

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,

At the time of completing another two years witness with *The Berean Expositor*, we have reprinted Mr. Welch's *Parable, Miracle and Sign of Matthew and John considered dispensationally*. A very significant conclusion drawn to our notice by its author is that the leaven put into three measures or meal (Luke xiii. 20, 21) represents the evil and error being ascribed to God's truth (p.72). The failure of Christendom to accept the Bible as God's inspired Word is an echo of Satan's first lie "Hath God said?" (Gen. iii. 1). Having this in mind, how vital is the stand made by such a publication as this which has always taught the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.

We pray that Volume 50 (L) of *The Berean Expositor* may attract many new friends and readers who will support us by prayer and finance to counter the seducers of truth in our day.

STUART ALLEN
NORMAN J. DREDGE
GEORGE T. FOSTER
FRANK PAPWORTH
LEONARD A. CANNING

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The Acknowledgment of the Son of God.

pp. 61 - 67

From time to time we have to consider the overwhelming subject of the Godhead, and two aspects of it relating to the Lord Jesus Christ are constantly coming to the fore, namely His Deity and His Sonship. We state straight away that, concerning God unconditioned and limitless, we know nothing. We are shut up completely to what He has been pleased to reveal of Himself in the holy Scriptures. Then again we must remember our very limited powers of comprehension and that, however advanced we are spiritually, we can now only see partially as in a mirror (I Cor. xiii. 12) which often creates for us a puzzling problem. This being so, we approach the subject in real humility and dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit, Whose main object is to reveal and exalt the Lord Jesus (John xvi. 7, 14).

That the Scriptures reveal the one God in a threefold capacity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is true for all who have eyes to see and minds that are unbiased. In his *Institutes of Theology*, the theologian Dr. Chalmers states that this, when viewed as *separate* propositions is abundantly plain, but it is when we seek to bring them together and attempt their reconciliation that the problems start.

This is certainly true concerning the Deity and Sonship of Christ and the subject has been made increasingly difficult by some of the creeds. If ever there was a need to be accurate and to keep within the bounds of the Word of God it is in respect of the Deity and Sonship of Christ. Once we exceed or detract from what God has written concerning Himself we get into an uncharted ocean and are completely lost. We have dealt with the Deity of Christ in the booklet *The Lord Jesus Christ, God or only man?*. We now wish to consider His Sonship.

There are those who believe in 'the eternal Sonship of Christ', but when one seeks plain Scriptural basis for such doctrine, we find it is conspicuously lacking. We are treated to theological statements such as 'the eternal generations of the Son' (attributed to the early Fathers), but these words are meaningless and no one who uses them ever attempts to explain them. We never find such expressions as 'the eternal Son' or 'the eternal Father' in the Bible, and we should expect them there if they were true. Sonship in relation to human beings is invariably connected with the thought of being begotten and this thought is definitely connected with the Son of God when He became incarnate. He was begotten by the Father through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. The angel who appeared to the virgin Mary said to her:

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which *shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*" (Luke i. 35, and see verse 32).

Note that the Son of God was not His name before His birth, but the future child that was to be born. Through this miraculous birth, He would be called the Son of God. On this point we should carefully note the quotation from II Sam. vii. 14 given in Heb. i. 5:

“. . . . And again, I *will be* to Him a Father, and *He shall be* to Me a Son.”

This was prophetically looking forward to His *future* manifestation in the flesh. It was *at that future* that this context stresses the Father-Son relationship, not in past eternity. The dogmatism of the creeds on this point is amazing, considering there is no clear statement in Scripture that teaches this relationship obtained before the birth of the Lord Jesus. The title “Only begotten” as applied to the Lord Jesus is not only a term of strong endearment, but one expressing unique relationship, of which Isaac’s relationship to Abraham was a type. Isaac was Abraham’s “only begotten son” (Heb. xi. 17), and although he had other children, no other son was begotten in the same wonderful way as the child of promise and of resurrection power. Isaac was truly born ‘according to the Spirit’ (Gal. iv. 29). Similarly the word ‘begotten’ is definitely used of the Son of God as *born in time* and in no other sense is the word ‘only-begotten’ ever used of Him.

Another reference back to Heb. i. should make this clear in its quotations from the Psalms:

“For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, **THIS DAY** have I begotten Thee?” (Heb. i. 5).

The divine begetting of the Son took place *at a specific moment in time—THIS DAY* and it therefore cannot refer to past eternity. If we ask when **THIS DAY** occurred, the next quotation from the Psalms tells us:

“And again, when He bringeth in *the First begotten into the world*, He saith, And let all the angels of God *worship Him*” (Heb. i. 6).

The bringing in of the First begotten into the world relates *to His birth*. Furthermore, although the Father-Son relationship commenced here, His Deity is still affirmed, for the angels are bidden to *worship Him* and *worship* in the Scriptures is *the sole prerogative of God*. The worship of any created being, however exalted, is not tolerated. It is noteworthy that Paul in Acts xiii. 33 links the quotation from Psa. ii. 7 (“this day have I begotten Thee”) with the resurrection of Christ. So we see that this divine begetting is linked with the beginning of His human life and reaffirmed at the beginning of His new life in exaltation when He was raised from the dead by the Father.

Theologians, feeling that the word ‘begotten’ implied the posteriority of the Father Who begat the Son, and not seeing that this referred to Him Who was born of a virgin in time, tried to escape the difficulty by asserting that in some way the Deity of the Son was derived or communicated from the Father in past eternity. This leads to serious error, denying His *external existence* in the past *as God* and according Him the position of a lesser Deity than the Father, thus in turn denying the emphatic monotheism of the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation.

The Bible reveals little of the Lord Jesus Christ before Bethlehem. What an opportunity John had when he commenced writing his Gospel to support the view we have just given if it was truth. John did not write:

“In the beginning was *the Son*, and *the Son* was with God, and *the Son* was God”
(John i. 1).

John was careful to avoid this, giving Christ the title of *the Word* before His birth. The title of the Son is found in a variety of associations:

- (1) The Son (Matt. xxviii. 19).
- (2) The Son of God (Matt. iv. 3).
- (3) The Son of David (Matt. ix. 27).
- (4) The Son of Man (Matt. viii. 20).
- (5) The Son of the Highest (Luke i. 32).
- (6) My Beloved Son (Matt. iii. 17).
- (7) His only begotten Son (John iii. 16).
- (8) The Son of His love (literally Col. i. 13).

Every reference in the N.T. to Christ as the Son of Man goes back to Psa. viii. and the great prophetic use of the title there showing us He was truly Man. By comparison with I Cor. xv. 23-28, Heb. ii. 5-9 and Eph. i. 22, 23, we see the Lord as the second Man and the last Adam with all things finally under His feet as enemies, or under His Headship of the universe as redeemed. The Son of God emphasizes His divine origin, teaching us that He had no human father, thus being free from the taint of sin and making it possible for Him to become the Saviour of sinners. The two titles, the Son of Man and the Son of God are complementary. Neither can he held apart from the other.

It is the fusion of His human nature with His Deity that becomes the great problem for our limited understanding:

“. . . . no man knoweth the Son (that is completely), but the Father” (Matt. xi. 27),

and truly Christ is the secret (mystery) of God (Col. ii. 2 R.V.). The Bible makes no attempt to explain this great secret, but it is there in the Word of truth for our faith and acceptance even if we cannot fully comprehend it. Sometimes the Scriptures stress His Deity and sometimes His humanity as the Sent One, the perfect Servant. The danger comes when anyone stresses one at the expense of the other or ignores one and concentrates solely on the other. This is bound to lead to a defective view of God and is dangerous indeed for the believer.

There are at least two reasons why the Lord Jesus became man. One is that God “Who only hath immortality” cannot die, yet death was the penalty He had prescribed for sin (Gen. ii. 17), and if ever man was to be saved and death abolished, this penalty must be paid. So, in His infinite love, He took upon Himself a sinless human body so that it could be said with truth that the Lord “laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. liii. 6) and that ‘through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil’ (Heb. ii. 14).

Another reason is that sin and death make a yawning chasm between man and God that no created being can ever bridge. It needed someone who was both God and man, to

be able to reach right up to heaven and right down to earth, in other words the perfect mediator or Go-between:

“For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all” (I Tim. ii. 5, 6, R.V.).

Until the redemptive purpose of the ages is realized and at last a perfect creation embodying heaven and earth comes into existence, the mediatorial work of the Son of God is necessary.

When all that separated God and man is removed and abolished then we read:

“. . . . Behold, the tabernacle (dwelling place) of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. xxi. 3).

At last there is no more need of Temple ritual, priests or mediators, for all barriers between men and God have vanished at this point of time and God’s great redemptive purpose is finally achieved.

When we consider the earthly life and service of Christ in the Scriptures, we link it therefore with His Sonship and His voluntary humiliation in laying aside His will for the will of the Father (John v. 30; vi. 38), so that this will might be permanent in word (John xiv. 24) and work (John xiv. 20; xvii. 4).

The Lord, as it were, suppressed His own Deity. He ‘emptied Himself’ (“made Himself of no reputation” Phil. ii. 7) of everything pertaining to His own will, His own words and His own deeds, and became the “Sent One”, the perfect Servant of the Father. It was from this standpoint and from this only that He said:

“My Father is greater than I” (John xiv. 28).

It was only from the standpoint of *relative position during His earthly life* when He became the Son and the Servant, that this was true. In human affairs a lieutenant is in an inferior position to his captain, though he may be personally and in ability much his superior. We must not confuse *status* with *role and operation*. Oscar Cullman was right when he expressed a similar thought: “to speak of the Son has meaning only in reference to God’s revelatory action, not in reference to God’s Being”. The essence of God was not touched when He Who was the Word and was God (John i. 1) became flesh and took upon Himself a human body. That human Body was never a *substitution* for His Deity, but an *addition to it*. It was “God Who was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. iii. 16) not just an exalted human being raised up by God.

When we realize that His Sonship commenced at Bethlehem, we can understand why the four Gospels have more reference to this Sonship than the rest of the N.T. Coming to the Prison Epistles we are struck by the fact that there are two references only to Christ as the Son:

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (acknowledgment) of the Son of God” (Eph. iv. 13).

“(The Father) Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col. i. 12, R.V.).

When He is the ascended and exalted Son in glory, it is His Headship over all things to the church which is His Body, that is now stressed. There are seven references to this supreme Headship in the prison ministry of Paul (Eph. i. 22; iv. 15; v. 23; Col. i. 18; ii. 10, 19. Also Eph. i. 10 where “gather together in one” is literally “head up again” all things “in heaven and earth”).

The object of all this is ‘that in all things He might have the first place (pre-eminence)’ (Col. i. 18) which will be demonstrated in a future day of triumph manifestly when every being in existence bows the knee to Him and gives Him His rightful place as LORD (Phil. ii. 9-11).

His mediatorial position lasts as long as it is needed, that is as long as sin and imperfection remain in the creation. We come to the furthest point in I Cor. xv. 24-28 when at last a new heaven and earth come into being (Rev. xxi. 3-5), when sin and death are eradicated for ever, and the whole universe is now standing in the power of God Himself and not in the strength or ability of any created being. Then, and not till then, will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father that GOD (not the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit) may be all in all. Here we have traversed a huge circle:

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

At the end “GOD all in all” (I Cor. xv. 28).

In between is the long span of time covered by the ages during which God is working out His great redemptive plan to bring all things back to perfection. In order to do this, He has found it necessary to manifest Himself in a threefold way, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Word of God reveals nothing of eternity past or eternity in the future when the ages are completed. We are therefore not in a position to say that the Trinity existed in past eternity and will do so in the future for evermore. If we keep to what is revealed we shall link the Trinity with the redemptive purpose of God and go no further. This does not touch the eternal Being of God nor alter the glorious fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, has wonderfully made Him known to us, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John xiv. 9).

Archaic and Obsolete Words of the Authorized Version.

No.9. p. 60

HOUGH. This belongs to the series of English words with different pronunciations as cough, though, plough, rough, tough, etc. The word is only used as a verb in the A.V. and is pronounced 'hock'. It means to cut the tendons at the back of the foot of a horse or other animal, in other words "to sever the hamstring" (Josh. xi. 6, 9; II Sam. viii. 4; I Chron. xviii. 4).

HUSBANDMAN. This meant a tiller of the soil and is used of Noah (Gen. ix. 20) and others. Sometimes it is equivalent to 'farmer' as in II Tim. ii. 6. Where the cultivation of vines is concerned, the word means a 'vine-dresser'.

INDITE. This word originally meant to dictate a form of words to be repeated or written down and then it came to mean any expression of one's thought in writing. In Psa. xlv. 1 we have 'my heart is inditing a good matter'. The Hebrew verb however, is more vivid meaning to bubble up or boil over. So the R.S.V. renders it "my heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe".

INFIDEL occurs twice in the A.V., 'what part hath he that believeth with an infidel' (II Cor. vi. 15) and "if any provide not for his own he is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. v. 8). The word comes from Tyndale, who meant 'one who is without faith' rather than a person who denies or deliberately rejects it, in other words an unbeliever or unsaved person. II Cor. vi. 15 clearly teaches that the marriage of a believer with an unbeliever is disobedience in God's sight, whether the unbeliever opposes the truth or not, and young believers should constantly remember this if they want to avoid a life of misery and spiritual unfruitfulness.

No.10. p. 80

INJURIOUS. This is an A.V. translation of the Greek *hubristes* and 'injurious' is not strong enough in modern English. The equivalent today would be insolent or insulting, the conduct of a bully (I Tim. i. 13). This is the Apostle Paul's description of himself before the grace of God saved him.

INQUISITION. The word is often linked in the mind with persecution and torture because of the Inquisition of the 13th century in Spain set up by Pope Innocent III for the suppression of heresy and punishment of so-called heretics. But its normal meaning is 'inquiry', specially of judicial investigation. "The judges shall make diligent inquisition" (Deut. xix. 18), that is, they shall inquire diligently. In Esther ii. 23, "when inquisition was made of the matter" means, "when the affair was investigated".

No.11. pp. 119, 120

INSTANT, INSTANTLY. In the A.V. these words do not refer to time but to the manner of an action. The Jewish elders besought the Lord to heal the servant of the centurion. "They besought Him instantly", means "they besought Him earnestly". Paul, in Acts xxvi. 6, 7 declares that the twelve tribes "instantly serve God day and night". In modern English "they earnestly serve (or worship) day and night".

INTELLIGENCE. In Dan. xi. 30 we read the 'vile person' will 'have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant'. This means 'have an understanding with' or 'give heed to'. In Dan. xi. 37 the Hebrew word is translated 'regard'.

INWARD. In Job xix. 19 we have 'all my inward friends abhorred me'. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the word 'inward' meant intimate, belonging to the inner circle of one's friends. Job is lamenting that even his closest friends had deserted him.

KNOP is an old word for the bud of a flower or an ornamental knob. It is used in the description of the golden lampstand in Exod. xxv. 31-36; xxxvii. 17-22, which Bezaleel made under the direction of Moses.

LATCHET does not mean a small latch, but a shoelace or thong to fasten a shoe or sandal. In Gen. xiv. 23 Abraham tells the king of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet" (from him), and John the Baptist, referring to the Lord declares: "there cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose".

LEASING. This is an archaic word for lying or falsehood. In Psa. iv. 2 we have in the A.V. "how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing", and in Psa. v. 6 we read, "Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing". In I Tim. i. 10 Wyclif's version reads "lesyngmongers" for liars. Both words are quite obsolete today.

LET. There are two English verbs spelled LET, but which come from two distinct Anglo-Saxon roots and they have opposite meanings. One means to hinder or prevent and the other, permit or allow. Both were used in 1611 and occur in the A.V. Only the second is in use today except in the legal phrase 'without let or hindrance'. In our old English Bible the first meaning occurs three times: Isa. xliii. 13, "There is none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall let it?" This means "who can hinder it?" Paul speaks of his intention to visit the believers at Rome: "often times I purposed to come to you, (but was let hitherto)", that is, he had been prevented from coming.

In II Thess. ii. 6, 7 we have an important occurrence: "He Who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way". The difficulty of these verses is increased by this obsolete English word. The Greek word means to hold fast or restrain. The N.I.V. renders the passage "And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the One Who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way".

No.12. pp. 139, 140

LIBERTINES. This occurs only once in the A.V.: "then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines disputing with Stephen" (Acts vi. 9). These were not dissolute or licentious men, but respectable freedmen, probably descending from the Jews who had been taken as prisoners to Rome by Pompey in B.C.63 and there sold as slaves. In modern English we should render the phrase as 'the synagogue of the Freedmen'.

LIGHT. In the A.V. this is easily understood as a verb or adjective when applied to things, but twice the translators use it of persons in the obsolete sense of shallow character. Abimelech, we are told, 'hired vain and light persons, which followed him' (Judges ix. 4). But the word 'light', in its obsolete sense, is not strong enough. The

R.S.V. translates 'worthless and reckless fellows' which is nearer the sense of the Hebrew.

In Numb. xxi. 5 we have the record of the people of Israel complaining they had no bread or water and saying 'our soul loatheth this light bread', referring to the manna. Here again the A.V. is not strong enough. In their backsliding the Israelites actually said 'we loathe this worthless food' (R.S.V.). What a shocking state of mind to get into, describing the delicious food which the Lord provided for them freshly every day! This but anticipated the Israel of later centuries to whom He Who was the true manna, the Bread of Life, came and was rejected. As Isaiah foretold "He was despised and rejected of men" (Isa. liii. 3).

LIGHTNESS. This word is now obsolete in the sense the A.V. uses it. God condemns the false prophets 'who cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness' (Jer. xxiii. 32). "Recklessness" would be far better.

When Paul says in II Cor. i. 17 "when I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?", he means 'was I vacillating when I wanted to do this?'.

LIST. This occurs four times in the A.V. meaning to desire or wish. "Whatsoever they listeth" (Matt. xvii. 12) means "whatever they pleased". "The wind bloweth where it listeth" (John iii. 8) can be rendered "where it pleases". In James iii. 4 "Whithersoever the governor listeth" means "Wherever the will of the pilot directs".

LIVELY. This word does not mean spritely or active in the A.V. but *living*. Moses received 'the lively (living) oracles' from God (Acts vii. 38). I Pet. i. 3 speaks of a 'lively (living) hope' and in ii. 5 we have 'lively (living) stones'.

LUCRE. This word means 'gain', but in the Scriptures it is only used in the sense of dishonest gain. There is one occurrence of it in the O.T. in I Sam. viii. 3 where we are told that the sons of Samuel, as judges, "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after *lucre*, and took bribes and perverted judgment". The expression 'filthy lucre' is found in I Pet. v. 2 where it means dishonest gain. There is no basis in the Scriptures for the habit of referring to money as 'filthy lucre'.

LUNATICK. Some of those brought to the Lord Jesus for healing are termed in the A.V. 'lunatick' (Matt. iv. 24; xvii. 15). The Greek word means 'moon-struck', the Latin equivalent being *lunaticus*, from which the English word is taken. Mental disorders were thought to be influenced by the moon, but it is probable that epilepsy is referred to in Matthew's Gospel rather than people suffering from insanity.

LUST. This word was used at the time of the A.V. for any desire for something good, but it later became limited to the bad sense that it has today. The Greek verb *epithume* means to long eagerly, to desire strongly and is used in a good sense as well as a bad one. This is seen in Luke xxii. 15 where the Lord says “with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer”. We should take great care with our strong desires and inclinations to see that they are totally in line with the Lord’s will.

No.13. pp. 177 - 180

MANSIONS. This word in the seventeenth century had no reference to a manor house or a large building: It simply meant a place of abode and would have described the smallest dwelling place. We must keep this meaning in John xiv. 2, “In My Father’s house are many mansions”. The Father’s house evidently describes the whole of the final new creation embodying heaven and earth and in this vast and wonderful dominion there are many ‘abodes’, some earthly and some heavenly into which God wills that His redeemed children shall enter in resurrection and enjoy for ever.

MAUL. This word occurs once in Prov. xxv. 18, “A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is a *maul*, and a sword and a sharp arrow”. “Maul” means the same as “mace”, a heavy club made of metal and was used as a weapon of war.

MEAT is used in the A.V. for food in general and not restricted to flesh foods. In Ezekiel xlvii. 12 “trees for *meat*” means “trees for food”. “Purging all *meats*” in Mark vii. 19 means “thus He declared all foods clean” (that is, from a ceremonial standpoint). The Lord said to the disciples “I have *meat* to eat that ye know not of” (John iv. 32) which refers to nourishment generally and not the flesh of animals (see also verse 8). In the O.T. we have the ‘meat offering’ mentioned over 100 times, but it contained no flesh and was a meal or cereal offering. We still sometimes use the phrase ‘grace before meat’ and this of course means saying grace before any meal.

MESS. This is an old word for a portion of food. We are told that Joseph sent to his brethren “*messes* unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s *mess* was five times so much as any of theirs” (Gen. xliii. 34). We would point out that the often used phrase ‘a mess of pottage’ in connection with Esau’s sale of his birthright is not Scriptural. It does not occur in the Bible.

METEYARD. This word occurs once in Lev. xix. 35, “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in *meteyard*, in weight or in measure”. “Meteyard” is an ancient word for a rod to measure length. It is now obsolete.

MOTION. In Rom. vii. 5 this word is found in the plural and it is its only occurrence. “For when we were in the flesh, the *motions* of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Here it is used in the obsolete sense of inward passions or impulses and means ‘sinful passions’ in this verse.

MUNITION. In the A.V. the word is used in the obsolete sense of a fortification or fortress. Isa. xxxiii. 16 reads “his place of defence shall be the *munitions* of rocks” which in modern English would be ‘fortress of rocks’. The same can be said of xxix. 7 “even all that fight against her and her munition” which refers to Ariel’s stronghold.

NAUGHTINESS, NAUGHTY. This word is used in our English Bible of something worse than trivial misbehaviour. It means downright wickedness. The command in James i. 21 to ‘lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of *naughtiness*’ should be rendered ‘all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness’. In his vision recorded in xxiv. 2, Jeremiah refers to ‘*naughty* figs’, but this means that they were so bad that they could not be eaten.

NEESING. This is an old word for sneezing and is found once in Job (xli. 18), “by his *neesings* a light doth shine”. The Hebrew word is *atishah*, matching the sound exactly.

NEPHEW. One should bear in mind that, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘nephew’ meaning ‘grandson’ was common in the 17th century. “If a widow have children or *nephews*” (I Tim. v. 4) means children or grandchildren.

OCCUPY. Luke xix. 13 gives the best known context where this word occurs. “He called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds and said unto them, *occupy* till I come.” Here it is used in the obsolete sense of ‘use’ or ‘trade with’. The Greek verb means ‘to do business’, but the translators followed Coverdale here and rendered it ‘occupy’. In the Book of Common Prayer Psa. cvii. 23 reads “they that go down to the sea in ships, and *occupy* their business in great waters”. In Exod. xxxviii. 24 we read “all the gold that was *occupied* for the work”, meaning “that was used for the work”.

OFFEND. In addition to its usual meanings the word is used as a translation of *skandalizo*—to place something in another’s way causing him to stumble or fall, or sin. “If thy right eye *offend* thee, pluck it out” has the meaning “If your right eye causes you to stumble or sin”. Paul’s statement, “if meat make my brother to *offend*, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to *offend*” in modern English

would read, “if food is a cause of my brother’s falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall”. Again, in II Cor. xi. 29, “who is offended, I burn not?” should be rendered, “Who is made to fall and I am not indignant?”.

OUCHES. Here is a word that was already becoming obsolete in 1611. Tyndale had used it in his translation of Exodus with a note of explanation, “ouches, ornaments fit to display jewels or precious stones”. It was the gold filigree work that surrounded the jewel and this is its meaning in Exod. xxviii. 11, 13, 14, 25; xxxix. 6, 13, 16, 18.

OUTLANDISH. This is used concerning Solomon in Neh. xiii. 26 where it means alien or foreigner, “nevertheless even him did *outlandish* women cause to sin”. These were foreign women who brought their false religion with them.

PASSENGER. The word is used in the old sense of a passer-by, a traveler and not one who is carried in a vehicle or ship. Prov. ix. 15 should be rendered ‘calling to those who pass by’ rather than ‘to call passengers’ and the former reading should obtain in Ezekiel, chapter xxxix.

No.14. pp. 199, 200

PECULIAR. It is a difficulty with some that the word of God should refer to believers being ‘peculiar people’ (Titus ii. 14; I Pet. ii. 9). Today the word has the meaning of odd or eccentric, but this was a later development after 1611. At that time it meant “one’s very own” and was used of private property distinguished from what is owned in common. Israel were a “special people” belonging to the Lord, or treasure that He valued. The Hebrew *segullah* is rendered ‘peculiar treasure’ in Exod. xix. 5; Psa. cxxxv. 4; Eccles. ii. 8. The Body of Christ are ‘a people of His own’ (Titus ii. 14) which may consist of oddities by nature, but by redeeming grace become ‘holy, unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight’ (Col. i. 22).

PEELED. This translates a Hebrew verb which means to make smooth or bare, to scour or polish. In Ezek. xxix. 18 we read ‘every shoulder was *peeled*’ which means ‘every shoulder was rubbed bare’. In Isa. xviii. 2 Ethiopia is referred to as ‘a nation scattered and *peeled*’. The R.V. renders the phrase ‘tall and smooth’ which means ‘sleek’ in appearance.

TO PILL. Pill, as a verb, means to peel or strip off the skin or rind of anything. “And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree and *pilled* white strakes in them” (Gen. xxx. 37, 38) means ‘peeled white streaks in them’.

POLL. The basic meaning of this words is the human head. “To take a poll” is to count heads. “Every male by their *polls*” means “every male head by head”.

As a verb it means to cut the hair. Hence Absalom “*polled* his head” (II Sam. xiv. 26) or cut it once a year.

POMMEL. This refers to the bowl-like ornament at the top of a pillar (see I Kings vii. 41, 42).

PORTER. In the Bible a porter is not used in the sense of a luggage porter, but means a gate-keeper or door-keeper. In I Chron. xvi. 42 we are told that ‘the sons of Jeduthun were *porters*’, but the margin reads ‘for the gate’.

POST. The word is used eight times in the sense of running or a runner. II Chron. xxx. 6, 10 reads: “So the *posts* went with the letters of the king and his princes”. “So the *posts* passed from city to city”. These were royal messengers which were used in the king’s service.

PRESENTLY is used in the A.V. meaning immediately, at once, not later on. The withering of the fig tree after the Lord’s pronouncement was immediately not presently in the modern sense (Matt. xxi. 19). In Matt. xxvi. 53 the Lord asserts that the Father could *presently* (A.V.) give Him more than twelve legions of angels, but of course He meant *immediately* on asking. This would have avoided Calvary and all that God had planned for redemption, so this request was never made, for which we can praise the Lord.

PREVENT. This word is used 17 times in the Scriptures and always in the obsolete sense of go before, anticipate or precede. “Prevent” comes from the Latin *prae* before and *venire* to come. In Psa. cxix. 147 the writer says “I *prevented* the dawning of the morning” which is mystifying to the modern English reader for, in no way whatsoever could he have stopped day and night. What he meant was that he anticipated the dawning of the morning, by rising before dawn for meditation in the Word of God. In verse 148 the psalmist says “Mine eyes *prevent* the night watches”, that is, “My eyes are awake before the watches of the night”.

The well known reference in I Thess. iv. 15, “we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not *prevent* them which are asleep”, means shall not precede or get before them which are asleep.

No.15. pp. 219, 220

PROPER GOOD. When David announced to Israel the plans for building the Temple and the store of materials he had provided, he made a personal gift of 3000 talents of gold, 7000 talents of silver which he described as “mine own proper good” (I Chron. xxix. 3, 4). “Proper” meant “owned as property”, an archaic use of the word and “good” is archaic for “goods”, and so the meaning is “I have a treasure of my own of gold and silver”, out of which he gave generously to the Lord, realizing that all of it came originally as the Lord’s gift and was really His, not David’s. He said “for all things come of Thee, and *of Thine own* have we given Thee” (xxix. 14). Would that all believers would remember this. “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Hag. ii. 8). We talk about money being ours, but who gave us the health and ability to earn it or superintended the means that provided it?

PUBLICAN. This word in the Scriptures has no reference to modern usage. It denoted one who had the right to collect taxes in a particular district. Often this was exercised in greed and unfairness and therefore publicans were hated and despised by the Jews, especially as they had to maintain continual contact with Gentiles which forced them to be regarded as ceremonially unclean.

Zacchaeus is described as “a chief among the publicans and rich” (Luke xix. 2). He was probably the head of the tax organization for the Jericho district.

QUICK, QUICKEN. The adverb ‘quickly’ is used in all the English translations and causes no problem. But the adjective ‘quick’ translates different words and always means ‘alive’ or ‘living’. “The *quick* and the dead” is “the *living* and the dead” (Acts x. 42; II Tim. iv. 1; I Pet. iv. 5). “The Word of God is *quick* and powerful” (Hebrews iv. 12) means *living* and powerful. In the O.T. we are told that Korah and his company went down *quick* into the mouth of the earth (Numb. xvi. 23-33). This does not refer to the speed of their descent but to the fact that they were buried alive. The verb ‘*quicken*’ occurs 11 times in the N.T. and should be rendered ‘makes alive’. “It is the Spirit that makes alive” (John vi. 63). In I Cor. xv. 45 “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit” is clearer than “a quickening Spirit”. “Hath *quicken*ed us together with Christ” (Eph. ii. 5) means “hath made us alive with Christ”.

RECORD. The word occurs 34 times, 27 of which use the obsolete meaning of witness or testimony. “I call heaven and earth to *record* this day against you” (Deuteronomy xxx. 19) means ‘witness against you this day’. “God is my *record*, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ” (Phil. i. 8) means “God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ”.

“To bear record” is used some 12 times in John’s epistles and means ‘to bear witness’ or ‘testify’. “I take you *to record*” (Acts xx. 26) is obsolete for “I call you to witness”, but more accurately it should be “I testify to you”.

RISING. This word, as a noun, occurs in Lev. xiii. 2, 10, 19, 28; xiv. 56 in a medical context and refers to a body swelling which is a symptom of disease. Lev.xiii.28 reads “it is a rising of the burning” which is equivalent to “it is a swelling from the burn”.

No.16. pp. 239, 240

REINS. This is a name for the kidneys or kidney region—the loins. It comes through the French from the Latin *renes*. The word often has a figurative meaning and is the equivalent of the word ‘heart’. “I the Lord search the heart, I try the *reins* (kidneys)” (Jer. xvii. 10). The second phrase repeats the sense for emphasis. “My *reins* also instruct me in the night seasons” means “In the night my heart instructs me” (Psa. xvi. 7).

RUDE. The word goes back to Tyndale and is used in the archaic meaning of inexperienced, or unskilled. It does not mean rough or unrefined in the Bible. When Paul said he was “*rude* in speech” he meant that he was not a professional orator.

SCALL. This is only found in Lev. xiii. 30-37; xiv. 54. It means a scab, an eruption on the skin. *The Oxford English Dictionary* says that dry scall is psoriasis and humid scall is eczema.

SEETHE, SOD, SODDEN. These words are now obsolete and mean to cook by boiling or stewing. “Sod” is used as the past tense of the verb and “sodden” its past participle. Gen. xxv. 29 says Jacob “*sod* pottage” meaning that he was boiling pottage. Regarding the passover, it was definitely stated that the lamb must not be boiled but roasted. “Eat not of it raw, nor *sodden* at all with water, but roast with fire” (Exod.xii.9). “Sodden at all with water” now means “boiled with water” as it also does in II Chron. xxxv. 13.

SEVERAL is sometimes used in the obsolete sense of ‘separate’. King Azariah “dwelt in a *several* house” because he was a leper (II Kings xv. 5; II Chron. xxvi. 21). In other cases it is a tautology and can be omitted. “Every *several* gate was of one pearl” (Rev. xxi. 21). “Each one of the gates” would be modern English. “To every man according to his *several* ability” (Matt. xxv. 15), the word “several” can be omitted.

SHAMBLES is often used today to describe a scene of wreckage but originally it referred to a slaughterhouse. In I Cor. x. 25 we have 'whatsoever is sold in the *shambles*, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake'. "Meat market" would be an up-to-date rendering.

SIMPLE. Paul wrote in Rom. xvi. 19 "I would have you wise unto that which is good and *simple* concerning evil". He did not mean to be gullible or foolish, but free from duplicity, innocent and so the Greek should now be rendered.

The Epistle of James.

No.1. pp. 121 - 126

This epistle is one of a group of seven generally known as General or Catholic epistles because they were not addressed to any particular church. In our A.V. they come in the order of the Latin Vulgate and many of the Greek manuscripts, and it is interesting to know that they are often found as a whole along with the Acts of the Apostles, for they have a direct bearing on the period covered by the Acts. The authorship of the epistle has been often debated, as James was a common name in the N.T. times and there are three in the N.T.: James, the son of Zebedee, James, the son of Alphaeus (called the Less or Little), and James, the brother of the Lord.

We can rule out James, the son of Zebedee, by reason of the fact that he was put to death by Herod Agrippa I in the year 44 and it is well nigh impossible to date the epistle as early as this. As for James the son of Alphaeus we know little about him and there is no evidence that the epistle was ever assigned to him in the early church. We can have much more confidence in taking the Lord's brother, as the author of the epistle. He heads the list of four men who are described as the Lord's brothers in Matt. xiii. 55 and he became the leader of the mother church of Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem. He is mentioned first in Gal. ii. 9.

It would seem that James became a true believer after the resurrection when the Lord appeared to him (I Cor. xv. 5, 7) and soon became the recognized leader at Jerusalem, and Gal. ii. makes it clear that he was 'a pillar' of the church. After Peter was miraculously released from prison, he bade his friends give a report of all that had happened 'to James and to the brethren' (Acts xii. 17). When Paul made his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, to visit Peter, he saw none of the other apostles "save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. i. 19). This must have been a visit of outstanding importance to the Apostle Paul, for he could learn much of the Lord's *earthly* life and witness from Peter and further than this, intimate details of *His home life* from James.

Those who 'came down from Judaea' (Acts xv. 1) and taught that circumcision was necessary to salvation, may not have accurately reflected the teaching of James, but it seems evident that at the first he did not encourage Jewish and Gentile believers to eat together, for there was a strong possibility that the Gentiles, lately converted from paganism, would not adhere to the strong O.T. regulations regarding food, and so they would cause offence and division. This explains Gal. ii. 12 where 'certain came from James', that is from Jerusalem church and found Peter eating with Gentiles. The fear of man came in here and we are told Peter withdrew himself from them.

James obviously presided over the conference at Jerusalem recorded in Acts xv. which was called together to consider the terms of admission of Gentile converts to the Jewish church in order that all friction might be avoided. James' words, "my judgment is" (Acts xv. 19) shows the authority he possessed and it was in his name and that of the

other apostles that the epistle embodying the council's decisions was sent to the churches in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia and this, incidentally, is the first epistle of the N.T.

There are certain linguistic resemblances between James' speech and the epistle of James which have been noted by Bible scholars and this helps to confirm his authorship, but it must be said that such similarities can be found in other epistles. There is no doubt that James, the Lord's brother, has the strongest claims for the authorship of the epistle we are about to study and there is certainly nothing in the N.T. that directly militates against it.

There have been other theories by scholars, but we do not think it profitable to consider them. Those who desire to do so can consult Dr. Donald Guthrie's *New Testament Introduction*. Some have mentioned that it was unlikely that a simple Galilean could write such good Greek, but no less an authority as Dr. A. T. Robertson writes, "the incongruity of such a small piece of Greek as the epistle of James being written by a Palestinian Jew like James vanishes when we consider the bilingual character of the people of Palestine" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p.123).

If the authorship of James, the Lord's brother, is accepted, the date of writing could be any time just before (*between*) 50 to 60A.D. According to Josephus and Eusebius James was martyred in 62 or 68A.D. If written in the early part of this period then (with the exception of the letter from the Jerusalem conference) it was the first of the N.T. epistles. There is no mention of the fall of Jerusalem in 70A.D. and the social conditions described in chapter v. concerning rich land owners did not apply after the destruction of the city. The meeting place of the church is called a 'synagogue' (ii. 2 R.V.) and the stress upon the imminent coming (*parousia*) of the Lord, a feature of all the epistles written during the Acts period, and the general Israelitish character of the epistle strongly suggests an early date.

The structure of the epistle, largely based on the one given in *The Companion Bible* is as follows:

- A | a | i. 1-4. Patience.
 - b | i. 5-8. Prayer.
- B | c | i. 9, 10-. The law exalted. The rich made low.
 - d | i. -10, 11-. Life likened to grass.
 - e | i. -11. The end of the rich.
- C | i. 12-16. Lust.
- D | i. 17. Good gifts from above.
- E | i. 18-27. God's Word and its effects.
- F | ii. 1-7. The faith without partiality.
 - G | ii. 8. The royal law.
 - H | ii. 9-11. Moses' law—one offence breaks it.
 - G | ii. 12, 13. The law of liberty.
 - F | ii. 14-26. Faith without works.
- E | iii. 1-14. Man's word and its effects.
- D | iii. 15-18. The wisdom from above.
- C | iv. 1-5. Lusts.
- B | c | iv. 6-10. The proud resisted. The humble exalted.
 - d | iv. 11-17. Life likened to a vapour.
 - e | v. 1-6. The end of the rich.
- A | a | v. 7-12. Patience.
 - b | v. 13-20. Prayer.

To whom was the epistle addressed? This is clearly stated in the first verse as 'the twelve tribes in dispersion', *disapora* being a technical term for Jews living outside the land of Palestine. The recipients of the epistle were evidently Hebrew believers from the twelve tribes comprising Israel and whose home was outside the land. Peter's epistles and the epistle to the Hebrews are addressed to a similar group of believers from Israel, all of whom were evidently being tested by suffering and loss. These epistles were written to encourage them to 'go on to perfection' (or maturity) no matter how severe their trials were, the goal being a 'crown' or reward given by the Lord for faithfulness and endurance.

The epistle commences with greetings to its readers:

"James, a servant (a bond-servant) of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion, greeting" (i. 1, R.V.).

Although he was the leader of the Hebrew church at Jerusalem, James does not mention his office, but humbly describes himself as a 'bond servant' in the same way as his brother Jude (verse 1). What is quite clear in the N.T. is the fact that early converts were soon put to the test by trials and sufferings. Satan gave them no respite, hoping to overwhelm and crush their faith at the very beginning. So James makes it clear that this experience was normal for the believer and once the overruling of the Lord could be seen in it, then it was not a thing to be shunned but rather welcomed:

“Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations: knowing hat the proof of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing” (i. 2-4, R.V.).

Peter writes similarly to Hebrew Christians who were enduring suffering:

“. . . . though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, that the *proof of your faith*, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. i. 6, 7, R.V.).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning fiery trial among you, *which cometh upon you to prove you*, as though a strange thing happened unto you . . .” (I Pet. iv. 12, R.V.).

And also the epistle to the Hebrews:

“But call to remembering the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions” (x. 32-33, R.V.).

These believers must understand the *reason* why these severe tests were permitted by God, otherwise they would be overwhelmed by them. The Lord is concerned not only with the fact that each child of His has true faith, but also that this faith might grow and develop. In His earthly life four times the Lord Jesus had to lament concerning the *little faith* of the disciples (Matt. vi. 30; viii. 26; xiv. 31; xvi. 8), whereas it was the despised Gentiles who had *great faith* (Matt. viii. 10; xv. 28).

Now faith is like the human body; it cannot develop and grow without exercise, and this is what trial and suffering, when rightly regarded, do for the faith of a believer.

When the sun shines and all goes well, there does not seem to be a need for faith or trust in the Lord. But when the storms come, then it is we learn what sort of faith we possess and how much we are dependent upon our God and Saviour. The more we exercise our faith in the Lord, the more it grows and the Lord is concerned that we should be those of ‘great faith’, for otherwise how can we serve Him to the fullest extent? Little faith will not take us far along the Christian road with all its tests.

James was concerned that his readers should learn this most valuable lesson:

“Knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience (endurance). And let patience (endurance) have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing” (i. 4, R.V.).

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (i. 4, N.I.V.).

The word *teleios* (perfect) and its cognates is one of the most important words in the N.T. relating to the believer. The word does not primarily mean sinlessness, but *maturity*, leaving spiritual babyhood behind and growing up to adulthood. Only as spiritual adults can we fully serve the Lord and meet all the tests of the pilgrim pathway.

One of our great aims should be to “*grow* in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. iii. 18). Let us see to it that we do not suffer from arrested spiritual growth!

No.2. pp. 152 - 157

Having dealt with the testing of faith with a view to its growth, leading to endurance, so that the believer may be ‘perfect and entire, lacking in nothing’ (i. 2-4), the writer proceeds:

“But if any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (i. 5, R.V.).

Worldly cleverness and capability are of little use in the pilgrim pathway. Nothing less than the wisdom of God is needed, giving the believer spiritual insight that will preserve him from walking after the flesh and accepting the false standards of the world around him. One of the great Biblical commentaries on wisdom is found in the early chapters of I Corinthians where man’s wisdom is contrasted with the wisdom of God. What men deem to be wise is considered utter foolishness by God (I Cor. iii. 19). The only wisdom that is worthwhile is found in Him Who is Himself the wisdom of God (i.24). It is important to note how wisdom is stressed in the Prison Epistles of Paul, where it occurs no less than 9 times (Eph. i. 8, 17; iii. 10; Col. i. 9, 28; ii. 3, 23; iii. 16; iv. 5). These verses make it abundantly clear that the ‘worthy walk’ of Eph. iv. is impossible without heavenly wisdom.

But how can we obtain this? James i. 5, 6 is the answer. God Who alone possesses it is ready to give it to all who realize their lack of it and moreover, we are encouraged to read that He ‘giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not’ (“without finding fault”). The Lord always gives generously without reproaching the petitioner. Calvin remarks here that the words ‘upbraideth not’ are added ‘lest anyone should fear to come to God too often He is ready to add new blessings to the former ones without any end or limitation’.

James however, warns that prayer for wisdom must be the prayer of *faith*, “without doubting” (i. 6). Unbelief can never be tolerated by God, for it makes Him a liar (I.John.v.10). It limits Him and cuts the believer off from blessing, leaving him with disquiet in his mind, causing him to waver to and fro, and preventing him from leaning upon God. James likens such a person to waves of the sea tossed about by the wind, the very opposite of stability. Certain it is that that man will not receive anything of the Lord (i. 7). He is a ‘double minded’ person and thoroughly unstable or unreliable.

Real prayer involves turning the *whole person* to the Lord. We cannot face two ways at once when we are praying along the lines of His will.

Another important fact is now brought out by the writer of the epistle:

“But let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate: and the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away” (i. 9, 10).

God is a great leveler. Money speaks loudly in human affairs but in God’s estimation it is less than nothing. James has quite a lot to say about money and the lack of it. Here he refers to the poor and the rich, encouraging the poor believer, because in his new relationship to the Lord as His child, he is exalted to true wealth in Jesus Christ. At the same time he warns the rich of the transitory and unsatisfying nature of riches and the need for a totally different evaluation of material things than that obtaining in the world around him.

Human life, with its weakness and short-lived character, is often compared to grass in the Bible. Isaiah compared the frailty of ‘all flesh’ to the grass that withers and whose flower fades (Isa. xl. 6-8), contrasting it to the unchanging and eternal Word of God. Peter quotes the same words (I Pet. i. 23-25), showing the difference between the abiding life of those newly born again by the seed of the Word and the emptiness of the natural life dominated by sin and death. James draws attention to the almost instantaneous wilting of the grass from the burning heat of the sun and the scorching wind (i. 11).

The Lord Jesus Himself made a comment about this. He said “When ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass” (Luke xii. 55). The lesson that James draws is that the one who is living just for money and material things will ‘fade away’ just like the scorched grass and of what use then is his wealth?

The writer now returns to the theme of trial of faith and looks towards its reward by God:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (trial): for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him” (R.V., i. 12).

It has already been shown that such tests are the means God uses to develop faith and Christian character and without them, faith cannot reach maturity. James now points out that only those who are experiencing and enduring such trials are really happy (blessed), paradoxical as this may seem, for then theory is exchanged for real experience and reality of what the Lord can achieve for those who fully trust Him. It is clear that inward trial and not outward temptation is uppermost in James’ mind for it has been truly said, inner enticement to evil would have to be *resisted* not *endured*. This abiding joy looks forward to the future when the Lord will give ‘the *crown* of life’ which He has ‘promised to those that love Him’ (i. 12). Crowns in Scripture are always the symbol of *reward* given by the Lord to the faithful, and the writers of the N.T. use the word with varying expressions. Here it does not mean that eternal life *is* the crown, but this crown is *associated with* endless life, showing the approval of the divine Giver.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding regarding temptation, James now makes it quite clear that he does not mean temptation *to sin* or that such temptation could ever come from God:

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed” (i. 13, 14, R.V.).

God allows men to be tested, as Abraham and Job, and in fact all His people, and the purpose behind it is, as we have seen, to develop their faith, thus leading to spiritual growth. But God never tries men *with evil intent*, so tempting them to sin. He, by His very nature, cannot be tempted with evil. He is the thrice holy God, Who ‘will by no means clear the guilty’ (Exod. xxxiv. 7). He cannot sin or plan that sin shall happen. Those who believe the terrible and subtle doctrine that God is the author of sin, must find these verses impossible of interpretation if they are honest.

Deep students of the Word have failed here, in that they believe that God willed sin to happen so that His great love in redemption could be manifested. The argument is that man could never have known such love unless he was a sinner needing redemption and forgiveness. Such a view is completely untrue for, as we have seen, it is an affront to His holy nature and going right against the revelation of Himself in the holy Scriptures. Furthermore, it limits Him to one course of action in manifesting His love.

Even failing human beings do not act on this principle. Do loving parents urge their children to sin so that they may experience the joy of being forgiven? And what would such parents think if it was asserted that only in this way could they adequately make their love known to their children?

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul sounds the death knell of such doctrine relating to God when, in Rom. iii. he writes:

“But if our unrighteousness (sin) commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous Who taketh vengeance? (or punishes?) God forbid: *for then how shall God judge the world?*” (Rom. iii. 5, 6).

If Satan and Adam were only doing what God planned they should do, then it would be impossible for God to judge or condemn them, for they would only be carrying out His will. The Apostle goes on to say:

“And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) *Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just*” (Rom. iii. 8).

If God acted in this way, He would be deliberately causing sin to occur so that good might eventually come, but the Apostle strongly repudiates such an idea, and those who hold it will come under God’s righteous condemnation (damnation).

Satan is the evil tempter of mankind, not God, and in any case, James points out that it is man’s sinful nature that leads him to transgress: “. . . . but each man is tempted when

he is drawn away *by his own lust and enticed*'. The Lord Jesus emphasized the same truth when He said;

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth *from the heart*; and they defile the man. For *out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man;” (Matt. xv. 18-20).

None of these things, or sin in any form, can originate or be purposed by a holy God. Such doctrine comes perilously near blasphemy.

So far from God tempting men with evil intention, He is the source of all good:

“Be not deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning” (i. 16, 17, R.V.).

All the Father's gifts are perfect and they come from One Who never varies. He knows what is best for His children and gives without stint, so that every need is supplied. Not only this, but these Hebrew believers owed their spiritual birth to Him as He worked upon His own life-begetting Word (i. 18) in their hearts. Thus they became a 'firstfruits' of His kingdom, becoming part of the elect remnant of Israel spoken of in Rom. xi. 1-5.

In the O.T. God claimed the firstfruits (Lev. xxiii. 10) and in the same way the faithful remnant of the Acts period were a 'beginning' of His earthly kingdom purposes.

No.3. pp. 173 - 177

Having stated that the Hebrew believers were 'a kind of firstfruits' (i. 18) of the earthly kingdom ministry that was proceeding during the Acts, James goes on to indicate the kind of practical walk that should accompany such a calling:

“Ye know this (or know ye), my beloved brethren. But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (i. 19 20, R.V.).

Some of the ancient texts read *iste*, instead of *hoste* (wherefore) and the former word can either be imperative (know, or take note of) or indicative (ye know). If taken as imperative, it would be a command to note the context, and this would make the meaning more forceful. The characteristics of the new spiritual life resulting from the new birth must be evident in practice. Believers must be 'swift to hear'. They must be constantly on the alert to hear the voice of God speaking to them through His Word.

On the other hand, they should be 'slow to speak', taking care that they first absorb for themselves this Word of God, before they attempt to teach others and most certainly they

should be 'slow to wrath'. If this is indulged in (??? - *more rightly "not indulged in"*), then the voice of God cannot be heard, nor will anyone listen to a bad-tempered speaker. All wrath is better left to the One Who is absolutely righteous and can indulge in it without sin. Further than this, there must be a putting away of 'all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness' (i. 21 R.V.). The A.V. has 'superfluity of naughtiness' and the old English fails to convey today what James actually wrote. He cannot mean that it is only the surplus of naughtiness which must be laid aside, and the middle English 'naughtiness' is not nearly strong enough, for the word has changed its meaning over the centuries. The R.V. is better and in the place of sin, all should receive with meekness the engrafted or implanted word which could 'save their souls'.

The Scriptural meaning of the 'saving of the soul' we have dealt with elsewhere. The reader should consider Matt. xvi. 24-27 in the R.V. and note the insistence of the Lord by the repetition of the word 'life', which the margin shows is the word 'soul' in the Greek. Likewise Heb. x. 39 should be consulted. Each of these occurrences together with the reference in James is addressed to *saved persons* and therefore cannot be referring to the salvation of the sinner, as the phrase is used today. There is a further aspect of salvation which should concern the believer and this is linked with suffering, testing and the perfecting of faith, which finally results in *reward* from the Lord and each of these contexts is dealing with this very important doctrine.

The writer has been stressing readiness and keenness to hear, but something more is required than passive listening:

"But be ye *doers* of the Word and not hearers only, deluding your own selves. For if a man is a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (i. 22-24, R.V.).

It is comparatively easy to listen, but far harder to listen and then practice what we hear. James gives the illustration of someone taking a hasty look at himself in a mirror and then going off and soon forgetting what he saw. Mayor, noting the aorist and perfect tenses of the Greek verbs, renders it "Just a glance, and off he goes". What he sees makes no impression on him. He turns at once to other things and forgets "what manner of man he was".

The mirror, which reflects the imperfections of the outer man is now contrasted with the perfect law of freedom which reflects the inner man. James refers to the law 8 times (i. 25; ii. 8-12; iv. 11 twice). He calls it the *royal* law (ii. 8) and the law of *liberty* twice (i. 25; ii. 12). The writer is not dealing with the law of God as it relates to the unsaved and the futile attempt of the unbeliever to keep it by his own efforts. We need to take great care here otherwise we shall be setting up the teaching of James against that of Paul. Many have done this, including great names like Luther, but they have disregarded the context and to whom the epistle was written. As we have seen, it was addressed to Hebrews who are saved and are now being taught what 'going on to perfection' or maturity means. The 'perfecting of faith' through trial and suffering was stressed in chapter i. 2-4.

Teleios, perfect or mature occurs five times (i. 4 twice; i. 17, 25; iii. 2). *Teleioo*, to make perfect or mature occurs once in an important context relating to Abraham's faith (ii. 22). *Teleo*, to finish or fulfil is found in ii. 8 "If ye *fulfil* the royal law". *Telos*, end or goal is used in v. 11 "the *end* of the Lord". This very important group of words gives us one of the clues to the interpretation of the epistle, specially its relationship to the law. We must remember that while *justification* of the sinner is not by law-keeping, going on to maturity for the believer is certainly related to *practical* response. This is the standpoint of James and we shall give this further consideration in chapter ii. where the controversial passage concerning Abraham and his justification occurs.

The Hebrew believers to whom James addressed his letter are now reminded of this fact. While the beginning in experience of the truth of God is related to the opened eye and the opened ear, progress in it depends upon the practical working out in daily living, and so a progressive Christian will constantly 'look into' the Word of truth for guidance in this respect (James i. 25).

The word *parakupto* means literally 'to bend down and peer into' for close inspection, such as Peter and Mary did in the empty tomb on the great resurrection morning (John.xx.5,11). Peter also tells us that angels desire to 'peer into' the contents of the gospel (I Pet. i. 12). Likewise the saved who are putting first things first, delight in God's commandments and are eager to obey them. After giving them consideration they do not forget such things, but rather they *continue therein* (i. 25) making these their daily delight. Did not the Lord Jesus say concerning His teaching, "if ye know these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*" (John xiii. 17)? Further than this James reminds his readers that in so doing they will be blessed (i. 25). He follows this with a warning:

"If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain" (i. 26).

Dokei means 'seem in his own estimation'. Such a person imagines himself to be progressive spiritually because he is often engaged in religious observances. At the same time he does not control his speech and so denies in practice his profession. This man's religion is empty declares James, who is nothing if not practical all through this epistle.

Threskos religious and its cognate *threskia*, describes the details of formal worship or ritual, in other words the *externals* of religion. Thousands are very punctilious in this respect, but the Word of God makes it abundantly clear that such acts are unacceptable to God unless the attitude of mind is right with Him, accompanied by practical obedience.

Israel's scrupulous observance of Mosaic ritual was spurned by God when they turned away from Him. Isaiah had to write:

"What to Me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts Bring no more vain offerings, incense is an abomination to Me your appointed feasts My soul hates; they have become a burden to Me, I am weary of bearing them" (Isa. i. 11-14, R.S.V.),

and all this because Israel had become ‘a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evil doers, sons who deal corruptly’ (Isa. i. 4 R.S.V.).

Later on the Lord Jesus Himself said, “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matt. xv. 8). Much that was external in ritual was correct, but it was all in vain as far as God was concerned because their minds and daily lives were far removed from Him.

And so it always has been. All such conduct is no more than empty profession. If it comes to external acts then James tells his readers:

“Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (James i. 27).

This does not attempt to give a complete definition of what pure religion is. Rather it gives two characteristics of the truth in practice, which are better than external acts of worship taken by themselves. Widows and orphans were not provided for in ancient society, they were typical examples of those needing help. God Himself is revealed in His Word as “a Father of the fatherless” and “a judge of the widows” (Psa. lxxviii. 5), and the Lord Jesus strongly condemned some of the Pharisees for embezzling the property of widows (Mark xii. 40). We remember too Paul’s injunctions to Timothy concerning widows’ needs (I Tim. v. 3) and the concern of the early church for them (Acts vi. 1).

Truly our God is a practical God and while there is plenty of ‘religion’ about today, how much of it really counts in the Lord’s estimation? Routine attendance at a place of worship on Sunday and a forgetfulness of the Lord and His claims during the week do not harmonize. One cannot help feeling that much in Christendom is no more than this. No wonder such Christian profession is devoid of power or attractiveness and the riches of God’s revealed truth are so little appreciated. May all of us who claim to have “opened eyes” seek grace and strength to be “living epistles” clearly making known Whose we are and Whom we serve.

No.4. pp. 195 - 199

When we come to chapter ii. of this epistle we find that James is still dealing with the practical expression of the faith of the Hebrew believers to whom he wrote:

“My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, Have a seat here, please, while you say to the poor man, Stand there, or, Sit at my feet, have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James ii. 1-4, R.S.V.).

James gives a hypothetical case of two people coming into their ‘assembly’ (*synogoge*, synagogue), one rich and the other poor. The rich person gets favoured treatment and is given a special seat. The poor man in the first instance, is not even given a special seat, but told to ‘stand’ or if he does sit down, it must be on the floor in a lowly place. First of all, this denies the fact that in the sight of God all are equal and He is no respecter of persons and the fact that some who have money counts as nothing with Him. Secondly, such treatment shows a divided allegiance and is an example of the “double mindedness” that is condemned in chapter i. 7 and 8. Thirdly, those who differentiate between rich and poor in this way become *judges*, and show an unrighteous and biased mind. “Judges of evil thoughts” (A.V.) is misleading. The R.V. is correct, rendering it “judges *with* evil thoughts” and only this sense fits the context properly.

Such sinfulness is directly opposite to the thoughts and ways of God:

“Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love Him?” (ii. 5, R.V.).

God’s ways are not man’s ways. God is concerned with the *true* riches (note Luke.xii.20,21). In the same way the Apostle Paul enjoined Timothy:

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy that they be rich in good works” (I Tim. vi. 17, 18).

It is not that God has limited His choice to the poor, but He gives them a special place (Luke i. 52; I Cor. i. 26, 27), and makes them heirs of that glorious kingdom which had been the theme of all the O.T. prophets and one day will be established on the earth when Christ will return and take control of everything and bring in His righteous rule.

Not only this, but it was a strange thing to single out for preferential treatment some of the rich who at that time were the violent oppressors of believers:

“Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by the which ye are called?” (ii. 6, 7, R.V.).

In chapter v. 4-6 James gives an example of the kind of oppression he has in mind, but the greatest offence of these well-to-do tyrants was that they blasphemed the sacred name of Christ and for any Hebrew believer to show partiality to such people meant that they themselves were committing sin, and so the Apostle continues:

“If you really fulfil the royal law, according to the Scriptures, ‘you shall love your neighbour as yourself’, you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it” (ii. 8-10, R.S.V.).

It is important to realize that the moral law is a *unity*, an expression of the undivided will of God the law-giver. It is *one* law expressed in ten different ways, each one being summed up in the word ‘love’.

Paul expressed it thus:

“. . . . he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xiii. 8-10).

This is expanded in various ways, touching adultery, killing, stealing, false witness, but it is all briefly comprehended in this saying, namely “thou shall *love* thy neighbour as thyself” (ii. 9). So that the sinner, no matter what his sin is, has touched the very heart of the law that unifies it and has broken the commandment ‘to love’. This is what James means when he says that the wrong-doer if he only fails in one point, is guilty of all. Respect of persons disobeys ‘the royal law’, for in one of the subsidiary laws derived from this royal law it is stated:

“Ye shall do no *unrighteousness in judgment*: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but *in righteousness* shalt thou judge thy neighbour” (Lev. xix. 15).

Moreover, the law clearly brands those who break it as transgressors. The words in the A.V. are now archaic “. . . . and are convinced of the law” (James ii. 9). They should read “. . . . being *convicted by the law*”. What men have to learn is that they cannot pick and choose in God’s sight. It is useless to excuse their failure to observe one part of the law, by pointing to their observance of other parts. God is not honoured in this way, nor will He allow exceptions. We cannot subtract and omit the laws we do not like. It is all or nothing, and it is man’s absolute failure to obey God’s law in its entirety that makes it necessary for his salvation to depend, not on his own righteousness or attainments, but upon the all-satisfying righteousness of Another, namely the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. iii. 8, 9).

Christian love must be shown both in speech and action “so *speak* ye, and so *do*, as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty” (ii. 12) and this is expressed by *mercy*, remembering all the while that it was a God of infinite mercy Who save sinners and therefore He expects those whom He has saved to be merciful constantly to others. “For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy: mercy glorieth against judgment” (ii. 13 R.V.). Mercy is therefore a product of practical love and where this is absent, the love that Scripture stresses is absent too.

In the same way James now proceeds to show that where such love does not exist, real faith is lacking:

“What does it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? Can *that* faith save him?” (ii. 14, R.V.).

It is important to note that the writer does not say ‘though a man has faith’, but “though a man *say* he hath faith and have not works”. Such a professed faith, being totally lacking in results, is useless. James asks two rhetorical questions both demanding the answer ‘certainly not’. The A.V. ‘can faith save him?’ is misleading and fails to bring out the force of the Greek definite article. “Can *that sort of faith* save him?” is what is meant. The illustrations given of this are forceful. What would be the use of saying to someone naked or destitute of food ‘depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled’, or to put it in modern English, ‘goodbye, get some clothing and nourishing food’, and not raise a finger to supply this basic need? “What doth it profit?” says James, “of what practical use is this sort of thing?”. It is dead, callous and utterly useless, no matter how much the word ‘faith’ is used. Some may talk loudly about faith, but the writer makes clear that he wants practical proof in action for all faith, and without this it is barren and futile (ii. 18-20).

No.5. pp. 211 - 219

Now follows the controversial passage concerning Abraham’s faith which has led some undiscerning people to imagine that James is contradicting Paul in Paul’s emphasis on faith apart from works. Even Luther stumbled here, calling this epistles a ‘strawy’ one. What has been missed is the fact that James and Paul are looking at two different phases of the faith of Abraham:

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith *made perfect*” (ii. 21 and 22, R.V.).

The key is contained in the words ‘faith *made perfect*’. *Teleioo* to make perfect, means to *bring to completion*. When Paul uses Abraham as an example of faith without works, he is looking at the *beginning* of his faith, when he first heard God speak to him and he responded and believed Him. James is looking thirty years later in Abraham’s experience, when the final great test by God was given in the command to offer up Isaac. The patriarch stood the test, very difficult though it was, and by his obedience his faith was *brought to completion*. It became great faith. There is no contradiction at all between Paul and James when this is understood. James had one aim, to destroy the pretence of those who professed to have faith when there was no evidence in the way they behaved to show their faith was real and alive. The word ‘justified’ in verse 21 means in effect “*shown to be justified*”. Abraham’s works here declared without any doubt that his faith was *real*, that it had grown to *great faith* which could trust God

without any reserve whatsoever, even though His demand was overwhelming from a human standpoint.

In verse 21 the A.V. translation ‘when he had offered’ is better rendered in the R.V. “in that he offered” (noting the aorist participle of the verb), and the imperfect tense of the word ‘wrought in’, shows that this co-operation was continually going on.

The climax to all this is that God gave him the supreme honour of calling him *His friend*. What a privilege! Just imagine an insignificant ‘human being’ being called the close friend of almighty God! No wonder God said in Gen. xviii. 17 “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” Close friends have no secrets! This reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus:

“. . . . I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known to you” (John xv. 15).

In Isa. xli. 8 God again calls Abraham His friend and in II Chron. xx. 7, he is declared to be God’s friend for ever.

As God looks at us by day and notes our response to Him in obedience and the exercise of faith, can He say the same of us and call his (*us*) His close friends?

We have seen that James in dealing with justification by faith underlines that its final practical working out was one to great faith and spiritual maturity. He now brings this to bear upon his readers. In taking the example of Abraham, he was not looking at the *initial* steps of faith that Paul stressed in the epistle to the Romans, and thus there is no contradiction between these two writers as has been imagined by Luther and others. Real faith is never static, but is a practical response to the revelation and claims of God which results in *obedience*. In other words it expresses itself *in action*. Paul does not hesitate to speak of ‘the *obedience* of faith’ (Rom. i. 5; xvi. 26) and if professed Christian faith does not result in outward action and response, then one doubts whether the inward reality is really there.

James now goes, as it were, to the bottom of the social ladder and cites the example of Rahab the prostitute. She certainly professed faith, for she said “the Lord your God is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Josh. ii. 11), but this was not merely barren faith, but faith that immediately expressed itself in effective action. She received the messengers in a friendly way and sent them out, so enabling them to escape. This practical faith of hers is mentioned in Heb. xi.:

“By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb. xi. 31).

The R.V. is better here, “*in that* she received and sent them”.

James has therefore made it perfectly clear that the mere profession of faith is in itself a dead thing. If it is not productive of active obedience, it is not really faith at all and can only be compared to a corpse:

“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead”
(James ii. 26, R.V.).

The next section of the epistle develops this practical viewpoint by dealing with the responsibility of teachers. We should remember the English word ‘master’ used in the A.V. of chapter iii. 1 was used in 1611 of *teachers*. We still talk about ‘school-masters’. The word does not mean an *employer*. The Greek word *didaskalos* means a teacher and should be so rendered in modern English. The R.V. and modern versions recognize this:

“Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment”
(James iii. 1, R.V.).

“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness” (R.S.V.).

“Not many of you should act as teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” (N.I.V.).

There is no doubt whatsoever that the crying need today in Christian circles is for reliable and well-equipped teachers. Yet, as James reminds us, this most important Christian service is not to be undertaken lightly, because of the great responsibility to the Lord that is involved. We have sometimes been amazed at the way some push forward to teach and lead, and are inexperienced and ill-equipped themselves to take on such responsible work. They are ‘untaught teachers’ who can mislead others, however sincere they may be. Every Christian teacher should remember the truth of James iii. 1 which is truth for all time.

Those who teach should obviously know more than those taught, otherwise they have no right to attempt to instruct others. The fact is, *all truth brings responsibility in the Lord’s sight* and the teacher, who thereby claims to have greater knowledge of the Word of God, is more responsible to Him than others without this knowledge. Believers often pray that the Lord will give them more light upon His Word of truth. But do they realize that if this is granted their responsibility to the Lord is increased? We should not shrink from praying like this; at the same time it is needful to remember all that is involved. Teaching and expounding the Word of God is a wonderful ministry. But it is also a solemn ministry, for the Lord does not take a light view of those who mislead others and bring them into error.

From the thought of teaching James now proceeds to consider speaking in general. He declares that we all stumble in our speech at times, yet the mark of perfection, or spiritual maturity is shown by the way we speak:

“He that stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man (mature), able to bridle the whole body also” (iii. 2, R.V.).

The Word of God gives us many characteristics of the mature person from a spiritual standpoint, but one that is often forgotten is *controlling the tongue*. Such a person can only control his speech, but his whole body also, for the tongue is the hardest member of the body to discipline. How often we have to regret things we have said! No wonder the Lord Jesus declared “By *thy words* thou shalt be justified, and by *thy words* thou shalt be

condemned” (Matt. xii. 37). We all need the controlling power of the Holy Spirit to bring every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. x. 5) for “out of the abundance of the heart (or mind) the *mouth speaketh*” (Matt. xii. 34) and it is from within that evil words arise (Mark vii. 21-23). James gives practical illustrations of the power of the horse, by which, if their mouths are controlled, the animal is brought to obedience and the rider is able to ‘turn about its whole body’ (iii. 3). In the same way the rudder of a ship, though small, can guide and alter the direction of the largest ship (iii. 4). The word behold (*idou*), so characteristic of Jewish writers, occurs six times in this epistle, introducing each time an illustration (iii. 3, 4, 5; v. 4, 7, 11).

The power of speech is tremendous for good or ill. We all know how great oratory can sway multitudes. In the context we are considering, it is the distinctive power of the tongue that is stressed. A spark can set on fire a great mass of material and uncontrolled speech can destroy much that is precious. Verse 6 is strong language and is a terrible warning of the damage that the tongue can do. Moreover, it is beyond the power of man when left to himself, to completely control it. Man can control the animal world, but he cannot control himself (iii. 7, 8). For the believer it is only when the new nature, energized by the Holy Spirit, is dominant, that the tongue can be tamed, and then its highest use can be the praise of Him Who is our Saviour, Lord and Head. Calvin truly said “He who truly worships and honours God will be afraid to speak slanderously of men”. The Apostle Paul said:

“let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Col. iv. 6).

Let us remember that speech always shows the inward personality and if the Lord’s grace has taken possession of us, then our speech will always be gracious, and a preservative against evil, just as salt prevents putrefaction.

To sum up this section, James deals with two kinds of wisdom. One which comes down from above and is from God. The other which is ‘earthly, sensual and devilish (or demon-like)’ (iii. 15). The former he has dealt with in the first chapter, where he tells us that if we lack this wisdom, God will give it liberally if we ask Him (i. 5), so there is no excuse for us not to possess it. Its characteristics are:

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy” (iii. 17, R.V.).

It is associated with meekness in verse 13. Its greatest exponent was the Lord Jesus Himself, for He could say with truth of Himself “I am meek and lowly of heart” (Matthew xi. 29), and Paul does not hesitate to appeal to “the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (II Cor. x. 1). How very different is “bitter jealousy” and “selfish ambition and strife” (James iii. 14). Contentiousness, arrogance or self-assertion show infallibly that those who exhibit these traits are not fit to be teachers or leaders in the Christian sphere, no matter what their capabilities are or their intellectual grasp of the Bible. Such only lead to variance and division, so breaking the unity of the Spirit which is God’s creation and we are exhorted to guard it at all cost (Eph. iv. 1-3).

From the beginning of chapter iv., it is evident that all was not well with some of the groups of Hebrew Christians to whom James was writing:

“Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members?” (iv. 1, R.V.).

The A.V. ‘lusts’ is correctly rendered ‘pleasures’ in the margin. James diagnoses the cause of these destructive factions as pleasure-seeking and this surely is one of the greatest forces that operates in the unregenerate mind. The Apostle Paul when he wrote to Titus also described the time of unregeneracy as “. . . . serving divers lusts and pleasures” (Titus iii. 3) and in his description of the last days of the age he says “*lovers of pleasures* rather than lovers of God” (II Tim. iii. 4 R.V.). When we consider the amount of time, energy, money and enthusiasm spent in the pursuit of pleasure, we can appreciate that James is not exaggerating, but stating sober truth.

Now there is nothing wrong with pleasure in itself, providing it comes from and is concerned with wholesome things. The devil loves to portray God, specially to the unsaved, as long-faced, frowning upon every enjoyment. It is only when pleasure becomes the over-riding ambition of life that it is deadly. It is like drugs which become habitual and finally need ever larger doses to produce results. Hedonism is a terrible master and holds its victims in its remorseless clutches and millions today are enslaved by it. Yet it never satisfies; it promises so much and gives back so little and for this to grip the mind of any true believer is tragedy indeed. The more one grows in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, the simpler one’s pleasures become and they assume the right proportion in life and do not become a snare. Moreover the instructed child of God knows that the time for *real* and *lasting* enjoyment and satisfaction relates to the next life, and not this one. “At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore” (Psa. xvi. 11).

In the context we are considering, we have seen that James is warning against the devastating effect of uncontrolled earthly pleasure in the life of a believer (iv. 1-3). Such a condition militates against the prayer life:

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures” (iv. 3, R.V.).

Two things are said here which nullify prayer. “Ye have not because ye ask not” (James iv. 2), and self-centredness, which wants answers to petitions in order to gratify selfish desires. I John v. 14 gives us a good guide to effective praying “. . . . if we ask anything *according to His will*, He heareth us”. Nothing is clearer in the Scriptures of truth than the fact that none of us can go to God with demands of our own which are not in accord with His will. It appears that some believers feel that if they persist long enough, God will finally grant their requests. It is as though by worrying Him, He will finally give way. This will never happen no matter how long such prayer is maintained. Our attitude must constantly be that of the Saviour, “Thy will be done, not mine” (Luke xxii. 42).

James reminds his readers that those who were obsessed with worldly pleasures were friends of the world and enemies of God, for this world system is Satan inspired and entirely anti-God. God's enemies would certainly not get satisfactory answers to their prayers! We remember that the Lord Jesus said "because ye are *not of the world* therefore the world hateth you" (John xv. 19). The antidote to all this wrong thinking and action is *grace* and the spirit of *humility*:

"Wherefore the Scripture saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth *grace* to the *humble*" (iv. 6).

It is significant that we find the same words in I Pet. v. 5, the repetition showing how important is the truth expressed in these verses.

The A.V. of James iv. 5 presents a problem:

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"

There are few people who have not had a difficulty in understanding this verse. It is not easy to associate envying or lusting with a holy God, that is if the word 'spirit' is a direct reference to the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the word could be a reference to the sinful state of mind of the unregenerate and of the old nature in the believer. *The Companion Bible* has a note here which says "this can only refer to the general testimony of Scripture that the natural man is prone to selfish desires leading to envy of others who possess the things desired". We feel this is the answer that fits the context. Certain it is that wherever we find pride mentioned in the Bible it is unreservedly condemned by God, for it was the parent sin that caused the fall of Satan. The Lord will not tolerate the exaltation of self. God brooks no rivals and nothing is truer than the old saying that 'pride goes before a fall'.

On the other hand the truly humble will 'submit themselves to God' (iv. 7) realizing that His will must always be paramount and His infinite knowledge of our real needs is past our understanding. We are not surprised therefore that James continues with "resist the devil and he will flee from you". Satan knows only too well that if he encourages pride in the believer, a voluntary submission to the Lord and His claims will be impossible. The Apostle Paul stressed this when he wrote to Timothy warning him not to appoint one who was a novice, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Tim. iii. 6). The big "I" has been the undoing of many a believer. May we all seek grace to manifest constantly the real spirit of humility found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Men God Called

No.1. Noah.

pp. 32 - 37

Throughout the centuries there have been men and women “subject to like passions as we are”, who have been raised up by God for His purposes. The records of their exploits are ‘written for our learning’, and as examples for us.

Noah was such a man. The background to his calling is outlined in Gen. vi. 1-7. In verses 1, 2, 3 and 4 the word ‘men’ (or ‘man’) represents in the original “the Adam”. This is translated by J. N. Darby as ‘mankind’ in verse 1, and draws attention to the fact that it is true human beings who are in mind in contrast to ‘the giants’ or *nephilim* who were the off-spring of the illicit union between the ‘sons of God’ (i.e. angelic beings) and the daughters of Adam. It is a somber and sobering thought that even as early as the daughters of Adam, Satan was not only at work, but found ready response in the human race.

As a result of this state of affairs ‘the wickedness of man was great in the earth’. The word ‘wickedness’ has the significance of lewdness, and moral depravity, and draws attention to a significance of the Lord’s words in Matt. xxiv. 37, 38, which is often overlooked:

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, *marrying and giving in marriage*, until the day that Noe entered into the Ark.”

In the light of the account in Gen. vi. “marrying and giving in marriage” takes on a more sinister meaning. It can hardly be the fact that they were ‘marrying and giving in marriage’ that is so significant, for throughout the history of mankind this has been going on. Moreover Paul specifically states in Heb. xiii. 4:

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

It is the *abuse* of the married state that comes under the judgment of God. This is found in the state of affairs recorded in the passage before us: there was a combination of ‘supernaturalism’ and moral depravity. There is a similar situation in the world today: moral depravity abounds, and there is an increasing interest in supernaturalism, in the occult, spiritism, and even Satanism.

The description of the world wide situation in Gen. vi. 11-13 has a familiar ring today. “All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (verse 12), “the earth was filled with violence” (verse 11). Such was the situation that “The Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth” (verse 7). The events in the world today, in the light of Scripture, are leading up to God’s judgment upon mankind. It was against

the background of a world situation not so dissimilar from that today that Noah was called.

In the midst of all the corruption and violence there was one notable exception:

“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Gen. vi. 8).

Noah only was acceptable to God, and when this is so, acceptance by God brings responsibility, and so it was with Noah:

“And God said unto Noah, Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch” (verses 13-14).

Could anything be more ridiculous? Here was a man who was not merely holding to old fashioned, outmoded ideas, but was stupid enough to try to build a ship on land, far from any sea. But was he subject to any more ridicule than before? He had always been the ‘odd man out’ among his contemporaries. Verse 9 could be rendered:

“This is the family history of Noah: Noah was a just man and without blemish among his contemporaries, and Noah walked habitually with the Creator.”

All his past life had been a preparation for the work he was now to undertake for God. He had been ‘faithful in little’, now he was to be given the opportunity to be faithful in much.

Paul summarized Noah’s call in these words:

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. xi. 7).

Noah was ‘warned of God’. The word ‘warned’ is one which is always used of divine communications, and in Luke ii. 26 a corresponding word is translated ‘it was revealed’. In the response to this revelation ‘moved him with fear’. It was not fear in the sense of terror, but of caution, being circumspect or discreet, even to wait quietly for. Arndt and Gingrich put it “Noah *took care* and built an ark”. The cautious man builds a ship on dry land! Then quietly waits for all that God has revealed. It was through faith Noah did this. He *trusted* God, trusted in the revelation given to him, taking heed to do all that God had said, taking care to do what God had told him, quietly waiting God’s time. The truly cautious thing to do at all times is to trust in God, and to do His will.

In this way Noah became “a preacher of righteousness”.

“God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (II Pet. ii. 5).

The context of this statement is instructive: “The angels that sinned”; “Sodom and Gomorrah”. In a time of moral and spiritual corruption Noah became a preacher, or better, a herald. He proclaimed righteousness, and proclaimed it whether his hearers took heed or not. Surely the ‘righteousness’ he proclaimed was that the coming judgment was

just. The chapter also begins with a reference to ‘false prophets’, and there are many such in the world today; it continues (verse 10 on) with walking ‘after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness’, it makes reference also to ‘the way of Balaam’: immorality, rebellion and corruption. In such a situation Noah became a herald of righteousness.

Like many another of those called of God, Noah was called to what someone has called ‘a ministry of failure’. For all his faithful proclamation of righteousness, not one took heed to his message. Only Noah and his immediate family were saved from the judgment of the deluge. Because he was called to ‘a ministry of failure’, he was called to a ministry of faithfulness. As a result he ‘became heir of the righteousness which is by faith’. “Through faith Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Should not those who by faith have inherited righteousness be faithful?

Seldom, if ever before, has there been a time like the present to parallel the days of Noah. Yet the time was foreseen by the Lord, “As it was in the days of Noah”. So also Paul spoke of the days leading up to those of which our Lord spoke.

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (I Tim. iv. 1-3).

Some shall depart from, stand aloof or withdraw from the faith; some will not remain faithful in the difficult ‘latter times’. They will give heed to seducing spirits: seducing is the Greek word *planos*, wandering, straying. Perhaps this gives greater significance to the A.V. ‘seducing’ in the light of ‘the angels which kept not their first estate’, but wandered, or strayed from it, taking wives from among the daughters of men.

Similarly in II Tim. iii. Paul emphasizes the dangers of ‘the last days’, for they shall be ‘perilous times’ of great apostasy. Verse 8 has a salutary warning in the reference to “Jannes and Jambres” who withstood Moses. These are the names of the magicians who counterfeited the signs performed by Moses before Pharaoh. *Just as* these apostates will resist the truth. There will be counterfeit signs and wonders performed by some (at least) of those who stand aloof from the faith. They do not necessarily *deny* the faith; the situation is more *perilous* than that, for they have ‘a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof’. This is reinforced by Paul’s statement to the Thessalonians concerning the coming of ‘that day’ and the presence (*parousia*) of the man of sin ‘whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness’ (II Thess. ii. 9, 10).

Noah’s calling, with his faithfulness in days of great moral laxity and spiritual corruption, with his faithfulness in heralding righteousness, and in his faithful obedience to the will of God for him, speaks to us, living, as we do, in days of great similarity to those in which Noah lived. Should not we, in our great calling, seek to be spiritually without blemish among our contemporary believers, habitually walking worthily before God, remaining faithful in what might appear to some to be God’s delay, being heralds of the righteousness which is to be found in Christ alone? There may be little response to

the truth we proclaim, but following the faithful example set us by Noah let us continue to seek to enlighten all men what is the stewardship of the secret which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

No.2. Abraham. **pp. 50 - 55**

On the immediate historical background to the great man of faith, Scripture is silent. We know that Abraham was the son of Terah, and that originally he lived in Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi. 31).

We do know that, all too soon after the Flood, men engaged in planning the Tower of Babel. It is clear from the account in Gen. xi. 1-9, that this was an act of rebellion against God, and was judged by Him as such. Up to this time God had been dealing with mankind as a whole; now He begins to move towards the calling of one family, one race and nation. With the call of Abraham this purpose comes into operation.

In some instances those called of God for His service experienced that call over a very short period. Others, like Abraham found that their calling extended over a much longer period, developing step by step. If we have experienced one of these, we must be careful not to deny the other. To some God speaks in an instant; to others He speaks over a more prolonged period of time, leading them step by step to greater things. Nor must we look upon those whose experience differs from our own as being less spiritual, or more spiritual than we are. God deals with us as individuals, and chooses and uses us according to our needs and abilities. From the human standpoint it might seem that one needed to be led step by step, as was Abraham; and Abraham merited the proud title of 'father of the faithful'.

In recounting the history of the chosen People Stephen, before his accusers, said this of Abraham:

“The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell” (Acts vii. 2-4).

“Then came he out.” Heb. xi. 8 adds to this information by telling us “and he went out, *not knowing whither he went*”. This is often quoted as support for those who ‘leave all’ to serve the Lord, giving up the means of livelihood, and ‘trusting to the Lord’ to supply their needs. It is just as frequently forgotten that Abraham took his livelihood with him, in the shape of flocks and herds! “He went out, *not knowing whither he WENT*”. He knew from whence his next meal would come, and from the same source, as wool or skins would come his clothing, and accommodation could also be provided by

tents made from skins. This is not to say that God does not, or cannot supply every need; He can, of course. But sometimes what passes for faith is nothing more than credulity.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, *unto a land* that I will shew thee: and I will bless thee” (Gen. xii. 1, 2).

Having made this statement, the account continues (verse 4) “so Abram departed, *as the Lord had spoken unto him*”. Although the call had been “from thy father’s house”, when, after 25 years delay at Haran, Abram went into the land of Canaan, it was “as the Lord had spoken unto him”.

“And Lot went with Him” (verse 4). The next verse states: “An Abram *took* Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son”. The inference seems to be that Lot *wanted* to go with Abram, although *he* was not called, and Abram, in spite of the injunction “Get thee from thy kindred”, acquiesced to the young man’s request, and took him with him. We know from the history of Abram that Lot was the cause of a good deal of trouble for him later on. It is also significant that neither Acts vii., nor Heb. xi. makes any mention of Lot.

We are given the initial call to Abraham in Gen. xii. 1-3:

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

He was called, then: (1) to a land; (2) to a blessing; (3) to be a blessing; (4) to a great name; (5) to be a blessing to those who blessed him; (6) to be a curse to him who cursed him; (7) to be the means of blessing to all the families of the earth.

Abraham was called ‘to a land’, yet already, in verse 7 there appears to be a hint to the effect that Abraham, himself, would not inherit the land:

“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, *Unto thy seed* will I give this land.”

This is developed further in Heb. xi. 8-10:

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

To a place *he should after* receive for an inheritance. The word translated ‘he should after’ signifies ‘he was about to’. It was his if he wanted it. But ‘by faith he *sojourned* in the land of promise’. Sojourned is the word *paroikeo*: to dwell beside, or near, hence to live as a stranger. The substantive of this word occurs in Luke xxiv. 18, “Art thou only

a *stranger* in Jerusalem?” The sense of verse 9, then, is “he dwelt as a stranger in the land of promise”. It was his, God had given it to him, yet in it he lived as a stranger!

Nonetheless, the promise to Abraham was that the land was given to him:

“For all the land which thou seest, *to thee will I give it*, and to thy seed for ever”
(Gen. xiii. 15).

Similar statements are also found in Gen. xv. 7; xvii. 8. Yet Abraham lived as a stranger in the land of promise. The reason for this is given in Heb. xi. 10:

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

The word ‘looked for’ in the original, occurs also in Heb. x. 13, “From henceforth *expecting* till His enemies be made His footstools”. The basic thought of the word is to take, or receive from: *to take up*. Abraham *took up* the city whose builder and maker is God. He had ‘an option’ on either the land, or the city. He *took up* the option on the city. God had given him the land, and this was good; but at some point God had also revealed to him the possibility of inheriting the city, and this was better. To gain the better, he had to renounce the possibility of the land which God had given him. Abraham knew it was not possible ‘to have the best of both worlds’.

Believers today have a similar choice: “Life through His Name” with an earthly inheritance, or citizenship and eternal life in heavenly places; the good, and the better. But as Abraham found with his choice, there is a cost attached to the better; that of becoming ‘strangers and pilgrims on the earth’.

Those of old time, who looked for the heavenly city, did not obtain the promises (Heb. xi. 13), “but seeing and greeting them from afar, and confessing that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth (or *land*)”, made manifest that they sought a fatherland. Those heavenly citizens became strangers to, and sojourners, in the promised land. Yet, “if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned”. Abraham had set out not knowing whither he went, to a land God had promised him. Then it was made known to him that beyond the land (all the land which thou seest), was an unseen fatherland, which was far better.

When this ‘secret’ was made known to Abraham, we do not know. That there was progression in his calling seems certain:

“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (Gen. xiii. 16).

“Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be” (Gen. xv. 5).

Here may be more than a hint of the earthly calling (the dust of the earth), and of the calling to the heavenly city (the stars of heaven).

It is instructive to note what preceded the second of these two promises. After the victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, Abram met the priest-king

Melchizedek, and to him Abram gave 'tithes of all'. About the same time the king of Sodom offered to Abram all the booty of the battle:

"And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten" (Gen. xiv. 22-24).

Chapter xv. begins:

"*After these things* the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and thy exceeding great reward.*"

Abram renounced earthly reward, and desired only to 'glory in the Lord'. As a result the Lord declared Himself to be Abram's exceeding great reward, and there followed the promise of a seed as numerous as the stars of heaven. Nevertheless, the land is still mentioned, and this is also the case in chapter xvii. 8. When we come to the confirmation of the covenant with Abraham in chapter xxii., following the offering of Isaac (16), for the first time there is no mention of the land as the inheritance of Abraham. He is promised that his seed shall be 'as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore' (17), and in his seed all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

Progressively, step by step, the Lord led Abraham on, and step by step and in response to the faith displayed by Abraham in his obedience, God made known to him more of his purpose. It cannot be ascertained at what point Abraham became aware of the calling to the heavenly city; but what is clear, is that Abraham was content with nothing less than the best.

As with many another whom God called, Abraham had experienced the 'awe-fulness' of God. When the Lord covenanted the full extent of the promised land (Gen. xv.) we read:

"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" (Gen. xv. 12 and 17).

Abraham was one whom God was pleased to call "my friend" (Isa. xli. 8), yet in the presence of God he experienced 'an horror of great darkness'. He knew the greatness and the holiness of the One with Whom he had to do. Surely this is the secret of faithfulness in any servant of God.

Today, in our calling, there is usually a progression to what has been termed 'a calling within a calling'. Normally we begin with the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and then, by the grace of God progress to the knowledge of the Secret, the calling to heavenly places. There is, as many know from experience, a price to pay if we desire the best. So it was with Abraham, who was numbered among those who:

“died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. xi. 13).

No.3. Moses. **pp. 68 - 72**

It is probably hardly necessary to recount the antecedents of the man Moses, they are so well known. Heb. xi. 23-27 gives us the summary:

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.”

An unusual element to his birth, as is the case with several of those whom God called, he was hidden by his parents, his sister stood guard over him when in the ‘ark of bulrushes’, and was found by the princess of Egypt. But when he had grown, and quite possibly as a result of the teaching of his mother, who had nursed him, he obviously knew something of the God of his fathers, and so, “by faith he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”. This knowledge led him to the incident recorded in Exodus ii. 11-15:

“And it came to pass on those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And going out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.”

In *The Companion Bible* structure this section is headed “Moses self-sent. Failure and flight”.

Moses saw the need of his people; He desired to serve God. Like many another since, he had to learn that the mere recognition of need, is not necessarily God’s call. He saw the need, but thus far he was neither called nor sent by God. Possibly this was because his knowledge of God was not *personal*; he knew God only by hearsay. No one can serve God until head knowledge becomes heart knowledge.

Nevertheless, his mistaken action brought him to the place of revelation, an instance of “all things work together for good”. Having fled from Egypt and the wrath of Pharaoh, Moses went into Midian, where he came in touch with Jethro, the priest of Midian. Tending Jethro’s sheep Moses saw the burning bush, from which God spoke to him:

“Now Moses kept the sheep of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exod. iii. 1, 2).

It has been suggested that the burning bush signified the affliction of the Hebrew nation: the bush burned, but was not consumed. For Israel the fire still, to this day, burns on, yet the nation is not, and has not been consumed. But may it not (also) signify the affliction of Moses as God’s man? We have already seen that Paul, writing to the Hebrews pointed out that Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than the pleasures of sin, he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than those of Egypt. Moreover others of those whom God called were confronted with more than the possibility of suffering in the service of God. Paul is perhaps the outstanding example of this, for he was told at the time of his call “how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts ix. 16). Paul is the one who makes quite clear what is at issue here:

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil. iii. 7, 8).

“Win” would be better translated “gain”, for here Paul is setting forth a spiritual ‘profit and loss account’: the ‘treasures of Egypt’ are not to be compared with the incalculable gain of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Again like others called to God’s service, Moses was made aware of the holiness of the One calling him.

“And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God” (Exod. iii. 4-6).

Without the sense of God’s holiness and greatness, service relies too much on ‘the arm of flesh’. As we saw in the last study, Abraham experienced ‘an horror of great darkness’ at the time when the covenant was enacted. Without the sense of the greatness of God, we have a God Who is ‘too small’.

The God Who spoke to Moses from the bush revealed Himself as *Elohim*, the God of creation: *Elohim* then changes to *Jehovah*. Moses must know Him as the God of the Covenant, the Covenant keeping God:

“And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *Jehovah* God of your fathers sent me unto you: this is My name for ever” (Exodus iii. 15).

Personal confrontation had to become a personal relationship. Moses must know, before he commences his work that the God whom he will serve is a *faithful* God, and can be relied upon in every circumstance.

Again, Moses had to realize the all-sufficiency of God.

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM” (Exod. iii. 14).

A statement which is wonderfully all-inclusive. It is sometimes said it would be better to translate it “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE”. God will do His own will, nothing will prevent it. Yet in all the history of His people He will be found to be all, and indeed more than all that they need. With all the experiences involved in the exodus from Egypt, Moses had need to know this from the outset. When confronted by the Red Sea, with the hosts of Pharaoh behind, it would be a strength to Moses to know their God was able: in the wilderness needing water, needing food, it would be a strength to him to know that God would supply.

Yet there was one aspect of the character of Jehovah Moses had yet to learn. In this incident Moses shows a commendable humility: verse 11, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” Chapter iv., verse 1 Moses doubts his ability to convince his hearers, a few verses later (10) he speaks of his inability to speak eloquently, and goes on (13) “O my Lord, send I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send”. The outcome of this final objection was that he was commissioned to include in his ministry his brother Aaron: an arrangement which later led to trouble. Moses had to learn that “**God’s calling is God’s enabling**”. His commission could not be shared with another. There is a humility which is right, and in due course Moses came to that right humility; but there is a humility which is wrong. Peter defines the humility needed by Moses, and needed by us all:

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God*, that He may exalt you in due time” (I Pet. v. 6).

True humility is first the submission of oneself to the will of God. Whatever His will may call upon us for, He will be sufficient.

For the man, or woman, called of God, faith in the God of creation must give way to a personal relationship through personal confrontation. He must wait until he has been called before embarking on any course of action, to do otherwise can only lead to trouble. As he looks to the future, he needs to realize that the man chosen of God is ‘immortal till

his work is done'. It is essential that he appreciates fully the spiritual 'profit and loss account', seeking only to 'get to know Him'. He cannot include in his own personal calling any to assist him. Again, to do so will only lead later on to trouble. He also needs to recognize the all-sufficiency of God in Christ, that in the new man "Christ is all, and in all". He must be humble; but that does not mean he will submit to the demands and wishes of all and sundry, but that, above all else, he will humble himself under the mighty hand of God.

No.4. Joshua. **pp. 87 - 92**

Moses was dead: he had converted a rabble of ex-slaves into a nation, had laid the foundation of their status as the People of God, and, not without many difficulties and problems, had brought them through the wilderness to the borders of the Land God had promised to them. What would happen, now that Moses was dead? More than once over the past forty years they had longed for "the flesh pots of Egypt". Would they now be prepared to go ahead and fulfil what God purposed for them, or would they, once more, begin to think in terms of returning to Egypt? Who was there, capable of leading them, and keeping them faithful to their God?

It was clear that they needed a man of experience: one who knew how things had been for them, and was strong enough to counter any signs of the rebellious spirit they had shown in the past. Joshua was such a man.

The first reference to Joshua, in Exod. xvii. 9, 10, shows him, on the instruction of Moses, leading the nation into battle.

"And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill."

There can be little doubt that, in addition to the experience Joshua gained of fighting, he also learned through this battle the efficacy of prayer, for "when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed". According to *The Companion Bible* note on this incident, Joshua was now a man of 53. He had experienced the bitterness of slavery in Egypt, he had experience of travel in the wilderness, and now, experience in battle as captain.

"And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua" (Exod. xvii. 13, 14).

"Rehearse" means to set, or place. What was it Moses was to set, or place in the ears of Joshua? Was it that Joshua had routed the Amalekite army? Surely his first victory on

the battle field would be an unforgettable event in his life. Was it not that so long as there was prayer, God's People could perform God's purpose?

Moreover Joshua had experienced the holiness of God, like others of those God called.

“And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God” (Exod. xxiv. 13).

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery but the noise of them that sing do I hear” (Exod. xxxii. 15-18).

Immediately prior to the first ascent mentioned in Exod. xxiv., Moses, in the company of Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel:

“saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness” (xxiv. 10).

It seems unlikely that Moses was not also accompanied by his minister on this occasion.

But not only was Joshua a man of experience, he had also demonstrated his faithfulness:

“These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea (named verse 8 as one of the spies) and son of Nun Jehoshua” (Numb. xiii. 16).

“And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of this land” (Numb. xiv. 6-9).

With Caleb, Joshua was the only one to set forth a balanced view of the situation they had found in the land after they had explored it. Following this incident, Joshua learned the lesson that faithfulness would not bring popularity:

“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones” (Numb. xiv. 10).

Joshua had learned an invaluable lesson before he finally embarked on the great work to which God later called him.

So often nowadays the leader, the minister must be the choice of the people: the minister goes to the church to ‘preach for a call’. Not so with Joshua. On the instruction of Jehovah Moses had ‘ordained’ Joshua:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient And Moses did as the Lord commanded him And laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses” (Numb. xxvii. 18-23).

The choice of the new leader was given to Moses, a man of the Spirit, who would recognize that the Spirit was also in Joshua.

Moses was also instructed to ‘encourage’ Joshua, and this in view of his own experience as leader of this people.

“Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go thither: But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it” (Deut. i. 37, 38).

“And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed” (Deut. xxxi. 7, 8).

In the light of this, verse 25-29 are of particular import:

“Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death? Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record against them. For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.”

The work to which Joshua had been called was no sinecure, and Moses knew from his own experience that this was so. The result was that he sought to prepare the way, so far as was possible, on the one hand by encouraging Joshua, and on the other by warning the Levites and the nation as a whole, of their rebelliousness.

Joshua was also a wise man; but it was not the wisdom of the world, it was wisdom from above, “for Moses had laid his hands upon him” (Deut. xxxiv. 9). There is no place in the man God calls for the wisdom of the world, perhaps, in terms of today, no place for the wisdom of the business world. Paul reminds us that ‘the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God’ (I Cor. iii. 19), and the converse is true: the wisdom of God is foolishness with the world. This was to be apparent in the strategy Joshua was to employ in the conquest of the land.

In Joshua we have a man of experience, a man who has proved himself faithful, a man who is wise, and one appointed by the previous leader. But all this would be in vain without the commission of God. This commission is recorded in detail in Josh. i. 2-9. The commission was to enter and to conquer the land, and certain aspects of it underline points we have been considering. Verse 5, “as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee”; verse 6, “Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide the land”. It would certainly need a man of courage and strength to apportion the inheritance. One can imagine the disagreements and

disputes that could arise over such a matter! It is interesting to note a slight change in ‘formula’ in verse 7:

“Only be thou strong and *very courageous*, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.”

Now that Joshua was leader, there would be many occasions when the temptation to lower the standard of the law would be very strong, when compromise would appear to be the best course; but true prosperity would not lie that way. Great courage would sometimes be needed to remain the faithful man he had proved himself to be in the past.

To the end that he might have the required courage Joshua is told:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Josh. i. 8).

Notice again that true prosperity and ‘good’ success will depend upon the place the law is given by Joshua: it is to be constantly in his thoughts. The true prosperity and success of the man God calls is his faithfulness, and for us our true prosperity and good success comes to us as we are faithful to the written Word, and in consequence faithful to the Living Word.

Verse 9 completes the commission: I have commissioned you; therefore be strong and of good courage, for I am with you where ever you go, says Jehovah.

Following his commissioning, and immediately before the attack on Jericho, Joshua is instructed in the strategy to be employed. The instruction is preceded by another experience of the holiness of God (Josh. v. 13-15), and in response to that experience “Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship”. Before such an adventure, so foolish in the eyes of the worldly wise, an experience of the holiness and greatness of God would greatly encourage and strengthen Joshua.

Then Joshua is instructed on the strategy to be employed in the siege of Jericho. The victory is to be the Lord’s, and His only. The people are to do nothing more than march around the city daily for seven days: then on the seventh day to blow trumpets! But the weakness of God is stronger than men, and through the faithfulness of Joshua in carrying out his instructions, the city fell.

To sum up the qualifications of this man called of God: he was an ‘elder’, being 53 years of age when he first makes an appearance; he was a man of experience, not a novice (Timothy seems to be an exception, but he was versed in Scripture from a child); he was a faithful man with a balanced view, though that view did not accord with that of the majority; he was wise with the wisdom of God, and aware of the holiness of God. Joshua was commissioned to do the ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

Perhaps Joshua, more than any other, impresses the need for the man or woman called of God to be strong, courageous, conscious of the Lord's abiding presence, and to be a 'man of the book'.

No.5. Gideon. **pp. 113 - 119**

The immediate background to the call of Gideon is recounted for us in Judges vi. 1-10. "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord", and as a result the Midianites became their overlords for seven years. The Israelites worked, and the Midianites benefited. The latter were as 'grasshoppers', or better, 'locusts', indeed they were worse than locusts, for not only did they destroy 'the increase of the earth', they left 'neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass'. "They entered into the land to destroy it." Nothing can be more disheartening than to labour successfully, and then at the last moment be deprived of the reward. Great impoverishment was the outcome for Israel, and the people were finally driven to 'cry unto the Lord'. But there is no hint of *repentance*, as is made clear in verses 8-10:

"The Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land; and I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice" (Judges vi. 8-10).

Neither does the prophet make any mention of deliverance.

The sequel demonstrates the patience and longsuffering of God; for although there is still no hint of repentance on the part of the nation as a whole, in mercy He acts:

"And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat and the angel of the Lord appeared unto him" (Judges vi. 11 and 12).

It was the angel of the Lord: the angel of *Jehovah*, the covenant God who came to Gideon. Although deliverance was to be effected through Gideon, it was not on the grounds of national repentance, but on the grounds of God's faithfulness to His covenant. This is perhaps emphasized in the greeting the angel gave: "*Jehovah* is with thee, thou mighty man of valour". It was a personal message to Gideon: thee, thou. Yet like others, such as Moses and Daniel, Gideon associates himself with his people, and in his reply says "if the Lord be *with us*". He included himself in the corporate responsibility of the nation.

Gideon was addressed as a 'mighty man of valour'. The word for 'mighty man' is '*gibbor*': a man of physical strength. This point is underlined by the use of the word

‘valour’: strong, force. But Gideon was sufficiently perceptive to realize that physical strength was not enough, although in human terms the situation demanded a leader of strength and a people of military strength. In his reply Gideon acknowledges the strength of Jehovah, and concludes, as the nation has been reduced to such impoverishment, that Jehovah has deserted them:

“And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites” (vi. 13).

Jehovah’s answer to this shows what was in Gideon’s mind at the time: “Go in *this* thy might, and thou shalt save Israel have not I sent thee?” Physically strong Gideon might be, the ideal man to deliver Israel; but his true strength was his trust in the power of God.

Gideon’s response to this commission, at first sight, appears to be a case of false humility:

“Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house” (vi. 15).

The angel had spoken to ‘a mighty man of valour’, now Gideon says he is the *smallest*, or *youngest* in his father’s house. Humanly speaking he was therefore the least likely to be called upon to deliver the nation; one of his brothers would be more suitable. This is given some support in chapter viii. 18, 19:

“Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother.”

He was the smallest, or youngest, of a family of strong, powerful men. Like David, whose family seem scarcely to have thought of him, until Samuel enquired whether *all* the sons were present, Gideon was God’s choice. Often God chooses and calls the least likely, and the least suitable from an outward standpoint to fulfil His purposes.

To this objection, Jehovah replied, “I will be with the, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man” (vi. 16). An assurance given to Moses, to Joshua and to others. It is still true that “God and one are a majority”. The man God calls needs to have a soundly based conviction that God is with Him.

Gideon was a cautious man: a fact which makes the method of his choice of those who would go with him against the Midianites the more remarkable. At this point he seeks reassurance that it is Jehovah Who speaks to him:

“And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me” (vi. 17).

He had already pointed out that Jehovah had, in the past performed miracles for His people (vi 13), now he requests a sign that he may be certain he is not being deceived.

The sign is recorded for us in verses 18-21, where we read that fire rose up out of the rock and consumed the provisions brought by Gideon for the angel. Gideon placed great emphasis on the power of God to perform ‘miracles’, as we see also from verses 36-40 where the signs of the fleece are recounted. It would be nothing less than a miracle if Gideon, even with a large band of his compatriots, could save Israel from the Midianites, and Gideon sought proof of the power of God, which had not recently been exercised on behalf of Israel.

Like others we have considered in these studies, Gideon also was aware of the holiness of God:

“And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not, thou shalt not die” (vi. 22, 23).

If on perception of an *angel* Gideon reacted in this way, he clearly recognized that the holiness of God was much greater. The response of Gideon to this was worship:

“Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom” (vi. 24).

The one called of God is ‘worshipful’: he worships, and worships with gratitude in his heart. Today so many lack the sense of the holiness of God, and hence they lack the spirit of worship and reverence.

The first of the exploits performed by this man called of God, was the destruction of the altar of Baal. The background to this incident is curious: Gideon’s father was named Joash. A name that means ‘Jehovah gave’. It thus seems likely that Joash had been brought up in a godly home, where Jehovah was revered and worshipped. Yet the altar that Gideon destroyed was ‘the altar of Baal that thy father hath’, and he was also bidden to destroy the ‘grove’ or *asherah* that was by it. An altar to Baal with all the pagan symbols attaching to it, owned by the one “Jehovah gave”. Moreover Joash says after the altar has been destroyed “If Baal be a god, let him plead for himself” (31). In which God did Joash believe? In Jehovah or Baal? Or is the confusion revealed in the incident symptomatic of an attitude current today: “It’s the same God, under a different name”? This would provide a further reason for Gideon’s insistence on signs, and Jehovah’s ability and power: he wanted to be quite certain it was Jehovah and not Baal Who was addressing him.

This incident also shows Gideon as indeed a man of courage. He was prepared to destroy his father’s altar to Baal, and,

“He feared his father’s household, and the men of the city” (vi. 27).

Perhaps there is here a hint that Joash, in his heart worshipped Jehovah, but because of popular opinion was prepared to compromise. Gideon was not prepared to compromise. Though ‘the men of the city’ were against him, and his own kith and kin, he had to make a clear and clean break with Baal. Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal, and built an altar to Jehovah. Once again we are reminded that service must be preceded by worship.

Then from chapter vi. 34 to the end of chapter vii. we read of Gideon's army and conquest of the enemy. He gathered to himself a company of twelve thousand and twenty (possibly, even of thirty-two thousand). But this force was too large, and perhaps too strong, to be used of God. He was instructed to reduce the numbers with him, and after an appeal for those whose hearts were not in the fight and who were afraid, to leave, no less than "twenty and two thousand" went home. But still the number was too large. After the test at the water (vii. 5, 6) only three hundred were left. The fearful (possibly the faithless?), and the incautious, or possibly idolaters departed.

It is interesting to note the title given to the three hundred who remained. In verse 8 they are spoken of as 'the people': an inference that in this small band Gideon had the 'faithful remnant' of his day.

Then comes the well known story of the defeat of Midian. By the most ridiculous means the enemy army was reduced to chaos and confusion. After the breaking of the pitchers, and the sudden appearance of the light of the torches, and the equally sudden shout of "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon", "all the host ran, and cried, and fled".

"And the three hundred blew the trumpet, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host" (vii. 22).

Thus it appears that the defeat of Midian was accomplished without the three hundred using their swords. Only when the Midianites had *fled*, did Gideon call together the men of Israel to pursue, and to consolidate the victory. It was an excellent example of:

"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (I Cor. i. 27-29).

Indeed, this was very much what Jehovah said to Gideon concerning the numbers with which he set out:

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

But, alas, Gideon, like so many men God calls, was not without his faults. He resisted the suggestion that he should be king (Judges viii. 22, 23), but he made an ephod of the spoils of battle that came to him.

"And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house" (viii. 27).

It may have been that Gideon did this with the best of intentions, seeking to re-establish the worship of the true God, but it led the whole nation astray, and became 'a snare' to Gideon and his family. Nevertheless his commission:

“Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites” (vi. 14),

was fulfilled:

“Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon” (viii. 28).

Gideon was one of the comparatively few called to a ministry which, in terms of the world’s assessment, might be called ‘successful’.

No.6. Samson. pp. 131 - 135

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Samson” (Heb. xi. 32).

It sometimes comes as something of a shock to the thoughtful reader to find Samson listed among the ‘heroes of faith’ in Heb. xi. Samson whose morals can hardly be said to be of a very high standard: Samson whose exploits often appear to be little more than childish tricks. Yet Samson is named as one of those “who through faith subdued kingdoms” (Heb. xi. 33).

Perhaps more than others, of those God called, it is necessary to put Samson in his historical background. It was a time of which it is recorded:

“And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years” (Judges xiii. 1).

Twice it is recorded in the book of Judges “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (xvii. 6; xxi. 25). The lawlessness (or, as we might say, the permissiveness) of the times may account in part for the failures of this man. For it is only too easy for the godly person to be influenced by the customs of his day without realizing it.

Like Samuel and John the Baptist, Samson was one of those born of a barren woman: like Jeremiah and Paul, he was one of those specifically mentioned as marked out by God before birth. He was marked out for, and placed in the position where he could fulfil God’s will for him; yet his failures are more familiar to us than his successes. May it not be said that Samson was *predestined* by God for His purpose, and demonstrates a point often overlooked in the consideration of predestination, that *there is no element of fate involved*. Predestination requires man’s co-operation: Samson’s co-operation was only partial.

The angel of the Lord told his mother before his birth:

“For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall *begin to deliver* Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judges xiii. 5).

Samson was to be a Nazarite: one separated to God from his birth. It was God’s intention that Samson should be wholly concerned with the Lord’s will for him: frequently he was concerned only with his own desires and will. Nevertheless, Samson is an illustration of the fact that “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Romans xi. 29). God purposed that he should *begin to deliver* Israel from the Philistines, and in considering this man called of God, this needs to be remembered. Frequently he is thought of as a *Judge*, with all that is implied to us in the word: but it was not as a judge that he was commissioned. His commission was to ‘begin to deliver Israel’, and in this, and to this extent, he succeeded. While the frailty and sinfulness of human nature is very clearly to be seen in the life of this man, he did fulfil his commission to this extent. Yet as we look at the life and exploits of this man called of God, recognizing that he did ‘begin to deliver Israel’, we can only say ‘what might have been’. How very much more he might have accomplished had he not given way to his own likes and dislikes, his own desire and whims.

It is clearly the responsibility of believing parents to bring up their child in the way that he should go. Samson was fortunate in that his home influence was godly:

“Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which Thou didst send come again unto us, and *teach us what we shall do unto the child* that shall be born” (Judges xiii. 8).

“So Manoah took a kid with meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord” (xiii. 19).

Samson was born into a family which desired to know the will of God, and to do it; a family which worshipped Jehovah. Yet, alas, Samson was not all he might have been.

Samson’s first exploit is recorded in chapter xiv.: what a disappointment it must have been to his parents to find their son, of whom such great things had been foretold, desiring marriage with a Philistine woman. Yet there was something about it they did not realize:

“But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines” (xiv. 4).

It was of the Lord that he sought an occasion against the Philistines. When marriage with aliens was forbidden by God, it is clear that the occasion Samson found was one of his own devising: God’s Spirit moved him to seek an opportunity to move against the Philistines; but his own wishes found him an occasion which pleased him. We also need to beware lest we seek to do God’s will our own way.

Samson, it seems, always sought an excuse, if not a reason, for attacking or injuring the Philistines. In this case the ‘reason’ came through the riddle: the Philistine guests at the wedding cheated! As a result Samson slew thirty Philistines. The discovery, later, that (evidently in accord with custom) his wife had been given to the ‘best man’, gave

him a further opportunity to take action against the Philistines. Following his revenge taken by releasing in pairs with burning firebrands tied to their tails, three hundred foxes, events led up to the situation in which “he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter” (xv. 8). The combined result of these events was that the Philistines came against Samson, and persuaded no less than 3,000 men of Judah to take him (xv. 9-16). The outcome of this was a further 1,000 Philistines slain by him.

This latter incident reveals just how submissive to the Philistines the children of Israel were at this time. Three thousand of them meekly went to capture their own champion at the bidding of their enemies! There is another hint of the extent of the subservience of the nation to the Philistines in the incident where Samson kills the lion with the jawbone of the ass. I Sam. xiii. 19-21 informs us:

“Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears so it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people . . .”.

With a nation meekly submitting to their enemies, and with the complete absence of weapons among them, it is no wonder Samson could only *begin* to deliver Israel!

The downfall of this man God called is recorded in chapter xvi. 1-21. Samson saw an harlot. *The Companion Bible* note at this point reads:

“He could rend a lion, but not his lusts. He could break his bonds, but not his habits. He could conquer the Philistines, but not his passions.”

Not long after, it seems, came his affair with Delilah. The Philistines were able to capitalize on this weakness of Samson’s, and to discover the secret of his strength by means of the seductions of Delilah. Samson was captured.

“The Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house” (xvi. 21).

From God’s appointed leader of His people, reduced to the work of women and slaves in the prison of his enemies.

Then, his hair, the symbol of his separation to God, began to grow in prison. The day came when his enemies gathered in the temple of Dagon to rejoice over the downfall of Samson, and he was brought in ‘to make sport’. Calling upon his God to grant him once more his strength, he pulled down the pillars on which the whole structure of the temple depended: “So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life” (xvi. 30).

Did he repent? or did he simply recognize another God-given occasion against the Philistines, by which he could also revenge for his eyes? We cannot be certain. We can be certain of his faith in Jehovah, even at the darkest moment of his life. If only he had, in all things, put God first!

Why should this bloodthirsty man be included with the heroes of faith? The Philistines were mixed with ‘the giants’: Goliath, slain by David later, was the Philistine champion. These were the offspring of Rapha, one of the nephilim, the result of unlawful, and unholy union between the ‘sons of God’ and the daughters of men. Satan’s object in this was the defeat of the purpose of God. It was therefore right that they should be destroyed.

Samson: physically strong, morally weak and childish. Was it necessary for him to visit the dead body of the lion and so be defiled? What was the purpose of his riddle? or of the removal of the Gates of Gaza? On two occasions at least he was not strong enough to withstand a woman. But he had faith: he ought to have been a better man: but he *began to deliver Israel*.

No.7. Samuel. **pp. 168 - 173**

In our last article on Samson we noted that the historical background was one of lawlessness. When Samuel was called of God the situation had not appreciably changed, for we read at the end of the book of Judges:

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

Yet, as always, there was the faithful remnant, of whom was Elkanah, the father of Samuel. However, in spite of the faithful remnant, the situation in Israel was very serious:

“The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision” (I Sam. iii. 1).

Is there here just a hint that the faithful remnant were unable to worship openly? Recorded for us in I Sam. ii. 22-25 are the evil doings of Eli’s sons. This seems to suggest that the worship of Baal went on openly, even at the tabernacle of the congregation.

Not only was there no king in those days, but there was also no effective priesthood. It is possible that Eli had a personal devotion to Jehovah, but he was not of sufficiently strong character to provide an effective leadership. He was unable to control his own sons, and it seems they despised him (ii. 25). He was also, himself, reproved by a man of God (ii. 27-36), who foretold his punishment.

This situation resulted in there being ‘no open vision in those days’, “and the word of the Lord was precious”. No doubt to the faithful, as always, the word of the Lord was indeed precious and to be prized. Yet in the immediate context it would seem more appropriate to translate “the word of the Lord was *costly*”, and there were few prepared to

pay the cost. The Hebrew word (*yakar*) signifies ‘heavy in price’. The word of Jehovah was *rare* in those days, because the cost of observing it was too great.

Against such a background it seems hardly possible that there should be a family sufficiently loyal to God to dedicate a son to Jehovah’s service, even before he was born. Yet the devotion of Elkanah and Hannah to Jehovah was of sufficient strength and character, and their perception and discernment clear enough for them to see the urgency of the need for one man completely committed to God.

The situation in the world today comes close to that of Samuel’s day. Many gather for worship; but how many worship in spirit and in truth? The Word of God is ‘precious’, rare, so that in many churches and chapels it is at a discount. There are many who should be leading others in the way of God, who are, in fact, misleading them. How great is our need of loyalty to the Word of God. How great is our need of perception and discernment lest we should be led away by the attitude of so many who ‘profess and call themselves Christian’. Moreover, perhaps particularly with the example of Samson in mind, it is incumbent upon every believing parent to have special care in training their children in the ways of God, and to love His Word.

Samuel was probably about twelve years of age before he was taken to the House of the Lord. Can it be doubted that in such a home as his, he had been taught the things of God to prepare him for his life’s work? We are not told how long he was under the instruction of Eli, nor is there certain evidence to show that such training was all it should have been.

Samuel had no personal knowledge of Jehovah, although he must have had knowledge about God. To be brought up in a godly home is no alternative to a personal commitment to God. His father was a Levite, and evidently of rare and habitual devotion. “This man went up out of his city *yearly* to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh” (I Sam. i. 3). The word translated ‘yearly’ is literally ‘from days to days’ perhaps implying that Elkanah went, not only ‘yearly’, but with regularity to all the feasts of Jehovah. Yet,

“Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him” (iii. 7).

Perhaps part of the significance of this statement is that he did not fully understand what he had been taught, and needed a personal confrontation by Jehovah to enlighten him. We recall Paul’s prayer in Eph. i., for the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

Then came the time when God spoke to Samuel, and perhaps there is more to it than meets the eye in the words “and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord”. Jeremiah prophesied at a time when the Word of God had been *lost* in the *Temple!* We have drawn attention before to the fact that frequently the times of apostasy were countered by God by His man either called before birth (as in the case of Jeremiah, i. 5), or, as in the case of Samuel, by one dedicated to His service before birth. More than once in the history of the people of God, of more than one dispensation, the lamp of God has

almost gone out, and gone out in God's House, e.g., the time of the Reformation. If the lamp of the Word of God goes out, the ark of God, with its Mercy Seat is unknown, the cross of Christ is unknown. Surely the mark of the last great apostasy of the last days is that the Word of God will be rejected and cast from the House of God: a situation which now appears not so remote. How very careful the 'Berean' should be to give full heed to all that is said in a 'rightly divided' Word of Truth, remembering that 'all Scripture is God-breathed'.

At such a time God called Samuel: and Samuel answered "Here am I" (iii. 4). The one point to note here is that he was *willing*. When first he was called, he *thought* Eli called him; but he was willing to go on responding in spite of the 'rebuff' he received from the old man. It may seem strange that Eli did not immediately recognize that God was speaking to Samuel. But it was not only his physical eyes which began to wax dim that he could not see clearly: his spiritual perception also had 'waxed dim'. Samuel was also persistent: three times he went to Eli before it was suggested that the *Lord* called him. When at last Eli perceived Who called Samuel, it is to his credit that he did not discourage the young lad: He could have said "Ah! He called three times: He won't call again. What a pity!" No. His response, when he realized that it was Jehovah Who called was:

"Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth" (I Sam. iii. 9).

Samuel obeyed the old man Eli, and went and laid down in his place.

"And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, for Thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle" (iii. 10, 11).

Like many another whom God called, Samuel was not given an easy and popular ministry. His first task, youth though he was, was to be the bearer of Eli of tidings of judgment upon Eli and his house. And Samuel did not fail.

"And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision: Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that He said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him" (iii. 15-18).

We are sometimes tempted to think of those whom God called as being fearless; but they were also men 'subject to like passions as we are'. Samuel feared: but when Eli asked him to reveal all the Lord had told him, he did not hesitate to do so. From Samuel's call we learn that those whom God calls must be willing and persistent:

(1) To know God, perhaps above all else, this should be the attitude of the true 'Berean'. Paul's great desire was to get to know Him (Phil. iii. 7-10). For Paul no sacrifice was too great 'that I may know Him'.

(2) To receive ‘the spirit of wisdom and revelation’. For only as we are prepared to pray that tremendous prayer of Eph. i. are we able to go on and to ‘get to know Him’. There have been, and are, many who have studied the Life of Christ, yet they have never known Him as Saviour, much less as Head of the Church which is His Body. They have not sought first the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

(3) To be faithful with an unpopular ministry. This is of first importance, remembering that it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. This, surely, must include the ability to resist demands that he should ‘popularize’ either himself, or his ministry. This inevitably leads to compromise, and to the adoption of methods his Lord would not own.

(4) To overcome his fears. One of the greatest fears that can be experienced by the man God calls, is the fear of men. This was the experience of Samuel, but by the grace of God he was able to overcome his fear of what Eli would think: and note his fear was, it would seem, the fear of hurting the old man Eli. But which is the greater hurt: the hurt of speaking God’s Truth, or the hurt which results when the feelings are spared?

Whatever the task to which God has called us, we can be best fitted for it as we say, and mean, with Samuel: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

No.8. David. **pp. 206 - 211**

The immediate historical background to the call of David is the failure of king Saul to obey completely the commands of the Lord. Through His servant Samuel God had instructed Saul:

“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass”
(I Sam. xv. 3).

At the conclusion of the expedition against the Amalekites, Saul found it necessary to excuse his conduct of the engagement by saying to Samuel:

“They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed” (I Sam. xv. 15).

Not only had Saul, and the people, brought the ‘best’ of the livestock, but they had also spared Agag the Amalekite king. It is also significant that Saul speaks to the prophet of ‘the Lord *thy* God’.

God reveals to Samuel that He has rejected Saul as king. This causes Samuel great grief, until the Lord says to him:

“How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons” (xvi. 1).

But the broader background goes back to the choice of Saul as king. Samuel was an old man, and had appointed his sons as judges in Israel:

“And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (I Sam. viii. 3).

As a result the elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded a king:

“And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations” (viii. 5).

Verse 6 tells us ‘the thing displeased Samuel’. *The Companion Bible* note at this point is:

“Displeased = was evil in the eyes of: i.e., in not waiting for God’s time and for God’s king, as promised (Gen. xvii. 6, 16; xxxv. 11; xlix. 10; Numb. xxiv. 17; Deuteronomy xvii. 14-20).”

Moreover the people of Israel wanted a king ‘like all the nations’. They wanted to be like the rest of the world, they were not concerned with their position as a people separated to God. The seriousness of the situation was not that they merely wanted to replace an earthly judge for an earthly king:

“And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, *but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them*” (I Sam. viii. 7).

Nevertheless, although their desire for a king was an act of rebellion against their God, *He* chose the man for them:

“Now the Lord had told Samuel Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over My people Israel” (ix. 15, 16).

Although their desire was for a king, the king’s appointment was to be controlled by God, for ‘the powers that be are ordained of God’ (Rom. xiii. 1). Man may seem to be having his own way, but God’s controlling hand is over all: and a nation so gets the leadership it deserves. The kind of king Saul would prove to be is described in I.Sam.viii.10-18. He would be a despot, and though the nation would cry to Jehovah, He would not hear them.

There is a threefold aspect to the appointment of Saul, as there is a threefold anointing of David. The people chose a king regardless of the purpose of God for them, then came the incident of the lost asses, and the event recorded in I Sam. ix. 22 - x. 1. The fact that rulers such as Saul, and the Lawless One when he comes to power, are permitted and overruled by God should be a matter of reassurance for the believer; for God is always

ultimately in control. Finally Saul was revealed to the people (I Sam. x. 17-25). He was an outstanding man who would appeal to them: “when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward”, a fact which gives greater point and emphasis to the comment by Jehovah to Samuel at David’s first anointing.

The well known account of David’s selection and anointing is found in I.Sam.xvi.1-13. God’s sovereignty over rulers is emphasized in the first verse: Saul is rejected by Him, and He has already provided Himself a king among the sons of Jesse. The rulers are provided by God, for Himself. God’s choice is frequently of the unlikely. He chose as His king ‘the youngest’ (11). It was not so much what David was, or did, but God’s *choice* which made David “the man after God’s heart”. Both His foreknowledge and His enabling are involved in this.

Having arrived at Bethlehem, and all the preparations completed, Samuel asks for the sons of Jesse to be brought before him. When Eliab appeared before him the prophet’s reaction was “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him” (xvi. 6). Eliab was evidently a very presentable young man, and the elder son. In the eyes of men, this would more than qualify him to be chosen.

“But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (xvi. 7).

Samuel was evidently so impressed with the appearance of Eliab, that he did not wait to see any of the other sons of Jesse. It is worthy of note, however, that he did not say “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before me”; he recognized that he was merely the instrument through whom Jehovah would make known His choice. *His* choice rested on one Jesse’s own family had discounted.

“(Samuel) sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep” (xvi. 5 and 11).

There is an interesting contrast between Saul, who *lost* his father’s sheep, and David, who *kept* his father’s sheep.

The fact that David was ‘ruddy and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to (a stripling with handsome eyes, of noble mien)’ seems to have been almost incidental. It is, however, a reminder that however unlikely, God’s choice is always the best.

The principal of God’s choice was not ‘the height of his stature’ (7): Saul had been noted, as we have seen, for ‘the height of his stature’. It was ‘the man within’, for “the Lord looketh on the heart”. God’s choice having been made known to Samuel, he then anointed David *among his family*:

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren” (xvi. 13).

Some fourteen years later David was anointed *in his tribe*. Saul and Jonathan were dead. David did not seize upon the opportunity to establish himself as king. First “the man after God’s heart” sought to know what was in God’s mind:

“And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And He said, Unto Hebron” (II Sam. ii. 1).

In obedience to Jehovah’s instructions, David ‘went up’:

“And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah” (ii. 4).

So David’s progression to the kingship of the nation developed. First in his family, then in his tribe, and finally in the whole nation.

It was a further seven years before David was finally anointed king over the whole house of Israel (II Sam. v. 1-3). Numerology is a subject to be treated carefully, yet there are certain aspects of the calling and appointment of David which are worthy of note. His calling, or appointment was over a period of 21 years; a period of three sevens. Three is the number of completion and seven that of perfection. Now, at length, David is king over the *complete* nation, and is perfectly suitable, being God’s choice. The nation entered into blessing because it, and in turn, accepted God’s choice.

God is never in a hurry. From God’s choice of David to his complete acceptance by the nation took 21 years. God is never too soon, nor is He too late. It could have been a time of frustration and disappointment, even of rebellion against God for David. He was prepared to wait for Him.

David reigned over Israel for forty years (I Kings ii. 11). Forty is the number of probation; but it comprises the factors four (the number associated with creation and the earth), and ten (the number signifying divine order). So David’s reign is symbolic of Christ’s millennial reign: the perfection of the divine order for creation for one thousand years. One thousand being 10 X 10 X 10 is symbolic of the completeness of the divine order.

David’s call demonstrates, perhaps more than any other, the progressive nature of God’s purpose for the believer, and reminds us that God’s choice is best, though, not infrequently, the choice is not one we ourselves would make, and that the man God calls, needs the co-operation of those to whom he is to minister, if success is to attend him. Isaiah and Jeremiah are instances of men whom God called who were not given the co-operation of those to whom they ministered: and their ‘success’ was their faithfulness to the Lord.

The Miracles in the Gospels.

No.3. The Twelve Miracles that precede Rejection (Matt. viii. - xii.). pp. 15 - 20

Twelve separate miracles are recorded by Matthew. Eight separate signs are recorded by John. Evidently therefore the writers of these “gospels” made a choice of the event to suit the purpose of their respective narratives.

We know that twelve is associated with Israel, and with government. Let us look at these twelve miracles together, and notice anything that will help us to see what their special purpose may be.

- viii. 2. The Leper cleansed.
- viii. 5. Centurion’s servant. Asks on behalf of another.
- viii. 14. Peter’s wife’s mother.
- viii. 16. Collective miracles and O.T. quotation, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses” (Isa. liii. 4).
- viii. 24. The Storm.
- viii. 28. The Demons.
- ix. 2. Sins forgiven. Brought by others. O.T. quotation (13), “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice” (Hos. vi. 6).
- ix. 18. Ruler’s daughter.
- ix. 22. Issue of blood.
- ix. 27. Blind men.
- ix. 32. Dumb demon. Brought by others.
- ix. 35. Collective miracles and O.T. quotation, “As sheep having no shepherd” (Zech. x. 2).
- xii. 13. Withered hand.
- xii. 15. Collective miracles, and O.T. quotation, “That it might fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying,
Behold my servant, Whom I have chosen, My beloved in Whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon Him and He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send for the judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust” (Isa. xlii. 1).
- xii. 22. Blind and dumb demon
The people’s enquiry, “Is not this the SON OF DAVID?”
The Pharisees’ objection, “He casts out demons by Beelzebub.”

The first three miracles touch the orders of human society which would make a direct appeal to the Jew.

The leper, representing Israel, their uncleanness removed.
The centurion's servant, representing the Gentiles, healed at a distance.
Peter's wife's mother. A woman; very little esteemed so far as spiritual things were concerned.

The Old Testament quotations that follows these three miracles shows that the healing of these diseases was part of the Lord's work as the suffering Messiah. He was "acquainted with grief", for He hath "carried our sorrows" as well as borne our sins.

As in the case of the woman who touched the Lord, virtue went out of Him when He thus bore the sickness of sin stricken Israel. This will sufficiently account for the Lord's sound sleep in the ship. Mark's account is very full here. The Lord after a strenuous period of service said to His disciples, "Let us pass over unto the other side. And when *they* (not He) had sent the multitude away, *they took Him even as He was* in the ship". Oh, wondrous weakness, oh, mighty condescension. "He saved others, Himself He could not save."

No miracle did the Lord work throughout His course to spare Himself. Thus it was that being wearied He was fast asleep on a pillow, while the storm began to swamp the ship. The result of the stilling of the storm upon the disciples was to make them exclaim, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him".

We do not feel it would be profitable to enter into a detailed discussion concerning the question as to whether this miracle is different from that recorded in Mark iv. and Luke viii. The only gospel narrative that claims to have set out the events "in order" is that written by Luke. The other writers use what events serve their purpose without of necessity pledging that the sequence is always historical. Such a statement, however, as that this miracle of Matt. viii. was *before* the calling of the twelve: and that the other was *after* that event is misleading. By the calling of the twelve in Matthew we can only suppose Matt. x. to be meant. Now Matt. x. speaks of that time when the Lord called unto Him His twelve disciples to give them power over unclean spirits, and sent them forth to preach. This is exactly parallel with the record in Mark vi. 7-13 & Luke ix. 1-6, and all three passages come after the miracle of the stilling of the tempest.

The references in Mark iii. 13-19 and Luke vi. 13-16 refer to a prior nomination, and this is moreover suggested in Matt. x. 2, "Now these are the names." Not that this passage (Matt. x.) is to be taken as the same as Mark iii. Matthew does not record the parallel for this earlier call. Then again the storm is followed in Matt. viii. by the healing of two possessed of demons. They cry, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Then follows the remarkable request that they should be permitted to enter the herd of swine, which rush into the sea and perish. The result was that the people besought Him to depart from their coast. The same thing happens immediately after the miracle of the tempest in Mark iv. Matthew calls the place, "the country of the Gergesenes", Mark "the country of the Gadarenes", while Luke adds, "which was over against Galilee", but this is explanation not contradiction. It seems more difficult to believe that on two separate

occasions, within a short while of each other, there arose two storms, that the disciples in both cases was asleep, that He rebuked their little faith, that on both occasions they express their astonishment, using similar words, and that the two separate miracles on the sea were each followed by the healing of the demon-possessed, the demons confessing Christ, and referring to their torment, and in each case asking to be permitted to enter a herd of swine, which were killed in the sea. If the slight differences in the narratives are to be taken as signs that a different event is being recorded, then we shall have to make three separate miracles, for the reader can easily find differences between the two narratives of Mark and Luke.

Let us not miss the point of these great powers and signs. The Lord was demonstrating His Messiahship. The world of the physical, the elemental, and the spirit were beneath His control. At a touch leprosy vanishes. At a word sickness departs. At a rebuke the storm subsides. At the word "go" the demons enter the herd of swine. A yet fuller and deeper power is exhibited in the next miracle which closes another series; *His power over sin*. What is it to us if He can heal the body and cannot heal the deadly wound of sin?

Christ is no mere wonder-worker, but God's appointed Saviour, Whose redemption shall make universal what was the peculiar possession of the few. These miracles were "powers of the world to come". Christ will reign not only in the world of sense, but also of spirit, all things in heaven and earth, yea and under the earth, will own His sway. All this is set forth in these wondrous works. So it was that when they brought to the Lord the sick of the palsy He took the opportunity of declaring His greater power.

Mark places this miracle before the miracles of the storm and of the swine (Mark ii.), nevertheless it is one and the same event. Luke's order is equally very different from either Matthew or Mark; nevertheless one miracle is thereby intended.

The healing of the palsied man and the forgiving of his sins very much resemble the opening miracle of Peter's pentecostal ministry, and his application of it to the salvation of the nation (Acts iii.; iv. 1-12). While the faith of the palsied man is presumed, this miracle is another instance of the efficacy of the faith of others on behalf of the sufferers. There is no indication that the centurion's servant exercised faith, neither is there that the Syro-phænician woman's daughter believed.

Knowing what we do of the Person and Work of Christ, the fact that He should say, "Son, Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee", does not strike us as it did those who heard the words actually uttered. The Scribes immediately said, "This man blasphemeth". Mark ii. 7 records that they said, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Luke tells us that the Scribes and Pharisees were present and began to reason in their hearts. Thus the little differences need no solving, the miracle is one.

The Lord does not hesitate to call their thoughts "evil". This of itself testifies to the abundant proofs He had already given that He was the sent One of God. Nicodemus,

Pharisee, member of the Sanhedrim, “the teacher” of Israel, bore witness that such was the case: “Rabbi we know that Thou art *a teacher come from God*; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him”. For a man uncommissioned to stand up and say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee”, would be indeed “blasphemy”. The question does not touch the Person of Christ in His official capacity. As the sent One He had power on earth to forgive sins, and the signs and wonders were His credentials. He will however demonstrate His commission and authority yet once more. The reasoning of the Lord is invincible. It is certainly easier to SAY, “Thy sins be forgiven thee”, than to SAY, “Arise and walk”, for while none can test the fulfillment or otherwise of the first statement, all can witness the second. There are many to-day who pronounce the forgiveness of sins and wield a tremendous power over the ignorant and the superstitious, who could not abide this challenge. So the Lord of glory stooped again in long-suffering gentleness:--

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), ‘Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.’ And he arose, and departed to his house.”

The result according to Matthew was, “When the multitude saw it they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such authority unto men”. Mark says, “they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion”. Luke’s record is, “They were all amazed and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day”.

Each Gospel records the calling of Matthew, immediately after this miracle. Each records that at the feast that followed the Lord said, “They that be whole need not a physician but they that are sick, for I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”. Thus, as in the miracle, the physical shadows forth the spiritual.

(*Miracles10*, pp.74-78).

No.4. The Third Group.
The Culmination of Israel's Rejection (Matt. ix.).
pp. 45 - 50

This group contains four miracles. Two are wrought upon women and two upon men.

The domain of ceremonial LAW had been entered when the Saviour, in spite of the law of Moses, touched the leper. National exclusiveness had received a shock when the Gentile Centurion's prayer was heard, and his faith recognized as greater than any exhibited in Israel. The unnatural despising of woman in the estimation of the orthodox Jew received a rebuff when the Lord deigned *unasked* to cure Peter's wife's mother.

The domain of SIN was entered and spirit forces compelled to recognize their Master in the second set.

The third series brings the Lord face to face with DEATH. A ruler comes and worshipping Him says, "My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live". What a stupendous request! yet see how naturally the Lord receives it. "And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples." He even allows Himself to be intercepted on the way to heal another sufferer. The woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years (Israel's number coming out again), is another example of Israel's condition. Her complaint would render her unfit to attend the house of God. It was recognized by tradition as a sufficient ground for divorce, it placed her outside the pale of society generally. She was in effect in much the same position as the leper. Yet she dared to contemplate touching the fringe of the Saviour's garment! Something must have told her that no defilement could adhere to Him. Had He not touched lepers? Was He not even now going by request to touch the very dead? How closely He came to the suffering world! How wonderful beyond thought that He, the holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, could so mingle with them as to appear in the eyes of the unsanctified as a friend of publicans and sinners, in a sense lower than the Scriptural one! There is often more of the unsympathetic Pharisee about our ideas and practice of "separation" than that of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Holy One of God.

Faith appears in some miracles very prominently, in others it is not mentioned. The faith of the Centurion called forth the words of Christ, "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel". There does not appear any room for faith in the case of Peter's wife's mother. It was evidently possessed by the leper, for his "if" was merely a question of "will", not of "can".

The mention of "faith" in the storm is one of rebuke—"O ye of little faith". Faith does not figure in the miracle of the two demon-possessed. The faith which is expressly mentioned in the account of the healing and forgiving of the man sick of the palsy is the faith of those who brought him (ix. 2). To the woman whose issue of blood was healed

the Lord said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole”. No one can question the faith of the ruler, but the word does not appear. In the next miracle, that of the blind men, faith is prominent, and the cure was conditional upon it.

The references to faith in this Gospel are subject to a definite arrangement, and as some of the passages are directly concerned with the miracles, we will give the order for the sake of future study,

Faith.

- A | viii. 10. Great faith; outside Israel. Man for servant.
- B | ix. 2. Their faith. Led to forgiveness.
- C | ix. 22. Thy faith. *Exeranthe* (dried up), Mark v. 29.
- D | ix. 29. According to faith. Eyes of blind opened.
HERE COMES REJECTION (xii., xiii.).
- A | xv. 28. Great faith; outside Israel. Woman for daughter.
- B | xvii. 20. As mustard seed. Luke xvii. 6 links with forgiveness.
- C | xxi. 21. Remove mountains. *Exeranthe* (withered), verse 20.
- D | xxiii. 23, 24. Pharisees omit faith. Blind guides.

There is a lesson in all this. It is surely intentional that the two first occasions on which faith is mentioned concern Gentiles seeking the blessing for others, in one case so markedly as to cause the Lord to marvel, and in both cases to remark upon the greatness of the faith exhibited. Yet the Lord would not deny the faith that was as small even as a grain of mustard seed. His final charge against the blind guides of Israel, who were leading them quickly into the ditch of rejection and unrepentance, was that they omitted among other weighty matters, “faith”. The faith even of others was blessed by the Lord, how much more the faith of the individual! And so the last miracle that speaks of faith, before the crisis (Matt. xii.), makes healing conditional upon faith.

Two blind men address the Lord by His kingdom (the true dispensational) title, the title which Israel should have recognized and believed, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on us”. Seven times in Matthew’s Gospel is the Lord addressed as Son of David, this being the first occasion. Here at last comes the confession that in their midst stands Israel’s long-promised King. Would the eyes of this nation be opened to see Him? or would He have to say that the words of the prophet were fulfilled, “their eyes they have closed”. Therefore, not for the individual’s sake, but because of the typical value of all the miracles, the Lord replies:--

“Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.”

This is what might have happened nationally, but faith was absent. The persistent unbelief brought the evidences of the Messiah’s presence to an end (Matt. xiii. 58). Therefore it was that the Lord straitly charged the two blind men, “See that no man know it”.

The last miracle of the series makes the rulers of Israel speak out their antagonism. A demon-possessed man, rendered by his possession dumb, is cured, and the multitudes marvel saying, "It was never so seen in Israel". Then comes the Pharisees' blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Look at chapter xii. 22-32. The healing of another demoniac caused the people to say, "Is not this the Son of David?" Again the Pharisees immediately counteract the impression by saying, "This fellow doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons". The Lord in reply, after showing the folly of their argument says:--

"But if I cast out by the Spirit of God, *then the Kingdom of God* is come unto you . . . Wherefore I say unto you . . . the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men, . . . neither in this age of the one about to be."

Herein is the supreme responsibility of the rejection of God's evidences, a subject that comes again prominently forward in the Gospel of John.

We retrace our steps a little to observe the gathering opposition and the development of events, the healing of the man with the withered hand. The word here for "withered" is akin to that used of the fig-tree that withered. Christ stood ready to heal their barrenness and withered unfruitfulness, and they chose the dust-dry pettiness of Sabbath-day observances, even contemplating the murder of the very Lord of the Sabbath. In the previous cases, when others interpose, it has been for the purpose of obtaining blessing for the sufferer. Here, the man with the withered hand is brought forward, not for any love for him or sympathy with his affliction, but that he may prove a bait to catch the Lord of life and glory.

The Rabbis had taught that there was "no Sabbatism in the Temple". The Lord could have appealed to this, but He preferred to take a simpler and wider view, and asked, in fact, whether a man was not of more value than a sheep. That which God had given as a "delight", they in their withered barrenness made the symbol of all that was exclusive, narrow and formal. The way in which their leaders had fenced the observation of the Sabbath with the most minute and ridiculous restrictions blinded them to the spiritual significance of the day. We shall find that much of the opposition of the Pharisees was related to the Lord's attitude to their conception of the Sabbath. This we must deal with separately, as space will not suffice here and now.

The Pharisees now take counsel against the Lord as to how they might destroy Him. What perversity is this! His every act had left behind Him mercy, peace, health, thankfulness, life from the dead, sight for the blind, yea, the forgiveness of sins—yet they hated Him, these scrupulous Sabbath-keepers.

Then follows the quotation which at last speaks of the Gentiles. With this quotation, Isa. xlix. 3-7 should be read. There the close connection between Israel's rejection of the Lord, and the blessing of the Gentiles is seen. One of His titles there is, "Him whom the nation abhorreth"! We have already looked at the closing miracle. The last words indicate the possibility that Israel may receive the Lord as the Son of David. Here the

Pharisees interpose their blasphemous statement, and Israel sinks into unrepentance and blindness.

The miracles keep pace with the theme. Each Gospel writer chooses or rejects in accordance with the special object of his narrative, and this is by far the most important aspect in which to view the miracles. They can be considered in a detached and undispensational manner safely afterwards, but that is not our present purpose.

(*Miracles10*, pp.105-109).

No.5. The Miracles of the Rejection (Matt. xiii. - xxi.). pp. 97 - 100

We have traced the ever deepening character of the evidences given to the Messiah by the miracles which are recorded. Things physical and temporal, things spiritual and eternal, come within their scope. We notice the cumulative character of the effect produced:--

“His fame went throughout All Syria and there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan” (Matt. iv. 24, 25).

The emphasis here is mainly on the geographical extent of the evidence. It included practically all the land then occupied by the people of Israel.

The disciples themselves are the next to exhibit their impressions, marveling and saying, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” When the multitude witnessed the miracle of the healing of the sick of the palsy, “they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men”. As a result of His raising the ruler’s daughter from the dead, “the fame thereof went abroad unto all that land”. The blind men who were healed disobeyed the Lord’s injunction of silence and as a result the fame of the Lord was spread abroad in all that country. When the dumb man possessed with a demon was cured, the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never so seen in Israel”.

Then follows the commission of the twelve (chapter x.) who received from the Lord power over unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. Their power was very full: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”. Their testimony was widespread. John in prison heard of the works of Christ and was confirmed in the belief that these were indeed His evidences (xi. 1-6).

After the healing of the blind and dumb demoniac, “the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?” This in the eyes of the Pharisees was a perilous question, so that they reiterated their blasphemy that the Christ of God was in league with Satan.

We first of all find it touched upon in ix. 34, “The Pharisees said, He casteth out demons by the prince of demons”; and no comment is passed. In xii. 24 we discover it to have gathered strength, and then the Lord exposes their thoughts and brings to bear upon them the fact that the kingdom of God had come unto them. Will it be believed that after all the signs and wonders which the Lord had given, miracles for which He had become famous throughout the length and breadth of the land, these insolent rulers of this age have the temerity to say, “Master we would SEE A SIGN from thee” (xii. 38)? The Lord’s answer indicates that the time for showing signs is passed. The next great sign shall be that of His resurrection.

We shall observe the same order in the Gospel of John. Seven out of the eight signs come in the first half of the Gospel. Then comes chapters xiii.-xvii., where the Lord is with His own, and the eighth and concluding sign is that which follows His resurrection.

The parables of the mysteries of the kingdom (Matt. xiii.) follow the Lord’s rejection, and the miracles that follow are a complete set by themselves. The first reference to miracles after the great rejection (chapters xii. and xiii.) is of a negative character: “He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (xiii. 58).

We will look at the whole series however before we consider any in detail:--

The Miracles after the rejection.

A1 | xiii. 58. Not many because of unbelief.

B1 | Seven miracles. |

- | C | a | xiv. 14. Many healed.
- | b | xiv. 15-21. 5,000 fed.
- | D | xiv. 22, 23. The Sea.
- | E | xiv. 36. Perfectly whole.
- | D | xv. 21-28. The woman of Canaan.
- | C | a | xv. 29, 30. Many healed.
- | b | xv. 31-39. 4,000 fed.

A2 | xvi. 1-4. The demand for a sign refused.--

No sign but that of the prophet Jonah.

B2 | Seven miracles. |

- | F | xvii. 14-21. Lunatic. Faith remove mountains.
- | G | xvii. 27. Tribute. Kingdom not yet come.
- | (xix. 2. Multitudes healed).
- | H | xx. 30. Blind. Son of David.
- | H | xxi. 1. Colt. Thy King cometh.
- | G | xxi. 14. Blind and Lame. Son of David.
- | F | xxi. 19. Fig tree withered. Faith to remove mountains.

A3 | xxvii. 42-44. Demand for evidential miracle refused.

B3 | xxvii. 52 - xxviii. 8. THE SIGN OF JONAH.

The first set of seven miracles does not partake so much of the character of signs as of miracles of compassion. He went about doing good. “And Jesus was moved with

compassion” (xiv. 14). The feeding of the 5,000 resembles the feeding of the 4,000, and there again the Lord says, “I have compassion on the multitude”.

The second series of seven begins to foreshadow the development of events. Immediately after the glory of the transfiguration the Lord deals with a difficult case of demon possession and makes reference to a faith capable of removing mountains. Then follows the miracle of the tribute money and its question:--

“Of whom do the Kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money, that take and give unto them for Me and thee.”

Has the reader observed one great difference between the miracles performed before the twelfth chapter and those after it? In the case of those that are detailed in the first half of Matthew Christ works them entirely alone. A change comes with this new series.

The disciples are the ones first addressed with regard to the feeding of the 5,000. “Jesus said unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat.” While the disciples were utterly unable to comply with the task they have an ample share in its outworking. Peter evidently began to realize that the working of miracles in conjunction with the Lord was now expected, for he asks the Lord to bid him come to Him upon the water!

The repetition of the feeding of the 5,000 by the feeding of the 4,000 seemed intentional, but the disciples did not at the time appear to grasp the Lord’s purpose. The Lord rebukes both lack of memory and lack of faith as to these two miracles (xvi. 5-12). He rebukes the lack of faith again when the disciples confessed their inability to cast out the demon (xvii.), and reminds them that prayer and fasting were essentials. Peter shares, however humbly, in the miracle of the tribute money; the disciples take a part in the miracle of the colt, and when the disciples marveled at the withering of the fig tree, they are again reminded of the faith which removes mountains. There is a reason for this, “Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to My Father”, said the Lord, and Mark xvi. closes with the words, “The Lord working with them, confirming the Word with signs following”. These are therefore all indications of the coming dispensation of Pentecost. All was now awaiting that sign of all signs, *the sign of the prophet Jonah*.

The references to the coming of the King, and the hosannas to the Son of David, again indicate how near the common people were to accepting the Lord as their Messiah. What a shocking charge lies at the door of their spiritual rulers, who instructed them to choose Barabbas instead of Christ! How soon will this piece of history be repeated on a grander scale? The spiritist activity and world wide conditions seem to indicate that the Lord is near.

There are two miracles which we reserve for more detailed consideration owing to their bearing upon the dispensational outlook, namely, that of the woman of Canaan, and that of the withered fig tree. These we hope to deal with in our next article.

(*Miracles10*, pp.139-142).

**No.6. Two Miracles of Dispensational Importance
(Matt. xv. 21 - 28, and xxi. 19).
pp. 135 - 138**

(1) The Syrophenician Woman (Matt. xv. 21 - 28).

All the miracles, as do all the parables, have a definite dispensational character, but the two we select in this article have that character in a very prominent way. The first of the two take place near the close of the Lord's ministry as the Son of David, the second near the close of His ministry as the Son of Abraham. Soon after working the first miracle the Lord began to speak of His approaching death, while soon after the second He was led away to be crucified. A simple outline of the miracle of Matt. xv. 21-28 is as follows:--

- A1 | Have mercy, O Lord, Thou Son of David.
- B1 | But He answered; not a word.
- A2 | Send her away for she crieth after us.
- B2 | But He answered; not sent but to lost sheep of Israel.
- A3 | Lord, help me.
- B3 | But He answered; not take children's bread and cast to dogs.
- A4 | True Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.
- B4 | Then Jesus answered, O woman, great is thy faith.

The woman was of Canaan, a Gentile, a Syrophenician by nature (Mark vii. 26), and she approached the Lord, calling Him by His title, "Son of David". Now as Son of David He came to be King, "King of the Jews" (Matt. ii. 2; xxvii. 37, 42). This sovereignty was primarily of an exclusive character. The promise to David regarding his throne will be fulfilled in Christ, and in its primary interpretation it has no place for any nation but Israel. When the earthly kingdom is established and that King is reigning, then world-wide blessing will result. So it was that the Saviour, Who so often was moved with compassion as He contemplated fallen and suffering man, "answered her not a word".

His reply to the disciples' request reveals the reason of this strange silence, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel". These words, to weak faith, would have sounded as the death knell of hope. The woman however penetrated the reply and learned its lesson. As Son of David He could do nothing for her; she must therefore drop that title and approach Him simply as *Lord*; she had no right in Him as Son of David such as Israel had. "Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me." This request draws from the Lord a personal answer, but what will He say? Will He grant her request? "He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to *kunaria* (little dogs)." At first sight this answer seems as forbidding as the former one.

Israel were the lost SHEEP, what had He, their shepherd, to do with DOGS? Israel were the children of the house; surely it was not right to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs? The faith of this woman enabled her to believe that what He spoke to her was absolute truth, and she seized upon the word He had used for *dogs*. As the reader will know, the dog is a term of reproach throughout the east, and is a symbol of all that is depraved, forsaken and cast out, *e.g.*, "without are dogs". The Lord in His reply said "*little dogs*", or, as we say, *puppies*. The rule regarding the dog has an exception in the case of the little puppy; children in the east, like children in the west, like to pet and fondle the little puppies and for a short time they are allowed inside the house. "Truth, Lord", replies the woman, "yet the puppies eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table". She knew that the exclusiveness of the Lord's ministry to Israel was not for any mean or narrow reason, a saved Israel will be saved not for their own sake, but that all families of the earth may be blessed in them.

The twofold aspect of this phase of God's dealings is emphasized in Rom. xv. 8, 9, "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"—this is an exclusive ministry to Israel with reference to promises made in the past—"and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy"—this follows as the designed sequence. So it was that the woman sought the crumbs. She gave Israel their rightful place, they were *the Masters* (the very same word twice rendered "Lord"). She was but a little dog, *they* sat at the table, she could only expect the crumbs. As soon as this was recognized, blessing came. How vital to this woman's case a correct appreciation of dispensational truth! How many to-day are perplexed because the Lord answers not a word, simply because they are asking amiss! The miracle clearly shows us what was the relationship between Israel and the nations at the time of the Lord's earthly ministry. In Rom. xi. the figure changes to that of *wild olive branches grafted into the true olive*. In Eph. ii. it further changes to the *creation of one new man*. Which shall we believe, the Scriptures, or those who speak against "dispensational" truth?

(2) The Barren Fig Tree (Matt. xxi. 19).

The second miracle has also a dispensational character. Here is a symbol of Israel as a nation, the fig tree. The fig, the vine and the olive represent Israel in various capacities:--

"And when He saw one single fig tree by the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but LEAVES ONLY, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever, and immediately the fig tree was withered."

In the prophecy of Luke the Lord separates the fig tree from all others—"Behold the fig tree, and all the trees," (Luke xxi. 29-31). The sign of the Lord's return is found in the budding of the nation and all the nations; a day is coming when "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the earth with fruit" (Isa. xxvii. 6). At the time, however, when the miracle was performed, the Lord found "leaves only". The crowd had spread their garments in the road, had cut down branches from the trees and scattered them on the road, they had shouted saying, "Hosannah to the Son of David"; but it was "leaves only".

The same crowd within a few days were prevailed upon to cry, "Away with Him, crucify Him". The Lord had foretold this (Matt. xiii. 5, 6):--

"Some fell upon stony places where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away."

The Hosannahs were *leaves only*; the fruit depends upon root. The scorching sun indicates persecution:--

"He that received the seed in stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, immediately he is offended" (Matt. xiii. 20, 21).

The fig tree and those hearers on stony ground withered. Such was the parable of Israel: they began to cumber the earth; soon the word would go forth, "cut it down". Israel will bring forth no fruit until the age (translated "for ever").

It is deeply suggestive to us all to note the fact that the only miracle of judgment which the Lord performed was upon a tree. Never did He work such upon a human being. The only other occasion where anything resembling a judgment might be found is the case of the swine which were choked. Yet here it was the swine, not the men, who were drowned.

Thus these two miracles taken together speak of the blessing going out to the Gentiles, and of the cutting off, for the time being, of an unfruitful people. In this case there are lessons for all to learn, lessons not rendered the less pointed by seeing them in their true dispensational perspective.

(*Miracles10*, pp.173-176).

Reflections on ISAIAH.

(Fundamentals34)

ISAIAH.

#27. Isaiah xlii. 12 - xlv. 15.

Restoration Promised, Conditioned, Foreshadowed.

Restoration Promised (xlii. 18 - xliii. 9).

pp. 123 - 126

Reflections on ISAIAH49.

ISAIAH.

#28. The Lamb of God (Isa. lii. 13 - lvi. 8).

The Material sorted and the Structure of Isa. lii. 13 - liii. 12 discovered.

pp. 185 - 188

ISAIAH.

#29. “Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him” (lii. 13).

pp. 227 - 229

(Fundamentals35)

ISAIAH.

#30. The Lamb of God (Isa. lii. 13 - lvi. 8).

The astonishment and blindness of Israel (Isa. lii. 14, 15).

pp. 29 - 33

The late Mr. Welch had a series of studies running up to Volume XXXV of *The Berean Expositor* under the general heading of *Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth*. For some reason the final nine (*middle nine rather!*) on Isaiah were mislaid. These have now come to light and we felt our readers would still enjoy having them reproduced here. Mr. Fred Leigh of Preston, one of our proof readers made the following comment: “I am now able to return the Parts 1-9 of the Studies on Isaiah by Charles H. Welch I feel sure that many older members particularly will welcome this series, and of course in future, libraries of volumes of *The Berean Expositor* will be passed on to younger generations (such as I am hoping mine will be) and they will be glad of the complete studies on Isaiah. I was particularly struck by the skill with which C.H.W. was able to discover ‘structure’ in the midst of so much details between chapters xl. and lii. He was a remarkable man, to whom we all owe a great deal”.

No.1. My Witnesses (xlii. 18 - xlv. 15).
Cyrus, the shadow of the Great Restorer (xlv. 28 - xlv. 14).
pp. 6 - 11

(Fundamentals34)

ISAIAH.

#27. Isaiah xlii. 12 - xlv. 15.

Restoration Promised, Conditioned, Foreshadowed.
Restoration Promised (xlii. 18 - xliii. 9).

My Witness (=) Restoration Promised, Condition, Foreshadowed.
Cyrus, the shadow of the Great Restorer (=) Restoration Foreshadowed.

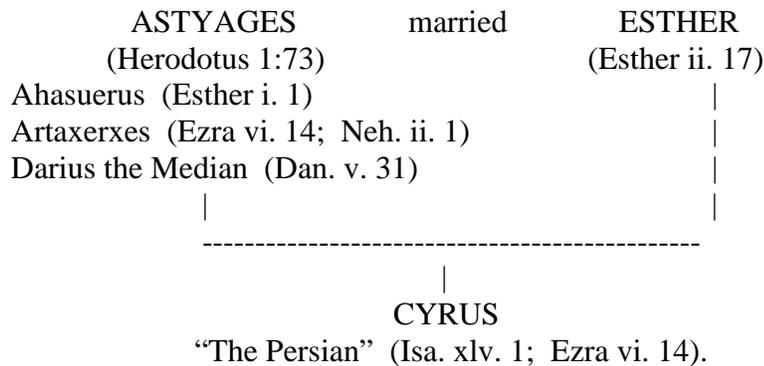
One further witness is to be brought forward before this great section closes; the prophecy concerning Cyrus. Cyrus is presented in a twofold aspect:

- (1) As the Persian king, who was moved to make the proclamation that led to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and who encompassed the overthrow of the city of Babylon, as predicted.
- (2) As foreshadowing the Messiah, Who shall accomplish in fulness, what Cyrus accomplished only in measure. This we may see in the very titles given to this great king. He is called "My Shepherd" (Isa. xlv. 28); and "His anointed" (Isa. xlv. 1). There is moreover a parallel between the words used of Cyrus and those of the Messiah, as for example:
 - "Whose right hand I have holden" (Isa. xlv. 1).
 - "I the Lord will hold Thine hand" (Isa. xlii. 6).
 - "I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight" (Isa. xlv. 2).
 - "The crooked shall be made straight" (Isa. xl. 4).

Cyrus is called 'the anointed' in the same way that the Medes are called 'My sanctified ones' in Isa. xliii. 3. Personal holiness is not predicated of the Medes, nor was Cyrus the 'Messiah', but they were set apart for the work that God had determined they should do. The Scriptures speak of Cyrus by name 22 times, and the books wherein these references occur, are II Chronicles; Ezra; Isaiah and Daniel. External testimony to the person and work of Cyrus is threefold. We have the testimony of Josephus; the cuneiform inscriptions; and the writings of Herodotus, Xenophon and Ctesias. The testimony of Josephus is valuable. Here is a short extract from the eleventh book of Antiquities:

"In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write throughout all Asia This was known to Cyrus by his reading of the book which Isaiah left behind him of his properties This was foretold by Isaiah 140 years before the temple was demolished" (*Antiquities Bk. 11, Ch. 1*).

The testimony of the inscriptions brings to light the genealogy of Cyrus, the foreknowledge and provision of God, and the character of the man that Isaiah prophesied would be the Lord's "Shepherd" and "Anointed". The combined evidence of the cuneiform inscriptions and the history of Herodotus is set out in *The Companion Bible*, appendix 57 at great length. The following short extract focuses our attention on one feature of supreme interest:



No proof is offered here that Ahasuerus, Artaxerxes and Darius the Median are titles of one and the same person. The interested reader must consult *Records of the Past* for himself, or failing that he should give very careful attention to appendix 57 of *The Companion Bible* which sets out the genealogy of the Persian kings. If Esther was the mother of Cyrus, we can see the hand of the Lord preparing a deliverer for His people and we can see how timely this prophecy comes in the book of Isaiah, giving a pledge and a foretaste of that fuller restoration which should be accomplished by the true "Shepherd" and the true "Anointed" Who was to come.

The edict of Cyrus is recorded in the book of Ezra:

"Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia. The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah" (Ezra i. 2).

Dr. Samuel Davidson criticizes this record, and speaks of the edict as "A Judaizing paraphrase of the original". Instead of this being damaging evidence, it is in reality a very wonderful confirmation, for Prof. Sayce says:

"In Reading the words of Cyrus, we are irresistibly reminded of the language in which the Books of Samuel describe the rejection of Saul and the selection of David in his place."

But not only so:

"It is a fact the most Hebraic of all the cuneiform texts known to us Even the vocabulary of the inscription is not altogether free from what we may term a Hebraism. There we find *malka*, the Hebrew *melech*, used in the sense of 'king' in place of *sarru*, the Hebrew *sar*. Everywhere else in cuneiform literature *sarru* is 'king', *malka* the subordinate 'prince'. It is only here that the Hebrew usage is followed, according to which *melech* was the 'king' and *sar* the 'prince'." (*Records of the Past*, Prof. Sayce).

If Esther was the mother of Cyrus, and knew the destiny that awaited her son, we may be sure that however small her influence may have been in his training, such a woman as Esther would have left some lasting impression behind.

When Isaiah described the march of Cyrus against Babylon in Isa. xxi. 1-10, he used the strange figure of a chariot drawing asses and camels. Herodotus tells of an oracle which said:

“Be afraid when the Medes shall be commanded by a mule, and Nebuchadnezzar some time before his death foretold a disaster which none of the gods could avert, when ‘A Persian mule shall come against you, who, with the help of the gods, shall bring you into bondage’.”

Cyrus, the child of a Persian father and a Jewish mother fulfilled this strange figure. Let us now return to the prophecy of Isaiah and observe some of the utterances that were so closely and accurately fulfilled:

“That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers” (Isa. xlv. 27).

What have these words to do with Cyrus or prophecy? We learn that when Cyrus invested the city of Babylon, he, accompanied by his chief officers, rode around the walls, in the vain attempt to find some weak spot, or assailable point. It was then that Cyrus conceived the scheme, already foreshadowed by Isaiah. It meant nothing less than the deflection of the course of the river Euphrates. A great trench was dug, ostensibly for the purpose of blockade, and Herodotus comments:

“If the besieged had either been aware of the designs of Cyrus, or had discovered his project before its actual accomplishment, they might have effected the total destruction of the troops. They had only to secure the little gates which led to the river, and to man the embankment on either side, and they might have enclosed the Persians as in a net from which they could never have escaped.” (*Herodotus lib. 1:191*).

Xenophon records that Cyrus said:

“My friends, the river yields to us its bed, to make for us a way into the city; let us enter it with confidence.”

And so while Belshazzar and his lords were drinking wine to the gods of wood and stone, that finger was seen writing his doom ‘upon the plaster of the wall’, while the army of Cyrus was marching into the city:

“One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped” (Jeremiah li. 31, 32).

Thus, as Cyrus has recorded on the cylinder, which is in the possession of the British Museum, “Without battle and without fighting” Babylon was taken.

As our space is limited, it will assist us in obtaining a clear view of the general trend of this passage if we set out in barest outline the structure (regrettable split) as follows:

The witness of Cyrus (xlv. 28 - xlv. 14).

- A1 | xlv. 28-. “My Shepherd.” Type of Messiah.
- B1 | xlv. -28. Jerusalem. “Thou shalt be built.”
- A2 | xlv. 1-. “His anointed.” Type of Messiah.
- B2 | xlv. -1-3-. Babylon. Overthrown.
 - C | xlv. -3-6. | a | The God of Israel.
 - b | There is none else.
 - D | xlv. 7-12. | I create (7) (moral).
 - | I create (8) (spiritual).
 - | I create (12) (physical).
- A3 | xlv. 13-. “Raised in righteousness.” Type of Messiah.
- B3 | xlv. -13. Jerusalem. “He shall build My city.”
 - C | xlv. 14. | a | God is in thee.
 - b | There is none else.

God is Creator in each realm, moral, spiritual and physical:

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. xlv. 7).

“Righteousness Salvation I the Lord have created it” (Isa. xlv. 8).

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it” (Isa. xlv. 12).

With this glorious, all embracing fact in view the Lord addressed Israel saying:

“Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and His Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command ye Me” (Isaiah xlv. 11).

What did Vashti know of the purpose of God when she refused the command of the king? What did Mordecai know of the part that Esther would play, either in the deliverance of Israel at that time, or subsequently through the ministry of her unborn child Cyrus? What did Haman know of the purposes of the God of Israel? Yet whether the instruments intended evil or good, the Holy One of Israel accomplished His purposes. He surnamed Cyrus even though Cyrus knew Him not, He girded him, He held his hand. He overthrew Babylon itself, all to accomplish the word that He had spoken. If all this and more was not too much for the Lord to plan and achieve in bringing about the temporary restoration of Israel after the seventy years captivity, what may He not plan and accomplish, for the fulfillment of all those wondrous promises of complete and glorious restoration that shall be associated with the advent of a greater than Cyrus, and the overthrow of a Babylon greater than that lost by Belshazzar?

**No.2. “Israel My Glory” (xlvi).
pp. 26 - 32**

Chapter xlv. in its closing section, gives us a glimpse of the Day of Christ when ‘every knee shall bow’ (Isa. xlv. 23), and the reader may remember that in the epistle to the Philippians where this passage is quoted ‘things under the earth’ are included—so universal is the homage that shall at length be paid. What these ‘things under the earth’ may include we do not know, but it is at least significant that the opening words of Isaiah xlv. are “Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth” (Isa. xlv. 1).

There have been many exposures of the utter futility and folly, to say nothing more, of the worship of idols in the chapters of Isaiah we have already studied, but till now, no specific god or idol has been mentioned by name. We are about to consider the great prophecy of Babylon’s doom (Isa. xlvii.), and it is therefore fitting that the two great gods of Babylon should be mentioned in the passage before us. Bel was the national god of Babylon, and the word signifies confusion. Jeremiah appears to play upon this meaning of the word when he says “Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded” (Jer. 1. 2), or as we might say “The confounder is confounded”. Babylon stands for all the Satanic opposition to God and His Word which constitutes the conflict of the ages. It is Babylon that at length falls accompanied by the alleluias of the redeemed in the book of the Revelation, and with the fall of Babylon comes the glorious restoration and the millennial reign of Christ (Rev. xix. and xx.).

Bel, the great god of Babylon bows down before the mighty God of Jacob. Nebo, as the word suggests, is the prophet or interpreter of the gods, and his symbol was the planet Mercury, known to the ancients as Hermes, and giving us hermeneutics or the science of interpretation. That Nebo was greatly revered by the Babylonians can be seen by the way the name of the god entered into the names of the people. Thus we have such names as *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Nabonidus*, etc. The worship of Baal or Bel was very closely allied to the productiveness of nature and the reader will realize that anyone intimately acquainted with the significance of these gods Bel and Nebo, would find allusions to them in Isa. xlv. where God is revealed as the Creator Who created “not in vain” (18), and Who moreover “declared from ancient time” (21) things that came to pass:

“That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad” (Isa. xlv. 25).

The God of Israel in all His ways is set in glorious contrast to the miserable deceptions, Bel and Nebo.

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth.”

Looking at the opening verse of Isa. xlv. the reader cannot help agreeing that the heading adopted by Geo. Adam Smith for this chapter is very apt. He entitles it “Bearing or Borne”.

“Foolish men, instead of letting God undertake for them, go to and try what their own hands and hammers can effect.”

“This cleavage is permanent in humanity—between the men that are trying to carry their religion, and the men that are allowing God to carry them.”

“Over against this kind of religion, which may be reduced to so many pounds avoirdupois, the prophet sees in contrast the God of Israel” (Geo. Adam Smith).

“Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity. Harken unto Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you” (Isa. xlvi. 1-4).

The reader will observe two features here. First, there is the emphasis upon dead weight—“heavy loaden”, “burden”, “weary beast”, but the transition at verse 3 introduces in the English version a new theme, that of bringing to birth. This is only a new theme however in the translation. Anyone acquainted with the original would have already sensed the double meaning of the prophet. This underlying meaning we must attempt to make clear, but the effect will be laboured and spoiled in the explaining, it cannot strike the reader with the freshness that it does when coming upon it first of all without the interposition of the Lexicon and Concordance.

Let us examine the words used, and endeavour to approach a little toward the vantage ground of the reader of the original. “Bow down.” This word is the translation of the Hebrew *kara*, and is used chiefly either for bowing the knee in adoration or worship, or bowing in submission to a conqueror:

“Unto Me every knee shall bow” (Isa. xlv. 23).

“At her feet he *bowed*, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he *bowed*, he fell; where he *bowed*, there he fell” (Judges v. 27).

There is one occurrence where this word is associated child-birth:

“And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas’ wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she *bowed* herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her” (I Sam. iv. 19).

“Heavy loaden” (*amas*). This word occurs in Isaiah but twice, and provides an example of the double meaning we are endeavouring to show:

“Your carriages were *heavy loaden*” (Isa. xlvi. 1).

“Which are *borne* by Me from the belly” (Isa. xlvi. 3).

“Deliver” (*malat*). This word is used chiefly with the idea of being delivered from an enemy, or escaping from some threatened calamity. It is used however on one occasion in Isaiah in the sense of being delivered of a child:

“They could not *deliver* the burden” (Isa. xlvi. 2).

“I will carry, and *will deliver* you” (Isa. xlvi. 4).

“She was *delivered* of a man-child” (Isa. lxvi. 7).

“Carried” (*nasa*). This word occurs several hundred times in the O.T. Scriptures, with the meaning to bear, lift up or take away:

“Surely He hath *borne* our griefs He bare the sin of many” (Isa. liii. 4 and 12).

There are however at least two occasions where this word is used in connection with child-birth:

“Which are *carried* from the womb” (Isa. xlvi. 3).

“Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, *Carry* them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child” (Numb. xi. 12).

“I have made, and I will *bear*” (Isa. xlvi. 4).

It is written of the Lord, that He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. He not only brings to the birth, He carries all the day long, and will finally accomplish all His pleasure. The key thought seems to be in the words:

“I have made and I will *bear*.”

We must leave the reader to use this material while we pass on to other matters that await our investigation.

Before we quite leave this passage which opens with the bowing down of Bel and the stooping of Nebo, it may be well to remember that there are indications in other parts of Scripture of this attitude of the Lord to the gods of the nations. Let us consider two such examples.

At the Passover and the Exodus from Egypt, the Lord said:

“I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment” (Exod. xii. 12).

When the Philistines took the Ark of the Lord, and put it in the house of their god, Dagon, we read:

“Behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of the Lord and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold: only the stump of Dagon was left to him” (I Sam. v. 3, 4).

Such, coupled with the bowing of Bel and the stooping of Nebo set forth the overthrow at long last of every false hope and every usurpation of the Only wise God.

As we read this forty-sixth chapter of Isaiah we pass from the Almighty’s ability to ‘make and to bear’, from birth to hoar hairs, to the extraordinary foreknowledge of this same Almighty God, manifestly in prophecy:

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure. Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth My counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (Isaiah xlv. 10, 11).

The ‘ravenous bird’ symbolizes Cyrus. Xenophon wrote of him:

“He had for ensign a golden eagle, stretched upon a long spear; and this even still continues to be the ensign of the Persian king” (Cyrop. 47).

The Hebrew *ayet* which is translated ‘ravenous bird’ is very probably the root of the Greek word *aetoo*, which is translated ‘eagle’ four times in the N.T.

The title given to Israel in this chapter demands our attention, it is “Israel My glory”.

Without consulting the original of this passage we should have felt practically certain that the word translated ‘glory’ here, would be the Hebrew word *kabod*, which is so translated in Isaiah no less than 33 times. This guess turns out, however, to be a mistake, the Hebrew word being *tipharah* which is translated 7 times ‘glory’ in Isaiah. This word occurs many more times than this in Isaiah, and is translated ‘bravery’, ‘comely’, ‘beauty’, as well as ‘glory’.

“In that day shall the Lord of Hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of *beauty*, unto the residue of His people” (Isa. xxviii. 5).

“I will glorify the house of My *glory*” (Isa. lx. 7).

“Thy God thy *glory*” (Isa. lx. 19).

“Our holy and our *beautiful* house” (Isa. lxiv. 11).

We meet the word first in the book of Exodus, where it is used to describe the holy garments of the High Priest (Exod. xxviii. 2), and of the priests (Exod. xxviii. 40).

“And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for *beauty*.”

Israel are not only a ‘royal nation’ they are a “Holy priesthood”. They are to be a ‘kingdom of priests’ even as their Messiah is a “Priest after the order of Melchisedec”, who was king of Salem and also Priest of the Most High God. Israel’s restoration not only restores them as a nation, not only restores them to their land, not only restores their city, the city of the great king, Jerusalem, it also restores their temple, and constitutes them the priest-nation of the earth. Like the high priest of Zech iii. Israel will be cleansed, clothed and crowned by grace to enter, at last, upon their high and holy destiny. Let us never forget their crowning aspect of the blessed restoration which constitutes the theme of Isaiah’s prophecy.

“And they shall build the old wastes and strangers shall stand and feed your flocks But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God” (Isa. lxi. 4-6).

**No.3. Babylon said, I am and none else (xlvii).
pp. 106 - 113**

As the analysis of Isaiah considered as a whole was given in *The Berean Expositor* as far back as volume XXX, it may not be amiss to give a summary:

- A | PRE-ASSYRIAN INVASION (i.-xxxv.).
 - a | i.-xii. THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN.
 - b | xiii.-xxvii. BURDENS AND BLESSINGS.
 - c | xxviii.-xxxv. WOES AND GLORIES.
- B | ASSYRIAN INVASION AND DELIVERANCE (xxxvi.-xxxix.).
- A | POST-ASSYRIAN INVASION (xl.-lxvi.).
 - a | xl.-xlvi. COMFORT AND CONTROVERSY.
 - b | xlix.-lx. LIGHT AND PEACE.
 - c | lxi.-lxvi. ACCEPTABLE YEAR AND DAY OF VENGEANCE.

The whole prophecy moves toward the fulfillment of the “Acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God”, and these two notes are struck in the two sections of Isa. xl.-xlvi. that await examination.

- (1) “Babylon said, I am and none else.”
This brings down upon it the vengeance of God.
- (2) “His servant Jacob, redeemed.”
This is the effect of the acceptable year of the Lord.

It is not without significance that the name Babylon occurs exactly thirteen times in Isaiah, a number significant of rebellion and evil, and that the city is not mentioned in the closing sections of Isa. xlix.-lx. and lxi.-lxvi.

In the same way, the reader will remember the repeated exposure and denunciation of idols and false gods that are so characteristic of Isaiah’s prophecy. These two come to an end with the great section now before us.

In place of the blasphemous assumptions of Babylon and the false trust placed in idols, the closing portions of Isaiah reveal the equally abominable assumption of righteousness and the false trust in self and its works, that are after all the animating spirit of all idolatry since the fall of man.

In Isa. xliii. the fall of Babylon is anticipated:

“And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (xliii. 19).

The word 'glory' in the title "Israel My glory" suggests the priestly nature of Israel's calling. This same word is found in Isa. xiii. 19, quoted above, where it is translated 'beauty', a further indication of the usurping character of all that Babylon stands for.

If Bel the god of Babylon 'boweth down' (Isa. xlvi. 1) it must follow that the worshippers of the god, must come down too. Consequently, it is in the very nature of things that Isa. xlvi. should open with parallel words:

"Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon."

If in the preceding chapter there has been a repeated claim by the Lord, found in the words "I am, and there is none else", we are not surprised to find still further evidence of Babylonian usurpation in Isa. xlvi.:

"Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me" (xlvi. 10).

Yet further. The reader will remember the continuous claim by the Lord to His power of foretelling the future, and the challenge that is made with regard to this great fact in connection with the idols of the nations:

"I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. xlvi. 9, 10).

"Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: and abomination is he that chooseth you" (Isa. xli. 22-24).

So, in Isa. xlvi., which deals with the utter failure of Babylon and Bel that Babylon stands for, we read:

"Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the star gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee" (xlvi. 12-13).

The invasion of the Assyrian and the false corrupt teaching of Babylon constitute the dark background of this prophecy of deliverance and restoration. Let us with this preparation, consider the chapter that is before us.

The Judgment of Babylon (xlvii).

- A | 1-7. Babylon debased. |
a | 1. | m | Sit in dust.
n | Daughter.
m | Sit on ground.
n | Daughter.
b | 2-4. *No more Tender.* |
Reproach—Avenge—No acceptance.
a | 5. | m | Sit silent—get into darkness.
n | Daughter.
b | 6, 7. *No more Mistress.* |
Provoked—Profaned—The Issue.
- A | 8-15. False Trust. |
c | 8, 9-. | o | Lady of pleasure.
p | thou sayest in thine heart, I am.
q | These shall come on thee.
d | -9. spite of incantations.
spite of spells.
c | 10, 11-. | o | Lady of pleasure.
p | thou hast said in thine heart, I am.
q | These shall come on thee.
d | 12-15. Thy spells.
Thy incantations.

Rotherham's translation is so suggestive of the truth underlying the language of Isaiah in this chapter that where we quote from this passage here, it will be from his version that excerpts will be made.

“Down—and sit in the dust, O virgin,
Daughter of Babylon.
Sit on the ground—throneless
Daughter of the Chaldeans;
For thou shalt no more be called
Tender and Dainty.”

Babylon is probably styled the virgin daughter because hitherto the city had not been taken by enemies previous to the capture by Cyrus. The humiliation associated with sitting in the dust is a figure with which every reader is acquainted. To take the millstone and to grind meal, is to undertake the most menial of tasks, and as none but the lowest class of women in Eastern lands ever go uncovered, or ever travel on foot, but are completely veiled from head to foot, the reference to ‘putting back the locks’ (or the veil) lifting up the skirt and uncovering the thigh and wading through rivers, would indicate to the Eastern mind how low this great kingdom was to fall.

“I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man” (Isa. xlvii. 3).

Rotherham's version reads: “An avenging will I take, And will accept no son of earth.”

The commentators have offered a great variety of translations of these words:

“I will suffer no man to intercede” (Lowth).
“I will ask no man (i.e. to avenge)” (Jarchi).
“I will strike a league with no man” (Gesén).
“I will spare no man” (Hend).
“Though I should meet with no man” (Vitx).
“I shall encounter no man” (Steir).
“I shall not meet a man (i.e. shall be wholly desolate)” (Hahn).
“I shall not pardon any man” (Delitzsch).
“I will meet thee not as a man” (Mayer).
“I will not accept or regard any man” (C. Bible).
“I will accept (or make truce with, Heb. meet) no man” (R.V.).

This exhibition of differences reveals the intensely humbling nature of the task we undertake in *The Berean Expositor*.

Paga, the Hebrew translated ‘meet’, primarily means ‘to strike upon’, or as the English idiom is ‘to light upon’. It may be of set purpose or by accident; it may be with violence (I Sam. xxii. 18 ‘fall upon’). It is found in two senses in the book of Ruth:

“That they *meet* thee not in any other field” (ii. 22).
“*Intreat* me not to leave thee” (i. 16).

Here, in Ruth i. 16 the word enters its secondary meaning. To assail anyone with petitions; and so in Isaiah we read:

“He *made intercessions* for the transgressors” (liii. 12).
“He wondered that there was no *intercessor*” (lix. 16).

Consequently Gesenius says of Isa. xlvi. 3 that it should read:

“I will take vengeance and will not make peace with any man.”

Where scholars disagree, the reader may find confirmation and certainty by considering the influence of parallel passages. Now we know that ‘the day of vengeance’ of our God is contrasted with ‘the acceptable year’ of the Lord in this same prophecy, and Isa. xlvi. 3 read in the light of such passages, suggests that the true rendering is that given in *The Companion Bible* or by Gesenius.

We must now pass to other subjects:

“I had been provoked with My people,
Had profaned Mine inheritance
And given them unto thy hand
Thou showedst them no compassion,
Upon the elder madest thou very heavy thy yoke.
And thou saidst,
Unto times age-biding shall I be Mistress—
Insomuch that thou laidst not these things to thy heart,
Didst not keep in mind the issue thereof” (Isa. xlvi. 6, 7).

There is a similar statement to this in Zech i. 14, 15 where the Lord said that He was very sore displeased with the heathen, for He had been but a little displeased with Israel, but that these nations had helped forward the affliction.

In Isa. x. 5-15 the reader will find an exposition of this same principle.

The Assyrian had been the rod of God's anger, and he had been sent in judgment against Israel:

“Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?” (Isa. x. 5-15).

“To their full have they come on thee spite of the mass of thine incantations, spite of the great throng of thy spells” (Isa. xlvii. 9, Rotherham).

“Take thy stand I pray thee, with thy spells, and with the throng of thine incantations Peradventure thou mayest be able to profit, peradventure thou mayest strike Me with terror” (Isa. xlvii. 12, Rotherham).

The reader will not need any comment on the above passages. “Spite Spite”, “Peradventure Peradventure” are sufficient indications.

“Astrologers, star-gazers and monthly prognosticators” neither warned Babylon of this impending doom, nor could they save it when judgment threatened. It is a sad thing to see how much space is still devoted in the columns of certain newspapers to these self-same deceivers, who while peddling about with their pettifogging ‘monthly prognostications’ hopelessly fail in warning the nation concerning the developments of the great conflicts in which the world is at grips.

“They shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee” (Isa. xlvii. 15).

As it was said in Isa. xlvi. 2 “But their own soul into captivity hath departed”, so here in Isa. xlvii. 14 it says, “They shall not deliver their own soul from the grasp of the flame”. Worshipper and worshipped alike prove utterly futile, the Lord alone is God, there is none else like Him.

No.4. His servant Jacob, redeemed (xlviii). pp. 126 - 130

Comfort and controversy (Isa. xl.-xlviii.) come to an end with the destruction of Babylon (Isa. xlvii.) and the redemption of Israel (Isa. xlviii.). The great controversy however persists throughout this chapter as the most casual reading will make evident. Israel swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel—they do indeed, “but not in truth, nor in righteousness” (Isa. xlviii. 1, 2).

One of the reasons given for the constant practice of prophetic foretelling, declaring ‘the former things from the beginning’ was to prevent Israel from saying “Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image and my molten image, hath commanded them” and moreover lest Israel should say “Behold I knew them” (Isa. xlviii. 3-7). Israel is charged with treachery (8) and it is lamented that they had not hearkened to the commandments of the Lord, for “then had thy peace been as a river” said the Lord (18), and their seed should have been as the sand, his name should not have been cut off.

Jenour’s summary of the chapter is worth reading:

“The contents of this section are addressed to the carnal Jews, with whom Jehovah expostulates for their hypocrisy and formality, verses 1, 2; declares the reason why He had made known the fate of Sennacherib’s army only a short time before it was destroyed, verses 3-5; promises further revelations respecting His people, and reprove them for their rebellion and obstinate unbelief, verses 6-8; intimates that He would deliver them from captivity, yet not for their sakes, but for His own glory, verses 9-11; appeals to His prophecies concerning Cyrus, as a proof of His being the first great cause of all things, verses 12-16; addresses a pathetic apostrophe to Israel as a nation, mingled with many encouraging promises, verses 17-19; and concludes with an exhortation to His people, now supposed to be captives in Babylon to come forth and return home, verses 20-22.”

The structure of this chapter must now be discovered, and it appears to be divided into two parts, the former being devoted to the refining of the people, the latter part to the redemption of the people.

Isaiah xlviii.

- A | 1, 2. HEAR. |
 a | Jacob, Israel, Judah called.
 b | The Lord of hosts is His name.
- B | 3-7. DECLARED. |
 c1 | I have declared Obstinate.
 c2 | I have declared Lest . . . say.
 c3 | I have shewed Lest . . . say.
- C | 8-11. REFINED. |
 d1 | For names sake.
 e1 | Anger deferred.
 f | I have refined thee.
 d1 | For names sake.
 e1 | not polluted.
- A | 12, 13. HEARKEN. |
 a | Jacob, Israel, My called.
 b | I am He. First and Last.
- B | 14-16. DECLARED. |
 c1 | Who hath declared.
 c2 | I even I have spoken.
 c3 | I have not spoken in secret.
- C | 17-22. REDEEMED. |
 d2 | The Lord thy Redeemer.
 e2 | Peace, Prosperity.
 Go forth out of Babylon.
 d2 | The Lord hath redeemed.
 e2 | Provision, no peace.
 Exodus from Egypt.

The charge of formalism and hypocrisy with which the chapter opens, reminds the reader of a similar charge made in the first chapter (Isa. i. 11-15).

It is not enough to ‘swear by the name of the Lord’, ‘Make mention of the God of Israel’ or call oneself ‘of the holy city’. These things are only effective and of value if done “in truth and in righteousness”.

Among the many items that ask for attention, is the strange expression found in verse 3 “I did them suddenly”. It must be confessed that the words of the poet:

“The mills of God grind slowly
But they grind exceeding small”,

expresses the general truth concerning the ways of God. Yet, there are occasions when He has, or will act ‘suddenly’, and these occasions are usually associated with judgment.

In the preceding chapter, speaking of the judgment of Babylon, the prophet says:

“Desolation shall come upon thee suddenly” (Isa. xlvi. 11),

which words expand the threat of verse 9:

“But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day.”

A passage that bears upon Isa. xlvi. 3 is that found in the prophet Malachi:

“Behold I will send My messenger and the Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple” (Mal. iii. 1).

The ‘sudden’ coming is associated by Malachi with the ‘refining’ of Israel:

“But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. iii. 2, 3).

The reader will remember that in Isa. xlvi. we have not only a passage speaking of a ‘sudden’ work of the Lord, but of a refining work also:

“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isa. xlvi. 10).

In chapter i., the prophet had said:

“Thy silver is become dross I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away thy tin, and I will restore” (Isa. i. 22-26).

The Psalmist said:

“Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried” (Psa. lxxvi. 10).

And the prophet Zechariah says:

“An I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined” (Zech. xiii. 9).

Israel shall be refined as silver is refined. What therefore does the prophet Isaiah mean when he says:

“Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver”? (Isa. xlvi. 10).

We have sufficient knowledge of the Word of God to know that there can be no contradiction or discrepancy here. The Psalmist said they *had been* refined as silver, the prophets declare that they *shall be* refined as silver. Isaiah as surely declares the same thing, for we have already quoted his words in Isa. i. 22-26. He must therefore be speaking of something else in Isa. xlvi. The Lord’s anger he tells us is ‘deferred’. This word translates the Hebrew *arak*, which means to ‘lengthen’ (“That thy days *may be long* upon the earth”); and is found in Isa. liii. 10 “He shall *prolong* his days”. The Lord’s anger was not deflected or deferred, it was attenuated, stretched out, and the idea is translated by the Greek *makrothumia* ‘longsuffering’.

“For My name’s sake will I defer Mine anger, and for My praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off” (Isa. xlviii. 9).

These words introduce the expression “I have refined thee, but not with silver”, and partly explain it.

The sufferings through which Israel had passed, had not at that point resulted in their perfect refining, that day was yet future, but the Lord had put a limit to His anger, and at the end of the period of seventy years He had raised up Cyrus and not utterly cut off Israel. In other words, the restoration that took place in the days of old was but a faint shadow of the restoration that shall take place in the Day of the Lord.

To the English ear, the phrase “but not with silver” does not make very good sense. The Hebrew participle *B* usually translated “in” comes to mean “with, “by” or “at” by reason of the innate sense of nearness resident in the word, and so in some instances it takes on the meaning ‘like’ or ‘as’.

What Isaiah intends us to understand is that the refining of Israel up to that point was ‘not like silver’ is refined, it was a temporary return but by no means final or complete. There is to be a future refining that shall completely and for ever separate Israel *to* the Lord and *from* all evil. A movement in this direction is indicated in verse 20:

“Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans”,

this had an immediate partial fulfillment in the days of Cyrus, but will have its real fulfillment in the Day of the Lord:

“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. xviii. 4).

So ends the first great section of the second half of Isaiah.

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people” are the words with which it opens (Isa. xl. 1). The fall of Babylon and with the words “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isa. xlviii. 22) are the subjects with which it is brought to a close.

We are now about to enter the second great section of this part of Isaiah, and instead of Babylon and Cyrus, or Hezekiah and Sennacherib, we are brought face to face with “The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow”, a subject which has had the whole of the prophecy as a preparation, and without which the glorious restoration, which is its burning vision, would for ever be beyond attainment or hope.

**No.5. Messiah's "light" work (xlix. 1 - 12).
pp. 147 - 152**

The second great section of Isaiah which commences with chapter xl., opens with the words of comfort and restoration to Israel: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people". John the Baptist came in partial fulfillment of this prophecy:

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord"
(Isaiah xl. 3; Matthew iii. 3).

Nevertheless the reader will remember that John himself confesses that though he was not Elijah, the one who was to appear before the Day of the Lord, yet the angel had announced before his birth that:

"He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke i. 17).

In God's good time, the 'acceptable time' of Isa. xlix., the chapter we are about to examine, Israel shall be restored, but the prophet now prepares his hearers for the terrible fact that history was to confirm; that Israel were to reject the Messiah; that instead of being gathered at His first advent, they should be for the time rejected.

It is now revealed that great as the restoration of Israel is in the prophecies of the O.T., "it is a light thing" when compared with the entire plan of the ages, for God also intends that this same Redeemer shall be a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Isa. xlix. 5, 6). Chapter xlix. commences the second great subdivision of the prophecy of restoration that occupies chapters xl.-lx. Chapter xl. 1-11 we have headed "Good tidings to Zion" but chapter xlix. 1-12 we have headed "A light to lighten the Gentiles". Similarly the closing passage of the section which opens with 'good tidings to Zion', closes with "His servant Jacob, redeemed" (Isa. xlviii.), while consistently, the closing section which opens with the promise of light to the Gentiles, closes with "Gentiles come to thy light" (Isa. lx.).

The passage before us, Isa. xlix. 1-12 opens and closes on the key note: "Listen, O isles, unto Me; and hearken, ye people, from far; (the far off Gentiles)" (verse 1); "Behold, these shall come from far" (verse 12). These constitute the opening and closing members of the structure which is now given.

“A Light to lighten the Gentiles” (xlix. 1 – 12).

- A | 1-. “From far.” Call.
B | -1-6. “Given.” A Light to Gentiles and salvation to end of earth. |
 a | Called from the womb.
 b | My servant.
 c | Labour in vain.
 a | Formed from the womb.
 b | My servant.
C | 7. Abhorred by the nation (*Goi*). Worshipped by princes.
B | 8-11. “Given.” A covenant of the people. Inherit heritages. |
 a | Acceptable time.
 b | Inherit.
 a | Prisoner go forth.
 b | Fed and led.
A | 12. “From far.” Come.

We need at this point to clear a textual problem in verse 5 and the sentence:

“Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord” (A.V.).

But in the R.V. this passage reads:

“And that Israel be gathered unto Him; (for I am honourable in the eyes of the Lord . . .),”

with a note in the margin which says:

“Another reading is ‘*But Israel is not gathered, yet shall I be etc.*.’”

In the Hebrew text the word translated “not” is *l’o*, but this has been marked to read *lo* “to Him” and this alteration is confirmed by the list of readings given in the Massorah. The Septuagint versions is evidence that the Hebrew text which these translators used read *lo* “to Him” and we therefore accept the evidence presented and read the passage as given in the R.V. *The Companion Bible* says in a note on this problem:

“Probably both readings may be correct, for Israel was not gathered at His first coming (John i. 11), but will be at His second coming.”

We give the reader the benefit of this comment, although we ourselves believe that every passage in the Scriptures can have had but one intended and exclusive meaning when written by the inspired penman, and cannot permit this elastic principle into our canon of interpretation.

We can now proceed to examine the passage as it unfolds its teaching. It is not without significance that the opening and closing members of the structure speak of those who are called and who come “from far”. Isaiah when he speaks of the restoration of Israel, says “Thy sons shall come from far” (Isa. lx. 4), but here are words in these opening and closing verses of Isa. xlix. that show us that the Gentiles are here in view.

“Listen O Isles unto Me.” The Hebrews used the word translated “Isles” in three senses:

- (1) Dry land as opposed to water, “I will make the rivers islands” (Isa. xlii. 15).
- (2) Land surrounded by water, “The isles of the sea” (Esther x. 1).
- (3) All countries divided from Palestine by the sea.

This wider usage is the earliest, for we meet it in Gen. x. 5: “By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands”, and in Jer. xxv. 22 where the A.V. reads “The isles which are beyond the sea”, the margin reads: “region by the sea side”.*

[* - The reader should be safeguarded against a specious interpretation that seizes upon the English word “isle” in order to bolster up a theory concerning Britain and Israel.]

Continuing our study, we read in verse 12:

“Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.”

Sinim is probably China. Some writers have suggested that the word refers to Egypt, others to the inhabitants of Syene, but it seems improbable that the translators of the Septuagint would be ignorant of this if such were the case. Instead, we read in the Septuagint: “and others from the land of the Persians”. Persia extended to the borders of India, and consequently it would be but one step more to China itself. The Arabian knew the Chinese as “Sin”, and the Syrians knew them as “Tsini”. It is not vital to the understanding of the prophecy, whether Sinim refers to China, Persia or any land in particular. The important point being that here is a reference to Gentiles, living in some remote parts of the earth who are to respond to the call and be gathered to the Lord. If we grasp the significance of this fact, we have grasped the key thought of this section.

If we glance at the structure given on page 148 (*see above*) we shall see that not only have we in the opening and closing members an emphasis upon the Gentiles, but we find that the central member uses a word which is not often applied to the nation of Israel, the Hebrew *Goi*. The plural *Goyim* is generally used of the Gentiles, and indeed is the word so translated in Isa. xlix. 6, the juxtaposition of these two references is more than suggestive:

“I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles (*Goyim*)” (Isa. xlix. 6).
“To Him Whom the nation (*Goy*) abhorreth” (xlix. 7).

It is a demonstrable fact that as the people of Israel began to pass off the scene, the Gentile nations are brought nigh, a feature that forms the basis of the Apostle’s argument in Rom. xi. which the reader should consult. As every reader may not be able to refer to the original or be in possession of means to verify the references, we give a selection of passages where *Goy* is used in Isaiah, we say a selection, for the word occurs nearly 70 times in that prophecy:

Used of Israel.

“Ah sinful *nation*, a people laden with iniquity” (i. 4).
“I will send him against an hypocritical *nation*” (x. 6).

Used of the nations.

“All *nations* shall flow unto it” (ii. 2).

“The *nations* are as a drop of a bucket” (xl. 15).

“The *nation* and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish” (lx. 12).

Used of the Gentiles.

“To it shall the *Gentiles* seek” (xi. 10).

“He shall bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*” (xlii. 1).

“Declare My glory among the *Gentiles*” (lxvi. 19).

These focal points in the structure prepare us for the revelation that is now made:

“It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa. xlix. 6).

Two phases of the Redeemer’s work are brought before us in this passage and both phases are amplified as the following arrangement will make clear:

A		a		Tribes of Israel—raised up.
		b		Preserved of Israel—restored.
A		a		To the Gentiles—light.
		b		To the end of the earth—salvation.

The restoration of Israel needs no expansion or emphasis to any reader who has so far followed us through these studies, but as the reference to the Gentiles is of dispensational importance, we give that theme, as here introduced, our attention.

The blessing of the Gentiles was never a ‘mystery’ in the O.T. Scriptures, it was incipient in the covenant with Abraham.

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

Early in the ministry of the Apostle Paul, he saw that the failure of Israel to repent and believe, with the blessing of the Gentile as a sequel, is implied in this prophecy of Isa. xlix.:

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts xiii. 46, 47).

A careful examination of the quotation of Isa. xlix. 6 in this chapter of the Acts, will reveal one or two slight departures both from the Hebrew original and from the Septuagint translation. The fact to be remembered is that Isa. xlix. does not prophecy of Barnabas or Paul, Isaiah did not say of either of these servants of the Lord “I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles”. This is reserved in all its blessed fulness of Christ Himself at His second coming, but Acts xiii. has much in it of a typical character, as for

example, the miraculous blinding of a Jew and the consequent conversion of a Gentile. So the widening purpose is revealed, Israel shall be restored, the far off Gentiles saved, “and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God”.

No.6. Sold for nought. Redeemed without money
(xlix. 13 - lii. 12).
pp. 181 - 186

This section now before us is a long one, and full of problems of interpretation, but it is an essential link between the earlier promise of ‘comfort’ and the glorious revelation of Him Whom alone can be His people’s comfort, namely the suffering yet victorious Messiah of Isa. liii.

The second great portion of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. xl.-xlvi.) opens with the words “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God” (Isa. xl. 1). We then wait until we reach Isa. xlix. 13, the opening verse of our present study, before we read that word ‘comfort’ again. Yet further, it is on this same note that the section ends (Isa. lii. 9).

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth: and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted” (Isa.xlix.13).

“Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem” (Isa. lii. 9).

It is fairly evident that these passages will form the corresponding members in the structure of the section, and with this commencement, we proceed. We are immediately met with such a wealth of material, that it is extremely difficult to close our eyes to the richness of detail, and pursue only the great connecting links in the theme.

As we read and re-read this section, we become conscious of another note that finds its echo in a corresponding passage:

“Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves” (Isa. i. 1).
“Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money” (Isaiah lii. 3).

There follows in Isa. i. that majestic passage concerning the Messiah, the One Who gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and the thrice uttered call to Israel to “hearken” (Isa. li. 1, 4, 7); and the thrice uttered call to “awake” (Isa. li. 9, 17; lii. 1). As these exhaust the remainder of this section of the prophecy, they must have some relation with one another, but at first sight that relationship is not evident. It is there however awaiting the believing and patient seeker. Before the words ‘Hearken’ (Heb. *shamea*) and ‘Awake’ (Heb. *ur*) are used of Israel, they are used of their Messiah, for in Isa. i. 4 we read:

“The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He *wakeneth* morning by morning, He *wakeneth* (Heb. *ur*) ear to *hear* (Heb. *shamea*) as the learned” (Isa. i. 4).

We perceive the underlying structure of this great section, and can proceed to set it forth so that it may be before us as we enter into fuller examination of details.

Isaiah xlix. 13 - lii. 12.

- A | xlix. 13-26. |
 - a | 13. *Sing.*
 - b | 14-26. Reason. The Lord hath comforted His people.
- B | i. 1-3. *Sold.* “For your iniquities.”
- C | i. 4-9. |
 - c | *Wake.* \ The Messiah.
 - d | *Hear.* /
- D | i. 10, 11. The voice of His Servant.
- C | li. 1 - lii. 2. |
 - d | *Hearken.* \ The Lord and
 - c | *Awake.* / His people.
- B | lii. 3. *Sold.* “For nought.”
- A | lii. 9-12. |
 - a | *Sing.*
 - b | Reason. The Lord hath comforted His people.

This section as we observe opens and closes with a song. “Sing, O heavens”, “Sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem”. The rejoicing of the heavens, as well as of the ravaged earth, are by reason of the fact that “The Lord hath comforted His people”. While the call to the heavens to sing, may be explained as the figure of *prosopopoeia* or personation, that explanation must not be so used as to ‘explain away’ the truth. The fate of the earthly city Jerusalem and the fate of the earthly people Israel, is an intimate concern of ‘the heavens’ and they that dwell therein.

Isaiah opens his prophecy with the words “Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth”, and complains of the callous ingratitude of Israel (Isa. i. 2); an ingratitude which led to the desolation of their country (Isa. i. 7). At last however the prophet reaches the blessed opening of the new section, and cries “Comfort ye”, and it is in view of this comfort that the heavens and the waste places are now called upon to sing.

Here, the Lord seems to say, that, just as men sometimes cause the name of someone dear to them, to be tattooed upon their skin, so He had the walls of Zion continually before His mind and in His memory.

The sweetness and blessedness of this fact is not limited to Zion or to Israel, it is a truth that illumines every phase of redeeming love, and every calling of Divine grace. Let us now examine the letters *D* and *D* in the structure previously given:

“Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people they shall bow down to thee and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (xlix. 22, 23).

“I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob” (xlix. 26).

The reader will notice the setting of this ‘knowledge’ of the Lord. Israel shall know, all flesh shall know, but Israel shall know as those who are redeemed. In a period of awful judgment, all flesh shall know that the Lord is Israel’s Redeemer.

The words “They shall know that I am the Lord” are used in the great Redemption Book, the book of Exodus. If we will but let these passages speak to us, we shall be able the better to understand the import of the two passages that are quoted above in Isa. xlix.

The passages as they occur in Exodus are as follows:

- A | “I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God:
and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God,
which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (vi. 7).
- B | Plagues. | “The Egyptians shall know . . . when I stretch forth Mine hand
upon Egypt” (vii. 5).
“In this thou shalt know . . . I will smite” (vii. 17).
- C | Lord of all. | a | “None like unto the Lord” (viii. 10).
b | “In midst of the earth” (viii. 22).
a | “None like Me” (ix. 14).
b | “The earth is the Lord’s” (ix. 29).
- C | Signs among them. |
a | “Signs done among them” (x. 2).
a | “Difference between Egyptians and Israel” (xi. 7).
b | “Honour upon Pharaoh” (xiv. 4).
b | “Honour upon Pharaoh” (xiv. 18).
- B | Manna. | “Ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out
from the land of Egypt” (xvi. 6).
“Ye shall know that I am the Lord your God” (xvi. 12).
- A | “I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.
And they shall know that I am the Lord your God,
that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them:
I am the Lord their God” (xxix. 45, 46).

Here in Exodus is a foreshadowing of what will take place on a larger scale at the time of the end. In Exodus, it was the Egyptians that were taught by the terrible plagues to acknowledge the Lord. In Isaiah it is “all flesh” that “oppresses” and that shall learn the same lesson. There in Exodus it was a typical redemption, here, in Isaiah it will be the glorious reality. The emphasis that there is “None like the Lord” found in Exodus, is echoed in the passages already studied in Isaiah. The fact that the earth is the Lord’s (Exod. ix. 29) forms a part of the Seraph’s worshipping testimony in Isa. vi. God intends that all men shall know, but there is an indication in the use of this expression both in Exodus and in Isaiah, that some will know the Lord as their Redeemer, whereas, some will only know the Lord as the Redeemer of His people, a knowledge that leaves them still unsaved. The subject however is not exhausted by these references or by these two sub-divisions. The knowledge of the Lord finds a big place in the N.T. both in its doctrine for the immediate present, and in its hope on the approaching future. We can but indicate the trend of these passages.

**No.7. (xlix. 13 - lii. 12).
The awakened ear (l. 4 - 9).
pp. 233 - 239**

It may be somewhat difficult at first to perceive the relation of the opening verses of Isa. l. with the chapter going before. If we read the passage and allow our minds to be occupied with the subject of ‘divorce’ to the exclusion of the object with which that question of divorce is introduced we may find it hard to believe that there is any continuity. The reader will remember that in Isa. xl., the blessed promise of restoration is met by doubt, which the Lord dispels by saying, in effect:

Truly, all flesh is grass, but the restoration of My people is not going to be brought about by “flesh”, it is the Word of the Lord that endureth for ever, and it is the promise and the Promiser, not poor frail man, that pledges the restoration of His land and people.

In the great section that is before us, namely Isa. xlix. 13 - lii. 12, we shall find the glorious promises interwoven with similar doubts that arise in the heart, as though the prospect were indeed too good to be true and that the mind is haunted by memories of its own lapse and failure.

Redemption is no sooner celebrated by a call to the heavens to ‘sing’ and to the earth to be ‘joyful’ then there is interposed the doubt:

“But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (xlix. 14).

This doubt is met by a question:

“Can a woman forget her sucking child?” (Isa. xlix. 15).

Then the blessed promise of restoration is resumed:

“Kings shall be thy nursing fathers they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me”
(Isa. xlix. 23).

The doubter says:

“Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?” (Isa. xlix. 24),

and again the Lord assures the doubting soul by saying:

“Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away I will save thy children”
(Isa. xlix. 25).

Then for a third time the voice of doubt is heard, this time implied in the reference to the bill of divorcement and the selling of children for debt:

“The form in which this challenge is put, assumes that the Israelites themselves had been thinking of Jehovah’s dismissal of Israel as an irrevocable divorce and a bankrupt sale into slavery” (Geo. A. Smith).

Until the student of Isaiah is acquainted in some degree with the law of Moses, the point of the reference to a bill of divorcement may be missed. In Deut. xxiv. 1-4, we find the law concerning divorcement and read:

“When a man hath taken a wife find no favour then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife”.

Here, as Geo. Adam Smith says, are the ideas of absoluteness, deliberateness and finality; -- of absoluteness, for throughout the East, power of divorce rests entirely with the husband; of deliberateness, for in order to prevent hasty divorce the Hebrew law insisted that the husband must make a bill of writing of divorce instead of only speaking dismissal; and of finality, for such a writing, in contrast to the spoken dismissal, set the divorce beyond recall.

The second figure introduced by the doubting Israelites is that of the sale of children by a father who put his children away, not as the husband put his wife away in his anger, but in his necessity, selling them to pay his debts and because he was bankrupt.

Israel had indeed been put away, but the very essence of Isaiah’s prophecy is that their dismissal *was not beyond recall*, they shall yet be restored and comforted. Israel had indeed been sold, but they had *sold themselves!*

“Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away” (Isa. l. 1).

It is ever the same. Man, who is a responsible agent and suffers for his own actions, flies from a guilty conscience to some fatalistic theory which he disguises under the high

sounding title of “The Sovereignty of God” and credits some decree of God with the results of his own sin.

Quite a number of commentators read the words of Isa. 1. 1 in the light of John i. 11, “He came to His own, and His own received Him not”, but this does not fit the context of Isa. 1. well enough, neither does it give room for the testimony of a similar phrase in other parts of Isaiah in prophecy. This debated passage reads:

“Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?” (Isa. 1. 2).

It will be observed that the argument is not concerned with whether men believed or did not believe, which is the argument of John i. 11, but whether there was any lack of power or ability on the part of the Lord.

Keeping to the second half of Isaiah, we observe that the expression ‘no man’ or ‘not a man’ occurs as follows:

- A | xli. 28. *Good tidings.* Behold there was no man.
- B | 1. 2. *Deliverance.* No man, none to answer.
Is His arm shortened.
- C | lvii. 1. *Perishing.* No man layeth it to heart.
- B | lix. 16. *Salvation.* No man, no intercessor.
His arm brought salvation.
- A | lxiii. 3. *Vengeance.* Not a man with Me.

If we but quote at length the last two references, we shall have no need to go to John i. 11 for light:

“And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation” (Isa. lix. 16).

“I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me” (Isa. lxiii. 5).

Before entering upon the examination of the next section, a blessed anticipation of Isa. liii., in that it speaks of the suffering, yet triumphant Saviour, it will be helpful to have an outline of the general theme.

Isaiah 1. 1 - lii. 3.

- B | 1. 1-3. Ye have sold yourselves.
- C | 1. 4-9. |
 - c | *Awake.* \ The Messiah.
 - d | *Hear.* /
- D | 1. 10, 11. The voice of His Servant.
- C | li. 1 - lii. 2. |
 - d | *Hear.* \ The Lord and
 - c | *Awake.* / His people.
- B | lii. 3. Ye have sold yourselves.

Such is the barest outline, but its value is in the fact that by the exclusion of detail it forces upon the attention the evident parallel between the Messiah Whose ear was *awakened to hear* (Isa. 1. 4-9), and Israel who are called upon to *hearken* and to *awake*. The passage which deals with the Messiah is rich enough and full enough to occupy all the space available in this article, leaving Isa. li. and lii. for future consideration.

A noteworthy feature of the brief passage before us namely Isa. 1. 4-9 is the fourfold repetition of the Divine title “The Lord God”, *Adonai Jehovah*. *The Companion Bible* says of *Adonai*:

“*Adonai* is the Lord in His relation to the earth; and as carrying out His purposes of blessing in the earth.”

“*Jehovah* is the same God (as *Elohim* the creator of all things) in *covenant relation* to those whom He has created (cp. II Chron. xviii. 31).”

Isaiah 1. 4 - 9.

The Lord God.	The tongue.		a		Tongue of learned
			b		that I should know
			c		word in season
			c		To the weary
			b		He wakeneth
			a		Ear of learned
The Lord God.	The ear.		a		Opened ear
			b		not rebellious
			c		neither turned back
			d		My back
			d		My cheeks
			a		face not hid
			b		shame
			c		spitting
The Lord God.	Help.		a		Not confounded
			b		As a flint
			c		not ashamed
			d		He is near
			e		Justifieth
			f		Who contend?
			f		stand together
			e		Adversary
			d		come near
			a		Who condemned?
			b		As a garment
The Lord God.	Help.		c		Moth eaten.

The Lord God is deeply concerned for His people, and has a purpose of mercy and of love that involves His beloved Servant the Messiah in vicarious suffering, a subject which reaches its zenith in Isa. liii., but which finds a noble prelude in the passage

before us. Israel must 'hearken' and 'awake' if they are to be saved, He, their Messiah will 'awake' and 'hear' so that He may have a word in season for the weary: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned" (Isa. l. 4). We must remove at once the false idea created by the word 'learned'. Today such a term connotes scholarship and venerable learning, whereas the word here means, rather 'discipleship'. Isaiah has already used a word that means 'learned' it is *yada sepher* "to know a book" and occurs in Isa. xxix. 11, 12. Here in Isa. l. 4 the Hebrew words used is *limmud* which is found in the first instance in Isa. viii. 16 where it is translated 'disciples'. All God's children *shall be taught (limmud)* of the Lord (Isa. liv. 13) in the day of their restoration and so the Messiah adds to the 'awakening' and the 'hearing' which must also characterize them, this attitude of the 'learned'.

This 'tongue of the disciplined' is given to the Messiah that He may know how "to speak a word in season to him that is weary". There is no word in the original for 'season' in this passage. The single Hebrew word *uth* means 'to succour' and while the recognition of this robs us of the lovely associations of 'a word in season' it restores what is more important, a connection with a passage in the N.T.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18).

We have in other studies noted a close connection that exists both physically and spiritually between the 'tongue' and the 'ear'. Many are dumb simply because they are deaf. When the Lord would heal the man who was dumb He removed his deafness:

"And straightway his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain" (Mark vii. 35).

It has been the experience of most faithful witnesses that the opened ear and the opened mouth lead to the smitten back, the plucked hair, the shame and the spitting. Blessed be God, our Saviour Whose heart was tender, set His face 'like a flint'. He was strong in the righteousness of His cause and said:

"He is near that justifieth Me" (Isa. l. 8).

Adversaries must wax old as a garment, but He remains:

"Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, and today and for ever."

Thoughts on John's Gospel

No.6. Chapter vi. pp. 11 - 15

This chapter (vi.) starts off with the feeding of the five thousand. Arising from this, the Jews refer to the manna (verse 31) and in the chapter Christ develops this theme to say He was the true Living Bread from heaven sent by God:

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (vi. 51).

Finally Christ links the bread with His flesh and that with His words:

“ he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (vi. 57).

“ the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (vi. 63).

“Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (vi. 68).

We should remember that the words of our Lord are not only those recorded in the four Gospels and spoken by Him during His earthly life, but just as important to us, are the words He gave to Paul to record after His resurrection and ascension.

In common with other chapters of this Gospel, the Lord Jesus here glorifies His Father by stressing the part God has taken in bringing us to this source of spiritual nourishment and eternal life:

(1) Guidance of the Son by the Father.

“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” (vi. 15).

Matthew adds (xiv. 23) that this was to pray. Here was a crisis, the crowd wanting to make Him a king. Our Lord seeks the guidance of His Father.

(2) The seal of God the Father on the work of His Son.

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed” (vi. 27).

A seal to us in this life is evidence that a certain person has authorized the terms of a written document. It is used twice in John's Gospel, here and in John xxxi. 32: “He that received His (Christ's) testimony hath set to his seal that God is true”. Where we believe the words of Christ and accept His act of redemption recorded in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit confirms with our spirit that God is true. This is testimony (like a seal) that all our readers, we hope, have experienced. Here in John vi. 27 the point is that God the Father

will raise from the dead His Son and this will be the Father's seal (visible evidence and proof of intent) to our hope of resurrection to eternal life.

(3) The will of the Father.

"I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (vi. 38).

(4) The Father has in His control the choice of the elect. This is a disturbing statement but one we have to face:

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (vi. 44).
". . . . therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (vi. 65).

Consider the following:

"But as many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He (Christ) power to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believed on His (Christ's) name" (John i. 12).

But see how this is qualified by: ". . . . which were born of God". So here again God has the final control.

(5) God has a hand in our spiritual education and with that instruction we come to Christ.

"It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh to Me" (vi. 45).

The prophets here can be Isa. liv. 13 and Jer. xxxi. 34, specific future occasions when God will put His word into the hearts of Israel, but it must surely extend back to contemporary and present times.

These five features indicate functions of God the Father complementary to the work of the Son. The seeming separate manifestations of the Deity present problems to some. God is Spirit and we have no conception of what He is like in essence. Christ Himself said of His Father:

"Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape" (John v. 37).

How is God going to achieve His declared purpose of being "all in all" with man (I Cor. xv. 28) when He Himself is unknowable by man? To do this He has caused Himself to be represented by terms that the human mind can understand. This is a great condescension on God's part for any human title carries with it a limitation of meaning and it limits His glory to have to apply to Himself for example the human title of 'father'.

We have here a subject too big for this article so we can only give pointers. To righteously redeem fallen man God had Himself to assume human flesh and die on the cross. To do this God provided the conception of Father and Son. Through the example of Abraham and the record of John iii. 16 God could thus in this complementary figure demonstrate His love for the world and His plan of salvation. We have seen in this

chapter of John how this figure of Father and Son was carried to reality. The Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect and obedient Son to the Father throughout His ministry to the last moments on the cross, when he could say of His Father's work for Him: "It is finished".

As we look over this chapter we think of those words which occurs towards the end of this Gospel:

" these are written (the selected signs and words), that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John xx. 31).

In the chapter before us we have life and eternal life repeated again and again:

" . . . the Bread of God giveth life unto the world" (vi. 33).
" . . . the Father's will that I should raise it (the believer) up again at the last day" (39).
" . . . every one that believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (40).
" . . . I will raise him up at the last day" (44).
" . . . he that believeth on Me has everlasting life" (47).
" . . . if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (51a)
" . . . My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (51b).
"whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (54).
" . . . he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever" (58).

Only when we extract such a feature and list the occurrences do we realize how important it is considered by the Holy Spirit. The whole work of Christ is directed to this end—that we might have eternal life. We might take serious thought to the solemn result to those who willfully refuse this most wonderful gift.

The Bible's history of Israel's response to God has many similarities to that made by mankind in general today. Consider Israel's dreadful reaction to God manifesting Himself to the representatives of that nation and His glory to all that people.

"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness" (Exod. xxiv. 9, 10).

The nation's leaders had seen this amazing appearance and yet after only forty days absence by Moses in attendance on God this incredible people pressed Aaron to make them gods: ". . . . for as for this Moses we wot not what has become of him" (Exod. xxxii. 1).

Christ appeared again to Israel two thousand years ago, this time in human flesh and the twelve apostles have witnessed to us His life and resurrection, yet is there not a similar careless response by the world today to this precious Gift of God? Only the man lost and dying of hunger and thirst learns the true value of bread and water that he has lightly regarded under easy circumstances. May we who are blessed be primed and

prepared to make known to those around us this glorious message of life eternal in Christ Jesus.

No.7. Chapter vii.
pp. 37 - 40

“Now the Jew’s feast of the tabernacles was at hand” (vii. 2).

It is not generally realized what an extensive place the word “Tabernacle” has in the Word of God. Israel was used by God to show in terms for human understanding His gracious desire to dwell with men and eventually to take those, who have responded, to Himself.

The Tabernacle was a temporary dwelling place for God whilst His people Israel were pilgrims in the wilderness. Every detail of its construction and contents were designed by God, and Moses was warned to adhere strictly to the instructions God passed to him for the building and furnishing of the Tabernacle. All these details were symbol of how God had dealt with Israel (for example the pot of manna) and set forth in type God’s plans for the future redemption and restoration of mankind.

Heb. ix. confirms the place this erection had in God’s purposes:

“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Heb. ix. 8).

The description of the Tabernacle occupies 15 chapters of Exodus (xxv.-xl.) and this underlines the importance it must have had in the mind of God. In these days when faith is so dim, and evident revelation seems so long ago, it is good to reflect that the great God of the universe came and dwelt with His chosen people, identified to the congregation by the visible fire by night and the cloud by day. These historical facts should be our comfort and strength that He Who is ever the same has us also firmly in His eternal purpose and love.

The Day of the Lord when Christ will return to the Mount of Olives still includes an aspect of the Tabernacle:

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations . . . And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of olives And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles” (Zech. xiv. 1-4, 16).

Finally the prophecy of Rev. xxi.:

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them” (Rev. xxi. 1, 3).

In the context of Zech. xiv. the nations are compelled to keep the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem or suffer the penalty of drought.

Returning to John vii. 37 our Lord knowing the Jews sought to kill Him, bravely attended that great feast, and on the last day stood and cried:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.”

These symbolic words are an echo of John iv. 14 where a similar message was given to the woman of Samaria. It is spiritual water that will pour out for the life of the world. It is significant in Zech. xiv. when “the Lord shall be King over all the earth” then:

“. . . . living water shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them towards the former sea, and half towards the hinder sea” (Zech. xiv. 8).

This spate of fresh water from the depths, will heal the salt Dead Sea and bring life to all that valley.

Our opening remarks are an attempt to give a background to John vii. through which we find a common theme, that of the question of man’s judgment of the events concerning, and the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ:

“The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil” (vii. 7).

The Jewish leaders had a strong tradition for the interpretation of the Mosaic Law and many rulings depended on what various Rabbis had declared in the past—much like the precedent of English Case Law today. For one, who in their opinion was unlearned, to stand up and express doctrine without reference to tradition was inflammatory and engendered the hate to which our Lord refers. Where our personal judgments are questioned pride enters in. All personal opinions and values must be moved from self to those emanating from the Word of God led by the indwelling Spirit of Truth.

How easy to write a sentence like that but how extremely difficult to put it into practice. We really have to learn humility and empty ourselves that He may fill us. Only in that spirit can He use us. If we have personal reservations on the truth of the Bible or of the completely righteous path of God, we shall fail. Degrees of irritation can arise in our heart and spoil the glorious appreciation of God’s desire, and steps to dwell and tabernacle with us.

Our Lord’s brethren were skeptical and jealous, egging Him on to what they knew were for Him perilous streets of Jewry.

He replied to them:

“My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready” (vii. 6).

What a wealth of purpose is hidden behind “My time is not yet come”. Instructed by His Father, the Son’s life was made up of fulfilling prophecy. The prophetic Word of God is the vindication before heaven and earth in the future that all things were and are controlled by Him and that they are inexorably working to the final fulfillment of His plans. This fulfillment will be made despite the deadly opposition of Satan throughout the ages which seeks to sabotage this glorious work of restoration.

Our Lord has to ensure that as the “Lamb of God” He should eat the Passover with His disciples, and on the same day (the Jewish day, 6a.m. to 6p.m.), the exact day be offered up as the Passover Lamb, and by His death preserve the life of the household of God.

This well attested fact of history, should in the eyes of the world, demonstrate the truth and accuracy of the O.T. record from the Passover Lamb of the exodus through the Temple ritual to successive pronouncements of God’s prophets.

No.8. Chapter viii. pp. 55 - 59

This chapter (viii.) is one of confrontation between our Lord and the leaders, the scribes and Pharisees. We saw them in the last chapter desperate to stop the teaching of Christ. With what anticipatory excitement they must have forced on our Lord the issue of judgment on a woman taken in the very act of adultery (see Lev. xx. 10 for the penalty of death). Which ever way Christ judged they felt that it would either show His violation of the Law or bring alienation from the common people. They had nationally been constantly guilty of spiritual adultery going after other gods when Jehovah looked upon Himself as their husband. It is ironic that physical adultery featured in their test. Our Lord’s reply that the one without sin was to cast the first stone, left them defeated. What gracious words He addressed to this poor woman:

“Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (viii. 11).

Throughout the following verses our Lord in patient love seeks to show His violent opponents that Satan unknown to them was their driving force, using them for his own schemes to sabotage the plans of God. How can some today deny the existence of Satan, saying that it is only the contrariness of man’s heart that is wrong and that Satan is a figure of sin generally and not a person. Consider:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (viii. 44).

In saying this our Lord may well have had in mind the first recorded lie: “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. iii. 4) and the action of Cain who could have been the progeny of Satan

(I John iii. 12). For the one who is an unbeliever in Christ and is therefore *not* a child of God, the domination by Satan can be a very real thing. It might be helpful to remind ourselves of a passage from Luke's Gospel:

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the *power of the enemy*: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father; and Who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him” (Luke x. 17-22).

The scribes and Pharisees by their very refusal to see and accept Christ as the “sent” Son of God were spiritually blinded, asking derisory questions:

“Where is Thy Father?” (viii. 19).
“Who art Thou?” (viii. 25).

These leaders were the ‘wise and prudent’ of Luke x. 21. If we come as “babes” (same verse) relying in faith to be taught by our Father we shall be illumined by the “Light of the World”. Another comparison we find made by Christ:

“And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the son abideth for ever” (viii. 35).

This thought is echoed in I John ii. 17: “And the world passes away but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever”. The servant dies in service. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (viii. 34). Christ warned the scribes that unless they repented they would die in their sins (viii. 21).

To those who threatened His life our Lord patiently points out that there are two witnesses to the Truth. His words, given Him by the Father, and His miracles, the witness of the invisible Father through the hands of Christ. Such was our Lord's reply to their unreasonable statement that “Thy record is not true” (viii. 13).

Well may we say that these words today are constantly put into the mouths of many people by Satan. It is just like Satan's first attack on God's word by his lying suggestion “Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. iii. 4). The constant denial of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is repeated in many forms by people both in and out of organized religion. If Satan can weaken or destroy the channel by which the knowledge of God and His salvation comes, the ground is clear for every evil idea of departure from the way God has planned.

One extreme of such deviation results in the practice of sodomy. This is repeatedly condemned by God in the Old and New Testaments yet the voice of church leaders is silent. The press report frightening advances of religious cults. These misuse the Bible and bear fruits of disruption of family ties and twisted minds. All this is because Satan is

being allowed to silence and weaken the Word of God. How thankful we should be that like the Ephesians, Paul could also have said to us:

“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. ii. 1, 2).

The continued patient appeal of reason to the Pharisees left them still rebellious to the truth. Their final charge against our Lord was:

“Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” (viii. 48).

When they made this utterance Satan must have felt that here at least for him with these leaders was victory:

“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. xii. 32).

The climax of this chapter is in verse 58:

“Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM” (viii. 58).

Here our Lord unequivocally claims the O.T. name God gave to Himself when Moses enquired of Him His designation:

“Say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exod. iii. 14).

Satan is powerless to disrupt the prophesied plan of salvation and although they pick up stones to kill the Lord of Glory, He passes through the midst of them unharmed. How we should continually praise God that His Son was preserved to achieve the work of redemption on the cross on our behalf. Our praise should equally be given to Him that His Word of Truth has been placed in our hands giving us access by faith and His spirit into His presence.

Finally with Satan still in our minds observe how he had his disciples ready when Paul began to turn from the Jews to the Gentile. Paul and Barnabas had found at Paphos a deputy of the country interested in the truth:

“And when they had gone through the isle of Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus: which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer . . . withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul (who also is called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou *child of the devil*, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to *pervert* the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts xiii. 6-10).

This attempt by Satan to pervert (turn aside from its proper use - dictionary definition) the right ways of the Lord continues to this present day.

The parable of the sower shows that it is those by the wayside who do not understand the Word that are robbed of the Seed of life by Satan. Paul in that wonderful letter to the Ephesians warns them of this dangerous foe:

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places And take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God” (Eph. vi. 11, 12, 17).

Our digression on this subject is to emphasize that Satan appears to be working through those under his control to accelerate the decline in human standards and the encouragement of every perversion and departure from perfect family relationships and responsibilities that God laid down in the beginning. God’s ways, His love and Truth all have a common aim, that of eventual unity between His children and then Himself. Every thought and action not contributing to this divine aim, find affinity with those who took up stones against the Lord Jesus Christ.

No.9. Chapter ix. **pp. 75 - 80**

Key words of this chapter (ix.) could well be:

“I am the Light of the world” (ix. 5).

This is an echo of John i. 9:

“That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”

Sight depends on light to illumine the object to be seen. Spiritual sight depends on the Light of the world. Verse 5 is prefaced by “as long as I am in the world”. We today have the privilege of ‘shining as lights in the world’ (Phil. ii. 15) and so continuing in our smaller measure the wonderful light that the Saviour brought into a world of darkness. Spiritual sight is the fruit of the believer’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Before we have faith or belief there must be knowledge:

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. x. 17).

Hardness of heart about which we read so much consists of man’s resistance to this Word of God, his refusal to humbly accept it and his ready forgetfulness of its message. In all ages man has sought his own prestige by attempting to secure his salvation by his own efforts and by the glory of his own mental and physical accomplishments. God’s way for fulness of life by reclamation and the salvation of man is the one and only way—the way the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished to the full on our behalf for His Father. This way is just and righteous and when man understands and accepts it in faith it will be

found acceptable to man's reason in every respect. It is only the hardness of man's heart that refuses out of pride to see God as the Author of His record.

Lack of faith as we have said induces spiritual blindness and the result is widespread refusal to accept the Bible's authority and plenary inspiration. To accept only part of this record is to place man in judgment on the Holy Spirit as to how much of His own words He managed to get recorded in the canon of Scripture. Diversity of human opinions (resulting from only partial acceptance of the inspiration of the Scriptures) is evidenced by a multitude of separate Christian church bodies all having their own opinions of emphasis, selection or addition, especially addition to the record provided by God.

Israel were an example all through their history of the effect of the dire results that accrue from the neglect of or lack of faith in the words of God. In Exod. xix. Israel met with God:

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount” (Exod. xix. 17).

There Israel saw some of the glory of God—smoke, fire, earthquake and the sound of the trumpet. Moses began to give them the words of God (chapter xx.) and God authorizes them by prefacing the ten commandments and all that follows by:

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

In His earthly ministry, Christ patiently besought the Jews to see His marvelous works as the power and presence of His Father working with Him. God has always given man good grounds for faith and it is only the hardness of heart that man has inflicted on himself that has kept him from the blessing and riches of the Truth.

Moses on the instructions of God returned to the mountain top to receive details of the Tabernacle and other instructions. And Moses said:

“Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matter to do, let him come unto them” (Exod. xxiv. 14).

Moses was only absent forty days but on his return Israel had already forgotten that it was God Who had brought them out of Egypt and had also forgotten the express words of Exod. xx. 23 “Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold”. What words of their's could be more obtuse or rebellious than:

“. . . . make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, *the man that brought us up* out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him” (Exod.xxxii.1).

At the time of these events the skin of Moses' face shone after having been in the presence of the Lord. Because of the fear this caused among the people, Moses put a veil over his face. It is remarkable that this action has been perpetuated to the present day by a veil being worn by the reader of the law in a synagogue.

“. . . . until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament (covenant)” (II Cor. iii. 14).

Paul is saying in this chapter of Corinthians that because Moses had a veil on his face to obscure the reflected glory of God attending the giving of the law etc., they could not see when in reality the shine went from the face of Moses. So while this veil was still there (in our Lord's time) at the reading of the law, in symbol there was a veil over their spiritual eyesight that obscured the fact that the glory of the law was being replaced by the glory of Christ and His law of the Spirit.

So we come back to John ix. and the healing of the man born blind. The circumstances related should prevent human misunderstanding of its teaching. First the man born blind is indicative of his desperate and helpless condition. Then the question of sin is eliminated and the plain purpose of the miracle is stated:

“Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents (to cause this blindness): but that the works of God should be made manifest in him” (ix. 3).

Christ could have spoken words and healed the blind man but to help the faith of man in this instance He links Himself with the miracle by making the clay. How necessary was this action, for the Jews said to the man: “Give God the praise” thus seeking to eliminate the channel of blessing even though the source was the same. Notice the Jews demand for a third account of the healing and the man's reply to them: “I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again?”. Here is a willful deafness. Look at their impudent comment:

“We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is” (ix. 29).

Compare this with their forefather's comment at Mount Sinai about Moses who they now acknowledge:

“. . . . as for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him” (Exod.xxxii.1).

The blind man's knowledge grows from “a man that is called Jesus” (ix. 11) to “a prophet” (17) and finally his faith in and worship of Jesus as “the Son of God” (35-38). The man's faith enables him to give personal testimony in the face of threats from the Jewish leaders. Even so the best testimony that any man can offer the world is the utter conviction from his heart that in Christ is ALL life, hope and truth.

The healing of the blind man was another miracle performed on the sabbath day. The Pharisees and the other leaders were obsessed with detail of sabbath observance rather than remembering the One Who ordained it and the meaning behind it—the day of rest and restoration that the Saviour was there to bring to them. The leaders of the Jews prided themselves in their knowledge of the law and its interpretation. Thus our Lord could say: “You say you see”.

The Lord had told Moses that He was ‘long suffering’ (Exod. xxxiv. 6) and how many times in the O.T. do we see this blessed attribute of God demonstrated. There does come a time when ‘there is no remedy’. See the culmination of many rebellious acts by Israel in II Chronicles:

“. . . . 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” (II Chron. xxxvi. 16).

Here is a people chosen by God to teach the world about Himself and we find a crisis has arrived when they are unusable and there is ‘no remedy’ for their correction. Let us digress again and seek to understand in part how our God works. God has the supernatural power to see the ages ahead and their happenings. This is quite beyond us to explain or understand. It is a fact, for God has placed in the Scriptures prophetic happenings of future events, many of which have been fulfilled and many are still to happen. God created the angels and man with free choice. Prophecy touches both these realms. What we must not think is that God causes His prophecies to come true by making us mere puppets. What He does do is to overrule the actions of Satan and his spirits and the activities of rebellious man in such a way that His final purpose is achieved. Throughout the ages there has been this dual action going on and the reason why God permits this interference with His plans would seem to be that He has a wide long term education for man and the spirit world. The goal of this tuition is to show that the ways of God are always best and result therefore in the greatest good for man and for the redeemed or saved in final unity with their Creator and Redeemer.

Having such thoughts in mind consider the warning God sent to Israel by the hand of Isaiah:

“Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed (cp. John ix. 41), but perceive not. Make (declare) the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isa. vi. 9, 10).

To understand this prophecy we must view it as a decision by God to institute a period of time when He would not only nationally refuse spiritual sight to Israel but would leave their land wasted and untenanted. God waited patiently, delaying this sentence, and the warning was repeated (Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 40; Acts xxviii. 26, 27; Rom. xi. 8). Acts xxviii. was the last time the warning was nationally disregarded and the period of blindness commenced for Israel.

The advent of Christ gave to all the opportunity to see the Light and receive spiritual illumination. It alas also supplied condemnation to those that preferred the darkness that fitted their deeds:

“And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth” (John ix. 39-41).

May our complete and utter faith in the Word of God enable the Holy Spirit to have full access to our minds and so yield acceptable service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

No.10. Chapter x.
pp. 92 - 96

This chapter (x.) centres largely on a parable of sheep, their shepherd, their pasture and their enemies. In verse 6 it is written: “They understood not what things they were which He spoke unto them”. The thing is, do we understand? The figures we refer to above, represent factors in our life today. The words of our Lord are precious to us and vitally important, but if their deep import is missed how tragic the loss for us.

The Good Shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ and His own sheep are those who believe on His Name. What of the pasture, the most important thing in the life of a sheep? Turn to John xxi. 15 and onwards. Peter is being exhorted by the Lord to care for His flock after His ascension:

- John xxi. 15 Feed (*bosko*—pasture)
My lambs (*arnion*—a little lamb, the immature believer).
- John xxi. 16 Feed (*pornaino*—tend as a shepherd)
My sheep (*probaton*—an adult sheep, the developing believer).
- John xxi. 17 Feed (*bosko*—pasture)
My sheep (*probaton*).

Again, turn to Peter’s epistles to see how he carried out this charge with the help of the Holy Spirit:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby”
(I Pet. ii. 2).

The first principles are recommended for study for the beginner. (cp. Heb. v. 12-14).

“We have also a more sure (steadfast) word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star (light bearer) arise in your hearts: 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. 19-21).

Peter is adding to his personal witness of the person of Christ by referring the believer to God’s authorized record of His Son’s act and words especially at that time to the O.T. with its education by types and prophetic words concerning Christ’s advent. The reference to the dawn and the day star gives a beautiful picture of the believer growing spiritually nearer to his Lord by patient attention to His Word and so becoming a ‘light

bearer' in joyous and profitable service. Here is the picture of Shepherd and pasture, finding its intended goal.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (II Pet. ii. 1).

Here Peter ‘tends as a shepherd’ and warns of the wolves (John x. 12) who with false doctrine would confuse and scatter the sheep. Consider “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matt. vii. 15). One can see many such around today.

In II Pet. iii. he addressed the mature believers to ‘stir up’ their remembrance of the O.T., warning them that the judgment of God had fallen in the past and would fall in the future (consider those who today scoff at the account of the universal flood and hence for whom future judgment has no terrors). The dispensation of law changed with the death of our Saviour to one of grace at the revelation of the dispensation of the Mystery (Ephesians iii. 9 R.V.). May we make the most of the period before it ends and that of judgment begins.

So then the pasture for the sheep (the believer—the new man) is the Word of God. Spiritual under-nourishment throws us open to all sorts of dangers, just as physical under-nourishment lowers the resistance of the body to the attacks of germs and other ills.

Verse 3. The Porter openeth to the Good Shepherd. Verses 7 and 9 “I am the door”. Verse 30 “I and My Father are one”. Here the work of Father and Son merge in a mystical unity.

“He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John x. 1).

Today one would think it obvious that to be a Christian, the understanding and acceptance of God’s plan of life and redemption through the work of Christ on Calvary, was an essential part and that there was ‘no other way’. But consider the witness and statements of many professing Christians both lay and leaders, and one is taken aback by what is considered sufficient for acceptance by God. God through His beloved Son has not spoken lightly on this matter: “who climbeth up some other way is a thief and a robber”.

Who were these thieves and robbers that had come before Him (x. 8)? They were indeed those who sought to enter the fold other than by the Saviour Himself (x. 1). The one who attempts to by-pass God’s plan of salvation is not only robbing his followers of their salvation but more often than not is making personal gain in the process. Our Lord discloses some aspects of this in Matt. xxiii. where He denounces the scribes and Pharisees. Without naming names today consider the many rich religious cults which have robbed the Lord Jesus Christ of His rightful place as the only Mediator between God and men.

How are we to understand the use of the figure of the ‘voice’ of the Good Shepherd? We cannot audibly hear the voice of the Lord Jesus but the Holy Spirit will glorify the Son of God (see John xvi. 13, 14) by guiding our spirit into understanding the Word of God and guiding us in our service for the Father too:

“And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice” (x. 4).

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit—the voice of the Good Shepherd—the believer will not be enticed by the voice of ‘the stranger’. Nor will the faithful believer be shaken or deterred by the voice of some of the ‘higher critics’, or the flood of educational statements on evolutionary theories that conflict with Scripture:

“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him” (x. 5).

“Stranger” is *allotrios*—belonging to another, that is other than the Holy Spirit.

Even as the Lord commissioned Peter to ‘feed the lambs and the sheep’, so as we grow in the service of the Lord we are expected to serve the flock, leading the young in faith to the riches of the Word of God and by example exhibit the fruit of the Spirit for their emulation. We should be experienced in the words of comfort and guidance with which the Scriptures abound.

“I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (x. 11).

In the near context of John fills out this figurative picture by our Lord’s words:

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father” (x. 17, 18).

This statement of the Lord Jesus Christ leaves no room for His enemies to say His life ended in failure. Here is a categorical link—Christ is laying down His life for the believer—He has power to do this and He has power to take it again so that His resurrection is the blessed assurance of eternal life for every believer. Moreover and this is vitally important, “This commandment have I received of My Father”.

The authority, approval and participation of God the Father is claimed by the Son, the witnesses of His resurrection prove the truth of His claims.

When you consider the crass disobedience of Israel throughout their historical record in the Bible and this in the face of a patient and long suffering and merciful Jehovah it is utterly amazing that John could write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (John iii. 16).

Then again on the Son’s part:

“Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life” (x. 17).

Here is a most wonderful display of love and grace extended to man by both Father and Son in concert. We surely should seek to match our response to our Creator’s deep concern for us.

No.11. Chapter xi. pp. 157 - 160

With all these articles on the chapters of John’s Gospel, we have sought the purpose of the Holy Spirit in selecting just the few incidents from 3½ years’ ministry by our Lord when innumerable addresses had been given, actions and miracles performed. This Gospel is largely set to show the links between God the Father (unknowable in essence), the Lord Jesus Christ (the sent one) and the written and spoken Word (the Bible). Mankind is lost without this chain of testimony. The savant and hopeful philosopher seek without success to establish a “Being” or “first cause” that can satisfy their independent ego.

The raising of Lazarus seems to stand next in importance to the Lord’s own resurrection:

“Jesus said, This sickness is not unto death, *but for the glory of God, that the Son of Go might be glorified thereby*” (xi. 4).

Demonstration was needed to proclaim to the countless thousands in the future who would die believing in the Lord Jesus that their future heritage was assured even though that resurrection day might be delayed for a long time. The Lord Jesus purposely delayed coming to His friend:

“When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was” (xi. 6).

The deity of our Lord Jesus Christ can bring problems to the human mind. The power to raise and quicken the dead by God and His Son can also raise questions. In both cases we need to let the Holy Spirit in the Word of God express facts in His own words. As soon as man, perhaps with the best of intentions, seeks to analyze, explain or try to reconcile the powers and positions of God and His Son he is lost and error must creep in.

God saw fit to manifest Himself in the person of His Son. God has stated the limitations He has placed on Himself, that in Christ we have the perfect man, begotten by the Father, qualified to redeemed us righteously from our sins. Nothing man writes must weaken this position. On the other hand the Scriptures and especially John’s Gospel underline the full and complete link between Father and Son so essential to confirm the Son’s words and His authority. Look up all the references that refer to the Son glorifying the Father and the Father glorifying the Son. Again the repeated insistence that the

Father had 'sent' the Son; that the Son was doing the Father's will and work; that the Son could see and hear the words and actions of the Father, and followed them. All these things are written that we may be sure of the divine identity and authority of the Son without impairing His role on earth in the Father's plan.

Having said this we return to the scene at the tomb where Christ asks for the stone to be rolled away and at which point He addresses a prayer of thanksgiving to the Father:

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And when He had thus spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth" (xi. 41-44).

The words of this prayer and its outcome give point to what I have tried to convey in the two previous paragraphs. The verses underline the close association and mutual glorification (proving or vindication) of Father and Son in demonstrating to mankind the way of resurrection to eternal life.

Confirmation of the fact of this miracle is found in the reaction of our Lord's enemies, these agents of Satan:

"Caiaphas said Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 49, 50).

Satan using Caiaphas was seeking to break God's word of prophecy by accomplishing the premature death of Christ on a false reason for saving the nation. Note however, how this enemy of God was still held as it were in a voice to prophesy in truth the words God intended to be spoken:

"And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also that He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (xi. 51, 52).

Compare Numb. xxii. 38 for another example of an unwilling prophet having to speak the words God gave him. Caiaphas did not of course realize the aspect of truth in his statement.

It is of interest to see what N.T. texts reveal of the opinion or belief held at that time concerning resurrection:

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again, Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John xi. 23, 24).

"And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter" (Acts xvii. 32).

"For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both" (Acts xxiii. 8).

"Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you (king Agrippa), that God should raise the dead?" (Acts xxvi. 8).

“I (Paul) continue witnessing that Christ should rise from the dead Festus said with a loud voice, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad” (Acts xxvi. 22-24).

Today, the present generation among its older members may have a reasonable percentage of those who have faith that life extends beyond the grave, no doubt due to their childhood training in Sunday School or church. But even in this age group one meets many who are quite content to have no hope at all. What however, of the younger generation growing up? They will be handicapped by lack of religious instruction in schools and the failing work of most churches to teach from the Bible. It is on this empty and negative ground that the message of this chapter needs to be sown. The distressing thought of the complete disintegration of the physical body requires convincing words to assure a believing mourner that their loved one will be clothed again with a new body having the ability of a two way recognition and response with friends in that future state.

The strong enmity of the Jewish leaders to our Lord at this time seems to have been reaching a climax and when Christ said “Let us go into Judea again” His disciples feared both for His safety and their own. Jesus answered:

“Are there not twelve hours in a day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the Light of the world” (xi. 9).

The figures of light, darkness and 12 hours to a day are repeatedly used in this Gospel. Why not write out the words of these references and study them: i. 4, 5, 7, 9; iii. 19; viii. 12; ix. 4, 5; xi. 9, 10; xii. 35, 45. Like other figures such as water, bread, etc., they have great application to our present lives and need our meditation and realization. To walk (in the Scriptures) is our way of life, our thoughts especially (known to God), and from these our judgments, friends, priorities, amusements, reading, viewing, etc. Are we not enjoined to walk in the Light of the world, as in the presence of the Lord Jesus, so that our life in all its aspects conforms to that Light.

Furthermore our Lord’s reference to the need to work while it is day (xi. 9) underlines the fact that there is a time in the plans of God that brooks no delay or hindrance:

“But exhort one another daily, while it is *called To-day*” (Heb. iii. 13).

Whether we are old or young, none knows when our life here will end. The Scriptures record no hope of a second chance to do what we delayed to do while it was “To-day”. God has a use for each one of us who are His children. May we ever stand in the Light and so see each step of the way He bids us take.

No.12. Chapter xii.
pp. 191 - 195

In this chapter (xii.) we have a variety of incidents which show how the people surrounding our Lord assessed and judged His ministry and acts and their resultant response. From a quiet study of their reactions we should find for ourselves emulation or warning. Perhaps the highlight is the action of Mary:

“Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment” (xii. 3).

The priorities of Mary and her sister Martha had already been compared in Luke x. 40-42:

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”

The return of Mary’s beloved brother Lazarus from the dead by the word of Christ, was only one of many reasons for her devotion and thankfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Mary expressed this in the only way she could think of—the sacrifice of a costly box of perfume anointing His feet and wiping them with her hair. A similar gesture of devotion by another woman is recorded in Luke vii. 37-48. Here our Lord compares her response with that accorded to Him by His host.

God places great importance and value on our response to His grace and loving provision. We need daily to reflect on all His benefits to us from the heights of the gift of His Son to the many answers we receive to our prayers. Consider the story of Job and God holding up Job as an example to Satan. Nearer to home:

“. . . . that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph. iii. 10).

Our response to the exceeding riches of God’s grace to us in Christ should be an example to principalities and powers in heavenly places and thus glorify the wisdom of God in so trusting us. May our response be doing this indeed.

“But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus” (xii. 10, 11).

Here is another comparison of response. Many of the people believing, but the Jewish leaders seeing in Christ only a menace to their nation and their position in the Mosaic hierarchy:

“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (xii. 43).

How often the response of man in his worship of God is evaluated and guided by the well meaning but doubtful traditions of church leaders rather than that found in the Word of God when it is properly understood.

The theme of prophecy fulfilled is found yet again in this chapter:

“Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt. These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him” (xii. 15, 16).

If those inspired by the Holy Ghost to write the Gospels had not added the words “as it is written” the ordinary reader might have missed this prophecy tucked away in Zechariah ix. 9 and in so many other words and incidents that fulfilled O.T. prophecy. God seems to have used this declaration and fulfillment of prophecy as His seal of truth on the O.T. and its recorded fulfillment in the N.T. There is no escaping this glorious and wise plan of God and it is of great interest we read the following:

“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” (xii. 48, 49).

Does not this infer that man in the last day will be confronted by the Word of God and judged on his acceptance or rejection of it? Again let us remember when Christ refers to His words we must include all that vital body of doctrine the risen Lord gave His Apostle Paul to deliver to us.

Indicative of the span of prophecy, verse 31 looks back to Gen. iii. 15:

“I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; *it shall bruise thy (Satan’s) head (authority and position)*, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall *the prince of this world (Satan) be cast out*” (John xii. 31).

Following prophecy through the ages, we see signs in this chapter of the change in dispensation:

“But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arms of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (xii. 37-40).

While verse 42 records that many believed, yet the signs of national rejection were already being established.

Continuing with this thought:

“And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast; the same came therefore to Philip we would see Jesus” (xii. 20, 21).

When our Lord knew of these visitors He sketches the process whereby the message to the world of His death, resurrection and life in the spirit would be preached to the world. Unless the wheat seed dies in the earth no life can be passed on and fruit produced (verse 24). This supreme unselfish sacrifice is enjoined in measure to His disciples and again earthly and spiritual values are compared and evaluated.

Israel have rightly been called the people of the Book and in verse 34 they ask a question:

“We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?”

Our Lord’s answer seems enigmatic:

“Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (xii. 35, 36).

Yet John the Baptist had repeatedly referred to Christ as the Light of the world and our Lord had linked light, walking and darkness when He said:

“I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John viii. 12).

The conclusion from this still applies today, so the Scriptures must be brought to the light, they must be read in faith in the Son of God, they must be read with the help of the Holy Spirit. They will then speak their message and the believer will receive the life they offer.

It seems incredible that the One Who created the marvelous universe around us, the limits of which by telescope or microscope are untraceable and unreachable, nevertheless speaks to us out of this Book He has ordained. Moreover in His wisdom, He has placed the disclosure of these riches in His own sovereign will and has bypassed the cleverness of man and rather has set the academic pride of man at naught. What a wonderful heavenly Father is this. I Cor. i. has remarkable words on how God has dealt with the wisdom of the world and verse 19 looks back to Isaiah’s message to Jerusalem (Ariel) in Isa. xxix. 14:

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

“Well may we join the Psalmist (ciii. 1) in singing “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name”.

No.13. Chapter xiii.
pp. 230 - 233

This chapter (xiii.) and the next six (xiv.-xix.) cover what must have seemed for our Lord the longest and most cruelly exacting day in His earthly life. The very first verse underlines the all important and sublime message Christ was to enjoin on His disciples and indeed on all His followers, namely that they “love one another”. Our Lord’s example in this attitude is proclaimed from the start:

“. . . . when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having *loved* His own which were in the world, He *loved* them unto the end” (xiii. 1).

The word for love *agape* as a noun and in verbal form is used by John in his Gospel and epistles over 70 times which is some indication of the importance accorded to it by the Holy Spirit. The ascended Christ later amplified His teaching to His disciples (e.g. Acts xxiv. 27) and included instruction on love to Paul, who recorded it in I Cor. xiii.:

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. *Love never ends*” (I Cor. xiii. 1-8, R.S.V.).

We need to ponder well verse 2. Some with the help of the Holy Spirit may rise to great responsibility and possess great gifts in the service of God but it is solemnly stated that such a person is nothing without love. Allegories are unsatisfactory but it is as if we said the finest Rolls Royce car was useless without oil in the engine to ensure the sweet running of all moving parts that come into contact with one another. Examine the positive and negative aspects of love in the above text. Unless all self is removed and we are reflecting and giving effect only to the love of God to others, our service is useless. What this love of God is to others and its outworking is something we have to learn from the Scriptures with the help of prayer and the Spirit of Truth. All the practical things we can do for others such as financial help, advice, companionship, must all be conditions for what is best for them in the long run in the sight of God and this is seldom what we would offer them on the spur of the moment. We should be able to see that all the things such as irritation, arrogance and self pride are absolutely opposed to this quality of love we are to possess.

Our Lord would know what temptations would assail the Apostles after He had gone. They would be endowed from on high with wonderful gifts and each one would find himself assuming positions of trust and responsibility quite foreign to their previous humble backgrounds. How necessary then the impressive lesson that the Son of God gave in washing the disciple’s feet, one of the lowest tasks expected from a servant.

The verses that follow I Cor. xiii. 8 indicate that as our earthly life ends and eternal life dawns, faith and hope will vanish with sight and reality, but love will remain as an indispensable attitude and outworking, both between the saint and his fellow saints, but also between them and their heavenly Father.

The defection of Judas Iscariot has been the subject of many studies and much surmise. It may be really only helpful to observe what has been actually recorded. Our Lord was grieved and troubled (xiii. 21) in the knowledge He had of this imminent act of gross betrayal. Judas had already witnessed the selfless sacrifice of riches to display utter devotion by Mary with her spikenard. Our Lord's rebuke (John xii. 7, 8) to Judas was lost on him. The example set by Christ in washing his feet was passed over and finally the honour done to him by being the one to whom Christ gave the sop can only have hardened the heart of Judas still more.

Our Lord realize here the Judas would not repent and that another prophecy placed by God in the O.T. (Psa. xli. 9) was being fulfilled by Him and so He says to Judas:

“That thou doest, do quickly” (xiii. 27).

In order that the subsequent action by Judas should not be a cause of discouragement and despair to the disciples, He assures them of His prior knowledge of the betrayal (19) and its importance as prophecy fulfilled. It is this latter fact that leads Christ to say:

“Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him” (xiii. 31, 32).

We see nothing in the way of ‘glory of magnificence’ of Christ then or in His appearances after resurrection. We are told of His coming glory, of that resplendent nature, in many places in the Scriptures including Luke xxi. 27: “Coming in a cloud with power and great glory”. To what glory then is our Lord referring in the context of John xiii. 31, 32? Surely it is the faithful fulfillment of O.T. prophecy set there by His Father, so vindicating the truth of the Scriptures, and by the resurrection of Christ the vindication of all the words and claims of the Lord Jesus Christ in regard to His relation to His heavenly Father and specifically His apostleship, that is “the sent One” from God. This chain relationship—the Father, the Son, and the Word we have referred make us realize its paramount importance in the world today. It establishes the message of salvation and knowledge of the ways of God, for otherwise we should have no link with an unseen and unknowable Creator and God.

This chain Christ now extends to His disciples who were to carry the witness on after our Lord's return to heaven:

“He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me” (xiii. 20).

We do not go far into the Acts of the Apostles before we see this chain of witness working. Peter, accompanied by John, heal the lame man at the gate called “Beautiful” of the temple. Peter says:

“Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man walk?” (Acts iii. 12).

Here, in operation, is the lesson of humility they had learned, and glory is directed to the real source of healing and power:

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath *glorified* His Son Jesus Whom God hath *raised* from the dead; whereof we are witnesses, And *His name* through faith in *His name* hath made this man strong But those things, which God *before* had showed by the mouth of all His *prophets*, that Christ should suffer, He hath so *fulfilled* Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath *spoken* by the mouth of all His holy *prophets* since the world began” (Acts iii. 11, 15, 16, 18, 21).

One could continue to quote to the end of this chapter and put it all in italics for it seems so vital, as it was to Israel then and as it is to us today. God has proved His Scriptures true by fulfilled events. These same Scriptures, and they alone, record, God’s intentions that He, God, the Creator of the world and the whole universe, will grant to us life through His (that of the Lord Jesus Christ) name, the name of His only Son Who died in our stead on the cross. This eternal life is granted to those who come in faith believing His written and living Word.

Looking back on that commandment our Lord gave “love one another”, we close this article illustrating a small facet of love that has regard to the many old people we meet around us. It is the prayer of the very old:

Blessed are they who understand
My faltering step and shaking hand.
Blessed who know my ears today
Must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know
My eyes are dim, my mind is slow.
Blessed are they who looked away
When tea was spilled on the cloth today.
Blessed are they who make it known
That I’m loved, respected, not alone.
And blessed are they who ease the days
Of my journey home in loving ways.

The First Epistle to TIMOTHY

No.7. iv. 1 - v. 4.

pp. 1 - 5

Having dealt with the mystery (secret) of godliness, which was Christ Jesus manifest in the flesh, culminating with His being received up into glory, the Apostle Paul now comes to the opposing elements under the domination of Satan. We should always be prepared for the fact that wherever Christ as the Truth is proclaimed, the enemy will contest every inch of the way. Thus chapter iv. begins:

“But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth” (I Tim. iv. 1-3, R.V.).

This ministry of the Spirit is emphasized by the word *rhotos* ‘expressly’ or ‘in specific terms’. The phrase ‘in later times’ is not parallel with ‘in the last days’ of II Tim. iii. 1. It suggests a more imminent time, subsequent to the Apostle’s day. “Fall away”, *apostesontai* gives us the word ‘apostasy’, and this is brought about by some who give heed to deceiving spirits or demons and put forward their lying doctrines. These apostates are hypocrites and liars through which these evil powers find a ready channel. Doubtless these are the ‘world rulers of this darkness’ to which Paul makes reference in Eph. vi., the great spiritual foes of the Body of Christ, under Satan’s control. Those who come under this domination, have consciences that cannot function because they have been ‘cauterized’ or quenched.

Their false teaching comprises two prohibitions: marriage and certain foods. This is surely incipient Gnosticism and a form of it had already taken place in the Colossian church where we have a ‘neglecting of the body’ and a spurious asceticism, which was a travesty of real holiness. In opposition to this, the Apostle insists that these foods, as well as marriage, are the gifts of the Creator which should be received in a thankful spirit. Nothing is to be rejected, for it has been ‘sanctified through the Word of God and prayer’ (iv. 5). This seems to be a clear reference to grace before meals. In his earthly lifetime, the Saviour blessed food before it was eaten (Mark vi. 41; xiv. 22), and we may be sure this was not an empty formality. Such food is then sanctified, i.e. set apart for the body’s use. Chrysostom said “grace before meat disinfects even what has been offered to idols”.

Timothy, in order to be a faithful leader, must bring these things before the notice of the brethren under his charge:

“If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which thou hast followed until now” (iv. 6, R.V.).

The good doctrine is obviously in contrast with the evil doctrine that Paul had just been mentioning. The word used for 'nourished' is the present participle *entrephomenos* which shows there was a continual process of being nourished up in the words of the faith, that body of doctrine which the ascended Christ had deposited with the Apostle Paul. The false teaching was likened to "profane and old wives' fables" vividly rendered by Moffatt 'driveling myths'. These must be rejected firmly for there must be no compromise (iv. 7).

The Apostle now makes a further comparison between physical and spiritual discipline. He does not say that there is no value in bodily exercise, but that it profits for a little time (cp. James iv. 14) in contrast to the lasting profit of spiritual training which not only embraces this life but also the life to come (iv. 8).

Another of the 'faithful sayings' follows in verses 9-11:

"Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we labour and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe. These things command and teach."

It is difficult to say whether the 'faithful saying' related to the previous verse (8) or the verses that follow. Either way, truth is being stressed. We must be careful with the word *soter*, Saviour, remembering that its usual Greek meaning is 'preserver', such as is expressed in Psa. xxxvi. 6:

". . . . Thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast."

The Scriptures often raise this word to a higher level and the fact that believers are specially mentioned in verse 10 shows that Paul uses it here in a double sense. What is certain is that the Apostle is not teaching universalism, and those who use it for this purpose must be hard pressed indeed.

Timothy is now enjoined to teach these things with authority even though this meant instructing believers who were older than himself. "Let no man despise thy youth", said the Apostle, but we must not infer from this that Timothy was a mere stripling. Moulton and Milligan quote from Irenaeus showing that *neotes* could apply to anyone up to the age of forty and Timothy at this point could have been between 35 and 40 years. Whatever his age may have been, he was to be an example (*tupos*, type) to all under his charge, manifesting seriousness of purpose, trustworthiness, consideration for others and self-control.

Verse 13 instructs Timothy to devote himself to these pursuits, public reading, exhortation and teaching. The reading referred to his public services, the reading aloud of the Old Testament Scriptures to the congregation. The phrase occurs in Luke iv. 16 and Acts xiii. 15 of the synagogue lessons. The proclamation of the Word of truth was of the utmost importance and still is, and should always accompany Christian gatherings for worship and divine instruction. There is a need of those who can read the Scriptures distinctly and with understanding. God is always prepared to work on His own Word!

The public reading was followed by exhortation based upon the passage concerned and teaching (doctrine), the importance of which is given prominence in the N.T. especially in the Pastoral Epistles. There is scarcely a deeper need today than faithful teachers who can clearly expound the Word of God. Preaching sermons can often be beside the point and ineffectual. "Preach the Word" was one of the Paul's last commands (II Tim. iv. 2) and the lack of this largely accounts for the ignorance of God's truth in professing Christian circles with its consequential falling away from spiritual standards. The Apostle continues:

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (iv. 14, R.V.).

Prophecy has already been mentioned in i. 18, but in the reference above it refers to the beginning of Timothy's public ministry received by the 'laying on of hands' of the body of elders (presbytery). There should be no difficulty with a somewhat similar statement by Paul in II Tim. i. 6, for there the Apostle speaks of his own part on this occasion, nor need there be any problem over the fact that this goes back to the Acts period. Not every gift (*charisma*) of the Spirit was necessarily linked with the testimony to Israel. Some were of enduring value in public service for all time and though Paul does not specifically mention what the gift was, it was evidently of this nature. Here his son in the faith is not to neglect it and in II Timothy he is bidden to 'stir it up', the word being used of a dying fire that needed re-kindling. He is to be 'diligent' in these things. *Meletao* can mean either 'practice' or 'meditate' and both meanings fit the context.

Timothy was to absorb these necessary qualities till they became second nature. "Give thyself wholly to them", the result being that his 'progress' (not profiting A.V.) might be recognized by all. He must 'keep an eye on himself', then on the teaching he gives, and lastly over his hearers, 'for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee' (verse 16). The verb 'save' here must be used in the sense of Phil. ii. 12, that is, working it out in practice. In no sense could it refer to the salvation and new creation of the sinner which is wholly of grace, apart from works (Eph. ii. 8). This was one of the fundamentals of the doctrine committed to Paul and never does he deviate from it.

The next section of the epistle, commencing with chapter v., deals with the needs of various sections of the assembly under Timothy's charge. First of all he is to avoid severely censuring those who were older in years. *Presbuteros* here does not refer to the body of leaders, but to a person's age. His contemporaries he was to treat as though they were brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger ones as sisters 'in all purity'. This phrase is added to safeguard his relationship. The N.I.V. renders the passage:

"Do not rebuke an older men harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat the younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity."

The Apostle now deals with the needs of widows in verses 3-16. This is quite a long passage, but ever since Acts vi. 1-4 the position of widows had been one of great concern to the churches.

Timothy is bidden to honour widows who are in real need. The word ‘honour’ means more than being respectful, and includes the idea of material support. “Widows indeed” means widows with no other means support, that is, those who were genuinely destitute. It was a Christian duty to provide for such. But Paul is concerned that this should not be abused. Widows who had close relatives should be maintained by them (verse 4). The Apostle knew the tendency of some to avoid their responsibility and expect the church or other benevolent institutions to keep relatives in need. This was selfishness and a definite breach of the fifth commandment of the law, whereas practical concern for them was acceptable and pleasing to God (verse 4 and cp. I Tim. ii. 3).

No age has a monopoly of poverty and it is good to realize all through the Scriptures, the poor and the needy are recognized by God and He expects His people, whether earthly or heavenly, to respond generously to their needs.

No.8. v. 3 - 25.
pp. 21 - 26

We are still dealing with the section of this epistle (v. 3-16) relating to the needs of destitute widows. Paul now gives the characteristics of the true widow who was eligible for practical support by the local church. She was ‘desolate’ (*memonomene*, meaning left entirely alone). She had her hope set on God (that is, she was a true believer), and was also a woman of constant prayer (she *continued* in prayer, verse 5). This reminds one of Anna (Luke ii. 37), whereas the widow, whose needs were not genuine, lived for an empty life of pleasure, and Paul likens her condition graphically to a living corpse (v. 6). Such had no claim on the assembly’s care and provision.

“These things” Timothy should command, that is the responsibility of children to support their parents in need, and in so doing they would be irreproachable (*anepileptos* cp. iii. 2). Provision for one’s own close relatives was an indisputable Christian duty and those who omitted to do this were ‘worse than unbelievers’ (v. 8). The word ‘infidel’ (A.V.) in its modern sense is too strong. Even the unregenerate pagan world recognized its family ties and it was unthinkable that Christian standards should sink below this.

The Apostle goes on to deal with eligible widows and the service they can render.

Some of the statements are not easy to apprehend:

“Let none be enrolled as a widow under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints’ feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work” (v. 9, 10, R.V.).

A careful consideration of this passage leads one to think that a special set of widows is referred to here, not destitute widows generally, for it is inconceivable that a destitute woman would have to reach the age of 60 before she became eligible for practical help from the church.

It would appear that special duties in the local church were reserved for some of the old widows receiving aid, official recognition of this being given by being placed on a list. Apart from the age-restriction, it was necessary that she was 'the wife of one man', which can only mean she had not re-married after her husband's death (on this point compare a similar condition for an overseer of the assembly, iii. 2, 12). Furthermore she must be well reported for her conduct in the home and outside.

Such a person would be a valuable aid in entertaining visiting Christians, looking after orphans and attending to many practical details, such as feet-washing which reminds one of the Lord's own humble action (John xiii. 1-7).

All these points were not so likely to be in evidence with a younger person who was not so experienced or mature. They might commence well and then change their minds and want to give up the work and to be re-married.

The N.I.V. gives the sense well:

"As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan" (I Tim. v. 11-15).

One thing is clear, that any service begun for the Lord was to be regarded as a serious thing with first priority. Those widows who had commenced such work and then given it up had 'waxed wanton against Christ' (verse 11). And we should remember today that service for the Lord is not something for us to take up and drop when we feel like it. There is a solemn as well as a joyful aspect to Christian service, knowing that one day this, together with all our works, is coming under His searching scrutiny.

It is evident that Paul was legislating for conditions as he knew them and was using heavenly wisdom in the directions he gave to Timothy, so that problems might be avoided and the witness go on unhindered. If anyone has difficulty with the fact that during the Acts period, in I Corinthians, Paul recommended the unmarried to remain as they were, we would remind the reader that at that time 'the end of all things was at hand', with the possibility of the Lord's Second Coming being very near, waiting upon the repentance of Israel (Acts iii. 19-26; v. 30, 31). This chosen nation was laid aside in unbelief at the end of the Acts, for they did not repent and that aspect of the earthly kingdom was postponed, the revelation of the dispensation of the Mystery or Secret, taking its place (Eph. iii. 1-11) for the age in which we are now living.

In verse 16 “if any woman believer has widows” may raise problems, but there is an alternative reading “if any *man* or *woman* who believes” and this accords better with the context, for it is difficult to accept that the responsibility to relieve destitute widows would be confined to women alone.

Paul now deals once more with elders, this time concerning their remuneration. That “honour” (*time*) is used in this sense, verse 18 makes clear. The Apostle quotes the Mosaic precept of Deut. xxv. 4 which he had previously used in I Cor. ix. 9 and also the saying of the Lord recorded in Luke x. 7 which is more than a current proverb. The adjective ‘double’ appears to have the sense of generous provision. If God was concerned for cattle treading the corn and ordained that ample provision should be made for them, surely, the Apostle argues, those who take responsibility in service, (‘rule well’), specially those who preach and teach (verse 17) should be adequately compensated.

Further rules are now given to protect leaders from false accusations. The law of God gave through Moses required the agreement of at least *two* witnesses before a man was called to answer a charge against him (Deut. xix. 15). Matt. xviii. 16 and II Cor. xiii. 1 agree with this. The Apostle writes:

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of *two* or three witnesses. Them that sin (meaning persist in sin) reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear” (v. 19, 20, R.V.).

At this point Paul gives Timothy a solemn charge concerning these regulations:

“I charge thee in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality” (v. 21, R.V.).

This stresses even further the importance of the commands given. We do not know who ‘the elect angels’ are. There appears to be a variety of grades of heavenly beings. Those mentioned here evidently belong to the highest class. In II Tim. iv. 1 we have a similar solemn charge, but without any reference to angels. Timothy must carefully observe all the instructions given and be absolutely unprejudiced and impartial, never allowing his personal feelings to influence his judgment:

This warned Timothy against hastily appointing anyone for specific Christian service without due regard to their suitability. Some think it might refer to the restoration of penitents after discipline, but this is far-fetched and there seems no doubt that the former meaning is the correct one. It would be easy to appoint someone for Christian work who appeared to be keen, but was he worthy and fitted to carry out his task? This is what Timothy must carefully ponder and do nothing in a hurry.

Undue haste in Christian appointments has led to unworthy people being brought into the Lord’s work, which has wrought havoc and played into the enemy’s hands. Someone has said that today there are too many ‘untaught teachers’ who are quite unsuitable for the work they have taken upon themselves. Such should remember the warning of

James iii. 1, bearing in mind that the word James used which is translated ‘masters’ in the A.V. is really the word ‘teachers’. Expounding the Word of God is a solemn responsibility which should never be taken on lightly. Those who do so are deeply responsible to the Lord, and if they have taught error instead of truth they will surely receive ‘the greater condemnation’, for they have not only professed to know more than the people they teach, but have been misled themselves, and consequently have misled others also.

Commentators have been puzzled over the next verse because it appears to have no connection with the context:

“Be no longer a drinker of water but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (v. 23).

But Timothy had just been advised ‘to keep himself pure’ and he might have construed this as meaning asceticism. He evidently was not robust physically and had a tendency toward ‘neglecting the body’. Now the body must be neither over-indulged nor neglected. We know that ‘neglecting of the body’ was part of the false holiness propounded by some in the Colossian church (Col. ii. 20-23) and the Apostle Paul, who knew Timothy better than anyone else, took care to check any tendency in him to this sort of thing. Hence his advice to the young man who was the leader of his assembly, to take a little wine as a tonic. Some Christians may be surprised at this, but Paul was a good deal wiser than his critics and knew what he was doing. He had not only Timothy’s welfare at heart, but that of the whole church over which he presided.

Regarding the next verse, it is better to link it with verse 22 and treat verse 23 as a parenthesis:

“Some men’s sins are evident, going before unto judgment; and some men also they follow after. In like manner also there are good works that are evident; and such as are otherwise cannot be hid” (v. 24, 25, R.V.).

We also give this passage in the modern N.I.V. translation:

“The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.”

The Apostle is giving Timothy further advice concerning the appointment of men to Christian service. A distinction is drawn between those whose faults are obvious and others whose failings are not immediately apparent but come out later on. Timothy’s judgment must take this into consideration and this is another reason why he must not be in a hurry to appoint anyone to a Christian office. First impressions may be wrong, leading him to make wrong decisions, but this must be avoided at all costs. Of course the judgment of sin finally will be made by God, but Timothy must exercise wisdom and caution, so that the Lord’s witness and work may not be hindered.

No.9. vi. 1 - 16.
pp. 41 - 45

At the beginning of chapter vi., the Apostle Paul turns from instructions that affect the local church to those touching the household. The relationship of believing slaves to Christian, or unbelieving masters raised problems. If a slave worked for a truly saved master, he should count this a privilege and not lose his respect for such a master because he had become a brother in Christ:

“Let as many as are servants (slaves) under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but let them serve them the rather, because, they that partake of the benefit are believing and beloved. These things teach and exhort” (I Tim. vi. 1, 2, R.V.).

The overriding consideration was the effect their conduct would have on Christian witness as a whole. The ‘benefit’ that would accrue could apply to either master or servant in the increased goodwill on both sides.

The Apostles now reverts once more to the false teachers:

“If any man teacheth a different doctrine, and consenteth not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings, and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain” (vi. 3-5, R.V.).

“Those who teach a different doctrine” are referred to in i. 3 and *heterodidaskaleo* is used in both contexts. The ‘sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ’ are descriptive of the ‘good deposit’ of truth which Paul had received from the ascended Lord Jesus and had passed on to Timothy (vi. 20; II Tim. i. 12, 13; ii. 2). This is the ‘doctrine’ of the Pastoral Epistles around which these epistles revolve in its proclamation and practice.

It is unlikely to refer to the Gospel records of the Lord’s earthly ministry which did not embrace the truth of the Mystery or the heavenly calling of the Body of Christ. It is not even certain that they were in circulation at this time.

Paul’s prison ministry formed the pattern (“form of sound words”) to which all teaching must conform. Those who refused to do this left a trail of havoc behind them. The N.I.V. renders these verses:

“He (the false teacher) is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments that result in envy, quarrelling, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”

The Apostle does not wrap things up, but clearly warns Timothy and those who stood with him of the dangers that would result if this pernicious teaching was embraced. Not only were these false teachers leading believers astray, but they were making a good thing out of it financially. “They imagine religion is a paying concern” is Moffatt’s translation.

Having touched on the topic of money, Paul gives it a closer scrutiny and points out some of its dangers in relation to the believer:

“But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out; but having food and covering, we shall be therewith content. But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (vi. 6-10, R.V.).

These are indeed graphic words and need to be constantly before the mind of the believer. The Father’s gracious provision sees to it that His children get all the necessities of life but not necessarily all they desire. It is important to note that “they that *will* be rich” of the A.V. is not just the future tense, but refers to those who *desire* or make it their object to amass money. The futility of this is seen in verse 7 which Paul apparently bases on Eccles. v. 15:

“As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour which he may carry away in his hand.”

This is a lesson that so few learn. Materialism is dangled before people in so many ways today and represented as being essential for happiness. Thus governments constantly bring before the electorate the desirability of a ‘rise in the standard of living’ and people really believe that if they had more money and more possessions they would be perfectly content. This deceptive myth is accepted by millions and most of modern living is geared round it. The believer needs to be constantly on the alert that he avoids this attitude of mind for it can only lead to frustration, spiritual barrenness and a poverty of Christian witness and service. The Lord warned: “Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke xii. 15), and “ye cannot serve God and mammon (riches)”. To see a Christian ensnared by this sort of attitude is pathetic in the extreme. Solomon’s experience of materialism should be a warning to all (Eccles. ii.) and his conclusion is “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver” (v. 10). Rather than satisfying, Paul asserts that such a view can only lead to serious hurt and destruction (I Tim. vi. 9).

Verse 10 in the A.V. is not accurate. The Apostle does not say that money is *the* root of all evil, because this is not true. An inordinate love of money is at the root of much evil, but not *all* evil. The definite article is omitted in the Greek. The R.V. is more accurate, “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil”. How much better is it for the believer to look on money and the ability to earn it as a gift from the Lord and for Him to have first claim upon it! “The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine, saith the Lord of

Hosts” (Hag. ii. 8), and when we give money to Him we should say, as David did of old, “of Thine own have we given Thee” (I Chron. xxix. 14).

As a contrast to money grabbing Timothy as a “man of God” must flee from this sort of thing (vi. 11). Paul gives a similar warning in II Tim. ii. 22. Timothy would doubtless remember that the title ‘man of God’ was given to such illustrious characters as Moses, Elijah, Elisha, David, Shemaiah and Igdaliah and he therefore had a high standard set before him and so he must pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness (vi. 11). He is now exhorted to:

“Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal whereunto thou wast called, and didst the good confession in the sight of many witnesses” (vi. 12, R.V.).

The word ‘fight’ (*agonizo*) means ‘to contend in the games’ and the cognate *agon*, ‘race’ is also used. E. K. Simpson claims that the military meaning is also present. Whether this is so or not, the verb implies a disciplined struggle that is continuous. He is also to lay hold of, or clasp, eternal life. This does not mean that he did not possess it by faith apart from works, but that now he was to continually appropriate it with a sure hold in his daily life and service. The good confession in the sight of many witnesses doubtless refers to his ordination to which allusion has already been made.

Paul now gives the last charge of this epistle to Timothy and breaks into a magnificent doxology:

“In the sight of God, Who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, Who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this commandment without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone is immortal and Who lives in unapproachable light, Whom no one has seen or can see. To Him be honour and might for ever. Amen” (N.I.V., vi. 11-16)

Some commentators apply the whole of this doxology to the Father, although the Apostle does not address God as such here. It is better to see this as an ascription of praise to the Triune God. He is the Quickener, the Giver of life, (the Holy Spirit). The title “King of kings and Lord of lords”, the supreme King and the supreme Lord, is twice ascribed to the Lord Jesus in Rev. xvii. 14 & xix. 16, and reminds one of Deut. x. 17: “For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward”. God the Father, in His essence as Spirit, cannot be seen or approached and it is Christ, as the Image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15; ii. 9), Who sums Him up concretely.

Already in I Tim. i. 17 immortality (*athanasia*) is ascribed to God. In the context we are considering we have the statement “Who only hath immortality” that is, inherently. If this most important statement had really been believed by the professing church down the centuries, we should never have had the unscriptural and pagan idea of the immortality of the soul. The words ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’, occurring many hundreds of times in Scripture, are never termed immortal. God alone possesses it. Man can be described as a *candidate* for immortality. Adam the sinner lost it (“and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take

also of the tree of life, *and eat, and live for ever*, therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden”, Gen. iii. 22, 23). Immortal life is found only in Christ and can be received by faith in Him as Saviour and Lord, for He has brought life and immortality (incorruption) to light through the gospel (II Tim. i. 8-11), and both immortality and incorruption are to be ‘put on’ by the redeemed at resurrection and not before (I Cor. xv. 51-55).

Needless to say, one cannot ‘put on’ what is already possessed.

No.10. vi. 17 - 21.
pp. 72 - 75

Having poured out his praise in this doxology, the Apostle Paul returns to the theme of riches, with the difference, that, in the former section he dealt with those *aspiring* to be rich, whereas here he is concerned with those who are *already* rich:

“Charge them that are rich in this present world, that they be not high-minded, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed” (R.V., vi. 17-19).

Believers who were wealthy were warned against a proud and lofty attitude of mind and too much dependence upon money. An abundance of material possessions is apt to produce a feeling of superiority—a dangerous attitude of mind for any believer, who is only usable by the Lord as long as he keeps really humble. There is always the danger too of relying on wealth, forgetting that money can easily take wings and fly away. In fact we all have a duty to keep a check on ourselves that our hope is not resting on the transient material things of this life, but upon the Lord and the eternal abiding riches we have in Him by grace. The advent of the Welfare State today can also be a danger, where everything is supposedly cared for “from the cradle to the grave”. Let us never forget that our constant assurance rests solely upon the changeless Saviour Whose love and bounty towards us never wavers.

Those who have money in good supply are exhorted by the Apostle to use it, not for themselves, but for the benefit of others with whom they can have the privilege of sharing. In doing so they would be laying up for themselves a good and solid foundation for the future, culminating with their appearance before the Lord, the righteous Judge, Who will test and assess every man’s service as to its quality, and decide whether it merits His approval.

The concluding phrase “that they may lay hold on eternal life” echoes verse 12, but with the variation that should be translated “life which is life indeed”. This is the *real* life—the unending life to come. The present one is only a shadow, a prelude to this

eternal reality. Millions live just for the present life with its problems, uncertainties and short duration. Only the believer in Christ can look forward with absolute certainty to the life to come with its unending and eternally satisfying richness, and happy is he who can live the life on earth with the future life constantly in view by faith.

The Apostle Paul concludes by giving his spiritual son a final reminder of the good deposit of truth which first of all had been given him (Paul) by the risen and ascended Lord Jesus, and now had been placed in Timothy's charge:

“O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, (the deposit, literally), turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so-called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with you” (vi. 20, 21, R.V.).

“The deposit” or “the good deposit” (II Tim. i. 14), had been already set forth vividly in Ephesians and Colossians, relating to the Body of Christ. This Timothy must watch over and guard as precious treasure, not allowing himself to be distracted with secondary pre-occupations. As a trustee, he must keep the terms of this divine trust and neither turn to the right hand nor to the left. Constantly he must exhort those under his charge to do likewise, for the activities of the enemy were ceaseless. His dupes would constantly seek to divert him and them by their endless arguments and disputes, which Paul called ‘godless chatter and opposition’ (N.I.V.). They were the ones who claimed to have the real knowledge, but all of it was false. The word translated ‘science’ (A.V.) must not be restricted to the modern meaning. It is *knowledge (gnosis)*, but false knowledge can apply today in much that is deemed scientific, for it is nothing more than unproved theory. It may have a ‘show of wisdom’, and on the surface appears to be right, but Satan, the great enemy of God and His people, uses it to cause those who embrace it to ‘wander’ (*astocheo*) from the truth. The Apostle has used this word in i. 6 where it is translated ‘swerve from’.

Alas, we can see his deadly work at the present time. There are quite a number who once stood faithfully for ‘the good deposit’ of truth witnessed by the spoken and written word. Now they have ‘swerved aside’ and left the track of truth, even opposing the things they once stood for so loyally. This is indeed distressing, but at the same time it is a warning to us all.

In the mercy of God, the rich and precious truth associated with the Body of Christ through Paul's writings has been preserved by Him, coming down to us today. It should be a constant challenge to us all who profess to receive it by faith that we seek to proclaim it in every way possible by life and lip. The age darkens and hastens to its terrible end, but let us make sure that the light of this ‘good deposit’ is constantly shining through us unhindered in any way. The divine charge to Timothy comes down to us who profess to be members of Christ's Body, ‘the fullness of Him that filleth all in all’. Let us see to it that, by the infinite grace of God and His almighty resurrection power, we do not fail Him, but prove to be faithful members, “meet for the Master's use”, channels through which He can constantly bless and enlighten others.

The last words of the epistle centre around this *grace*, which conclusion is peculiar to Paul's epistles. In this benediction the word 'ye' is plural, showing that this letter was designed for others besides Timothy, doubtless those under his charge. Let the last thought of the free and undeserved grace of God constantly be before our minds, for we were chosen and saved by His grace, and by that same grace alone we live and serve Him acceptably.

The Twofold Purpose of the Ages

No.1. pp. 81 - 87

The epistle to the Romans not only deals with the evils of sin and death that affect all mankind, but reveals that the whole creation has become involved, bringing problems that are beyond the ability of man to solve:

“For we know that the whole creation *groaneth* and *travaileth in pain* together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves *groan within ourselves*, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope” (Rom. viii. 22-24).

It is hardly possible for any sensitive or thinking person to contemplate the centuries of sin, death, pain and perplexities that have characterized the history of man in general, and the believer in particular, without at times asking the question “why?”. True, the context of Rom. viii. speaks of incomparable glory that will outweigh the sufferings and difficulties, and links the pain with salvation by hope and final deliverance, and, by subsequent reference to the ‘groanings’ of the interceding Spirit gives us the assurance that we are not left to face our sorrows and problems alone. But in spite of this, the question remains, “why was it necessary that God’s plan for creation should take the course it has done?”. We know from the teaching of Ephesians that the Body of Christ was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world with the object that it should enjoy all spiritual blessings in heavenly places where Christ is now enthroned in glory. Why then did we not at creation pass straight into heavenly places with spiritual bodies fitted to experience this wealth of spiritual blessing, instead of coming into a world marred by sin and death necessitating redemption by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and also the stupendous miracle, namely that of resurrection, before the original purpose of electing love could be realized? Even though we quote “Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?”, the problem still remains.

It is true to say that, with our present limitations, we shall never fully resolve this perplexity. Nevertheless the Word of God does shed a certain amount of light on this and we wish to search the Scriptures and obtain what help we can get from them. If the first two chapters of the book of Job were hidden from us, as they were from Job and his three well-meaning friends, we should be as baffled as they were in their attempt to find a reason for Job’s sufferings. Those opening chapters reveal the presence of a spiteful spiritual enemy, Satan, and a challenge which the Almighty One accepted with one important reservation (Job i. 9-12).

We also possess the concluding chapter, which the three friends did not know until after the event, where Job receives ‘double’. Again, we ask “why?”. A gleam of light is found on enquiring into the meaning of the word “Job”. C. H. Welch pointed out in his study of Job that in an appendix found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T. which was used by the Lord Jesus, the apostles and the believers of this period) we have a

statement that tells us his name was originally “Jobab”. Consequently the change to Job be intentional because of its significance.

The word ‘Job’ in Scripture is found first of all in the Hebrew of Gen. iii. 15 where it is translated ‘enmity’. Job’s story is an exhibition of the enmity that exists between Satan and the seed of the woman. God said to the serpent:

“I will put *enmity* between thee and the woman, and between *thy seed* and *her seed*; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. iii. 15).

These two opposing seeds are clearly seen in the parable of the wheat and the tares. The Lord disclaims responsibility for the tares. He declares that ‘an enemy (Satan) hath done this’ and that the tares are the children of Satan (Matt. xiii. 27, 28, 38). Here is a suggestion that the problem of the ages, set forth in the experience of Job, derives from the Satanic antagonism and enmity to the purpose of God in creating mankind. There are other reasons of course, such as the very nature of man, designed not as a machine, but as a moral being with the power of obedience or disobedience, of going right or going wrong and thus spoiling God’s intentions. It may be too that there are certain lessons and experiences that could only be realized by passing through human nature and that, in this present life, we are learning valuable and necessary lessons as a prelude to the eternal life to come in glory. However, we have not finished with the consideration of Satan’s malignant activity against God and His people.

Israel, a stranger in a land not theirs (Gen. xv. 13).

This enmity is further shown in the story of Abraham and the revelation of God’s purpose through him and his posterity. When Abram responded to the call of God, he was assured by the repeated unconditional promises of God that the land to which he had come would be given to him and his seed (Gen. xii. 7; xiii. 14-17; xvii. 8). In Gen. xv. Abram is again assured:

“I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it” (xv. 7).

Upon hearing this promise, Abram replied:

“Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” (xv. 8).

Then follows a strange transaction with an unexpected prophecy. Abram is told to arrange for the making of a covenant which involved offerings, and then, instead of being one of the parties to the making of this covenant, he is purposely put into a deep sleep so that he himself could promise nothing. The divine answer to his question is the extraordinary revelation that his posterity, instead of occupying the land of promise, would become strangers in another land not theirs, that they would become servants or slaves and be grievously afflicted. After a long gap of 400 years, in the fourth generation, they would return ‘hither again’, while Abraham, to whom the promise was made would die and be buried in a good old age, without inheriting this land! (Gen. xv. 13-15). This extraordinary prophecy is borne out by the history of this people in the book of

Exodus, and not till the 400 years were nearly fulfilled do we read “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Exod. ii. 24).

The people of Israel who had been given the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, could only return to it after 215 years of bondage and misery in Egypt, by way of the typical redeeming blood of the passover lamb! However, the above quotation is partial and the reason given by God to Abraham for this strange and protracted interlude is:

“For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. xv. 16).

The Amorites were Satan’s counterfeit seed, represented later in the parable of *the tares* to which we have already alluded. In this parable there is not immediate divine judgment on these “tares”. They are not to be rooted up straight away, but left till the harvest. Then they will be gathered out by God’s agents, the angels, blotted out by being burnt up and destroyed. We say ‘destroyed’ advisedly, because the universalist somehow must bring them back into being if his creed is true. Any gardener understands the illustration used here. He uproots the weeds and burns them up in a bonfire, not to *preserve* them, but to *destroy* them, and this would be a most unsuitable picture of the purpose of God if His final plan is to save them for eternity. Just as the tares are left till the harvest before they are destroyed, so the Amorites’ destruction is not immediate, for not until a certain quantity of evil is ‘filled up’ does God judge them and blot them out. In this we have a principle throughout Scripture that God often waits before judging for sin. In His righteousness He does not punish until sin has reached a certain level that deserves this, and then He acts. This must be remembered because we may sometimes fail to understand and remove them from hindering His great purposes. His righteousness and His infinite grace and longsuffering have to be reckoned with here.

The Second Time.

It is understandable that we should think that if God be God almighty, He could not take second place in His dealings with man, yet the whole record of His purpose for heaven and earth seems to point to ‘the second time’. Without being irreverent, we may liken the conflict of the ages to a great game of chess where the opposing players are God and Satan with the powers of darkness under his control. In this conflict God, since creation, sometimes seems *to allow Satan to make the first move*. But however many moves there are and however protracted the game may be, we know for certain that it will finally be ‘check-mate’ with God as the Victor and Satan and his hosts defeated and annihilated. God will finally be ‘all in all’ and at last the wondrous plan, conceived by Him in past eternity, can go on unhindered to a glorious completion.

This principle of “the second time” can be seen in Stephen’s address recorded in Acts vii. He points out that Joseph was made known to his brethren “*the second time*” and Moses was accepted by Israel, but only after his primary rejection (Acts vii. 13, 35). Again in Heb. ix. 28, even though ‘once at the consummation of the ages’ (end of the world A.V.), Christ had already ‘appeared’, it will not be until He appears “*the second*

time” that salvation will be received or attained (Heb. ix. 28). In the same way, Heb.viii.7 sets aside the first covenant in favour of the second, the first covenant becoming ‘old and vanishing away’, while *the second* is established (Heb. x. 9). Hebrews also speaks of a ‘better hope’, a ‘better covenant’, ‘better promises’ and an infinitely ‘better sacrifice’, even though the rejected hope, covenant, promises and sacrifices were all ordained by God Himself originally.

We cannot help noticing too the place that *pairs* occupy in the early types of the O.T.—Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob and so on. This twofoldness goes right throughout Scripture. Without going into details here we list the following:

- (1) The whole Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- (2) The book of Genesis as a whole and in variety of pairs.
- (3) The book of the Revelation, the complement of the book of Genesis.
- (4) The book of the Revelation, the complement of the book of Exodus.
- (5) The book of the Revelation, the complement of the Gospel of Matthew.
- (6) The twofold nature of the book of Exodus.
- (7) The twofold nature of the book of Isaiah.
- (8) The twofold nature of the Gospel of Matthew.
- (9) The twofold nature of the Acts of the Apostles.
- (10) The twofold nature of the epistle to the Ephesians.
- (11) The twofold character of prophetic Truth.

There are other considerations like the twofold witness of the Apostle Paul, during the Acts period and afterwards, but this list gives us a beginning, illustrating this twofoldness which is found right throughout the Scriptures.

The Twofoldness of the Word of God.

The Bible comes to us in its complete form as a twofold composition commonly referred to as (1) the Old Testament and (2) the New Testament. These titles are too ingrained for them to be exchanged for the Old and New Covenant, but that, strictly speaking, is what these books should be called.

The Greek word *diatheke* occurs 17 times in the epistles to the Hebrews, 11 times the word is rendered in the A.V. ‘covenant’ and 6 times ‘testament’. The choice of these two terms seems arbitrary, for in Heb. vii. 22 we read that ‘by so much’ Jesus was made a surety of ‘a better *testament*’, whereas in Heb. viii. 6 we read ‘by how much also He is the Mediator of a better *covenant*’. In Heb. viii. 8 we read ‘I will make a new *covenant*’, but in ix. 15 we have ‘He is the Mediator of the new *testament*’. In xii. 24 He is once more the Mediator of ‘the New *Covenant*’.

Bloomfield writes on this in his *Greek Testament*:

“The sense properly assigned to it, *testament*, is now generally rejected, from its involving something like an absurdity. For how, it is asked, can anyone be called the mediator of a *testament*? How can a *testament* need a mediator? How can anyone be

called the mediator of his own testament? How can it be said that the testator died to make it valid?" (p.514).

The following literal translation of Heb. ix. 16, 17 is found in Dr. E. W. Bullinger's *Greek Lexicon*:

"For where a covenant (is) a death (is) necessary to be brought in, of him or that which makes the covenant, for a covenant over dead ones, or victims (is) sure, since at no time has it force when he is living, the one who is making the covenant."

The last lines of this translation, if they were speaking of a covenant where the victim was an animal, such as bulls or goats, would read 'when it (i.e. the sacrificial victim) is living'. But as the victim and the One Who makes the covenant is the Lord Jesus Himself, we read, 'when He is living' which probably influenced the translators to think in terms of will-making rather than the making of a covenant.

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In further consideration of the twofold purpose of God revealed in the holy Scriptures, we look at the book of Genesis. This contains within itself 'the book of the generations of Adam' (Gen. v. 1). In contrast to this the N.T. opens with 'the book of the generations of Jesus Christ' (Matt. i. 1). In the first book is the introduction of sin and death; in the second we have God's salvation and the hope of eternal life. These books contain the backbone of what the Word of God reveals and unfolds. The last book in the Hebrew canon is not the prophecy of Malachi, but the two books of Chronicles which open with the words 'Adam, Sheth, Enosh' and contain on the last page the ominous words 'no remedy or healing' (II Chron. xxxvi. 16), whereas the last pages of the book of the Revelation speak of the resorted 'right to the tree of life', the leaves of which are for the 'healing' or health of the nations, sin and death having been for ever removed.

There are important links of pairs in Genesis that must not be missed. They are:

- (1) The creation (i. 1) and the re-fashioning (i. 2 - ii. 3).
- (2) Two Adams. One present (i. 26; ii. 7), the Other promised (iii. 15; I Cor. xv. 45).
- (3) Two coverings—leaves (iii. 7), skins (iii. 21).
- (4) Two ways—Abel (iv. 4). Cain (iv. 5).
- (5) Two Lamechs and the curse (iv. 11, 19-24 and v. 29, 30).
- (6) Two heads of the nations—Adam (i. 28). Noah (ix. 1).
- (7) Two pledges—the Ark (Gen. vi.). The coffin (l. 26).
- (8) Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac.
- (9) Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob.
- (10) Twofold type of Christ, Joseph and Benjamin.

The first and last Adam.

It is the fashion nowadays to deny the historicity of Gen. i.-v. In many schools the pupils are taught that these chapters are no more than myth. There was never a real man called Adam. The whole story was just a fairy tale or legend, a convenient way of making a beginning in the Bible. Not only in schools, but in many pulpits these ideas are promulgated and anyone who believes that these chapters are literal history is looked on with pity or amazement.

But let us face the consequences of denying the historicity of the first five chapters of Genesis. First of all, the whole validity of the O.T. is involved, for the closing books of the Hebrew canon, as we have already pointed out, are the books of Chronicles. The first *nine* chapters of I Chronicles are devoted to a genealogy starting with Adam (I.Chron.i.1) and adopt without question the genealogies set out in the book of Genesis, in which there are eleven. It then goes through unbroken succession to David and his sons, the ninth chapter opening with the comment:

“So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies.”

These governed the right of succession, inheritance, marriage, priesthood and were never questioned, but always accepted as valid. So, to be reasonable, the critic must set aside the complete O.T., for it is an organic whole. When we come to the N.T., the seriousness of this repudiation becomes evident. Not only did the Lord Jesus Christ endorse and accept the O.T. as the Word of God of which not one jot or tittle should pass unfulfilled, nor can it ever be broken (John x. 35), but in *resurrection*, and not under the so-called limitation of the *kenosis* theory (“He *emptied* Himself”, Phil. ii. 7 literally), as the conqueror of sin and death. When He was about to ascend and take His place at the right hand of the majesty on high, the Lord Jesus said “These are the words which I spake unto you, *while I was yet with you*” (Luke xxiv. 44) and so endorsed all that He had said concerning the O.T. Scriptures during the days of His flesh. He continued:

“That *all* things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, (i.e. the whole of the O.T.) concerning Me.”

Coming to the specific question concerning Adam, we note that if Gen. i.-v. is unhistorical, the genealogy of Christ is validated. Luke iii. 23-28 ends with “. . . which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, *which was the son of God*”.

If we refer to the genealogy given in Matt. i. which commences with Abraham, we read “Abraham begat Isaac begat Joseph the husband of Mary” (Matt. i. 1-16). How can fictitious characters beget children? There is only one logical thing to do if we deny the record of Gen. i.-v., and that is to repudiate the genealogies of the Saviour and in so doing we shall be forced to lose all the blessed and wonderful consequences resident in the prophecy and the name “Emmanuel”, “God with us”, which is one of the links in this chain. Further than this, in Mark x. 1-12 we have the account of the Pharisees’ questioning of the Lord regarding divorce. In His reply (6, 7) Christ said:

“. . . . but from the beginning of the creation *God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife*”

Here the Lord is quoting literally from the Septuagint version of Gen. i. 27 and ii. 24 and from this there can be no doubt whatsoever that He regarded Adam and Eve as literal persons. The context makes no sense without this.

How can anyone therefore call himself a *Christian*, a true believer in Christ, who does not accept as true everything that He taught? But there is more than this. The whole central section of the epistle to the Romans, namely v. 12 - viii. 39 stands or falls with a literal Adam:

“Wherefore, as by *one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin death reigned *from Adam to Moses* if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many” (Rom. v. 12-15).

Surely if ‘one man’ Adam is a myth, the whole of the Apostle’s argument and doctrine is jeopardized. Its basic doctrines of the Christian faith: justification by faith apart from works or human merit, its “no condemnation” and its glorious ‘persuasion’, all have no logical basis if they do not rest upon historical fact. Both Paul and Christ must have been deceived if Adam never existed and who can trust deceived people for time and for eternity? Truly we can echo the cry of Mary, “they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him” (John xx. 13).

Not only is the fundamental epistle to the Romans invalidated, the glorious hope of resurrection is likewise nullified:

“For since by *man (Adam)* came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as *in Adam* all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Cor. xv. 21, 22).

Here the argument from Rom. v. is reinforced by the emphasis on resurrection. That Paul completely and unreservedly endorsed the opening chapters of Genesis, let the subsequent references to Adam in I Cor. xv. 45-49 speak:

“And so it is written, *the first man Adam* was made a living soul; *the last Adam* was made a quickening Spirit *the first man is of the earth, earthy*: the second Man is the Lord from heaven and as we have borne the *image of the earthy*, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. xv. 45-49).

When we are dealing with the doctrine of resurrection, let us remember we are handling the very foundations of our faith and hope in the future. If there is no resurrection then the whole Christian faith collapses:

“And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: Whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished” (I Cor. xv. 14-18).

We can thank the Lord with hearts continually full of gratitude that our hope is sure and certain and based upon true historical facts whether we are dealing with the O.T. or the N.T. for both these rest squarely upon a crucified and risen Saviour.

There are three more references to Adam in N.T. to complete the tale:

“Adam was first formed, then Eve.”

“Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression”
(I Tim. ii. 13, 14).

How much better and safer it is to believe the facts of God’s Word, than to be deceived by the fallible opinions of men living nearly two thousand years after Christ, yet are sure that their pronouncements concerning Adam are right and the Lord Jesus (Who claimed to be the Truth, John xiv. 6), and the apostles are wrong. These people are blind leaders of the blind and their false ideas must be completely rejected.

Jude, knowing that the son of Cain was called Enoch, wrote in his epistle “Enoch, the seventh from Adam” (Jude 14), and Paul refers to the temptation of *Eve* by the serpent in II Cor. xi. 3. If Adam is a myth, we have no God-given Redeemer, but are stranded without chart or compass with but one thing to do, namely ‘to eat and drink for tomorrow we die’! What a prospect!

The Two Coverings.

The first reaction to the consciousness of guilt, as recorded in Gen. iii. 7 is that of seeking and providing a covering. The guilty pair ‘made themselves aprons’, and although these man-made coverings were stripped off, being completely insufficient, nevertheless coverings were provided by God, but these were of skin and so were sacrificial (Gen. iii. 21). Psa. xxxii. 1 says “blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is *covered*”, yet Prov. xxviii. 13 tells us “he that *covereth* his sins shall not prosper”.

There is no contradiction here. Sin must certainly be covered, but if it is merely ‘covered up’, in contrast to being ‘confessed’ and ‘forgiven’, it is wrong. If it is covered because ‘lifted up’ and borne away (Heb. *nasa* ‘forgiven’), it is blessed indeed. The word *nasa* translated ‘forgiven’ is rendered ‘bear’ 156 times, beside ‘be borne’ and ‘carried’, and is employed in such passages as “Surely He hath *borne* our griefs” and “He *bare* the sin of many” (Isa. liii. 4, 12). The cry of Cain, according to the A.V. of Gen. iv. 13 is “my punishment is greater than I can bear”, but the margin reads “mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven”, with a reference to Gen. xix. 15 where ‘iniquity’ in the text is ‘punishment’ in the margin. So interwoven in the Hebrew conception is sin and punishment, forgiveness and sacrifice, that the words used are as it were the reverse and observe of a coin. One side cannot exist apart from the other.

We have no information as to how far our first parents were instructed in the symbolism of this provision of a sacrificial covering made by God. But we who have the complete Scriptures and can see both type and fulfillment set before our eyes, have no

excuse. This leads us to consider the two opposing ways of approach to God recorded in Genesis which are linked with Cain and Abel. Let no one think that the antiquity of this subject makes it quite irrelevant today. It is basic for all time. God Himself has provided the way back to Himself for sinful man. He has provided *one* only, but it is all sufficient. The tragedy is that millions ignore it.

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The Two Ways --- The Way of Cain and the Way of Abel.

Having considered the basic teaching that is inherent in the 'two coverings' revealed in the early chapters of Genesis, we now note that there are two opposing ways which are illustrated in the actions of Cain and Abel. Before we consider this, it will be helpful to realize that redemption does not stand alone in Scripture. It is followed and completed by atonement and these are not just two ways of saying the same thing, as so many Christians think. The former gives us our *exodus*, the *way out* from sin, bondage and death, whereas the latter gives us our access into the presence of a holy God, our *way in*, and this is associated with the worship of the One Who has redeemed us.

At the east of the garden of Eden the Lord placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. Here the word 'placed' is the Hebrew *shaken*, familiar to many in the term "the *shekinah* glory". This gives us the word 'tabernacle'. At the east end of the garden which our first parents lost, was erected the first place of worship for man who had sinned. The cherubim, subsequently found in the Ark which was placed in the Tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 18), are an integral part of the Mercy Seat (note the marginal reading at verse 19). This blood-stained Mercy Seat was a picture of the propitiation which the Lord Jesus, centuries later, was to make on Calvary's cross (Rom. v. 13-15). The rich teaching associated with the cherubim rests squarely in the redemptive work of Christ and the last references to them are found in the Book of the Revelation, where unfortunately the A.V. speaks of them as 'the four beasts'. "Living ones" is what John wrote and they are not to be confused with the wild beasts representing Satan's kingdom in this great prophecy. This last book of the Bible deals with 'the restoration of all things spoken by all the holy prophets' which relate to the setting up of the earthly phase of the kingdom of God, when Christ at last will reign supreme over the earth.

In Genesis, the flaming sword that turned every way to *keep* or guard the way of the tree of life was not there just as a barrier or a threat, for the word *shamar* is translated many times 'preserve', and ultimately that sword was to 'awake' and 'smite' the Shepherd (Zech. xiii. 7) not the sheep. We are not told that Adam and Eve drew near to worship at any time. Their story illustrate the *two coverings*; it is left to their two sons to set forth the *two ways of approach to God*.

“In the process of time” or “at the end of days” (Gen. iv. 3) Cain and Abel brought their respective offerings unto the Lord. Some particular time is indicated by this phrase. In Gen. viii. 6 and xli. 1 we have similar words, “the end of forty days” and “the end of two full years”. In all probability it was a sabbath or a set season already established. Cain’s offering was of “the fruit of the ground” which had been cursed, and so links up with the bloodless covering of leaves which was made by Adam and Eve.

Abel brought “the firstlings of his flock” and the fat thereof. It is important to note that the word ‘also’ in Gen. iv. 4 should be read with the sacrifice and not with Cain, thus:

“And Abel *brought also* (that is in addition to a similar offering brought by Cain) of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof.”

The many references to the ‘fat’ in the offerings ordained by God through Moses (Exod. xxiii. 18; xxix. 13; Lev. iii. 3) and the typical teaching attached to it, make it clear that our first parents, together with Cain and Abel, were taught of God concerning the right approach of a worshipper. It is interesting to know that the Septuagint rendering of Gen. iv. 7 reads:

“Hast thou not sinned if thou hast brought it rightly, but not *rightly divided* it?”.

While the Greek is different from II Tim. ii. 15, the thought is the same. Cain had not ‘rightly divided’ or appreciated the difference of meaning that lay behind the fruit of the earth and the offering of the firstlings of the flock. Let us look closer at this verse:

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?”.

This is fundamental. If mortal and sinful man *could* ‘do well’, if he could produce a righteousness that would stand the test of the divine scrutiny, he would need neither offering nor Saviour. “If thou doest *not* well”, what then? There is nothing that can be done but rely entirely upon God’s mercy, point to the Lamb of God and cry “God be merciful to me the sinner”.

“Sin lieth at the door” (Gen. iv. 7). This phrase is usually interpreted as meaning ‘your sin is charged against you and is ready to spring and trap you further’. It is a gratuitous inference to think that, in the days of Cain and Abel, “to lie at one’s door” could mean “to impute or lay to one’s charge”. It is far more likely to refer to the door of the tabernacle (Gen. iii. 24 “placed” = as a tabernacle). The phrase is used repeatedly of the door of a tent (Gen. xviii. 1, 2, 10; Exod. xxvi. 36; xxix. 4, etc.). The word ‘to lie’, instead of referring to a crouching beast ready to spring, is used of sheep (Gen. xxix. 2) and in Psa. xxiii. 2, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”. Finally, the word ‘sin’ *chattah*, is translated ‘sin offering’ 116 times (e.g. Exod. xxix. 14; Lev. iv. 3). The words ‘desire’ and ‘rule over’ are the same as those used in Gen. iii. 16.

Gen. iv. 7 therefore should read:

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, a sin-offering coucheth or lieth at the door (of the tabernacle or tent at the east of the

garden of Eden). And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou (as the first-born) shalt rule over him.”

Jude links together in an unholy trinity “the way of Cain”, “the error of Balaam” and “the gainsaying of Korah” (Jude 11). Any gospel that is not based squarely on the offering of Christ for sin, is advocating the way of Cain and is sheer deception. Our pulpits today are full of such a travesty of the real ‘good news’. “Try to be like Jesus, imitate Him day by day and do your best” is the basis of many sermons, the hope being that somehow God will make up the deficiency and ignore our failures because He is love. Millions are being lulled into a sense of false security by such teaching, but this lie can only end in eternal death. In Christ Jesus alone we have the one Mediator and Saviour “Who gave Himself a ransom for all” and whose blood “speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. xii. 24).

Two attitudes to the curse on the ground.

Most believers will remember that Enoch was the one who walked with God and was translated (Heb. xi. 5). A glance at Jude 14 reveals that the writer refers to Enoch as “the seventh from Adam”. Why should he say this? Simply because there was another Enoch who can easily be confused with the former one. Cain’s first son was also called Enoch (Gen. iv. 17; v. 19). This Enoch had as his descendants Irad, Mehujael, Methusael and Lamech, while the Enoch of Gen. v. 18 had as his father, Jared, and as his son Methuselah, who in turn had a son named Lamech, the two names Irad and Jared differing only in the initial letter of the Hebrew.

This similarity of names is used by the arch-deceiver, Satan, in a similar way as at Babylon, there was used ‘brick’ for ‘stone’ (Gen. xi. 3). At the end of this dispensation Satan is going to fabricate a system that is so like the truth that ‘if it were possible’ it would ‘deceive the very elect’ and it will finally deceive the whole world except those faithful ones whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. xiii. 7, 8, 13, 14). Then the deceiver will at last get what he has been scheming for since his fall, the worship of all mankind.

In Genesis it would be easy to mistake Methusael for Methuselah, whilst both Lamechs are identical in spelling. There is more in this therefore than a mere accident or superficial likeness. It is a further division of the two ways, the way of Cain leading to the Lamech of Gen. iv. 18 and the way of Enoch leading to the Lamech of Gen. v. 25.

Two further links are found in the narrative. Lamech makes his boast:

“If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold” (Gen. iv. 24).
“And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years and he died” (Gen. v. 31).

There is a fundamental difference between the two Lamechs. Cain was cursed from the earth (Gen. iv. 11). *The Companion Bible* here reads:

“From the earth.” The Hebrew accent (*athnach*) after ‘cursed’ suggests ‘more than the ground’ (Gen. iii. 17).

To alleviate the effects of this curse on the ground, Cain built a city with all its attractions. Lamech’s son Jubal invented musical instruments, while Tubal-Cain became a worker in brass and iron. Lamech’s boast about slaying a man and his contrast with Cain’s protection by God (iv. 15) suggest that the metal working of his son Tubal-Cain provided him with weapons. Today, civilization with its many inventions, has laid a veneer over the curse of the ground and deadened the results of this curse. While life at the present time is easy in comparison with life in the earlier ages of man, it nevertheless prevents him from realizing his need for a Saviour and Deliverer.

The second Lamech took a different line. He called the name of his son Noah saying:

“This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed” (Gen. v. 29).

Toil of the hands and sweat of the face can be mitigated by the inventions of the line of Cain and yet at the same time play into the hands of the evil one, to remove or cover up the sense of utter need of a Saviour:

“This only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Eccles. vii. 29).

From one point of view it would be pessimistic defeatism to speak against the creative urge implanted in man. What wonderful things beyond man’s present attainment might have been made had he not become a sinner! One thing we should have been spared is the brilliance of his mind being turned to evil things, such as fabricating terrible weapons of war leading to untold suffering and destruction. Yet, on the other hand, who among us would willingly go back to smoking flax, to a tinder box, or the rubbing of two sticks to produce a spark?

The reference to man’s “inventions” in the Scriptures do not minimize their advantages, but reveal the fact that they so often displace trust in God for a stronger reliance on self, which in spiritual matters is fatal. In II Chron. xxvi. there is recorded the tragic history of king Uzziah. He started so well at the commencement of his reign for he “did that which was right in the sight of the Lord” (xxvi. 4). Yet later on, “when he was strong”, his heart was ‘lifted up to his destruction’, for he attempted to usurp the office of the priest which was forbidden by God and he died a leper (xxvi. 16-21). The worst sin of all, pride, caused his downfall, for it is the one sin that God will not tolerate, specially in the heart of His children. No wonder we have the constant stress in the N.T. on meekness and lowliness of mind, these graces being the first characteristics of the ‘worthy walk’ in Eph. iv. relating to the Body of Christ.

However, other factors entered in Uzziah’s case which ultimately led to this exaltation of self and these factors were related to human inventions. In his early days ‘he sought God’, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper (xxvi. 4, 5). God wonderfully helped him against the Philistines and the Arabians, and the Ammonites

were constrained to bring him gifts. As a consequence his name spread abroad to Egypt ‘for he strengthened himself exceedingly’ (xxvi. 8), but there is an ominous omission of any recognition or reference to the Lord as was recorded of him earlier.

He built towns and fortified the gates and armed his forces but the record goes on to say ‘he made in Jerusalem *engines, invented by cunning men*, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal and his name spread far abroad, for he was marvelously helped *till he was strong. But when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction*” (xxvi. 9-16). Here is where human inventions came in and led his mind away from trust and dependence upon the Lord to trust in self and weapons of war and then pride had the mastery and he became its slave. The Hebrew word for ‘engine’ is *chishshebonoth*, the same word being used in Ecclesiastes. Perhaps the greatest blow to all who trust in such inventions, is to read in Eccles. ix. 10:

“There is no work, nor *device* (same word as invention), nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.”

Human inventions cease at the grave and then what?

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Coming back to Genesis, we note that one son of Lamech was ‘the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ’ and another ‘the instructor of every artifice in brass and iron’ (Gen. iv. 21, 22). We need not rush to extremes and deduce from this, as some do, that all music and art proceed from Satan. There could have been no music or colour unless the Creator had made these possible. Moreover we note that Satan, in his unfallen state was given ‘tabrets’ and ‘pipes’ by the God Who made him and when we come later to Israel’s Temple we note the provision God made in ordaining a choir and a large orchestra to accompany His praise, and we have a number of references in the N.T. to singing and music in heaven, though this will doubtless transcend anything we know on this earth. God Himself is the supreme Musician and Artist and we see evidences of this around us in nature even though man has fallen and creation is subject to vanity. Who can look at a beautiful sunset with all its gorgeous colouring, without being moved? Satan certainly did not invent that! And the final city, that God Himself will build, the new Jerusalem is graphically described by the Apostle John in Rev. xxi. where every colour is lavished on it and its supreme beauty will be an object lesson to the whole creation.

Satan, in his wickedness, is quite prepared to use good things as well as evil things to achieve his ends, but because he uses them, this does not make them wrong in themselves. In Genesis, the boast of Lamech that he had slain a man and could avenge himself seventy and sevenfold was in direct opposition to Lamech, the descendant of Seth, of whom it is stated:

“ he begat a son: and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed” (Gen. v. 28, 29).

While this Lamech did not live to experience the deliverance accomplished through Noah, his attitude is the one that should be ours, who are redeemed. While “we use the world” we do not ‘use it to the full’ (literally, ‘Abuse’ A.V.) or as Moffatt translates it:

“Let those who mix in the world live as if they were not engrossed in it, for the present phase of things is passing away” (I Cor. vii. 31).

The subject is vast in its scope and in its associations. It implies the pilgrim character of the redeemed and warns of the pitfalls that harmless and necessary things may become if once we yield to the false assurances and reasonings of Satan, the enemy of truth. We pass on to:

Noah, the Second Man.

Rom. v. 14 tells us that Adam is ‘a figure of Him that was to come’. Adam is one of the names of Christ as ‘the second Man’ (I Cor. xv. 45, 47), and in the typical teaching of the first part of Genesis, Noah is the type of Christ in this respect. This can be seen if the following parallels are considered:

<i>A D A M</i>	<i>N O A H</i>
“Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth” (i. 28).	“Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth” (ix. 1).
Possible judgment in the background (i. 2).	Judgment in the background (vi. 7).
Let the dry land appear (i. 10).	The ground was dry (viii. 13).
Have dominion and subdue it (i. 28).	Fear and dread (ix. 2).
The image of God (i. 27).	The image of God (ix. 6).
Three sons (iv. 1, 2, 25).	Three sons (x. 1).
Nakedness covered (iii. 7, 21).	Nakedness covered (ix. 22, 23).
Cain cursed (iv. 11).	Canaan cursed (ix. 25).
The ground cursed (iii. 17).	The ground no more cursed (viii. 21).

A careful study will add to these, but the above correspondencies will at least show that Adam found his complement in Noah and illuminates Lamech’s resolve already noted.

The Two Prophecies of Enoch.

Noah was the grandson of Methuselah who lived longer than any other man on earth, reaching the great age of 969 years, thus nearly attaining a millennium. Enoch called his son Methuselah because of the prophetic meaning of his name ‘at his death it (the flood) shall be’, or as *The Companion Bible* puts it, ‘when he is dead it shall be sent’. Simple arithmetic will reveal the exactness of this prophecy:

Methuselah was 187 years at the birth of Lamech (Gen. v. 25).
 Lamech was 182 years at the birth of Noah (Gen. v. 28).
 Noah was 600 years at the time of the flood (Gen. vii. 6).

 969 (Gen. v. 27).

Enoch, however, uttered another prophecy which is not recorded in Genesis, but preserved by Jude in his epistle. We quote from the R.V.:

“And to these (not of these) also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord *came* (not cometh A.V.) with ten thousands of His holy ones to *execute judgment*” (Jude 14).

It is important to notice that the Lord’s coming referred to by Enoch was a *past event* in his day, not the coming of the Lord in a future day which is called His Second Advent. What Enoch said was a warning to those of his own time, that just as surely as a day of judgment in the future (the flood) was indicated by the meaning of his son Methuselah’s name, so there had been a judgment by the Lord *in the past* and the only Scriptural event we can link this with is the fall of Satan and the angels that sided with him. Both of these tremendous judgments, as II Peter reveals, foreshadow the gigantic judgment of the last days (II Pet. ii. 4, 5; iii. 4-7).

The Twofold Nature of Genesis.

The book of Genesis falls into two parts, the first headed by Adam, the father of the human race, the second headed by Abraham, the father of the nation and the nations. Noah brings the first part of Genesis to a conclusion and builds an ark so that all flesh should not be destroyed. Joseph brings the second part of Genesis to a close, saying, “God did send me before you to preserve life” and “to preserve you a posterity in the earth” and “save much people alive” (Gen. xlv. 5, 7; l. 20). The first part of Genesis ends with an Ark; the second ends with a coffin, but with resurrection in view (l. 25, 26; Heb. xi. 22). An outline therefore of Genesis could be set out thus:

The Deep (Abyss) (Gen. i. 2).	Adam to Noah The Race	The Flood (Gen. vi.) The Ark
	Abraham to Joseph The Nation	Beyond Jordan (l. 11) The Coffin

Abraham’s Two Sons.

The Apostle Paul has used the fact that Abraham had two sons, the one, Ishmael by a bond woman, the other, Isaac, by Sarah the free. This ‘allegorizing’ of an historical event is found in Gal. iv. 21-31. The fact that Abraham had two sons is therefore intentional in type and demands consideration although he had six more children by Keturah. Paul’s use of the record in Genesis concerning Isaac and Ishmael is governed by the need to

warn the Galatians believers of the spiritual implication of allowing themselves to be put under law (Gal. iv. 21; v. 3, 4). Ishmael, born of a bond woman, Hagar, represents the covenant instituted at Sinai and answers to “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free”, and Isaac and those who are of faith are ‘the children of promise’. At the close of this section the Apostle gives his clarion call:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal. v. 1).

Many other valuable lessons can be gathered from a prayerful consideration of Genesis xii.-xxii. which Paul did not introduce into Galatians as they did not form part of his argument. The two sons represent the slavery of sin and death, represented by the law given through Moses and the mighty deliverance which Christ, the true Isaac, has accomplished for the believer by His atoning death and glorious resurrection.

We can all sympathetically enter into the trial of Abraham’s faith in waiting so long for God’s appointed time in the gift of Isaac, the child of promise. One of the hardest tests of the believer’s pathway is to learn the lesson of waiting, for we are all more or less impatient. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him” (Psa. xxxvii. 7), but how difficult we sometimes find this is to put into practice! Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran (Gen. xii. 4). He had to wait 25 years till he was 100 years old before the promised son was given, and when he and his wife were physically incapable of having a child. Meanwhile, in line with the existing laws codified by Khammurabi, Abraham and his wife resorted to an expedient to help the Lord out of an apparent difficulty and Ishmael was born. But they had to learn that this was wrong and the hard lesson of waiting was continued. The effects of this mistake are felt to the present day, for it is from Ishmael that the Arab nations sprang. Before Isaac was given, the names of his parents were changed. Abram was altered to Abraham, “father of nations” and this name given to a man who was old and impotent! Sarai was changed to Sarah, a princess, and the covenant of circumcision was introduced.

All these things having a spiritual lesson for this aged couple who at last had their faith rewarded by the God of resurrection, Who quickened their mortal bodies by His mighty resurrection power and caused His promise of a son to be wonderfully fulfilled to the letter. Rom. iv. 16-25 and Heb. xi. 11, 12, 17-19 graphically sum up this story, and in Rom. ix. 6-9 Paul uses the record of the birth of Isaac to teach the truth of the two seeds and the plan of God which selected the descendants of Isaac and not of Ishmael, to carry out His purpose of a kingdom of priests, headed by the great King-Priest Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ through Whom God’s kingdom on earth would finally be established.

The same elective purpose of God is seen in His dealings with the two sons of Isaac—Jacob and Esau. This is clearly stated in Rom. ix. 10-13:

“When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (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."

It is a profound mistake to limit the doctrine of election to salvation. "The eternal purpose" (Eph. iii. 11) or better "the plan of the ages" has been mapped out by God which includes the human avenues through which it will surely be fulfilled and come to a triumphant conclusion. Not all the opposition of Satan, the powers of darkness and unregenerate men can thwart what God determines to be carried out, so that a perfect creation with perfect creatures will finally be established for ever.

The Twofold Gift of the Land.

In other studies we have pointed out the unconditional gift by God of *a seed* (posterity) and *a land* for Abraham. These must be kept together as they are in the original promises, and in doing this we shall be prevented from the error of spiritualizing them. The land is given definite geographical boundaries and must be taken literally (Gen. xv. 18) "unto thy seed have I given this land, *from the river of Egypt (the Nile) unto the great river, the river Euphrates*". The following Scriptures should be carefully pondered. They are too long to quote fully: Genesis xii. 1-3; xiii. 14-17; xv. 17, 18; xvii. 7, 8; xxii. 17, 18.

This dual promise of God was repeated to Isaac (xxvi. 3) and to Jacob (xxviii. 13, 14) hence its importance in the divine purpose.

We must notice, however, that the gift of the land is in two parts. The large piece of land we have just noticed embracing the Middle East, contains Palestine, which in O.T. times was called Canaan and this is stressed as being a gift of God. His words to Abraham were:

"I will give unto thee, and to they seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession" (Gen. xvii. 8),

and later to Moses:

"I have also established My covenant with them, to *give them the land of Canaan*, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers" (Exod. vi. 4),

also in I Chron. xvi. 15-18:

"Be ye mindful always of His covenant Even of the covenant which He made with Abraham, and of His oath unto Isaac; and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, *Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance*".

So also Lev. xxv. 38, and Deut. xxxii. 49. Canaan covers the area of modern Palestine and this part of the divine gift Israel enjoyed in Joshua's day. All of God's promise concerning Canaan was realized by Israel and *it is to this that Josh. xxi. 43-45 refers*. Joshua's campaign was confined to Canaan. He certainly did not touch Egypt or the far east containing Babylonia and reaching to the Euphrates. Even in the most

prosperous days of Israel's history under Solomon we are definitely told that Israel dwelt safely, "every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from *Dan even to Beer-sheba*, all the days of Solomon" (I Kings iv. 25). Dan and Beer-sheba were the extreme north and south of Palestine only and while Solomon's suzerainty extended much further eastwards, he only reached westwards 'to the *border* of Egypt' (II Chron. ix. 26) and not across Egypt to the Nile.

From this it should be clear that Israel in the past has only enjoyed a *portion* of the land originally promised to Abraham in Gen. xv. 17, 18. God is always true to His promises and therefore Israel must yet enjoy the much larger inheritance and we believe will do so when the earthly kingdom is established at Christ's second Advent. Surely Isa. xix. 23-25 will then be fulfilled:

"In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance."

The Twofold seed of Abraham.

Gal. iii. 16 on the surface seems to contradict what we have already seen concerning the numerous posterity God originally promised to Abraham unconditionally:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

This is a favourite reference of spiritualizers who deny that the people of Israel as a nation have any future in God's plans. All the promise to Abraham has been realized in Christ, they say! but they are only looking at half of the divine picture. Paul is recalling such a verse as Gen. xxi. 12 "In Isaac shall thy seed be called". Here the Hebrew *zera*, which is a collective noun, is used in the singular sense with a singular verb and looks forward personally to Christ. But in Gen. xvii. 7 the same word is used in *the plural sense* "thy seed in their generations" and must refer to Abraham's posterity. Thus we see that God's promise to Abraham relating to his seed is twofold: (1) A natural posterity, (2) All resting on the foundation of THE SEED, Christ, "the Son of David, *the Son of Abraham*" (Matt. i. 1). One is not complete without the other. We should note that the Apostle Paul in Gal. iii., not only stresses the *singularity* of the seed, but also its *plurality*: "And if ye be Christ's, *then are ye (all the Galatian believers) Abraham's seed*, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29).

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Jacob's Two Sons.

The reader may feel that a mistake has been made here, for Jacob had 12 sons and also a daughter. Although this is true, there are two who specially carry the story and the purpose on to the end of Genesis. They are Joseph and Benjamin.

There are seven great types of Christ found in the book of Genesis:

- A | ADAM. Sin and death. Return to the dust (iii.).
- B | ABEL. Accepted offering (iv. 1-4).
- C | SETH. Substitution. "Instead" (iv. 25).
- D | NOAH. Atonement. "Pitch" (vi. 14).
- C | ISAAC. Substitution. "Instead" (xxii. 13).
- B | JUDAH. Surety. "Instead" (xliv. 33).
- A | JOSEPH. Preserver of life. "The coffin" (xlv. 5; 1. 26).

Some may wonder why Abraham does not figure here, but he was more a type of God the Father, Who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all" (Rom.viii.32).

Jacob's record opens in Genesis with the words:

"And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.
These are the generations of Jacob" (Gen. xxxvii. 1, 2).

Jacob's generation was not written as from Padan-aram the home of Laban, but from Canaan, the land of promise, and does not commence with Reuben the firstborn, but with Joseph. Again, the record does not say 'now Jacob loved Joseph' but "*Israel* loved Joseph", indicating that this love was something over and above natural affection. The coat of many colours was no mere dressing up. It marked Joseph off from his brothers both as the heir and priest of the family. The consequence of this preferment was that 'his brethren hated him'. When Rebekah prepared Jacob to deceive Isaac and so to procure the birthright, she took 'raiment of desires' literally (Gen. xxvii. 15), and throughout the Scriptures clothing has a symbolic value.

The dreams of Joseph were of great importance and were misunderstood by his brothers and even his parents. We must remember that, in Joseph's day, there were no written Scriptures and as far as the record goes, no one who possessed the gift of prophecy. Dreams were probably rare then, and God used them to make known His will. They were not given to Joseph for himself; they were prophetic. Even the dreams of this period *run in pairs* as follows:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| First pair. | Joseph dreams of pre-eminence. | <i>Prison.</i> |
| Second pair. | Prisoners' dreams interpreted. | <i>Deliverance.</i> |
| Third pair. | Pharaoh's dreams interpreted. | <i>Glory.</i> |

Joseph was bound to make known his dreams, for they were a communication from God Himself and could not be kept secret. The reaction of his brothers very closely anticipated the attitude of the Jews against Christ centuries later:

“Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words” (Gen. xxxvii. 8).

Stephen, in Acts vii., uses the story of Joseph stressing ‘the second time’ and of Moses, ‘whom they refused’, to enforce the lesson upon his own countrymen (vii. 13, 35). It can be no accident that Judah (Judas in the Greek) suggested selling Joseph for twenty pieces of silver (Gen. xxxvii. 28).

Joseph’s pathway to the throne of Egypt via prison, sets forth in type the two advents of Christ, who, during the interval while Israel suffered want, was being used to bless Gentile Egyptians and who married a Gentile wife. While there is still disagreement over the exact meaning of the title Pharaoh gave to Joseph, namely “Zaphnath-paaneah” (Genesis xli. 45) which the A.V. margin renders ‘a revealer of secrets’, the possibility is that it can mean ‘abundance of life’ or ‘of food for the living’ (see *The Companion Bible* note). If so, it was anticipating Christ as “the Bread of life”. The words “what he saith to you do” (Gen. xli. 55) is echoed by Mary “whatsoever He saith unto you, do it” (John ii. 5), even as the words ‘his father observed the saying’ (Gen. xxxvii. 11) remind one of Mary who ‘kept all these sayings and pondered them in her heart’ (Luke ii. 19,51).

The necessary stages of prophetic foreshadowing can be summed up thus:

- (1) The repentance of Israel (Gen. xlii. 13, 21, 22).
- (2) The revelation to Israel (Gen. xlv. 1-4 cp. Zech. xii. 10).
- (3) The restoration of Israel (Gen. xlv. 7, 11; xlvi. 6).
- (4) The resurrection of Israel (Gen. xlix. 29; Heb. xi. 22).

So far we have been concerned with one son of Israel, Joseph, who is a very rich type of Christ. Who is the other, without whom the type is not complete? Let us first enquire why Joseph was so called. The verb ‘to add’ in Hebrew is *jasaph* and is so translated in the A.V. 39 times, its first occurrence being in Gen. iv. 2 where we read that, after the birth of Cain, ‘she (Eve) *added* to bear his brother Abel’ (she *again* bear in the A.V.). Here, at the beginning of the book, the birth of two sons is recorded, one being *added* to the other and setting forth the two opposing seeds from Cain and Abel. The other pair at the end of Genesis, which we are now considering, uses the very word “*jasaph*” or “Joseph” because his mother Rachel said:

“The Lord shall *add* to me another son” (Gen. xxx. 24).

In Gen. xxxv. 16-18 we have the record of the birth of Rachel’s second son during which she died and “as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: son of my sorrow”. In the ordinary course of things, no husband who loved his wife as Jacob had loved Rachel would have altered her last wish, but Jacob was constrained, (we believe by the Lord) to name him Ben-jamin, ‘son of my right hand’.

To complete the type of Christ set forth in the life of Joseph we need to ‘add’ the picture of Benjamin, the Son of the Right Hand, as in Psa. cx. 1, “Sit Thou at My right hand” or as it is reiterated in Hebrews (Heb. i. 3, 13; viii. 1; x. 12; xii. 2). The type of Joseph ends with death in Gen. 1. 26, a coffin in Egypt. We cannot stop here, for a risen Christ is essential for redemption and the final fulfillment of God’s purpose, so Benjamin completes the picture by portraying the Christ Jesus of resurrection—“Son of My right hand”.

The Twofoldness of the Book of Exodus.

The second book of the Bible is written around two sacrificial types of the work of Christ, namely the Passover and the Mercy Seat. In the N.T. two words are used to bring these two aspects of truth into prominence, the words *exodus* and *eisodus*. The former will be familiar to us as the title of the second book of Moses and means ‘a way out’. The other word *eisodus* means the opposite, ‘a way in’. While all Gospel preaching if it is to be faithful must stress the great work of deliverance or redemption as set forth in the Passover, a picture of the offering of the Lamb of God on Calvary’s cross, it is a mistake to stop there. While *redemption* sets us gloriously free, we need to be able to come into the presence of a thrice holy God and so need *atonement* and this is based just as securely on the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

We find the word *exodus* in Luke’s record of the Transfiguration:

“. . . . Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spake of His decease (*exodus*) which He should accomplish at Jerusalem” (Luke ix. 30, 31).

Both Moses (Exod. xiv.) and Elijah (II Kings ii. 14) are associated with a miraculous parting of the waters, either of the Red Sea or of the Jordan, and there, on the Mount as representatives of the law and the prophets they both speak of His ‘exodus’ of which theirs were but foreshadowings.

The *eisodus*, or ‘the way in’, is found in the epistle to the Hebrews:

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness of the *eisodus* (boldness to enter) into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. x. 19).

The two aspects of Christ’s finished work are indicated in Exodus iii. 7, 8, 10 and vi. 6, 7:

“I am come down to *deliver them out of* the hand of the Egyptians, and to *bring them up out of* that land unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

“*I will bring you out* from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will *rid you out of* their bondage, and I will redeem you I will *take you to Me* for a people.”

The Passover is the great type of the real exodus the Lord accomplished at Calvary. After Israel had crossed the Red Sea and were in the wilderness, the Tabernacle was erected with all its typical furniture and offerings. These complement the Passover with

its 'way out' by stressing the equal need for a sacrificial basis to give Israel, represented by the High Priest, a 'way into' the Lord's presence without which their deliverance from Egypt would have been incomplete.

Let us give further attention to this by considering the teaching lying behind the Passover and the Tabernacle. We have this twofold aspect of the one offering of Christ in several parts of the N.T.:

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. i. 7).

The word 'forgiveness', *aphesis*, is translated in Luke iv. 18 'deliverance' and 'to set at liberty'. This is the exodus aspect.

"Ye who sometimes were far off are *made nigh* by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13).

This is the *exodus* aspect. Peter likewise presents this twofold truth:

Redemption. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things but with the precious blood of Christ" (I Pet. i. 18, 19).

Atonement. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that *He might bring us to God*" (I Pet. iii. 18).

The word translated 'to bring' in I Pet. iii. 18 is *prosagoge*, the same word that is rendered 'access' in Eph. ii. 18.

The same order is observed in Titus ii. 14:

". . . . Who gave Himself for us, that He might *redeemed us from* all iniquity, and *purify unto Himself* a peculiar people".

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Continuing our consideration of the finished work of Christ in its twofold aspect, redemption and atonement, we notice that John's Gospel opens with 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world' (redemption). In the opening of his first epistle John reveals the fact that the cleansing blood of Christ enables the redeemed 'to walk in the light, as He is in the light' (atonement, I John i. 7). Israel had first to be delivered from the bondage of Egypt before they could learn the preciousness of access into the holiest of all. The one offering of Christ is both our redemption and our atonement, our 'way out' and our 'way in'. In spite of the indiscriminate use of the term, atonement is not primarily for unsaved sinners, but for the complete salvation of the redeemed:

"Being justified freely by His grace through the *redemption* that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God has set forth as a *propitiation (atonement or mercy seat)* through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 24, 25).

Before examining the record of the Passover in Exod. xii., let us acquaint ourselves with the distinctive meaning of the two words redemption and atonement as used in the O.T. The word *padah* which is translated 'redeem' and 'redemption' a number of times primarily means 'to sever, separate or divide'. In Exod. viii. 23 we read 'I will put a *division* between My people and thy people'. The Septuagint uses the word *diastole* translated 'difference' in Rom. iii. 22. Again, where Isa. xxix. 22 uses the word *padah* ('the Lord Who *redeemed* Abraham'), the Septuagint translates by the Greek *aphorisen* 'separated' as in Rom. i. 1.

The tract of country called *Padan-Aram* is the country *separated* by the two rivers, Euphrates and Tigris, and named by the Greeks *Mesopotamia*, the land lying in the midst of the rivers. *Gaal* or *Goel* refers to the wonderful type of Christ as the *Kinsman-Redeemer*. The office of the Kinsman-Redeemer is set forth in the book of Ruth and this is the One Job spoke of when he said "I know that my *Redeemer* liveth" (Job xix. 25).

The Passover (Exod. xii.).

Let us first of all see this chapter in outline:

- A | 1, 2. The beginning of months.
- B | 3-11. The feast of Passover.
- C | 12, 13. I will pass over.
- B | 14-17-. The feast of Unleavened Bread.
- C | -17. This day I brought you out.
- A | 18-20. The first month.

"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exod. xii. 2).

Notice that the words 'unto you' and 'to you' *indicate a change*. The first month of the year, till the institution of the Passover was Tisri, corresponding with our October. Here, at the Passover, *Israel started anew* and their New Year began which corresponds with our March-April. This is Gospel truth in type and shadow.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a *new creation*; the old has gone, the new has come!" (II Cor. v. 17, N.I.V.).

It is Christ on the cross where the sinner must commence. There is no other beginning that God recognizes. "It (the Passover) shall be the *beginning* of the year to you." "A lamb", "*the* lamb", "*your* lamb", such is the suggestive progression in verses 3, 4, 5, that from *a* Saviour, we may pass to *the* Saviour and not have rested until we can say *my* Saviour. "Your lamb shall be *without blemish*" (Exod. xii. 5). The law in Leviticus is stringent right down to minutest details, that the holiness and perfection of the great Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, might be constantly in the fore and ever be in the mind of the believer:

“. . . . there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut they shall not be accepted for you” (Lev. xxii. 21-25).

All such animals must be set aside “*It shall be perfect to be accepted*” (verse 21). The lamb was to be taken on the tenth day of the month and sacrificed on the fourteenth. This would give time and opportunity for careful inspection.

The true Lamb of God was constantly under inspection by His family, His disciples and the multitudes around Him. One day He threw out a challenge ‘which of you convicteth Me of sin?’ (John viii. 46). No one could reply for it was impossible. He was ‘holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners’ (Heb. vii. 26) and only as such could He be the Saviour of failing men and women. Had He sinned but once in thought, word, or deed, He would have needed a saviour Himself. A sinner cannot atone for or put away his own sin and put perfection in its place, let alone atone for the sin of the whole world!

Luke xxiii. contains the finding of those who examined the true Lamb of God:

<i>Pilate.</i>	I find <i>no fault</i> in this man (verses 4 and 14).
<i>Herod.</i>	“No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, <i>nothing worthy of death</i> is done unto Him” (15).
<i>The Malefactor.</i>	“We receive the due reward of our deeds: <i>but this man hath done nothing amiss</i> ” (41).
<i>The Centurion.</i>	“. . . . glorified God, saying, <i>Certainly this was a righteous man</i> ” (47).

Matt. xxvii. adds further evidence:

<i>Judas.</i>	“I have betrayed the <i>innocent</i> blood” (verse 4).
<i>Pilate’s wife.</i>	“Have nothing to do with that <i>just</i> man” (19).

God’s doctrine necessitated the tremendous statement that Christ ‘was made sin for us’, but it immediately adds ‘Who knew no sin’ (II Cor. v. 21). Peter insists that He Himself ‘bare our sins’ but straight away states ‘Who did no sin’ (I Pet. ii. 22-24) and speaks of “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb *without blemish and without spot*” (I Pet. i. 18, 19).

“It shall be PERFECT to be accepted.” Such was God’s requirement for the type of His Son for such is the Lamb of God, our Saviour.

Exod. xii. 13 reads:

“And the blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

The word *oth*, ‘token’, is often translated ‘sign’ in the O.T. The rainbow in the cloud is called the token or sign of the covenant (Gen. ix. 12). “The blood shall be to you for a sign”, that is, it *signified something* and that something was *life laid down*:

“The soul (life) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls (lives): for it *is the blood that maketh an atonement by reason of the soul (life)*” (Lev. xvii. 11).

The shed blood atoned for the soul or life, *by reason of the soul in it*. The sprinkled blood upon the door post was a sign that redemption had been made. Nothing else could be that sign and nothing else did the Lord ‘see’. No genealogy showing direct descent from Abraham could be a sign; no promises, vows, prayers, nothing but the sprinkled blood redeemed and protected those in the house. It is important to understand that the Lord ‘passing over’ each house of the Israelites was synonymous with *protecting*. It is difficult to understand that the act of passing over a building could protect it from harm. But when we realize that the word *pasach*, “pass over”, is rendered “halt” in I Kings xviii. 21, ‘how long *halt* ye between two opinions?’ and here is the thought of *suspension of movement*. ‘Hovering’ gives the sense better in Exodus. The theme of Deut. xxxii. 11 seems appropriate here:

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, *fluttereth over* her young, *spreadeth abroad her wings*”.

The Lord, like the eagle, spread abroad His wings, hovered over the houses of His people, protecting them from the destroyer that went through the land and caused death in every house. Psa. xci. 4 expresses the feeling of *pasach*—‘to pass over’ without using the word:

“He shall *cover thee* with His feathers, and *under His wings* shalt thou trust.”

We should note too that the two *side* posts and the *upper* door post were sprinkled with the blood, but never the floor and the threshold, for not even in type would God allow ‘trampling under foot the Son of God and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing’ (Heb. x. 29). God’s true Passover Lamb was perfect inside and out and in Him alone can we find redemption, acceptance and access.

The immediate result of the Passover was that all who came under the redeeming action became ‘pilgrims’:

“And thus shalt ye eat it: with your loins *girded*, your *shoes on your feet*, and your *staff in your hand*; and ye shall *eat it in haste*” (Exod. xii. 11).

There could be no more waiting in Egypt, the place of bondage, after such redemption, the exodus to freedom must start straight away. All this great illustration of the fulness of redemption must have been in Paul’s mind when he wrote:

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (I Cor. v. 7).

The Atonement.

After Israel were separated by redemption from Egypt (a type of the world system under the domination of a greater than Pharaoh, Satan), the next great typical movement was the erection of the Tabernacle. In this, the Mercy Seat is the central feature. Priests

are necessary, cleansing is emphasized and the solemn privilege of access and entrance into the holiest of all is set forth where the blaze of God's glory, the shekinah dwelt. We say 'solemn privilege of access' advisedly, because only *one* Israelite went into this most sacred dwelling place of God, *once a year*. God surrounded Himself with barriers as it were to impress on His redeemed people that access into His holy presence was a privilege beyond estimation. The ordinary Israelite *lived the whole of his life without once entering the most holy place in the Tabernacle*. Aaron only went in once a year in his capacity as the high Priest, representing the people of Israel on the great annual Day of Atonement and then 'not without blood', for access to a thrice holy God would be for ever impossible for sinners unless they had been redeemed and cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. But we read in Heb. x. 14:

"For by one Offering (Himself) He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

The most holy place of the Tabernacle was a picture of the reality in the highest heavens:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands (the earthly Tabernacle), which are the *figures of the true; but into heaven itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest (the most holy place) by the blood of Jesus let us draw near" (Heb. x. 19-22).

What no Israelite could do in the O.T. dispensation before the redemptive and atoning work of Christ on the cross, we who are saved and members of the Body can experience at all times:

"For through Him (the Lord Jesus) we both (Jewish and Gentile believers) *have access by one Spirit unto the Father*."

"In Whom (the Lord Jesus) we have boldness and *access* with confidence by the faith of Him" (Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12).

How highly favoured we are! May we ever value highly such a tremendous privilege and remember that the basis of it is nothing in ourselves, but it has all been wrought out for us by our glorious Saviour and Head. Redemption snaps the *bondage and slavery* of sin. Atonement cleanses from the *defilement* of sin and makes us fit to enter the holiest of all in heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Way and the one Mediator, unto our God and Father.

The Twofold Nature of the Prophecy of Isaiah.

The place occupied by the prophecy of Isaiah in the Hebrew canon can be best seen if the prophets as a whole are set out in their inter-relationship. This has been ably done by C. H. Welch in *An Alphabetical Analysis* Part 9, p.184 and for the sake of completeness we give it here:

Structure of the Prophets according to the Hebrew Canon.

- A | JOSHUA. “The Lord of all the earth.”
Failure to possess the land (xviii. 3).
The Canaanite still in possession (xv. 63).
- B | JUDGES. Failure. Thirteen judges.
Israel forsaking and returning to God. “No King” (xxi. 25).
- C | SAMUEL. Saul (type of Antichrist). David (type of Christ).
Israel want to be “like the nations”.
- D | KINGS. Decline and failure under Kings.
Removal from the land.
- D | ISAIAH. Israel’s only hope, final blessing, and restoration.
Messiah—God’s King.
- C | JEREMIAH. Nebuchadnezzar (type of Antichrist).
David’s “Righteous Branch”. “Raised up” the Deliverer.
Israel sent into captivity among the nations.
- B | EZEKIEL. The glory of God forsaking and returning to the land and people.
Jehovah Shammah. The Lord is there.
- A | MINOR PROPHETS. “The Lord of all the earth.” Joshua the High Priest.
Restoration of Israel to the land.
“No more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts” (Zech. xiv. 21).

From this arrangement of the Prophets, we can see that Israel reached the depths of apostasy, the glory has departed and they and all mankind have proved a failure. With Isaiah we start a new movement. The nation of Israel was called to be the Lord’s “servant-nation” (Isa. xli. 8), but it is the Messiah, Who, in the time of Israel’s failure, is spoken of in the words of Isa. xlii. 1 “Behold My Servant”. Israel is destined to be the Lord’s “witness-nation” to the world (xliiii. 10), but it is the greater than David Who is given as a Witness in Isa. lv. 4. The theme of this book as of all the prophets, is tersely expressed in a twofold way in Jer. xxxi. 10 “He that *scattered* Israel will *gather* him”. In other words the prophets give the record of God’s judgments on Israel for their apostasy and the nations associated with them for their sin, but because of His unconditional promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, concerning their *seed* and the *promised land* (of which Palestine is only a small part), God will honour His Word and finally save and restore the nation of Israel so that they can at last fulfil God’s will and be the channel of salvation and blessing to the whole world.

Israel's only hope is presented in the above structure:

“Israel's final blessing, restoration and only hope is in Messiah, God's King.”

Isaiah's prophecy is divided, not only by these two opposing themes, but also by the history of Sennacherib's invasion recorded in chapters xxxvi.-xxxix., his challenge and defeat. The introduction of this piece of past history into a prophecy which speaks of deliverance from a future oppressor is for the encouragement of God's people. Just as the prophecy of Daniel is in two parts, so that we may see, what God say He will do in the future, he has already done in measure in the past. So before we come to the wondrous words of Isa. xl. 1:

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My People, saith your God”,

the reader may be assured that what God has promised He is able to perform.

The first section of the prophecy (chapters i.-xxxix.) gives us God's judgments on Israel. In chapter i. they are likened to Sodom and Gomorrah (i. 10). They had sunk lower than animals, for even animals recognize their master. Israel failed to do so (i.3,4). Not only is Israel disciplined, but Gentile nations as well who had come into contact with Israel and for their own ends, and had injured the chosen people, for God always has respect to His promises, both for judgment and blessing. He had told Abraham that he would ‘curse him that curseth thee’ (Gen. xii. 3).

From chapter xl. onwards there is a dramatic change to comfort and blessing (xl. 1) ending up with a glorious picture of the future nation, saved and becoming the priestly kingdom that God had always intended they should be. Chapters lx. and lxi. should be studied as a whole (see lx. 1-3, 12, 19-22; lxi. 5-9). All this will come to pass after the Lord's Second Coming.

Twofoldness of the Gospel according to Matthew.

This gospel is divided into two parts by its *dating*. The words *in italics* are identical in the Greek:

“From that time forth Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. iv. 17).

“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).

The first part gives the commencement of the Lord's public ministry and is connected with the kingdom of heaven, the earthly phase of God's kingdom (Matt. vi. 10). This ministry is kept solely to Israel as is the ministry of the twelve disciples (xv. 24; x. 1-8). This can never be understood unless one has the Biblical conception of the role God willed Israel to fulfil in taking the knowledge of Himself to the ends of the earth (Genesis xii. 3; Acts xiii. 46, 47). The Lord planned to reach the Gentile world through

the Jew and will still do so when this nation is convicted of sin and born anew at the second Advent of Christ.

The second section of Matthew deals with the death and resurrection of the One Who had come to be Israel's Messiah and King-Priest and was to be rejected. Up till xvi. 21 the Lord Jesus had kept silent about His death. The words of xvi. 21 are unambiguous and Peter's attitude, when that death was announced, confirms the truth of this statement (xvi. 22, 23). The Lord's lament over Jerusalem (xxiii. 37-39) foretells its doom owing to Israel's rejection of Him: "Your house is left unto you desolate" (38). In the mercy and longsuffering of God yet another opportunity was going to be given to this people to repent and turn to God (Acts iii. 19-26) and this covered the whole of the Acts with the promise that, if they obeyed this command, Christ would be sent back to them and the glory of God's kingdom on earth, so graphically portrayed by the O.T. prophets, would then be realized. But again they rejected Him (Acts xxviii. 17, 23-28) and were left in the spiritually blinded condition which has characterized them up to the present time and will continue to do so until, at the Lord's Second Advent, "they look on Him Whom they have pierced" (Zech. xii. 10-14), acknowledge their sin, repent and become saved and spiritually made anew by God.

At that time they will be prepared and made ready to take the knowledge of the Lord and His salvation to the ends of the earth, and will be the greatest missionaries the world has ever known. The kingdom, so long postponed, at last will be gloriously realized, for then 'the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea', and He will be "King over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Lord and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9).

The Twofoldness of John's Gospel.

As with Matthew, this Gospel is divided into two parts:

John i.-xii. The public ministry.

John xiii.-xxi. The ministry to the eleven "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end" (xiii. 1).

The Gospel commences with the rejection by Israel. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." This was written *after* Acts xxviii. It could not have been written before, because Israel was put to the test again during the Acts period and not laid aside in unbelief till the *last* chapter (Acts xxviii. 17-28). John's Gospel was written for neither Jew nor Gentile as such, but for all men. The "world" is one of its key words occurring no less than 79 times. In his epistles the word is used another 21 times. Out of 188 occurrences of *kosmos*, world, in the N.T., John uses the word *100 times*. Any exposition of the Gospel of John that fails to take into account this key word will certainly miss the mark. While the account of the Gospel deals with aspects of the Lord's ministry in the flesh to Israel, it was certainly not written *for* Israel, but for mankind at large, whether Jew or Gentile and deals with the basic doctrine of life unending, which is given 'through His Name' and received by faith in Christ (John xx. 30, 31).

The Twofoldness of the Acts.

Again this book is really in two parts revolving round the witness of two men, Peter and Paul—chapters i.-xii., Peter; xiii.-xxviii., Paul. The first part concerns the longsuffering of God with Israel after crucifying their Messiah and King and the possibility of the earthly kingdom being ‘restored’ to them upon repentance and turning to God (Acts i. 6; iii. 19-26). Here Peter, the minister of the circumcision, is dominant until the conversion of Paul, and then as Paul’s ministry commences, Peter’s fades out. Paul’s ministry is twofold, to the Jew first and then to the Gentile. Wherever Paul covered new ground with the Gospel, he went to the Jew and the synagogue. It was *necessary* to do this, he stated (Acts xiii. 46, 47) for Israel were the channel chosen by God to make the knowledge of Himself known all over the earth so that His kingdom might become a reality. Just as the Lord in His earthly life and Peter at the beginning of the Acts witness to the Jew *in* the land, Paul and those associated with him minister to the Dispersion, the thousands of Israelites living *outside* the land. When this was accomplished and the question asked late in the Acts period “have they (Israel) not heard?”, the answer is “*Yes, truly (verily)*” (Rom. x. 18). Still they were disobedient as a whole to obey God’s command to repent, and in the last chapter of Acts they are laid aside by the Holy Spirit in the darkness of unbelief. It is in this state they have been as a race ever since and will be so until the blindness is taken away from them, when the Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ will come back and ‘turn ungodliness from Jacob (Israel)’ (Rom. xi. 25-29).

Paul’s prison ministry follows and this deals with the heavenly aspect of the kingdom of God, kept secret and hidden by God in Himself till revealed to Paul the prisoner for us Gentiles and then made known through his ministry, specially that of Ephesians and Colossians.

The Twofoldness of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

This wondrous letter associated with the Colossian epistle, touching heights and depths of doctrine unmatched anywhere in Scripture, is likewise divided into two sections. The first three chapters contain teaching concerning the new calling after Israel’s laying aside in unbelief by God at Acts xxviii. In them the revelation is given of a secret (Mystery) kept hidden by God in past ages and from past generations of people and now made known through Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for us Gentiles (iii. 1). It rests, as the whole purpose of God does, on redemption and the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (i. 6-8) and concerns the creation of a new company of the redeemed (ii. 14, 15), a heavenly one, which is seen closely linked to the ascended Head in the heavenly places where He is now exalted (ii. 4-6).

In the whole of this section there are no commands or exhortations. It is purely a revelation of this overwhelming calling of grace. The second part (chapters iv.-vi.) starts the *practical section* which enjoins a *worthy walk* day by day to match this supreme calling. It is interlaced with doctrine which expands what has been given in chaps. i.-iii. This epistle, together with Colossians, touches the high water mark of divine revelation.

The Twofoldness of Prophetic Truth.

Charles H. Welch dealt with this aspect of twofoldness relating to prophecy in a series of tapes. To those who have not heard these and in order to show its application to prophetic truth we give the headings and contrasts:

TWO APPEARANCES OF CHRIST ON THE EARTH	
<i>In the Past</i>	<i>In the Future</i>
“He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Heb. ix. 26).	“Unto them who look for Him shall He appear <i>the second time</i> without sin unto salvation” (Heb. ix. 28).

What follows shows that Satan is no creator, but a very clever and deceptive imitator, travestying the revelation and plan of God, seeking to defeat Him and His purposes of grace:

TWO SEEDS	
“Her (Eve) seed” (Gen. iii. 15).	“thy (the serpent—Satan) seed” (Gen. iii. 15).
“Wheat” (Matt. xiii. 24, 25).	“Tares” (the children of the wicked one—Satan) (Matt. xiii. 38, 39).
“Harvest (the end of the age)” “gather into barn” (Matt. xiii. 30).	“Harvest (the end of the age)” “bind in bundles to burn them” (Matthew xiii. 30).
TWO CITIES	
“Salem” (Gen. xiv. 18).	“Babel” (Gen. x. 8-10).
“Jerusalem” (Isa. lii. 1, 9).	“Babylon” (Rev. xiv. 8 - xvii. 5).
TWO MYSTERIES (SECRETS)	
The secret of godliness God manifest in the flesh (I Tim. iii. 16).	The secret of iniquity The man of sin manifested in the flesh (II Thess. ii. 3, 6).
TWO ANOINTED ONES	
The Lord’s anointed (Psa. ii. 2, 6). “The Lord hath anointed Me” (Isa. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18).	The anointed cherub (unfallen Satan) (Ezek. xxviii. 14-19).
TWO DYNASTIES	
“David” (Psa. lxxxix. 20-37; Hos. iii. 5; Luke i. 31-33).	“Nebuchadnezzar” (Dan. ii. 37, 38).
TWO FULNESSES	
“Israel . . . their fulness” (Rom. xi. 12).	“Fulness of the Gentiles” (Rom. xi. 25).
TWO WOMEN	
“The Bride” (Rev. xxi. 2, 9).	“The Harlot” (Rev. xvii. 3).

TWO SET OF MIRACLES	
“Signs, wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost.” “to confirm” the testimony of the King and the earthly kingdom (Acts ii. 22; Heb. ii. 3, 4).	“After the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” “to deceive” (II Thess. ii. 8-12).
TWO TRINITIES	
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19; II Cor. xiii. 14).	The dragon, the beast and the false prophet (Revelation xiii. 1; xvii. 8; xix. 20).
TWO RESURRECTIONS	
“Now is Christ risen” (I Cor. xv. 20).	“His (the beast’s) deadly wound was healed” (Rev. xiii. 3, 8, 11).
TWO COMINGS (<i>Parousia</i>)	
The Lord’s Second Coming (Matthew xxiv. 29, 30; I Cor. xv. 23; II Thess. ii. 9).	The man of sin (II Thess. ii. 8, 9).
TWO SONS	
The Son of God (Matt. iii. 17).	The son of perdition (II Thess. ii. 3).
TWO MYSTIC NUMBERS	
Jesus 888.	The Beast 666 (Rev. xiii. 18).
TWO NAMES (<i>in forehead</i>)	
The Father’s Name (Rev. xiv. 1).	The Beast’s name (Rev. xiii. 16, 17).
TWO BUILDING MATERIALS	
Precious stones—The New Jerusalem (Isa. liv. 11, 12; Rev. xxi. 10-21).	Brick for stone (Babel) (Gen. xi. 3).
TWO COVENANTS	
The New Covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31; Heb. xii. 24).	A covenant made and broken (Daniel ix. 27).
TWO THRONES	
God (Rev. xxii. 1).	Satan and the beast (Rev. ii. 13; xvi. 10).

These prophetic pairs are two opposing lines of revelation headed by God and Satan and give a good deal of detail concerning the great conflict of the ages. This conflict is real, intense and never ceasing. How thankful we should be for Him Who was manifested to destroy the devil (Heb. ii. 14) and all his works (I John iii. 8), and, gathered under the protective care of redemption, believers in Him are for ever safe. We are on the winning side, for “if God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. viii. 31). Not that we must treat this tremendous battle lightly. Of ourselves we are no match for Satan and the powers of darkness under his control. But clad in the panoply of God, described in detail in Eph. vi., we are safe and can go forward without fear. May all who own the Lord Jesus as Saviour, Lord and Head so live that it may be manifest to all Whose we are and Whom we seek to serve in obedience and loyalty.