

# 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

VOLUME X.

1920

LONDON:  
FREDK P. BRININGER,  
14, HEREFORD ROAD, WANSTEAD, E.11.

DEAR FELLOW-MEMBERS,

“It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful”. We neither judge ourselves, nor allow other to do so, leaving this as all else to the Lord. Nevertheless we remind all our readers that this high ideal is ours. That we fail we are only too conscious, but that we depart from this standard we most strenuously withstand.

It is because we consider ourselves “stewards”, with the obligation to “faithfulness”, that our magazine continues along the lines of *exposition*, and not of *inference*.

While recognising that “the body without the spirit is dead”, we nevertheless know no other medium, and no other authority, than the inspired letter of the Word.

The day seems not far distant when “we shall know even as we are known”. Till then we look for grace to be “*found faithful*”.

Yours in that blessed hope,

CHARLES H. WELCH  
FREDK. P. BRININGER

*December, 1920.*

## INDEX

BEREAN BIBLE STUDIES--	
The purpose of the Ages	7-13
DEVOTIONAL ARTICLES--	
Do all to the glory of God. Give none offence (I Cor. x. 31, 32)	16
Peace, perils of	17
Prayer (Ps. lxi. 1-4)	19
Singleness	20
DISPENSATIONAL DIFFICULTIES--	23
ECCLESIASTES, STUDIES IN--	
Question of authorship. Who is "The Preacher"?	24
<i>Koheleth</i> .--Its occurrences and testimony	28
Theme traced.--Without resurrection all is vanity	31
Key to the riddle.--The <i>life to come</i>	35
Is that life worth living which is without Christ?	38
FUNDAMENTALS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH--	
Principles of separation (Gen. xii.)	44
Gaps in the calendar of faith (Gen. xii. 10-20)	46
Saved, yet so as by fire (Gen. xiii. 5-18)	49
Faith's heritage and repudiation (Gen. xiii. 14 - xv. 1)	52
Faith and the flesh (Gen. xv. 1 - xvi. 1)	55
Circumcision and its relation to being <i>perfect</i> (Gen. xvii.)	59
HEBREWS, EPISTLE TO THE--	
The inherited salvation (i. 14)	64
Confirmed covenants and their responsibilities (ii. 1-4)	66
The so great salvation (ii. 1-4)	70
The confirmatory gifts (ii. 3, 4)	73
Crown with glory and honour (ii. 5-9)	76
The tasting of death and its relation to theme of epistle (ii. 9)	81
LESSONS FOR LITTLE ONES--	
Redemption	85
Faith	86
Gospel	87
Glory of God	88
New life	89
Three tests for the true gospel	11

MIRACLES, THE--	
Introduction	92
Barren fig-tree	109
Centurion's servant	94
Leper	94
Miracles after the rejection	106
Miracles preceding rejection	98
Peter's wife's mother	94
Syrophenician woman	107
Third group	101
MYSTERY, STUDIES IN EPISTLES OF--	
Grace-by-faith salvation (Eph. ii. 8, 9)	111
Not of works. . . . unto good works (Eph. ii. 9, 10)	113
Before ordained (Eph. ii. 9, 10)	116
Dispensational disability of being a Gentile (Eph. ii. 11, 12)	119
Made nigh (Eph. ii. 13)	123
Peace and enmity (Eph. ii. 14)	126
PASSAGES FROM PROVERBS--	
The guarded heart (iv. 23)	129
REVELATIONS, STUDIES IN BOOK OF--	
Great multitude (vii. 9-17)	131
Seven trumpets. Temple judgments (viii.)	135
First woe.--The opening of the abyss (ix. 1-11)	139
Second woe.--Four angels of the Euphrates (ix. 12-21)	143
Mystery of God finished (x.)	147
Two witnesses (xi. 1-14)	151
SIDELIGHTS ON THE SCRIPTURES--	
Greek and Roman antiquities	155
SYNOPSIS--	
Epistle to Ephesians	161
Epistle to Philippians	158
UNITED, YET DIVIDED--	5

**“United, yet Divided.—A Key to Holy Scripture.”**

You can appreciably assist by introducing this pamphlet to others. Have you ordered a few copies for judicious distribution? It is earnestly hoped that all our readers will assist us in this effort to interest others in a Word rightly divided. Sow the seed, and in due season ye shall reap.

The following is extracted from a letter recently received from the United States:--

“I cannot help writing and telling you how I have been helped, and uplifted by ‘UNITED YET DIVIDED’. I am over 60 years of age, and have been a Bible reader since girlhood; it is only in recent years, however, that I began to see the Dispensations. ‘UNITED YET DIVIDED’ epitomizes the wondrous plan so beautifully; it is so easily understood, so clear, that I value the copy I have more than gold. I lent it to another dear sister (a truth-seeker), who was so delighted with it, and who also profited by the reading.”

**“United, yet Divided.”**  
p. 191

The following review appeared in the February number of *The Evangelical Christian* of Toronto, Canada:--

“This booklet deals with the important subject of Dispensational Teaching and shows the vital necessity and spiritual importance of ‘rightly dividing the Word of truth’. This fundamental principle is clearly and convincingly set forth and deserves the thorough and constant attention of all Bible students. The author’s application of the principle is that the dispensational boundary is not Pentecost but Acts 28:17-28. While he believes that ‘a’ Church began at Pentecost, ‘the’ Church which is Christ’s body did not begin until the Jewish rejection of the Gospel recorded in Acts 28 took place. On this account that chapter is the boundary line. The author has a good deal to say for his position and while it may not be possible for all Bible students to accept it, the arguments by which it is supported are more weighty than many have been accustomed to think. Thus Mr. Welch calls special attention to the miraculous element promised in Mark 16:15,16, and pertinently asks whether these signs have followed our faith and, if they have not, whether some change of dispensation has not come in. Without necessarily accepting every position laid down the booklet is of real value and deserves the thorough consideration of all who love the Truth.”

**The Dispensations.**  
pp. 143, 144

(These notes, contributed by a reader, should be read in connection with articles of "Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth".

Readers of THE BEREAN EXPOSITOR and lovers of the Word know the scriptural significance of numbers, but possibly some may not have noticed how the different Dispensations are in accord with the other occurrences in the Word.

The definitions given below are culled from Appendix 10 of that much valued Word, *The Companion Bible*:--

1. *Adam unfallen*.—**One** denotes unity and commencement. First day, Light.
2. *Fall to Flood*.—**Two** denotes difference; if two different persons agree in testimony it is conclusive, otherwise it implies enmity, opposition, division, as was the work of the second day.
3. *Flood to Call of Abram*.—**Three** denotes completeness. The number includes resurrection, for on the third day the earth rose up out of the deep.
4. *Call of Abram to Exodus*.—**Four** denotes creative works and always has reference to the earth and things under the sun.
5. *Exodus to Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar*.—**Five** denotes Divine grace. It is God adding His blessing and gifts to the works of His hands, and it is the leading factor in the Tabernacle measurements.
6. *Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to Ministry of our Lord*.—**Six** is the human number. Six (and multiples thereof) is the hall-mark of all connected with man. The great men who have stood out in defiance of God (Goliath, Nebuchadnezzar, and Antichrist), are all emphatically marked by this number.
7. *Our Lord's Ministry and that of those that heard him until Acts xxviii.*—**Seven** denotes spiritual perfection. It is the number or hall-mark of the Holy Spirit's work. He is the Author of God's Word, and seven runs through it as the water-mark in paper.
8. *The Mystery*.—**Eight** denotes resurrection, regeneration, a new beginning. The eighth is a new first. It has to do with the Lord who rose on the eighth or new first day. Together with its multiples it is impressed on all that has to do with the Lord's names, people, and works.
9. *The Day of the Lord to the Millenniums*.—**Nine** denotes finality of judgment: it or its factors is seen in all cases where judgment is the subject.
10. *The Millennium*.—**Ten** denotes ordinal perfection.
11. *The Final Rebellion*.—**Eleven** denotes disorder, disorganization, being one short of the number twelve.
12. *The New Heaven and New Earth*.—**Twelve** denotes governmental perfection. It is the number or factor of all numbers connected with government, or things appertaining thereto in the heavens or on the earth.

## **Berean Bible Studies.**

### **The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #1. pp. 27, 28**

While every believer of the Bible is apt to have his favourite text, and to read some portions more frequently than others, yet, to understand the Scriptures, we must ever remember that God has a purpose, and that the Bible is *the written revelation of that purpose*. While we may get more spiritual help from reading the Psalms than a long list of names from Chronicles, yet no part can be spared or discounted the moment we begin to consider the purpose therein unfolded.

THE PURPOSE.—The *fact* of a purpose is evident from the number of passages which refer to it. The title of this paper comes from Eph. iii. 11, *see* R.V. margin, “The purpose of the ages”.

THE FULFILMENT of God’s purpose is entirely in His hands, and although He may use His creatures, the ultimate accomplishment does not rest in the creature, but in God Himself.

The FOCUS of God’s purpose is His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whether in creation, kingdom, or church.

The AGENTS by whom this purpose is carried on are Israel, the Gentiles, and the Church. (*See* paper No. 7).

The GOAL of the purpose of the ages is found in a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and where God shall be all in all.

#### **Questions on Course C. Paper No. 1.**

1. Collect the passages in the N.T. which show that God has a purpose. Give also a separate list of things which are said to be “according” to this purpose.  
Do you see anything striking, that demands a purpose for its explanation, by comparing the first and last chapters of Genesis?
2. Give references from both O.T. and N.T. to show that the fulfillment of God’s purpose is sure. Make a list of expressions used in these passages, together with the words “purpose”, and “counsel” that enforce this; e.g., Eph. i. 11 - the added words “Who worketh, etc.”
3. The centre of God’s purpose, it is said, is Christ. Give references to prove this. Consider these references, and show that Christ fills many spheres in different capacities in this great purpose.

4. It has been said the O.T. gives us *preparation*, the N.T. *fulfillment*. Each period in this preparation and fulfillment is marked by some transitional event, e.g., Gen. i. 2 - i. 31, The creative preparation for man.

*Transitional event.* The Sabbath rest.

Continue this endeavour to trace the unfolding of the purpose through both O.T. and N.T., noting particularly the events that link up each section.

5. Compare Genesis with Revelation. Set out parallels, e.g., Gen. iii. 17 with Rev. xxii. 3; show how this comparison helps us in understanding the purpose of God.

## **The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #2.** **pp. 61 - 64**

We have considered the fact that the Bible is the record of a purpose. We now consider the further fact that the purpose is being worked out through the ages. Here we are met by a powerful tradition that has been responsible for the veiling of much truth.

We read over and over again in the A.V. the words, “for ever”, “everlasting”, and “eternal”, and we naturally believe that the subjects connected with these words have reference to eternity. This is not so; the Bible practically says nothing about eternity. Genesis commences with creation, Revelation ends with the new creation, the interval being spanned by the ages. To illustrate the inconsistency of the traditional rendering will also enable us to see the true meaning of the words translated “for ever”, etc.

It is evident that the ages had a beginning (I Cor. ii. 7), for the word translated “world” here is *aiōn*, which in other places is translated “for ever”. The ages also have an end (Matt. xxiv. 3). Some ages are past (Eph. iii. 9), some are to come (Luke i. 33; Eph. ii. 7). If *aiōn* means eternity, how can it also mean “world”, and also what consistency is there in a rendering which uses the same word in such opposite senses as “the end of the world”, and “world without end”? Further, if *aiōn* in the singular means eternity, what can *aiōn* in the plural mean? Can there be eternities?

The adjective *aiōnios* has likewise been subjected to similar treatment. In Titus i. 2 we read that ETERNAL life was promised before the WORLD began. Observe the words in capitals, they are as opposite as can be, yet they are both the same word *aiōnios* in the original. There is, further, no word “began” at all, the words are *pro chronōn aiōniōn*, “before times of ages”.

Eph. iii. 11 (translated in A.V. “the eternal purpose”) is rendered properly in the R.V. margin “*Gk. Purpose of the ages.*” If the Greek says “ages”, then “eternal” is merely man’s idea given instead of God’s truth.

Turning to the O.T. we find the same bias at work. The Hebrew word *olam* (translated “ever”, “world”, etc.), comes from a word meaning “secret” (see Psa. xc. 8, and Eccles. xii. 14). It usually implies a period of undefined limits. Man had a beginning, consequently *olam*, when referring to man’s *past*, cannot be rendered “from eternity” (see Gen. vi. 4), yet when the same word speaks of man’s future, it is rendered “for ever”, etc. If it is heresy to say that man is always existed, and never had a beginning, why should it be heresy to say that he will not necessarily live for eternity, and never have an end (lest any should fear that the security of the believer is imperiled, we hasten to say that our hope is in no way connected with the words *olam* or *aiōn*).

Supposing the A.V. had rendered the passage, “The ungodly who prosper FOR EVER” (Psa. lxxiii. 12), the mis-translation would be apparent. Do we believe that the priesthood of Aaron and the service of the Tabernacle and its offerings are to continue “for ever”? Yet the A.V. says so (see Ex. xxix. 9, etc.).

Added to *olam* we often find the words *va-ed*, “and yet”. This combination is rendered “for ever and ever”. It should read, “unto the age and still further”. *Me-olam*, often rendered “from everlasting”, should be rendered “from, or since, the age”. Some lines of teaching extend up to the limits of the *secret*, or undefined period—the *olam*, the *aiōn*. Some teaching goes beyond *olam va-ed*, “the age and beyond”, the eons of the eons, and some teaching goes back before the ages, as Titus i. 2, “before times of ages”.

We shall never understand the purpose of the AGES if we will persist in giving to a period of time the title of eternity. A concordance, showing Hebrew and Greek words, like *Young’s Analytical Concordance*, is necessary for this paper.

### Questions on Course C. Paper No. 2.

1. The word *aiōn* occurs seven times in Ephesians, translated in A.V. “world”, “course”, “ages”, “eternal”. Find these seven passages, write out each verse, using the word “age” or “ages” throughout.

What do you learn regarding the ages and the purpose from these passages?

2. The Hebrew words *me-olam* occur in the following passages: Psa. xxv. 6, Gen. vi. 4, Josh. XXiv. 2, Psa. xli. 13, Psa. cxix. 52, Isa. lxiv. 4, lxiii. 16. Some passages speak of *God*, some of *man*.

Write out the verses, putting them in two columns (God and man), and say what you observe regarding the translation.

3. Compare Ex. xxi. 5, 6 with Lev. xxv. 40; I Sam. i. 22 with i. 11.

How does the comparison help to explain the words “for ever”?

Many other things are said to be “for ever” in the A.V. which have ceased, or will cease. They should have been said to be “unto the age”. Collect these “for evers” of the O.T. and show the true meaning, e.g., Exod. xl. 15, etc., etc.

4. “For ever and ever”.—Every passage in the O.T. (A.V.) except Isa. xxxiv. 10, so translated, is a combination of *olam va-ed*, “the age and beyond”. Every passage in the N.T. (A.V.) rendered “for ever and ever” should read “unto the ages of the ages”

with three exceptions, viz., Heb. i. 8, which is in the singular, “unto the age of the age”; Eph. iii. 21 is singular and plural, “unto the age of the ages”; and Rev. xiv. 11 which omits the article *the*, “unto ages of ages”.

Collect the references. Arrange them to show with what they deal, e.g., Israel, God, torment, etc.

5. Discover all you can concerning “this age”, “the age”, and “the ages to come”.
6. What are said to be *aiōniōn* (“eternal”, “everlasting”, A.V.)? Make a list, e.g., Redemption (Heb. ix. 12). How do you understand the words in Matt. xxv. 46?
7. Collect references to “eternal life”. What is the difference in the way it is obtained in Matthew, John, Paul’s epistles? Are all the same?

### **The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #3. pp. 92 - 94**

We have seen that God has a purpose, and that the purpose is begun and completed during the course of the ages, hence “the purpose of the ages”.

We now pass under review some of the instruments or agents used.

CREATION is one of the parts of the great plan. With creation Scripture opens. The creation mentioned in Gen. i. 1 must not be confounded with the work of the six days. During the six days some things already created were made to fit the present period, others were created during that time. The present creation is not the *goal*; it is the platform upon which the great purpose of the ages is worked out. God has a *new* creation in view, which brings the purpose of the ages to completion.

Gen. i. 1 is severed from the rest of Genesis. How far that goes back none know. In verse 2 we read, “the earth was without form and void”. The word “was” should be rendered *became* (see Gen. ii. 7, ix. 15, etc.). “Without form and void” is in Hebrew *Tohu va Bohu*. Isa. xlv. 18 declares that the earth was not *created tohu*; Gen. i. 2 tells us it *became* so. The six days’ work and seventh day’s rest have a foreshadowing of the great purpose begun then, and stretching out over the ages until “the rest that remaineth” is attained.

This creative work is sometimes referred to under the title, “THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH”. Gen. i. 1 tells us of the first, Gen. ii. 1 of the second, and II Pet. iii. 13 of the third, the new heavens and earth.

THE WORLD must be distinguished from heaven and earth. The Greek word *kosmos* meaning order, arrangement, and ornament.

TIMES AND SEASONS.—The whole purpose of God is ordered and sure, and the two indications of time teach this. *Times* convey the idea of the length of time, whereas *seasons* indicates the fitness of the time, as harvest-time means the season for harvesting, whereas the time that a thing takes to do indicates merely the amount of time without regard to any fitness or seasonableness. “Times” in N.T. Greek = *chronos*; “seasons” = *kairos*. They are not distinguished in the A.V.

### Questions on Course C. Paper No. 3.

1. How many times does the word “created” occur in the record of the six days’ work (Gen. i. 1 - ii. 3)? What does the number signify? What was created, and what was made?  
What is the difference in the ending of the creation of verse 1, as compared with the ending of ii. 1-3?
2. Find the structure of the six days’ work. This work of restoration seems to foreshadow the greater work during the ages. Trace any parallels. Note II Cor. iv. 6; also II Pet. iii. 8, and Rev. xx. 4.
3. Read Job xv. 15. Is there any warrant for this in Gen. i.? What other passages teach that the heavens come into the scheme of redemption?
4. “Without form and void.” Find parallels. Darkness. What does it stand for? What must have happened between Gen. i. 1 and i. 2?
5. Discover all you can of the *new heavens and new earth* in the Scriptures. Discover as much as you can concerning the *world*.
6. How are “times” (*chronos*) mentioned in the Bible? Give details. How are “seasons” (*kairos*) mentioned? (Use Concordance for Greek).
7. Collect all you can concerning “The Lord’s Day”—or the “Day of the Lord”, and “The Day of God”, “That Day”. Analyze your findings from the standpoint of a student of the Purpose of the Ages.

**The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #4.**  
**pp. 127, 128**

We have seen that God has a purpose, that the purpose is being worked out through the ages, that the six days' creation is its platform and foreshadowing, that the ages have various "times", and "seasons", and "days", that it includes the heavens as well as the earth, and that a new creation, new heavens and new earth complete the cycle of the ages.

DISPENSATIONS.—The ages are divided into a series of dispensations in which God's attitude and revealed will is made known in different ways, carrying with it different obligations and bringing into action different phases of His purpose. These should be carefully examined (a fuller examination of some of them will be given in subsequent papers); we first seek a *bird's-eye view* before attempting details.

*The first dispensation* is clearly that during which God treated with Adam unfallen.

*The second* commences with the fall of Adam and ends at the flood.

*The third* commences with the renewed world after the flood, and ends with the confusion at Babel.

*The fourth* reaches from the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt.

*The fifth* (which should be sub-divided in order to see the dispensations fully) commences with deliverance from Egypt and ends with the birth of Christ.

*The sixth* commences with the birth, and ends with the death of Christ.

*The seventh* commences with the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.), and ends with Israel's rejection (Acts xxviii.).

*The eighth* is covered by the "Acts" ministry of the apostle Paul ending in Prison.

*The ninth* is encompassed by Paul's "prison" ministry—"The dispensation of the mystery".

*The tenth* commences with the recognition of Israel again, ends in apostacy, and is characterized by wrath.

*The eleventh* occupies 1000 years (the Millennial Kingdom) and ends in rebellion.

*The twelfth* completes the series, and commences with the new creation, and ends with "God, all in all".

**The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #4.**  
(Concluded) pp. 143

1. What is the difference between a “dispensation”, and an “age”? Can two dispensation be in operation at the same time? May there be more than one dispensation in one age? Opinions are valueless; prove all by the Scriptures.
2. What were the outstanding characteristics of the *first* dispensation. Show Adam’s relation to all men and to creation. Also how he typified Christ.
3. Collect references to Adam in the Scriptures. Did God plan redemption because Adam fell? Give the most prominent differences between the first dispensation and the others. What may we know since the fall that would not have been possible in the first dispensation?
4. Why was the flood necessary? Who were the “Sons of God”? What was there wrong at Babel? Of what is Babel typical? Why was Abraham called? What was the attitude of God to the nations after the call of Abraham? Why was it necessary for Israel to be in bondage in Egypt?
5. What are the great outstanding features and events of the fifth dispensation? What was the revealed object of the first coming of Christ? What was the burden of His message? Did He teach the same aspect of truth throughout His ministry?
6. What were the characteristic features of the seventh dispensation? What one book of Scripture covers the period?  
Paul’s ministry, during the Acts, differs in many ways from his ministry after Acts xxviii. Examine his two sets of Epistles (*i.e.* those not from prison, and those from prison, which are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and II Timothy).
7. Give references from O.T. and N.T. to show that Israel will be gathered again. What one N.T. book deals with the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> dispensations? What does Scripture teach concerning the 1,000 years’ reign of Christ? What takes place after the Millennium?

## The Dispensations. pp. 143, 144

(These notes, contributed by a reader, should be read in connection with articles of "Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth".)

Readers of THE BEREAN EXPOSITOR and lovers of the Word know the scriptural significance of numbers, but possibly some may not have noticed how the different Dispensations are in accord with the other occurrences in the Word.

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## DEVOTIONAL ARTICLES.

**Do all to the glory of God. Give none offence.**

**(I Cor. x. 31, 32).**

**pp. 14 - 16**

If Christian doctrine and practice were simple issues, the problem of the believer's walk would not be a difficult one; as it is, the most bewildering complexity is the character of our pathway. We ourselves have, since we believed, dual natures; we possess the old man (crucified indeed), and the new man. We are continually being acted upon by the *flesh* and the *spirit* which are contrary the one to the other; added to this we have around us that marvellous and magnetic world, which in all its grades and varieties finds a ready response from the old nature. Nor is this all, the confused state of professing Christendom, its multiplied factions and sects, its snares and errors, but add to the problem of the believer whose desire is to live to the glory of God.

The passage of Scripture with which we have headed our article gives a command, which nothing less than the grace of God can enable us to obey. To some natures it is not difficult, when once the mind is made up, to pursue a given course regardless of difficulties, and equally regardless of the effect upon others. Such find in the words, "Do all to the glory for God", a scriptural reason for an unbending, uncompromising, clear-cut course. If weaker brethren are stumbled, it is their affair, the glory of God must come first and cannot be bartered for the feelings of others. There are others who are just the opposite, the idea of giving offence often dissuades them from persisting in a given line of conduct, and while they may often feel that there are many things that are unscriptural, a native timidity, or a desire to avoid unpleasantness, compromises their testimony; these would cling to the words, "give none offence". In both cases, there is room for the flesh to make some kind of fair show. The combined precept, however, which is the true pathway, is beyond the power of the flesh; bigotry and roughshod methods are not to the glory of God. Mr. Pliable, on the other hand, is not the pattern for our imitation.

The reader should ponder the example of the apostle as set forth in I Cor. ix. 19-23. He should observe the obedience to this two-fold precept in the apostle's attitude towards circumcision in Acts xv. and xvi. 3. A man of smaller spiritual power would have considered the idea of circumcising Timothy as pandering to human weakness; he would probably have thought of the charge of inconsistency. The apostle, however, pursues the higher law. There are some who have concluded that the unscriptural character of the churches of Christendom compels them to avoid any appearance of fellowship, while there are others whose disposition is to make no distinction, and who adopt the other extreme. The Scripture gives us a middle path; sometimes we give up our privileges and become as *weak*, as *Jews* even, or as those *under law*, or *without law*. Many doubtless condemned the apostle for being "made all things to all men". Sometimes we may appear to be sacrificing a real principle as superficial critics may have fancied Paul did in Acts xvi. 3. It will by no means prove an easy task to "Do all to the glory of God", and

at the same time “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God”.

The apostle gives a further statement in explanation in verse 33, and shows the secret of safety in an otherwise dangerous pathway, “even as I please all men in all things, *not seeking mine own profit*, but the profit of many, that they may be saved”, this being followed by the remarkable words, “Be ye followers of me, *even as I also am of Christ*” (xi. 1). We give place to none in our insistence upon holding fast, and standing fast, yet feel the need of our text lest we be led in mistaken zeal to rob God of His glory by offending some by our manner or methods.

**The Perils of Peace.**  
**“Beware of False Prophets.”**  
**pp. 28 - 31**

How we have longed for peace! How many things have been deferred “until peace comes”! The contrast is so great, the relief so deep, the thankfulness so full, that we shall not look with much favour upon anyone who lifts a warning voice. And yet peace has its perils no less than war. One thing remains unchanged though all things else have altered, and that is the heart of man. While most would admit that war is a product of the flesh, many may doubt either the wisdom or the truth of saying that peace too may be but another of its works. Let us remember that the present state of peace is only truly named as it is seen in contrast to the past state of war—it does not indicate, truthfully, the character of the age; whether the nations of the earth be at war or are at peace, the age is one, and the age is evil. In times of peace, as in times of war, the carnal mind is enmity against God; the proclamation of peace will not mean that this world has altered its attitude toward Christ or the Word. So it comes about that we seek to write a word of warning, lest the perils of the present time should overtake any of our readers and find them unprepared.

First among the “perils of peace” we place false prophets. We use the term in a lower sense than the scriptural one, and do not mean that miraculous powers will be manifested just yet. Newspaper articles, religious leaders, thinkers and speakers, press, pulpit, platform and pamphlet, have voiced a common theme, a growing ideal, an evolution of man upward toward some lofty goal. Scripture draws a decided line between the visionary and the true prophet:--

“The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream: and he that hath My word let him speak My word faithfully, *what is the chaff to the wheat?* saith the Lord.”

“Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbour. Behold I am against the prophets, saith the Lord that smooth their tongues, and say, He saith.”

The Scriptures are indeed quoted on every hand, but in such a way as to really “steal” the word from us; “smooth things” are palatable, yet no smooth things can come from God to a world still answerable to Him for the death of His Son. So it was in the days of Ezekiel, the false prophets are likened to those who build a wall and who daub it with untempered mortar. These prophets had said, “Peace”, when there was no peace, and had seduced the people. Their untempered daubing was doomed to fall:--

“The wall is no more, neither they that daubed it; to wit, the prophets of Israel which prophecy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord God” (Ezek. xiii.).

The secret lies in the words, “there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked”. So long as this evil age endures, so long as natural man administers and rules, so long as Christ is absent from the throne, so long must true peace be known only to the few who believe in Him.

What are some of the characteristics of the false prophets’ message, that imperils the times in which we live? The prophet Jeremiah in chapter xxiii. gives us a guiding word:--

“Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophecy unto you: THEY MAKE YOU VAIN.”

This is one of the characteristics of the false prophets of a Christless peace. Man is everywhere magnified, his need of a Saviour and Redeemer, or his own innate corruption and failure, is scouted. Jeremiah continues, giving another characteristic,

“They speak a vision of THEIR OWN HEART and not of the mouth of the Lord.”

Here is the fatal error of the message; the heart of man is desperately wicked, and out of the heart of the wisest and the best of unsaved men can come nothing but the wisdom of the world that comes to nought. A third characteristic is marked by Jeremiah:--

“They say still unto them that despise Me, the Lord hath said, YE SHALL HAVE PEACE: and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, NO EVIL SHALL COME UPON YOU.”

This is marked as a characteristic of the last days by Zechariah in chapter v. What real peace can there be to those who despise the Lord? And is this not the attitude of all those who believe not on Christ? As regards the second clause, which promises no evil to those who walk after the imagination of their hearts, a consideration of Jeremiah’s own words concerning this will show the utter falsity of these promises.

Jer. iii. 17 speaks of the time of Israel’s real peace, and places it in utter contrast with the imagination of their hearts; vii. 24 speaks of the disobedience of Israel in the wilderness under this term, and says, “they went backward and not forward”, their so-called progress was apostacy; ix. 14-16 threatens those who followed the imagination of their hearts with wormwood and gall, with scattering and sword, and yet the false prophets said, “no evil come upon you”. In like manner xi. 8, xvi. 12, xviii. 12, and xiii. 9, 10 link the imagination with pride, and threaten that the pride shall be marred—

yet they prophesied smooth things that could only deceive. In Jer. xxiii. 32 these false prophets are charged with causing the people to err by their lies and by their *lightness* or instability (*see* Gen. xlix. 4), lies because the words proceed from an evil heart, and contrary to the Word; and unstable, because double minded, endeavouring to serve two masters, not having the single eye.

There are many “perils of peace”. The one we warn against here is the peril of the false prophet. Before we endorse the teaching of the times, let us test it by the sure word of prophecy. Does it point onward to Christ? Is HE magnified, alone exalted, or is man placing himself upon a yet higher pedestal? Is a millennium coming without Christ? Is it possible for man to

*“Ring out the thousand years of war,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace”?*

Concerning all these dreams and prophecies of a Christless programme, politics or philosophy, may be quoted the language of Ezek. xxi. 27:--

“I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until HE COME whose right it is: and I will give it to Him.”

Brethren, in time of peace as in time of war, “*Beware of false prophets*”. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.”

## **Prayer (PSALM lxi. 1-4).**

**p. 31**

*What is Prayer?*—A cry. “Hear my cry, O God.” The unfeigned (Psa. xvii. 1) cry of distress (Psa. lxxxviii. 1).

*Where may I pray?*—“From the end of the earth will I cry.” The Jew particularly connected the temple at Jerusalem with worship and prayer, yet even he could cry from the end of the earth. Isa. xlix. 6, and xlv. 22 is the all-sufficient reason.

*When may I pray?*—“When my heart is overwhelmed.”  
When heart and flesh fail (Psa. lxxiii. 26).  
When the soul faints; when there is none to help;  
When we draw near to the gates of death;  
When we are at wit’s end (Psa. cvii. 5, 12, 18, 27).  
He is able to save to the uttermost.

*What shall I pray for?--*

	/ For I am lost without Thee.
	/ All else but Christ is quicksand.
“Lead me to the Rock	{ I am a sinner; He did no sin.
that is higher than I.”	\ I am a son of Adam; He is the Son of God.
	\ I am mortal; He rose again.

*What is my ground for prayer?—*“Thou hast.” God has been a shelter and a strong tower.

*What will be the result?—*I shall “abide”. I will “make my refuge under the covert of His wings”.

**Let us pray.**

**Singleness.**  
**pp. 109 - 111**

The Scripture declares the “a double minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James i. 8). This is plainly true in the ordinary walks of life, and the Scriptures utter a warning that we do well to heed.

The “doublemindedness” of this verse is answered by the “wavering” of verse 6. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed”; and the “liberality” of verse 5, “God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not”. The state of unstableness is easily recognized in the figure of the tossing sea, but the contrast of “liberally” with doublemindedness may not be so evident.

The word rendered liberally is *haplōs*, which means “simply, i.e., in simplicity with a readiness of heart, answering to the need without a second thought; simply, without a thought behind, freely” (*Dr. Bullinger’s Lexicon and Concordance*). “He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity” (Rom. xii. 8). In both cases the idea conveyed is that there is no double motive, there is nothing behind the gift. It will be seen therefore that the doubleminded man is in contrast with the Lord.

In chapter iv. 8 James says, “Cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded”. From this it appears that not only is the double minded man unstable in all his ways, but also needs his heart to be purified, indicating thereby the seat of the trouble. Not once, nor twice, but constantly, we shall need to breathe the prayer, “O Lord, give me singleness of heart”. How easily we confuse “soul and spirit” (Heb. iv. 12), how easily the old nature can be mistaken for the new, if our eye is not single.

Twice the apostle enjoins upon the believing slave the need for single hearted service:--

“Slaves’ be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your hearts as unto Christ. Not with eye service, as men pleasers; but *as servants of Christ*, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. vi. 5-8).

“Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: *for ye serve the Lord Christ*” (Col. iii. 22-24).

Singleness of heart may be understood from the expressions that accompany it.

*Not with eye service.*—We have found this in ourselves and in others too much to make explanation necessary. Eye-service differs from heart service, as the “form” of godliness differs from the “power”.

*Not unto men.*—We serve men. We have masters according to the flesh. We are enjoined to render them willing service. And yet our service is “not unto men”. How so? The answer is given in the blessed words, “Ye serve the Lord Christ”. Whatever our position may be, whatever our service may involve, we, as those who have been bought with a price, serve the Lord. What we do, we do “as to the Lord”. If we belong to Him, if we with truth have said, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” cannot we trust Him to place us in that sphere where we can best serve Him? Why not serve Him *where we are*, instead of always thinking of how well we could serve Him somewhere else? Have we not often taken up our daily duties with heavy heart, begrudging the time that must be thus occupied? Yet, to slaves, to men and women whose condition was far removed from our own, the apostle could write, “Whatsoever ye do, *do it heartily*”, “With *good will* doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men”.

How can we reach this condition when service of this character can be rendered “heartily”, when we can do our service “with good will”? It is all answered in the phrase, “with singleness of heart”. When our motives are single, when our plans are not laid with one eye on the Lord’s will, and another upon our own advancement, when our prayers are for His glory, and not for the satisfaction of the flesh (Jas. iv. 3), then we shall begin to enter into true service.

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light” (Matt. vi. 22).

Singleness of heart is accompanied by singleness of eye. This is further explained in the words:--

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*” (vi. 24).

The last words of this verse put the matter concisely. Self, the world, possessions, ambitions, anything other than the Lord Himself, make us doubleminded, unstable, impure, and darkened.

The days in which we live, the urgent call for faithful witness, have brought this thought of singleness prominently before us. Let us hold fast the faithful word. Let us, in all our service, and in all our ways acknowledge Him. May our eyes be single, and our motives pure.

## **Dispensational Difficulties.**

*A series of short articles designed to help to a clearer understanding of a rightly divided Word.*

**p. 94**

As a result of coming into contact with some of the readers of *The Berean Expositor*, we begin to feel that it may be useful to go over some of the points of dispensational truth, the repetition of which we have hitherto felt to be unnecessary. Some do not appear to be quite clear, for example, as to:--

1. The Church which is the Bride and the Church which is the Body.
2. The use of the word "body" in I Cor. xii.
3. The dispensational position of I Thess. iv.
4. The hope of the Church of the Mystery.
5. The unique character of the dispensation of the Mystery.
6. The reason why Paul speaks of a new creation before Acts xxviii.
7. The dispensational place of the Gentiles during the Acts.
8. The place of Pentecost in the purpose.
9. Baptism and the Church of the One Body.
10. The "Gospel" for to-day.
11. The references to "gifts" in the Prison Epistles.

Those of our readers who do not find their particular difficulty dealt with, are invited to notify the Editor, but no reply by post can be promised. It is not intended in this series to deal with the subjects exhaustively, but to indicate their main bearings upon dispensational issues.

## **Studies in Ecclesiastes.**

### **#1. The Question of Authorship. Who is “The Preacher”? pp. 56 – 61**

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. iii. 16, 17).

Two important considerations arise out of the application of the above quotation of Scripture to the book of Ecclesiastes.

1. Seeing that Ecclesiastes was included in the Hebrew Scriptures long before the time of our Lord’s earthly testimony, it received His approval when He referred in Luke xxiv. to the complete O.T. by using the accepted title, “The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms”. The book of Ecclesiastes therefore is canonical Scripture, and if “Scripture”, it is inspired. 2. To omit this book from our study is to deprive ourselves of one aspect of truth which will prevent us from being “perfect” and “thoroughly furnished”. This book, being inspired Scripture, will be “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”.

The adverse critics of the book may be concluded under two headings, those whose theological opinions do not agree with some of its teaching, and those who on the grounds of “higher criticism” and literary examination pronounce the book either a pious forgery or something inconsistent with its place in the canon of inspired truth. The former can hardly have carefully pondered the nature of their criticism, for if books, or even verses, of Scripture may be rejected according as they agree or disagree with the individual’s creed, there is hardly a book of either Old or New Testament that sooner or later will not fall outside the universally accepted Canon. The latter class of critics bring with them a variety of methods and motives. Those which are connected with the criticism of a literary and historical nature we may be able to consider, for the original language is open for all to search, and the careful comparison of scripture with scripture requires neither genius nor inspiration.

While the criticism of the former class says in effect, “Solomon’s wisdom led him no higher than ‘under the sun’, poor soul; *we* however know better!” the criticism of the latter school usually commences with a most emphatic repudiation of the possibility that Solomon could be the author of the book. One great authority declares that if this book were written by Solomon, or in Solomon’s time, then there is no such things as the history of the Hebrew language! The discoveries of man in any field of research are not final by any means, and even in the science of language it seems scarcely proper for such assumption of finality to be made. We propose therefore to ask the reader to consider the following collection of parallel passages (collected by other than ourselves), and then to

answer the question, “Does the evidence of language lead us to accept or reject the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes?”

In the first place we may be asked, “What does the book itself say with regard to authorship?” Solomon’s name is nowhere mentioned, but the following statements are made, and these, we submit, apply to no other man than Solomon.

(a). He was the son of David, king in Jerusalem (i. 1). This is a title that is true of Solomon, but not exclusively so, for it is true of all the kings who reigned in Jerusalem up to the captivity.

(b). He was king over Israel in Jerusalem (i. 12). The only other king whose name is put forward as being the author Ecclesiastes is that of Hezekiah. Hezekiah, though a son of David and reigning in Jerusalem, is spoken of in Scripture as king of Judah. There are only two kings of whom it can be said that they were kings over ISRAEL in JERUSALEM, they are David and Solomon.

(c). The writer of Ecclesiastes was not only a king, but he claims to have gotten “more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem”. The wisdom of Solomon is proverbial. The Lord said:--

“Lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee *before thee, neither after thee* shall any arise like unto thee.” “And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart.....Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men” (I Kings iii. 5-12; iv. 29-34).

The writer of Ecclesiastes claims to have gotten more wisdom than ALL they that were before him in Jerusalem. There is no statement to the effect that the writer was wiser than any king before him—it is the simple statement, “all”. Solomon was in Jerusalem, and inspired Scripture tells us that he stands alone regarding wisdom. Neither before nor since has anyone had such wisdom. We have therefore no need to pursue this section further.

Solomon was the son of David.

Solomon was king in Jerusalem.

Solomon alone was, with the exception of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem.

Solomon was wiser than any before him or after him in Jerusalem.

The writer of Ecclesiastes was son of David, king in Jerusalem, king of Israel in Jerusalem, and wiser than all who were before him in Jerusalem.

We are therefore obliged to (1) accept the statement that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes, (2) reject either I Kings iii. 5-12, iv. 29-34, or (3) believe that some unnamed writer assumed the name of Solomon for his own purposes. To think of any other king as author necessitates two men, each wiser than the other, which is absurd. Those who tell us that the book must have been written much later than Solomon’s day adopt 3. There is no alternative for the believer in inspired scripture with regard to 1 and 2.

Let us now look at the statements of the book a little further. Everywhere we have statements that read like autobiography, “I was king”, “I gave”, “I builded”, “I found”, etc. Those who deny the Solomonic authorship on literary grounds admit that Solomon is personated by the unknown author. *Grotius* bases his argument for the late date of Ecclesiastes on the appearance of (supposed) Aramaic words. These are “pot”, *sir* (vii. 6), “interpretation”, *beshar* (viii. 1), “pit”, *gummats* (x. 8), “desire”, *abiyonah* (xii. 5).

Regarding the word *sir*, “pot”, it was used by Moses even in Ex. xvi. 3, and is the very word used in I Kings vii. 45 for pots in the temple built by Solomon himself! *Grotius* therefore in this case is singularly unreliable.

Readers may remember that Daniel was “proved” to a be pious fraud because foreign names were given to musical instruments. The critics, however, were found untrustworthy, for the instruments, being imported, would naturally have native names, and the intercommunication of Daniel’s day has been proved, and the critics routed. The wide dominion of Solomon, the coming to him of such as the Queen of Sheba, accounts for the introduction of stranger words than Aramaic.

Let us now notice some parallels that we find between Ecclesiastes and other of Solomon’s writings:--

<b>Ecclesiastes.</b>	<b>Proverbs.</b>
“The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh” (iv. 5).	“A little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come,” etc. (vi. 10).
“A good name is better than precious ointment” (vii. 1).	“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches” (xxii. 1).
“I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon earth” (x. 7).	“....for a servant to have rule over princes” (xix. 10).
“The lips of a fool will swallow up himself” (x. 12).	“A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul” (xviii. 7).

Compare also:

Eccles. viii. 5, ix. 10, x. 8, 10, 18 with Prov. xix. 16, iii. 27, xxiii. 32, xxvii. 17, xiv. 1.

Eccles. v. 1, 2 with I Kings viii. 27, 30, 43.

Eccles. viii. 15 with I Kings iv. 20.

Passages that are somewhat more lengthy are:

Eccles. vii. 26 with Prov. v. 3-14.

Eccles. ix. 7-9 with Prov. v. 15-19.

We now draw attention to some characteristic words and phrases:--

“STREET” (*shug*).—This word used in this way is peculiar to the books of Solomon, being found nowhere else than in Prov. vii. 8, Song of Sol. iii. 2, and Eccles. xii. 4, 5.

“DELIGHT” (*taanug*).—Translated “delight” in Prov. xix. 10, Song of Sol. vii. 6, and, Eccles. ii. 8. Elsewhere, twice in Micah.

“PRE-EMINENCE” (*mothar*), Eccles. iii. 19, “PROFIT”, Prov. xiv. 23, “PLENTEOUSNESS”, Prov. xxi. 5.

“FOOL” (*cesil*).—The Hebrew word occurs 70 times; 49 times in Proverbs, 28 times in Ecclesiastes, the remaining 3 passages being in the Psalms. Grotius would set aside Solomon with three Aramaic words—here, Solomon is established by a greater and more searching criticism.

There are several expressions concerning wisdom and wealth which are peculiar to the *writings* or *time* of Solomon, *e.g.*:--

“The giving of *wisdom*” (Prov. ii. 6; Eccles. ii. 26; I Kings v. 12).

“To know *wisdom*” (Prov. i. 2; Eccles. i. 17, vii. 25, viii. 16).

“To seek *wisdom*” (Prov. ii. 4, xiv. 6; Eccles. vii. 25).

“The heart of a *wise* man” (Prov. xvi. 23; Eccles. viii. 5; x. 2; *cf.* I Kings iii. 12).

“The words of the *wise*” (Prov. i. 6; Eccles. ix. 17, xii. 11).

“*Wealth*” (*nekasin*) (Eccles. v. 19, vi. 2; II Chron. i. 11, 12; Josh. xxii. 8).

The three Aramaic words look small against this list of words peculiar to Solomon.

Beside the above there is also the witness of *style* to be considered. Notice, for example, the way in which the word *grace* is used. The use of *cheu* absolutely, is a feature of Proverbs. *See* i. 9, iii. 22, 34, iv. 9, v. 19, xi. 16, xiii. 15, xvii. 8, xxii. 1, xxviii. 23. In Eccles. ix. 11, x. 12 it is used in the same way.

*Love* occurs 18 times in Prov., Song of Sol. and Eccles., and is used absolutely in every place, except Prov. v. 19; Eccles. ix. 6. These three books occupy 42 pages. The word occurs elsewhere 22 times in 568 pages, and is used absolutely at the most on *three occasions*. If there is any argument in style, this is unanswerable.

*My son* is always an appellative in Prov., and Eccles. “The heart of the sons of men” (Eccles. viii. 11, ix. 3; Prov. xv. 11; I Kings viii. 39; II Chron. vi. 30).

“The heart knoweth”.—This expression is peculiar to Solomon (I Kings ii. 44; Prov. xiv. 10; Eccles. vii. 22, viii. 5).

“Assembler” (*koheleth*), which is the word translated “Preacher”, is the language of David’s time. David and Solomon were the only kings who assembled the congregation (I Kings viii. 1, 2). This signal honour is enshrined in the name adopted in Ecclesiastes. So with “nails” and “bowls”: both have to do with the Temple.

“Peculiar treasure” is used of God six times. Twice only is it used of man (I Chron. xxix. 3; Eccles. ii. 8). The peculiarities of Ecclesiastes are all in favour of its Solomonic authorship.

The reader who is not yet satisfied with either the quantity or the quality of the evidence here brought together is recommended to consult “*A Treatise on the Authorship of Ecclesiastes*” by D. Johnston, the book which has supplied this article with most of the data assembled. We are convinced that Solomon is the author, and shall take up this position in the ensuing articles of the series. We also believe that Ecclesiastes is inspired

Scripture and shall treat it accordingly. Who would think of treating the Psalms in the way that Ecclesiastes is treated even by the orthodox? and yet many, if not most, of the Psalms are in their primary setting the experiences and the findings of men who had not even the “wisdom of Solomon”.

Asaph’s experience recorded in Psalm lxxiii., so parallel in many ways with the outlook of Ecclesiastes, is accepted as inspired truth by the very ones who in their superiority speak of Ecclesiastes as “under the sun”! Surely Ecclesiastes has himself summed up the majority of adverse criticism in his inimitable words, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”.

## **#2. Koheleth. Its occurrences and testimony. pp. 89 - 92**

The book of Ecclesiastes bears upon it the same marks that we find upon the other books of inspired Scripture, namely, the presence of a wonderfully designed structure. This structure extends to the position and occurrence of the principal words used, and we shall give out attention in this paper to the passages where the words THE PREACHER occur.

The title *Ecclesiastes* is nearer to the meaning of the Hebrew *Koheleth* than “The Preacher”, for both words refer to an assembly. *Koheleth* might be rendered “The Convener”. This appellative is used seven times in the book, as follows:--

### **Koheleth.**

- A | i. 1. The words of Koheleth.
- B | a | i. 2. All is vanity.
  - b | i. 12, 13. King searching by wisdom.
- C | vii. 27. What Koheleth found.
- B | a | xii. 8. All is vanity.
  - b | xii. 9. Koheleth wise, taught the people.
- A | xii. 10. The words of Koheleth, words of truth.

The structure of the occurrence of this word contains a challenge. It opens and closes with “the words” of Koheleth. What shall we say of these “words”? Are they the words of a jaded spirit, a satiated appetite? Are they to be deprecated in this age of Christian enlightenment? Are they given as a warning, to show us what is *not* truth? Let the final member of the series answer.

“Koheleth sought to find out acceptable words.” Did he succeed? or was his search as vain as was also his estimate of this world? “And that which was written was upright, even WORDS OF TRUTH.” Here are given three characteristics of the words that are *written* in this book.

First notice the careful distinction that is drawn between the endeavour to find suitable words and the result. Koheleth “sought to find out” acceptable words. His search was satisfactory, for that which was written was in words of truth. Now let us notice the three characteristics.

1. ACCEPTABLE.—This word has been used in Ecclesiastes before the last chapter, and in three of the passages it is rendered “purpose” (iii. 1, 17; viii. 6). The acceptable words of Koheleth were words that were exactly suited to express his meaning.

2. UPRIGHT.—This is the term used in vii. 29 to describe the state of man prior to his fall. Such is the character of the written words of Ecclesiastes.

3. TRUTH.—This is the word used to describe the law (Psa. cxix. 142) and commandments (151). We have such expressions as “words (sayings) of truth” (Prov. xxii. 21). “The Scripture of truth” (Dan. x. 21). “The law of truth” (Mal. ii. 6).

These three descriptions taken together should cause the believer to hesitate long before setting aside the “words” of Ecclesiastes as those of a worldly wise misanthrope.

Returning to our structure, we will next note the complete parallel that exists between the preface and the conclusion, i. 2 and xii. 8. Before we are given any of the processes whereby the conclusion is reached, the conclusion is stated, “Vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth, vanity of vanities; all is vanity”.

It must not be imagined that Koheleth intimates that his mind was prejudiced before he commenced his research. The writer’s preface, like that of most writers since, had to be written when the whole work was accomplished. He states at the beginning, as it were, his thesis, “All is superlatively vain”, and then conducts the reader through the intricate mazes of investigation to the final statement of chapter xii. 8. “Vanity of vanities, saith the Koheleth, All is vanity”. Whatever our private opinions of this book may be, we cannot charge the writer with either inconsistency or of wandering. His proposition and his proof are in sight throughout the book, as we shall see more clearly when we trace this special feature through. Another feature that is constant is that which is brought out in the structure, namely, the process of investigation. Chapter i. 12, 13 reads:--

“I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven.”

So in the conclusion (xii. 9) we read:--

“And moreover, because Koheleth was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; Yea, he gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs.”

We have in the first paper of this series sought to show the connection both of theme and wording that exists between Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. Here, Koheleth tells us that many of his proverbs were sought out and set in order after the experience recorded in

Ecclesiastes, and presumably connected with it. If Ecclesiastes is untrue, we should expect to find that “Proverbs” being inspired Scripture, the errors are there corrected. This is not the case however. Where Proverbs speaks of the same things as Ecclesiastes, it uses similar words and leads in the same direction. It will be observed that Koheleth refers in this chapter to “the words of the wise”, saying that they are as “goads”. “The words of the wise” come in the introduction of the book of Proverbs, and are immediately followed by that section of Proverbs that were written FOR Solomon. If we turn to *The Companion Bible* we shall find the structure of this section FOR Solomon set out on page 865, Part III. The section covers chapters i. - x. and there is a fivefold alternation of A | Wisdom’s call, and B | The Foreign Woman.

This seems a strange theme, yet who knowing the sad end of Solomon’s career can but see the reason for the repeated warning? What has this to do with Koheleth and his book? Look at the structure already given. What is the central member of the seven references (C | vii. 27)? “What Koheleth found.” What did he find? He found by bitter experience what he might have known by simply believing the words of the wise inspired for his guidance:--

“I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whose pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.”

This is in entire harmony both with the introductory proverbs for Solomon’s guidance, and also with the proverbs written by Solomon:--

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord” (xviii. 22).  
“A prudent wife is from the Lord” (xix. 14).

With what theme does the book of Proverbs close? It closes with an acrostic in which for every letter of the Hebrew alphabet is written a verse in praise of the “virtuous woman” in whom the heart of her husband doth safely trust. Should this theme appear to be strange, let the reader turn to the other book of Solomon. The Song of Solomon shows us the faithful Shulamite and her shepherd lover in vivid contrast with Solomon and his threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number (Song of Sol. vi. 8). This number we find increased in I Kings xi. 3, “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines”, 1,000 in all. This gives added point to his words in Eccles. vii. 28, “One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all these have I not found”.

The “conclusion of the whole matter” refers all happiness under the sun to fearing God and keeping His commandments. Solomon found written across his own life, and that of others, “vanity” by reason of failure in this particular. Lives differ, but experiences lead to the same conclusion. Whoever transgresses the commandment of God must of necessity wreck his career. In the case of Solomon the warning concerning “outlandish women” was ignored, and bitter was his experience. In another case warning concerning wealth, business, the world, etc. is ignored, and the same expression summarizes the result.

These things will be seen the better when we are definitely analyzing the subject matter of the book. The unity that is discovered by reading the seven occurrences of Koheleth together is of importance in directing us both to its consistency and theme.

### **#3. The Theme Traced.**

*Without resurrection, all is vanity.*  
**pp. 122 - 127**

What is the theme of the book of Ecclesiastes? Is it the quest for the *summum bonum*, “that good” (ii. 3)? Is it the quest for the origin and purpose of evil? We feel it best to defer any answer until we have set before the reader one or two of the most prominent features of the book. Then possibly the Scriptures will have provided their own explanation. We know what Koheleth’s summary is, for it is written both in the preface and the conclusion:--

“Vanity of vanities, All is vanity” (i.2, xii. 8).

The word “all” must be limited to its context as in other places, for of all the words that have made havoc of theology this seems one of the chief. “All means all” may be a most untruthful conclusion. All means as many as the context intends and no more. Whatever the writer has in view, his conclusion concerning it is, “All is vanity”. Before reading on in Ecclesiastes, let us see what has been written elsewhere concerning vanity.

Psa. xxxix. 4-6.—This Psalm of David, we trust, is clear from any of the insults heaped upon the portion of Holy Scripture we are studying—this is not “under the sun” in the sense often intended:--

“Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how short lived I am. Behold, Thou, Lord, hast made my days as an handbreadth and mine age is as nothing before thee. Verily every man at his best estate is altogether (or, only all) vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: Surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches and *knoweth not who shall* gather them.”

Here, it will be observed, the vanity of man is seen in the one great fact that stands at the end of his career—DEATH. Death writes *vanity* over the whole creation of man. His labours are spent in accumulating that which some unknown person shall use.

Psa. xlix. 6-20:--

“They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches: None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should *still live* for ever *and not see* corruption. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.....like sheep they are laid in the grave.”

The Psalmist gives as a parenthesis the inward thought of these people. "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations": To effect this they:--

"call their lands after their names. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beast that perish. For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him....They shall never see light."

Here again the dread of death and of being forgotten urges men to do all kinds of things to perpetuate their memory. All the riches a man may accumulate, however, avail but for this transient life, "for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away". Surely this also is *vanity*?

Romans viii. 20, 21 says:--

"The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same, in hope that the creature itself also shall be set free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

Yet again we find vanity linked with the bondage of corruption with no release apart from resurrection.

Let us now turn to Ecclesiastes. What makes the writer there emphasize the vanity of all things? Precisely the same reason is found that we have read in Psalm and Epistle. Death writes *Ichabod* across the labours of man. The very first observation of the book is this, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh", and the section ends with the thought "There is no remembrance".

In chapter ii. 14-17 this observation is developed. He perfectly realized that wisdom excelled folly as light does darkness, yet he is faced with this calling fact. Death comes to the wise as well as the fool:--

"One event happeneth to them all. As it happeneth to the fool, so happeneth it to me, even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance (same word as 'memorial', i. 11) of the wise more than the fool for the age (*olam*); seeing that in the days to come all will have been already forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? AS THE FOOL! Therefore I hated life."

The writer not only hated life, but he hated all his labour by reason of the fact that death would deal with it.

"Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; seeing that I must leave it to the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool. Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity."

The theme is not dropped, for within a few verses we read, "For there is a man whose labour is with wisdom, and with knowledge and with skillfulness". Yet he must leave it, perhaps to a fool! Surely life and its labours are vanity!

Chapter iii. develops a new phase of teaching. It is concerned with the set times and seasons for all the purposes under heaven. Although a new phase is commenced, the vanity of the creature by reason of mortality is not forgotten. What is the first couplet of the twenty-eight statements?

“There is a time to be born, *and a time to die.*”!

After pursuing the question of time, the writer comes back to the subject of death:--

“I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even ONE THING befalleth them; as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have ONE BREATH; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto ONE PLACE; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again.....” (iii. 18-20).

In iv. 8 there is still a reference to the same sad theme. He looks at one “alone” having neither child nor brother. Yet he does not say, “For whom do I labour”? The suggestion is, of course, that death will prevent him from enjoying the result of his labour himself. So whether a man has an heir (ii. 18), or whether he has not—“all is vanity, yea, a sore travail”. Speaking further of the accumulation of riches Koheleth observes:--

“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. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that laboured for the wind” (v. 15, 16).

“Do not all go to one place”? he asks (vi. 6), and speaks of this life as

“Vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow. For who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun” (12)

“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men: and the living will lay it to his heart” (vii. 2).

“The laughter of a fool is like the crackling of thorns under a pot” (vii. 6).

Nothing but senseless and unbridled licence can explain why those who are aware that “the end of those things is death” do not appear moved by the prospect and saddened at the outlook.

In chapter viii. 4 we read, “Where the word of a King is, there is *power*”, but verse 8 reveals the need of a greater than Solomon. “There is no man that hath *power* over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he *power* in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war.”

Not only does the sense of vanity come to the writer as he sees all men, fools and wise, subject to death. He contemplates the burial of the wicked and the fact that they are forgotten with an equal sense of vanity (viii. 10). Still the subject haunts Ecclesiastes.

“All things come alike to all: there is ONE EVENT to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as to the good, so to the sinner: and he that sweareth, as he that

feareth an oath. This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is ONE EVENT unto all....madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead” (ix. 2, 3).

Surely had Ecclesiastes lived in this 20<sup>th</sup> century he would have heard the echo of his words in the colloquial, “What’s the good of ANYTHING—*nothing!*”. A Proverb is the wisdom of many in the wit of one, and—slang though it may be—it is the sub-conscious finding of man at large.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave *whither thou goest*” (ix. 10, *see also* ix. 5).

Here the writer reveals the identity of the *one place* whither all go, *Sheol*, the Hebrew equivalent to *Hades*. The uncertain tenure of life also appeals to him:--

“For man also knoweth not his time: as fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as birds that are caught in the snare: so are the sons of men ensnared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them” (ix. 12).

Whatever the condition in which a man may live, he is wise never to so live as though the rude intrusion were not bound to come.

“Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness for they shall be many. ALL THAT COMETH IS VANITY” (xi. 7, 8).

The survey concludes with the exhortation to the youth to remember his Creator while the evil days come not. For:--

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God Who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth, all is vanity” (xii. 1-8).

Thus ends the search and the survey. Dust returns to dust. Spirit returns to God the giver. What an end! What can we say after viewing the travail, the labour, the inequalities, the just suffering as the wicked, the wicked prospering as though just, the time and the chance, the one event to wise and to fools, but *Vanity, all is vanity!* Is this a sceptic’s finding, or a believer’s verdict? We dare to say that it is the finding of every Scripture-taught believer. One thing, and one thing only, can alter the verdict—RESURRECTION.

“If Christ be not RISEN, then is our preaching *vain*, and your faith is also *vain*....if Christ be not raised, your faith is *vain*; ye are yet in your sins....if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Cor. xv.).

That the teaching of the apostle is similar to that of Ecclesiastes when resurrection is removed from the argument is manifested by the fact that he echoes Eccles. ii. 24, viii. 15, where Koheleth, looking at the just man who suffers like a wicked man, commends mirth saying:--

“Eat, and drink, and be merry.”

So the apostle says:--

“If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not? LET US EAT AND DRINK FOR TOMORROW WE DIE.”

Few would be found who would pick out this verse from its context, and then try to show that the apostle was untrustworthy or that he was a cynic, or a sceptic, or any other of the names heaped upon Koheleth; yet what Ecclesiastes has spread over a book Paul has condensed into a verse. Koheleth wishes to impress the fact of *vanity*, Paul of *triumph*. Yet where they touch upon the same thing they speak with the same words.

All is vanity, even Paul teaches that, *apart from the risen Christ*. We shall find that Koheleth, too, teaches the same thing in his own way. Does this resurrection chapter continue the refrain, “What advantageth it me? What profit is there in labour?” No. Let us hear the last word on the matter:--

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave (the *sheol* of Ecclesiastes), where is thy victory? .....thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN in the Lord” (I Cor. xv. 55-58).

#### **#4. Koheleth’s Key to the Riddle.—The LIFE TO COME. (Eccles. vii. 11). pp. 165 - 168**

In our last paper we sought to show that Koheleth was justified in his pessimism by the fact that ONE EVENT happens to all men, whether they be wise or foolish, good or bad, pious or profane, and that all go to ONE PLACE, in short, that death and the grave have the last word in the affairs of man “under the sun”. Ecclesiastes is a black background solemnly true. Ecclesiastes’ conclusion that all labour was vanity, is enforced by the converse statement that the believer’s labour is not in vain “in the Lord”.

If the one word *death* represents “the sore evil” with which the writer saw the whole of man’s activities blasted, we should expect to find by the law of correspondence and the testimony of I Cor. xv. that *life*, that is resurrection life, would be “the good” which could alone solve the riddle and justify the experiences of this life.

After having entered the arena and made his challenge (i. 1-3), the writer conducts us along the line of his first investigation (i. 4 - ii. 17), and tells us that as a result he “hated life”, and he “hated his labour” (ii. 18-26). His second method is to consider the bearing of time, season and the age upon the affairs of men (iii. 1-21). His conclusion is more sober than the former, as he perceives that there is nothing better than to enjoy the present, “for who shall bring him *back* to see what shall be after him?” (iii. 22).

In chapter iv. He considers all the oppressions, and concludes it better to be either already dead, or not yet born—anything but being ALIVE! He passes in review the envy and the vexation of life, the childless man labouring endlessly—for whom? Then after speaking about the fickle fate of kings, he enters the sanctuary of God. Asaph in Psa. lxxiii. passes along the same road as Koheleth. They record their findings in different terms, but their findings throughout are the same. In the house of God (v. 1-8) he learns to view “oppression” without such bitterness as he did in iv. 1. There he saw “no comforter”: here he says:--

“Marvel not at the matter: for He that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.”

This is a definite acquisition. God knows, and regards, and is higher than the highest. He now returns to his theme, considering riches from a threefold standpoint (v. 9-17) and coming to a conclusion concerning that which is “good and comely”—because “God hath given him power to eat of his possessions”. This is contrasted with an “evil” wherein “God giveth not power to eat thereof” (vi. 1, 2).

Life, viewed particularly in its utmost length, is considered and the conclusion is that a life of a thousand years twice told is in vain, where no good is seen. Then comes the contrasting reference to GOD, viz., MAN:--

“That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with Him that is mightier than he.”

This is in exact balance with the words, “He that is higher than the highest”, and forms part of the structure, as we may see later. In the sanctuary of God Koheleth learned that God is higher than the highest. He also realized that it is vain for man to attempt to judge God; the word “contend” being the Hebrew “*din*”. God is mightier than man. It is the same word used by Nebuchadnezzar when he too learned the same lesson that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men”, for he said “how *mighty* are His wonders” (Dan. iv. 3). Job’s arguments were all stopped by the revelation of Him Who is *mightier* than man.

We leave this somewhat enigmatical verse (Eccles. vi. 11) for the time, and journey on. Verse 12 asks *the* question of the book, “Who knoweth WHAT IS GOOD for man in this life?” This life is then defined as “All the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow”. The reason why the quest is difficult is further explained, “for who can tell a man what shall be after him, under the sun?” In other words, “If a man die, shall he live again?” Let us notice the balance of thought here.

Question. | a | For who knoweth  
          | b | What is good  
          | c | For man in this life?

This life defined. Vain life, spent like a shadow.

Question. | *a* | For who can tell  
          | *b* | What shall be after him  
          | *c* | Under the sun?

“What is good” is echoed by “what shall be after him”. Even though the writer had said, “there is nothing better than that a man should eat and drink, and that he should make his souls enjoy good in his labour” (ii. 24, iii. 13, v. 18), yet that does not represent “THAT GOOD’ in its fullness, that Koheleth set out to find.

A certain definiteness meets us with the opening of the next chapter. *The Companion Bible* indicates a division in the book at vi. 10 denoting the section vi. 10 – xii. 12 as “The Chief Good, what it is”. It will be observed that we put vi. 10-12 back into the section covered by the enquiry as to what is good and commence the section which gives the answer with chapter vii. This is a small detail, however. The chief good is approached by seven good things, and then Koheleth’s question is answered.

1. A good name is better than ointment.
2. The day of death is better than the day of birth.
3. The housed of mourning is better than the house of feasting.
4. Sorrow is better than laughter.
5. The rebuke of the wise is better than the song of fools.
6. The end of a thing is better than the beginning.
7. The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit (vii. 1-8).

We will not stay over these now, they will come in the course of the general exposition. In verse 11 the revelation is made:--

“Wisdom is good with an inheritance.”

Now this sounds rather like making the best of both worlds. By all means many would say, Let me have the wisdom *with* an inheritance. This however is not what Koheleth taught. The R.V. gives “Wisdom is as good as an inheritance”, which, of course is quite another thing. The particle “with” is rendered in ii. 16 “as” and “more than”. In Psa. lxxiii. 5, “like” other men. The translation we offer is strictly in line with the Hebrew and yields good sense:--

“Wisdom is good, like an inheritance, and profitable to them that see the sun. In the shadow of wisdom, in the shadow of silver, but the profit of knowledge (is) that wisdom giveth LIFE to them that have it.”

- A | Wisdom like an inheritance.
- B | Profitable.
- C | Wisdom likened to silver.
- B | Profitable.
- A | Wisdom gives life.

Koheleth has said some hard things about life. We remember his early conclusion, “therefore I hated life” (ii. 17). He calls it “vain life” and likens it to “a shadow” (vi. 12). Again he speaks of “the days of the life of thy vanity” (ix. 9).

He has given us his considered judgment even in this chapter, that the day of death is better than the day of birth, and approaches the depths of Job's sounding when he cursed the day when he was born! How comes it then that life being so, he finds the good that he is reaching for to be wisdom, and the reason, that wisdom gives LIFE! Common sense, apart from inspiration, demands that the writer must mean something different from the life he has considered so vain, otherwise the book may as well be closed for it is impossible to follow its arguments.

We saw in our previous article that the fact that death was at the end of man's career rendered all his labour profitless, and summed up all in vanity. Resurrection life is the only thing that can make the crooked straight. That is the life intended here. *The Companion Bible* in its note on Lev. xviii. 5 draws attention to the Chaldee paraphrase which reads, "shall live by them to life eternal" (Sol. Jarchi, "live in the world to come"). This being so, the problem of ii. 13-16 is solved. While he may still hate this life, Koheleth can now see that wisdom is not only excellent in itself, but excellent in its results—it leads to LIFE that is life indeed.

Here light breaks. Granted that there is a life beyond the grave, then though wickedness may sit in the place of judgment (iii. 16), and though many inequalities and perplexing mysteries of providence may still baffle us (vii. 15; viii. 14, 17), though the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but all have to reckon with time and chance, yet the conclusion of the matter sets all right. It will be our wisdom to fear God and keep His commandments, for a day of judgment is coming, and if a day of judgment, then a day when the crooked shall be made straight, the inequalities made equal, a day of LIFE from the dead, where vanity and vexation of spirit shall never more intrude, for death and hades shall be destroyed in the second death, and God shall solve all life's mysteries in the LIFE TO COME.

## **#5. Is that life worth living, which is without Christ? pp. 184 - 189**

*"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."*

The Hebrew superlative is expressed in the words "Holy of holies", "Servant of servants", etc., and this opening statement of the preacher indicates the most utter emptiness and vanity. Vanity is the word that meets us at every turn throughout this book, and we must at least give the passages a consideration before passing on, otherwise we shall miss much help in the subsequent interpretation.

First of all let us notice the repeated detailed confirmation of the opening utterance by observing in what connections the preacher remarks, "this also is vanity"; for these mark progressive examinations with their conclusions.

“I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure” (ii. 1).

*Prove.*—This word in the same grammatical form is mostly rendered “tempt”, and specially in the connection of tempting God. In slightly different forms it is rendered “prove” in such cases as Deut. viii. 2, 16. The underlying idea is that of trial by means of some ordeal.

*Enjoy.*—This word literally means “to see” and in this form occurs seven times in Ecclesiastes. “See, this is new” (i. 10). “Consider the work of God” (vii. 13). “Live joyfully” (vii. 14, 27, 29; ix. 9).

*Pleasure.*—This is translated in the third verse “good” and recurs constantly throughout the book. It is the word which comes in vii. 11, where the highest meaning must attach to it.

Instead therefore of accusing Koheleth of taking a mad plunge into pleasure, we must credit him with a sober and sane investigation of mirth in order to notice its effect upon himself, and particularly upon his heart. The good, of course, catches a reflection from the word “mirth”, but the real thought seems to be that Koheleth in his search for what was “that good” tested himself with mirth, looking carefully concerning that good which is the reason for all these trials and experiments.

We translate “concerning good”, and, we feel, rightly so. The Hebrew *beth* is usually rendered “in”, sometimes “to”, “against”, “with”, and sometimes, as Lev. vi. 2 illustrates, it bears the thought of “concerning”. Here therefore was a properly planned, and carefully conducted test. What was the result? “This also is vanity.”

“I said of laughter, IT IS MAD, and of mirth, WHAT DOETH IT?”

This question “what doeth it?” is echoed in verse 3—“what they should do”—and shows that we have here a very real and careful investigation. Koheleth is after something. Shame on those misinterpreters who load their commentaries with their attempt to show superior knowledge. Even the A.V. is not clear over this, as witness their translation of ii. 1, which shows a bias against Koheleth.

He is still consistently pursuing his theme when he confesses that whatsoever God *doeth* it is for the *olam* (age) (iii. 14). So also when he pities the poor mortal, whose vain life he spends, or does as a shadow (vi. 12). The word appears again immediately in the next text. “I greatened my *works*” (lit.) (ii. 4), and all these “doings” are pronounced at the close “vanity” (ii. 11). We must not pursue this interesting theme now, it will form a separate study in this series.

The next case in which the writer pronounces the judgment “this also is vanity” is that of wisdom and folly:--

“And I turned myself (*same word 'looked' in verse 11*) in order to look, to behold (*not the usual word, it means 'consider'*) wisdom and madness and folly, for what can the

man do that cometh after the king?" (This is to say, he had as many advantages, if not more than, as any successor was likely to have), "even that which hath been already done" (ii. 12).

This is a continual refrain:--

"Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. There is no remembrance" (i. 10, 11).

"For there is no remembrance of the wise than the fool for the age: seeing that which is already, in the days to come shall be forgotten" (ii. 16). So again iii. 15.

There is something baffling which Koheleth experiences, and which he clearly records, as we shall see. Here he refers to it. Concerning his consideration of wisdom and folly, he saw clearly that wisdom excelled folly as light darkness, yet at the end was that ONE EVENT which wrote its dread *Ichabod*. "Then said I in my heart, that this also is vanity." In verses 18 and 19 another phase of this same thought appears. Koheleth was to leave all his labours to another. But said he:--

"Who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and where I have showed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity."

The theme is restated in verse 21 with the more positive thought that the result of all his labours will go to one who has not given one moment's thought to its production. Yet once more:--

"What hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart....all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief: Yea, his heart *taketh not rest* in the night. This also is vanity" (ii. 22, 23).

How completely in harmony is this with Psa. cxxvii., a song of degrees BY SOLOMON (*see Companion Bible*):--

"Except the Lord build the house, they *labour in vain* that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh *but in vain*.

It is *vain* for you to rise up early, and to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth His beloved IN (their) SLEEP."

We must note verses 24-26 and remember that the word "than" is not in the original. The Vulgate and Luther make the sentence interrogative. In verse 25 the weight of MS evidence is in favour of reading "apart from Him" instead of "more than I". Hence the passage reads:--

"Is it not good for man that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour? This also I saw, that it (*i.e.* enjoyment of good) was from the hand of God."

Man himself cannot accomplish it. "For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto *apart from Him*." Here Koheleth sees the truth of Rom. ii. 5-10:--

"For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom and knowledge and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather in (as the fruits, Lev. xxiii. 32) and heap up (same

word '*I gathered me also silver and gold*', ii. 8), that he may give to him that is good before God."

How similar is Prov. xxviii. 8:--

"He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, *he shall gather it for him* that will pity the poor"!

"This also is vanity and vexation of spirit." Do not let us jump to the conclusion, as many do, that Koheleth is taking sides with the sinner. He is expressing a *fact*, that the fraudulent accumulation of riches is simply vanity and vexation of spirit for the sinner, for none can enjoy the results of his labours apart from God's permission.

In chapter iv. 4, 8 and 14 three further observations are recorded: first, the envy which even righteous work begets in one's neighbour; secondly, the vanity of increasing and unsatisfying labour on the part of one having neither kith nor kin; and thirdly, by the contemplation of the instability even of a despot's throne. This passage has been paraphrased by A. A. Morgan thus:--

"Better cried they, a youth the land should rule  
Than one whom time and age hath made a fool.  
The heir of poverty, of bondmen born  
If wise, disarms hereditary scorn,  
And claims a people's homage more than he,  
Whose mind is wasted by infirmity."

While an old and foolish king can be no good to a people, and while we may argue with every appearance of right along such lines as "*a man's a man, for a' that, and a' that*", yet there is something very unscriptural in the democratic view of kingship. Prophecy illuminates the goal of democratic rule. The world will not be better for exchanging the head of gold for the feet of clay. God's ideal rule is by a king upon a throne, and nothing can finally be right that disregards that. Therefore Koheleth is right when he contemplates this up to date rebellion. "Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit." Five more observations will complete our survey.

"He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance (be satisfied) with increase" (v. 10).

This is exactly what Koheleth pronounced (i. 8). What is the eye for but for "seeing"? yet it is not satisfied thereby. If a man love silver will he not be satisfied with it? No. It is a weary business, this seeking satisfaction from a world marked with corruption. Ecclesiastes utters truth at every step. All his findings point in the same direction. Vanity is written over all by reason of death. THE good is the LIFE to come. Satisfaction cannot be found here. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" is as much the burden of Koheleth as of the Psalmist. In chapter vi. 1, 2 the writer reverts to a phase of experience already touched upon in ii. 24-26.

"There is an evil I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men (or heavy upon men R.V.). A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he

wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.”

How many failures may be attributed to the lack of recognition of this principle! The present economic situation is slowly revealing to the mass of men that money is a false standard of value, and when we remember such words as Hag. I. 6 we can see that to earn much and yet to put it into a bag with holes is indeed vanity. Yet such was the condition of those who in their selfish greed put their own house first and forgot the Lord's. We have still to do with the same Lord who fed the prophet and the widow during famine with the last handful of meal, and who could multiply five loaves and two fishes so that they would satisfy thousands. Chapter v. 19 tells us that this “power” is the gift of God, and a gift it is verily.

Verse 7-9 introduce another aspect of unsatisfied desires. “All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the soul is not filled.” So Prov. xvi. 26, “He that laboureth, laboureth for himself: for his mouth craveth it for him”. As we analyze the speeches of those who have pleaded for better conditions for labour, have they not insisted that the man who labours week in week out shall earn something over and above the mere satisfying of his mouth? Do not they speak of a higher standard of living within reach of some of the intellectual refinements of life? True it is there is nothing new under the sun. Koheleth strikes the same note here. There is no true satisfaction in merely satisfying the craving of the mouth.

Nevertheless Ecclesiastes is in advance of many of his self-appointed teachers. “Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul”—for seek as he will and where he will man will never escape the curse of vanity except by Him Who is the true and living way. Both Ecclesiastes and Christ say “a living WAY”. Man will believe in “a living WAGE!” “This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

Chapter vii. 6 sums up the senseless laughter of fools as so much crackling of thorns under a pot—mere vanity. Koheleth's opinion of laughter and mirth, expressed in ii. 2, remains unchanged. He also reviews the burial of the wicked with all the pomp and splendour that may accompany it (*see* vi. 3). They had “come and gone”. There is no “complex figure of Ellipsis” here. It is the observation of Ecclesiastes throughout the book. “One generation passeth away (same word gone) and another cometh (same word come).” “He cometh in vanity”, and “goeth to his long home”. “To come and go” is the summary of human activity. They had conducted their business in the very shadow of the holy place, yet “what shall it profit a man?” “This also is vanity.”

Finally, the apparent lack of equity that goes to make up the lives of men, the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous, this further emphasizes the unsatisfactory nature of things and cries aloud for the conclusion of the matter”, *viz.*, a definite hereafter for the rectification of all that now is crooked.

We have not exhausted the preacher's statement (we have limited ourselves to the one expression “this also is vanity”) giving, as it does, a series of investigations or observations and results. Who is there, taught by the Scripture, that will say that

Ecclesiastes is not soundly true? Members of the One Body, blessed with all spiritual blessings, will do well to meditate upon the teaching of this book, for what is the practical exhortation to us but the teaching of Ecclesiastes in the doctrine of Paul?

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”

## Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth.

### #25. The Principle of Separation (Gen. xii.).

pp. 6 - 8

Abraham must ever stand out in the Scriptures as a giant of faith, and it behooves such pigmies as ourselves to be careful of our criticism, yet we realize that the faithful Word presents to us in Abraham a man of like infirmities with ourselves, and if we learn from the recorded failures of this man of faith, it need not minister to our pride, nor lessen the testimony of faith which Abraham gave:--

“By faith Abraham, when he was called. . . . obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

“So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him.”

The question that is in our mind concerns Lot. The Lord had called Abram and he obeyed. He had told him to leave country, kindred, and father's house. Did Abram fully obey this part of the command? The verse in Gen. xii. says, “So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him, *and Lot went with him*”. Lot was the son of Haran, therefore Abram's nephew (Gen. xi. 27, 31; xii. 5; xiv. 12), therefore he was Abram's *kindred*, and Abram had been commanded to get out from his kindred. Lot seems to be mentioned several times in a somewhat detached way, “and Lot with him” (xiii. 1). “And Lot also, which went with Abram” (xiii. 5). A relieved feeling seems to come when we read, “and the Lord said unto Abram, *after that Lot was separated from him*, Lift up now thine eyes”. The ties of the flesh are strong. When Abram was first called out by God we read, “and Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son”. Now this tie, first introduced by Terah, is again found to be strong, “and Lot went with him”. Whether we are right in this, we cannot say, true it is that Lot's presence brought neither peace nor blessing to Abram, and his entry into the land of Canaan ultimately lost him his wife, his home, and finally his character. If we will but examine ourselves we shall find that most of our fullest acts of obedience, and sincerest endeavours to walk a separate path, have been somewhat spoiled by the *Terahs* and the *Lots* who will not leave us to wholly follow the Lord. The silence of Scripture as to this in the record of faith in Heb. xi. is a consolation; the Lord is not swift to mark iniquity, if He were, who should stand?

When Abram reached Sichem and the plain of Moreh, the Lord appeared unto him. Abram had crossed the Jordan, and penetrated nearly half way through the country known as Samaria; Gilgal, where the reproach of Israel was rolled away some years afterward, is near this place. It looks as though Abram had to venture upon the word of the Lord, walking by faith. Without further vision or revelation, surrounded by the Canaanites (ever the foes of faith), he was put to a severe test. The silence is at length broken by the promise, “unto thy seed will I give this land”. Following this promise comes Abram's response, “and there builded he. . . .” What did he build? Surely, if the land was his freehold, and his seed's for ever, he will at once begin to build a nice comfortable house, he will be justified in adding all the latest improvements that the Canaanites may have invented, and so show that his faith was real and matter of fact, that

he really believed that the land belonged to him. So reasons the flesh. Abram never built anything other than altars throughout his pilgrimage. Cain and Nimrod built cities, the whole family of mankind attempt to build a city and a tower, and make a great name; Noah and Abram built altars. There is in this a principle, true now as then, and expressed for all time in the words of Him Who spake with authority and not as the Scribes:--

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

The fitting accompaniment to the altar is the tent. Verse 8 tells us that Abram pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east, and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord. Verse 9 says, “and Abram journeyed”; the word indicates the pulling up of tent pegs. There was a definite purpose and choice in all this:--

“By faith he sojourned *in the land of promise*, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise” (Why?). “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

The spiritual pilgrim in effect judges that no city of man’s building has *foundations*. In spite of the testimony of our senses, faith knows that “that which is seen is temporal, but that which is not seen is eternal”.

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

Do we “declare plainly” that such is our faith and hope? Our life and hope and inheritance are found at the right hand of God. Do we, by setting our mind on things above, and by exhibiting small concern for the fashion of this world that passeth away, do we “declare plainly” that here we have no continuing city? Our citizenship is in heaven, and as such we cannot but be strangers and pilgrims on the earth; the altar and the tent are the two great characteristics of the pilgrim walk. The *altar* recognizes the claims of a holy God, the *tent* the necessity of separation for a holy and pilgrim people.

Heb. xi. tells us that the fact that Abraham was willing to dwell in a tent in the land of promise, was due to the vision of faith.—“he looked for a city that had foundations.” Abraham was not a nomad by temperament, he did not choose the tent out of preference, he longed for city life, he looked for a city. Like others, who found here no continuing city, he sought one to come. Abraham, however, realized that to have fellowship with God meant that he must share the rejection of the Lord. The altar and the city come together in Heb. xiii. 10-14, “We have an altar. . . here we have no continuing city”. That means practically for us, “the tent”. In other words, like Abraham, we must “go forth unto Him *without the camp*, bearing His reproach”.

It will come to the mind that no altar was raised to God in Egypt. Moses had to decide between the dignity and glory of being called “son of Pharaoh’s daughter”, and “the reproach of Christ”. He exchanged, as a matter of choice and estimation, the palace for the shepherd’s tent, the crown for the crook, the greatness of Egypt for the backside of

the desert. Abraham was called “the friend of God”, and Moses was never so great as when he renounced the treasures of Egypt. May the true spirit of altar and tent, of pilgrimage and strangership be more fully entered into by us all, that the name of the Lord may be magnified.

## **#26. Gaps in the Calendar of Faith (Gen. xii. 10-20). pp. 38 - 42**

We noticed in our last article the fundamental lesson of separation as it is exhibited in the case of Lot and Abram; we are now to see Abram in yet another light, and most heart-searching lesson awaits us.

“And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was grievous in the land.”

One of the lessons that we all have to learn is expressed in the words of Deut. viii.:--

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

Perhaps the strongest test of the faith indicated in these occurrences is the character of the manna, “which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know”; faith trusts apart from sight or knowledge, but sense yearns for something *substantial*, not realizing that “faith is the substance of things hoped for”. We must not judge by some rule of thumb, for each case has its own peculiar position in the purpose of God. When on another occasion a famine swept over Canaan, and the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt, we can see that it was part of a Divine plan to bring about God’s own purpose; and again, when Herod sought to kill the infant Christ, Joseph and Mary found refuge in Egypt at the command of an angel of God. Whether, therefore, Abram should have remained in Canaan in spite of the famine, or whether he was right to go to Egypt, it is not for us to say, one thing comes prominently out of the story, and that is the terrible effect upon the pilgrim of faith a close proximity to the world can have.

“And it came to pass when he was come near to enter Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be will with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.”

Bishop Hall’s pithy comment is worth repeating:--

“God hath said, I will make thee a great nation: Abram saith, the Egyptians will kill me. . . . he through inconsiderateness doubted twice of his life doubted not the life of his seed. . . . yet it was more difficult that his posterity should live in Sarah, than that Sarah’s husband should live in Egypt.”

When we analyze unbelief, it is of all things most unreasonable. Abram would doubtless have defended his attitude by saying that after all Sarai *was* his sister. The poet has it that the lie which is half the truth is ever the blackest of lies, and it is more abominable in Abram to make the semblance of truth his refuge, than for the wicked to lie outright. The world, the Pharaohs of this spiritual Egypt, they will even reprove the man of faith for his inconsistency. The famine in Canaan was a trial certainly, but all trials that come upon the child of God are intended to lead him more continually to Christ. If Abram had only thought what he was doing, as he drew near to Egypt, he would have realized that to take refuge in a lie was to depart from God. True, Abram exchanged Canaan’s famine for plenty—“he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels”—*but he had no fellowship with God*. This we shall see in the sequel.

The plagues sent by the Lord because of Abram’s wife are sent to unmask Abram’s deceit. An unbeliever (or at least a type of this world), rebukes the man of God:--

“And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, she is my sister? So I might have taken her to me; now therefore, behold thy wife, take her and go thy way.”

Let us notice how Abram’s sin involved others. “What is this that thou hast *done unto me?*” The pilgrim cannot step aside from the path of faith without evil resulting to himself and others. How sad to think that he who had been specially called out to be a blessing to all nations, should by his first individual act involve (but for the mercy of God) a nation in sin!

Chapter xiii. sees Abram leaving Egypt rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, yet poor as yet in the treasures of faith:--

“And he went on his journey from the south, even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been *at the beginning*, between Bethel and Hai, unto the place of the altar which he had made there *at the first*, and *there* Abram called on the name of the Lord.”

This is a picture of restoration, “He restoreth my soul, He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake”. The time which Abram spent in Egypt was so much waste, so far as God was concerned; he had to retrace his steps to the starting point. Similarly, Jonah ran away from the Lord, and entered a ship bound for Tarshish, yet when the great fish vomited up Jonah, he was upon the coast of the country he had been told to visit:--

“And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah *the second time*, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.”

Not only is it true that these lapses in the path of faith are so much lost time to the individual believer, but it enters also into the great prophetic reckonings of God with

His people. We doubtless are aware that there are what are called *lo-ammi* periods in biblical chronology; *lo-ammi* being the Hebrew for, “not my people”. According to I Kings vi. 1 the temple was commenced in the 480<sup>th</sup> year after the children of Israel had departed from Egypt, whereas according to Acts xiii. 17-22 the period is given as 573 years (this includes 3 years of Solomon’s reign), a difference of 93 years. Abram’s loss of communion, and the re-commencement with God from where he was *at the beginning*, is but a small example of the principle that solves this apparent riddle.

During the time of the Judges Israel were taken away captive 5 times, and if we note the duration of these captivities, we find they total exactly 93 years! In case some readers are acquainted with this fact, we give the references hereunder:--

Chusan-rishathaim.	Judges iii. 8.	8 years.
Eglon	iii. 14.	18
Jabin	iv. 2.	20
Midian	vi. 1.	7
Philistines	xiii. 1 .	40
		-----
		Total 93 years.
		=====

The years of the Acts reckoning are *Anno Mundi* (in the year of the world), whereas the 480<sup>th</sup> year of I Kings is *Anno Dei* (in God’s year), showing that no record is made of the years of captivity. What a short term of Christian service some of us really serve when we come to consider the many lapses, and the many fresh beginnings that we can remember. What a mercy that the Lord does restore us, yet should we remember His words, “Go, and sin no more”. The reader who is interested in the prophetic times of Dan. ix. will find a further application of this principle in Volume VI *The Berean Expositor* (page 165).

We are sure that when Abram reached the place of tent and altar, and there called upon the name of the Lord, he realized that nothing Egypt could offer was so precious as these two accompaniments of his pilgrimage. The world throughout all dispensations has been an unqualified snare: the wise will profit by these scriptural examples, while the foolish will think that where Abram failed, they will succeed. Doubtless Lot thought he would overcome the evil of Sodom, but we know that he did not.

We cannot close without at least a remembrance of that One who though the Son of God (and who could, had He wished, have turned the stones of the wilderness into bread), nevertheless waited upon God, repelling the suggestion of dependence upon any arm save that of His Father. Abram will find his place in the list of those who lived by faith, but the One who eclipses the whole cloud of witnesses is that One who is the author and perfecter of faith.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

**#27. “Saved; yet so as by fire” (Gen. xiii. 5-18).  
pp. 70 - 74**

“And the land was not able to bear them, that they might *dwell together*: for their substance was great, so that they could not *dwell together*. And there was *strife*. . . .”

The “substance”, literally “that which is gathered together”, was partly accumulated during the sojourn in Egypt and partly during the halt at Haran (Gen. xii. 5 and 16). The LXX translates the word by *ta huparchonta*, and a very apposite occurrence will be that of Heb x. 34, “Ye. . . . took joyfully the spoiling of your goods (*ta huparchonta*), knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance (*huparxis*).” “Goods” cling to Lot in this history. They originate the cleavage, and they are mentioned pointedly in chapter xiv.:-

“And they took all the *goods* of Sodom. . . . And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his *goods*. . . . and he brought back all the *goods*. . . . his brother Lot, and his *goods*. . . . and the king of Sodom said unto Abram, ‘Give me the persons and take the *goods* to thyself’.”

These goods, or this substance, seem to have no spiritual character or tendency.

Immediately following the record of strife are the words, “And the Canaanite and Perizzite dwelled in the land”. Abram’s conscience was still tender. The rebuke given him by the heathen king was yet vivid in his memory. And the strife between himself and Lot would be no good testimony to the Lord their God. He was beginning to desire to “adorn” the doctrine. Therefore it was that Abram, to whom the land had been given by God, stand aside and exhibits that meekness of spirit which should ever accompany the possession of the heavenly gift. To Lot Abram gives the right of choice. When all things are ours in God, we can well be generous with those of small faith.

Lot was not rebuked apparently by Abram’s forbearance, or, if he was, the well-watered plains of Sodom proved too strong a temptation for him. It is a curiously mixed description that Scripture gives. It was well-watered everywhere, yet the words, “before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah”, are inserted between the beginning and the end of the description, “even as the garden of the Lord”. Its Eden-like appearance was superficial, for the Lord never walked there in the cool of the day. It was furthermore “like to the land of Egypt as thou comest to Zoar”. *It was a reminder to Lot of that which Abram would fain forget*. So it came about that the choice was made, the two separated. “Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain (or among the cities of the plain) *and pitched his tent toward Sodom*.” “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

*The Companion Bible* draws attention to the six downward steps of Lot’s course.

1. “Strife” (7),
2. “beheld” (10),
3. “chose” (11),
4. “pitched toward” (12),
5. “dwelt in” (xlv. 12),
6. “sat in its gate” (xix. 1).

Sodom is proverbial in Scripture for wickedness, yet Sodom did not repel Lot. The N.T. throws a light upon one side of Lot's action and attitude:--

“And delivered righteous Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds). The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (II Pet. ii. 7-9).

Lot was righteous; Lot vexed his righteous soul; Lot was delivered as the godly—all this is comforting. Lot's witness, however, was marred. His fellowship with the Lord was hindered, and he is an example of those who though saved are saved “so as by fire”. Even in the parable of the Sower, the seed that was choked by the thorns is not to be taken altogether as of the unsaved, for Luke viii. 14 reads:--

“And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with CARES and RICHES and PLEASURES of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”

Lot had certainly “gone forth”, but he did not “go on unto perfection”. Rather did he come nigh unto cursing and being burned (Heb. vi. 8). He himself was righteous, but he did not bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

The two angels, who together with the Lord had been entertained by Abraham unawares, entered Sodom, but the Lord Himself Who had graced the hospitality of Abraham's tent would not enter the portals of Lot's city. Even the two angels were with difficulty persuaded to enter Lot's house.

Now as to the effect of Lot's choice upon his testimony. When the angels revealed to Lot the destruction of the city, he went and spoke to his sons-in-law, which had married his daughters, and said, “Up, get you out of this place: for the Lord will destroy this city”. What was the effect of this righteous man's earnest warning? He seemed as one that MOCKED—or talked nonsense. Lot had chosen, dwelt in, and established family ties with Sodom. His actions were reasonable and intelligible; his words were those of a mocker, or as “one that played with them”. Lot himself had to be hastened by the angels lest he should be consumed with the city. Even Lot “lingered”, and had to be laid hold of, “the Lord being merciful”, and set “without the city”. While Abram's faith gives him “the land of Canaan” to dwell in (xiii. 12), such spaciousness was too overpowering for Lot. He pleads against the command, “neither stay thou in all plain”,

“Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die; Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live” (xix. 19, 20).

Zoar, the city of his choice, did not long prove a refuge for Lot, “for he feared to dwell in Zoar”. The last end of Lot is pitiable in the extreme. Finding a refuge for himself and his daughters in a cave, he who had chosen the well-watered plains and pitched his tent toward Sodom left as his legacy two nations whose history is that of shame and

wickedness, Moab and Ammon. It is surely something more than coincidence that the final prophetic utterance concerning Moab and Ammon takes us back to the destruction of Sodom. “Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and Ammon as Gomorrah” (Zeph. ii. 9). An Ammonite or a Moabite were not allowed to enter into the congregation of the Lord even to their tenth generation (Deut. xxiii. 3).

Lot’s deliverance from Chedorlaomer was entirely the result of Abraham’s activity, and Lot’s deliverance from Sodom was for Abraham’s sake. The Scripture does not say, “And God remembered Lot”, but “God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow”. All the vexing of Lot’s righteous soul did not avail to save one Sodomite. Abraham who never entered its gates prayed that even if only ten righteous persons were to be found in Sodom it might be spared. We do not know just the reason why Abraham stayed at “ten”, some think he felt certain that Lot, his wife, his daughters and their husbands, together with their servants, would account for that number. It was not so however, Lot’s only recorded attempt at preaching sounded as so much mockery—his practice was far too eloquent.

Sodom occurs 39 times in the O.T. (13\*3), and 9 times in the N.T. Both numbers are indicative of rebellion and judgment. The references to Sodom in II Pet. ii. 6, 7 and Jude 7 show us the character of the last days fast approaching. In this light the connections between Sodom and Babylon are suggestive (Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. l. 40).

The attempt once again to intercept the purpose concerning the promised seed, and defile the Messianic stream, seems manifest. Sodom stand for all that is anti-Christian. The dead bodies of the two witnesses shall be in the streets of that great city, “which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, *where also our Lord was crucified*” (Rev. xi. 8). This world with its possessions, even though they may appear as attractive as the garden of the Lord, is on the verge of judgment. The lesson of Lot seems to be echoed in I John ii.:--

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world. . . is not out of the Father.”

Whatever our interpretation of such a passage as, “All things are of God”, certain it is that the Father repudiates the world and its ways as being of Him. Throughout the dispensations, different as they are in many particulars, there has always been the call of God on the one hand, and the attraction of the world on the other. Shall it be with us, “a tent in the land of promise as in a strange country”, or shall it be the city with its plenty, its protection, its advantages—and its loss? The true *Hebrew* still says, “*here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come*”.

Christ is still “without the camp”. Let us therefore go out unto HIM. The fundamental truth, true for all dispensations, which is brought forward prominently by a comparison of the O.T. and the N.T. story of Lot, is the distinction which must ever be drawn between salvation and service, between the One foundation and the building erected thereon, between the hope and the prize.

## #28. Faith's Heritage and Repudiation (Gen. xiii. 14 - xv. 1). pp. 101 - 105

Lot gives the picture of the failure of a believer's testimony; the utter lack of fruit; the barest minimum of faith.

We turn to the other picture of growing and increasing faith, and find it closely linked with a growing and increasing separation. There seems a clearing of the atmosphere when Lot is at last gone. Abram is now left alone. He had left his choice with the Lord. In the eyes of the world doubtless he would be pronounced a fool—but he was God's fool.

“And the Lord said unto Abram, AFTER THAT LOT WAS SEPARATED from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever (*olam*, for the age of undefiled limits). 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. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee” (Gen. xiii. 14-17).

Lot chose for himself and lost. Abram hears God's choice and obtained. Surely to each one of us the contrast is pointed enough to make us desire to emulate the one and shun the other. Leaving the well-watered plains of this world, let us stand alone in fellowship with the Lord and hear Him say, "Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and the breadth of it". There are blessings which are ours in Christ, which we have never yet experienced. Let us present that "other-worldly" spirit in contrast with the Lots of our time and explore and appropriate the fulness of blessing that is ours already in Christ.

It is doctrinal verity, as much as a record of historical sequence, that Abram did not hear these words until separation was complete. Separation however must never be considered merely from one side. Abram was not simply separated *from* Lot, but separated *to* the Lord. This is indicated in his next movement:--

“Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt among the oaks belonging to Mamre (brother of Eschol and Aner, xiv. 13) which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.”

It appears from Gen. xxiii. 2 that the name of this city was originally Kirjath-arba, the two names occurring together in the record of Sarah's death. Its first name means Strong-hold of Arba, being built by Anak and the sons of Arba (Josh. xiv. 15; xv. 13). It fell to Caleb, the type of the overcomer, where its second name again appears as Hebron. Hebron means "fellowship" or "confederacy", and was the name given to the rebuilt city of Kirjath-arba by the Kharibi or allies. The introduction of the name in the case of Abram emphasizes the typical meaning. Separation from worldliness meant fellowship,

covenant fellowship with the Lord. David was King in Hebron before he was King over all Israel (II Sam. ii. 11). He also knew the blessing of fellowship even though not at the time recognized by all his people.

This twofold character of separation is found in many scriptures, e.g.:--

“Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I WILL RECEIVE YOU” (II Cor. vi. 17).

“Let us go forth therefore UNTO HIM without the camp, bearing His reproach, for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come” (Heb. xiii. 13, 14).

Not, let us go forth without the camp for temperament’s sake, or for misanthropic reasons, but because He is there. “Unto Him” comes before “without the camp”.

There is a great deal of archaeological interest in the chapter that follows this separation and fellowship of Abraham. We will not deal with it here, however, but go to the end of the chapter to see how Abram has progressed along the line of faith. After Abram had delivered Lot and all the people and goods of Sodom we read:--

“And the King of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and the Kings that were with him, at the valley of Shareh, which is the King’s dale; and the King of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.”

Now, viewed from the standpoint of the world, Abram would have been perfectly justified to have taken his reward. Will he do so? Does he walk according to the elements of the world, or does he now walk according to the unseen things of faith? Before we allow Scripture to answer, we must go back and insert the parenthesis which we have omitted.

Most abruptly and strangely the episode of the meeting of Abram and the King of Sodom is interrupted by the episode of the meeting of Abram and the King of Righteousness and Peace:--

“And Melchisedec, King of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he (Abram) gave him (Melchisedec) tithes of all.”

Before Abram is tempted to sully the separate character of his walk with the goods of Sodom, he meets with him who was the type of Christ, the High Priest, specially mentioned in that epistle of perfection and overcoming—Hebrews. Abram’s attitude in chapter xiii. led him on to victory and greater blessing. Did Lot have such a privilege in his “garden of the Lord”? Could he have repudiated the offer of Sodom’s King?

There are times when the believer learns rapidly and accurately. Such was the condition of Abram. Melchisedec had ministered to Abram the symbols of covenant-keeping. Melchisedec had twice spoken of The Most High God, and further, that He was the possessor of heaven and earth. Melchisedec had blessed Abram in the

name of this Most High God, taught Abram that the great deliverance that had been accomplished was entirely the work of this Mighty One, and Abram had recognized the truth and blessedness of all this by giving tithes of all the booty before ever he returned to Sodom. He was thus equipped to meet the offer of Sodom's King:--

“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 (oh, how small the goods of Sodom become by comparison! How small Lot's choice, with the northward, southward, eastward and westward of a separate blessing!) 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 Abram rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eschol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

Abram is jealous of the glory of God. How marked a contrast with the sad lapse before Pharaoh. Abram's attitude must have been wholly unintelligible to the King of Sodom, especially as one professing like faith had acted so differently. “The far more exceeding, age abiding, weight of glory” is in view “while we look not at the things which are seen”. An eye on the well-watered plains or the goods of Sodom would soon lead to the reasoning that these things were Abram's possessions—for had not God Himself given them to him? But no, away with the thought—the blessing is vitally connected with righteousness and holiness, and to be a pilgrim in the midst of the earth is our only capacity “till He come”. Greater riches than the treasures of Sodom are in store for Abram:--

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

Great faith leads us face to face with great reactions. Abram had exposed himself and made possible enemies by his victory. He had further repudiated legitimate reward, and to confirm his faith and still his fears, the Lord reveals Himself in the twofold capacity of shield from enemies, and reward in the place of Sodom's repudiated gifts. As the man of faith goes on in the pilgrim pathway, he learns by blessed experience that his all is in God. Presently (chapter xvii.) God will reveal Himself in a yet fuller light as El-Shaddai, God all-sufficient; but for the time being Abram's faith can rest satisfied in God His shield and exceeding great reward.

There is no surer shield and reward for either the writer or the reader, than the same Most High God, made known to us by Him Who ever liveth at the right hand of the majesty on high. Oh that we all carried the name of the Lord so high and so clear that we could always repudiate the temptations of the world “lest it should say, I have made Abram rich”! None shall enrich the child of faith but God alone. The wilderness journey is designed to teach that man does not live by bread alone.

It is noticeable, that Abram had his faith “to himself alone”. He did not impose it upon Lot who owed his life and liberty to his intervention, neither did he allow his own scruples to rule the attitude of Aner, Eschol and Mamre. The cause of truth is often hindered by zeal unaccompanied by knowledge. Think of the offence often caused by one believer telling another believer that he ought not to take the Lord's supper, for instance. In the first place the probability is that the said believer is blessed under the

terms of the new covenant, and so would be wrong with his present light to forego the observance.

Then secondly, the only right that we have to use the word “ought” is with regard to ourselves. I can say, “I ought not to observe the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper” with clear conscience and scriptural reasons, but this must not be imposed upon any who do not take the same stand.

Lot, Aner, Eschol and Mamre were representative of a different class. Abram it was that met Melchisedec, and was blessed by him. Abram it was who lifted up his hand to heaven. The others were ruled by lower laws, that could not be imposed upon the man of faith, and conversely could not be displaced except by like precious faith. What Israel did by faith, the Egyptians ‘assaying to do’ were destroyed.

May we all learn increasingly the blessing of a closer walk with God our shield and exceeding great reward.

## **#29. Faith and the Flesh (Gen. xv. 1 - xvi. 16). pp. 134 - 139**

In the two chapters now before us we shall again be brought face to face with the conflict of spirit and flesh, of faith and works, of liberty and bondage, in short with the key words of the epistle to the Galatians, and the very allegory which the apostle uses in that epistle.

In response to the words which were given to Abram in the vision, “Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward”, Abram said:--

“Lord God, what will Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.”

This must not be interpreted to mean that upon the mention of the word “reward” Abram evidenced a grasping spirit—rather the contrary is the true meaning. Here he was a stranger among strangers. His nearer relative had parted from him for the greater attraction of Sodom. He was getting well on in years and still childless. Hence he says, “What wilt Thou give me?”; as much as to say, Thou hast already loaded me with blessings, what can more of the same avail, seeing that in the ordinary course (and according to the law of the land at the time) it must all go to Eliezer my steward? (For the code of Khammurabi, to which Abram refers here, *see* Volume VI, page 104).

God had promised Abram a seed, and Abram began to think that the intention of the Lord was to run along the lines of human codes. In this he was mistaken:--

“And behold the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.”

This definite statement removed Eliezer from the field conferred upon Abram in his old age the assured hope of literal parenthood.

Not yet did Abram's faith firmly grasp the fact that this promise encircled Sarah also; this is evident by the sequel, yet he believed the literal statement of the Lord and for the time that was all the Lord intended. When Abram stood alone, rid of the society of Lot, the Lord used the simile of the dust of the earth to indicate the number of his seed. Now Abram's eyes are directed heavenward:--

“And He brought him forth abroad, and said, 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.”

Abram stood before that heavenly host, a childless old man, yet the simple statement is made—grand in its simplicity—“And he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness”. This sentence brings us to one of the most important utterances of Scripture. Upon the truth contained therein the apostle Paul founded his gospel. The epistles to the Romans and the Galatians are impossible apart from it: It will therefore warrant a pause and a prayerful consideration.

“*He believed in the Lord.*”--Rom. iv. 3 says, “Abraham believed God.” Had not Abraham believed in the Lord, or believed God when he obeyed the command to leave Ur of the Chaldees? He certainly did, for Heb. xi. definitely says that he acted “by faith”. Was not the response recorded in Gen. xii. 7 the act of a worshipper who believed? Did not Abraham believe the Most High God when he preferred His blessing to Sodom's gifts? Surely he did. Then what is the reason for this statement here? We believe the whole secret is wrapped up in the fact that Abraham's belief in the Lord on this particular occasion embraced the idea of *resurrection*. This is elaborated in Rom. iv. in connection with the fuller statement concerning Abraham's seed given in Gen. xvii. That is the character of the faith which justifies.

The purpose of justification goes back as far as Gen. xii., for Gal. iii. 8 says:--

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

Justification by faith was incipient in the covenant of Gen. xii., it arrives at full consciousness, so to speak, in Gen. xv. Take the words “counted for”. If we turn to Rom. iv. 1-8, we find the expression “counted for”, and also “reckoned” and “imputed”, the same word being translated by these various terms. The important thing to notice is that faith is “counted FOR”, whereas righteousness, sin and reward are “counted”. The difference is this, righteousness, sin and reward are real value in themselves, whereas faith is only of value by virtue of the work of another and the ordinance of God.

A treasury note is worth £1, yet its intrinsic value is practically nil. Drop a treasury note in the fire and its value ceases. Drop a sovereign in the fire and its value remains the

same. Faith is the treasury note. It is *counted for*, but it is not of itself *counted as*, righteousness. The moment we look on faith in itself as a meritorious cause of justification, that moment we make it a work which is excluded.

Abraham's faith, as exhibited in Gen. xv., confessed the utter inability of the flesh to accomplish anything for God. His faith said practically, "Unless God is the One who quickeneth the dead, I have no ground of hope".

Following upon this justifying faith comes the confirmatory covenant concerning the inheritance. "Whom He justified, them He also glorified"; that is the sequence expressed doctrinally. "Joint heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with Him"; that is the reason for the affliction of Abraham's seed. "God works all things together for good to them that love God, to those who are called according to a purpose"; this expresses the superintending hand of God in all the strange pathways of His covenant people. Thus the history of Gen. xv. and the doctrine of Rom. viii., bear united testimony. Even though justification leads on to glory, it does not exempt from intermediate suffering, but rather supports the teaching that it must come.

The Lord said to Abram, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it". And he said, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" There are two questions in this chapter, and there are two answers. Indeed the answers precede the questions:--

"I AM THY SHIELD."—This was the pledge of Abraham's justification.

"I AM THY EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD."—This was the pledge of Abraham's inheritance.

"WHAT WILT THOU GIVE ME?"—External confirmation.—The stars.

"WHEREBY SHALL I KNOW?"—External confirmation.—The smoking furnace and the burning lamp.

Space prevents us from quoting the verses of Gen. xv., the reader is expected to "search and see" with regard to all the articles of this magazine.

Offerings are arranged for the purpose of making a covenant, but Abram falls into a deep sleep that the covenant may be manifestly unconditional.

The question must arise, Why was it necessary for Israel to go down into Egypt, to be oppressed there, to be delivered out of it, and to be brought back to the same land wherein Abraham already was? Why should not Abraham's descendants just continue without a break in the land of their inheritance? This question expressed in different terms is asked all down the age regarding the strange providence of suffering. The answer is a revelation of God's character and purpose:--

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again, FOR THE INIQUITY OF THE AMORITES IS NOT YET FULL."

The bondage in Egypt was not only for the discipline of Israel and the manifestation of redemption, it was because the longsuffering of God waits until the workers of iniquity

have proved themselves incorrigible. That this is a *Fundamental of Dispensational Truth* we shall find by other scriptures:--

“And in the latter time of their Kingdom, *when the transgressors are come to the full*, a King of fierce countenance. . . . shall stand up. . . . , but he shall be broken without hand” (Dan. viii. 23-25).

In Matt. xxiii. 32-36; I Thess. ii. 16 we find the words:--

“*Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.* . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. . . . All these things shall come upon this generation.” “Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, *to fill up their sins always*: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

“Filled up” sins are met with “filled up” wrath. John saw ‘seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is *filled up the wrath of God*’ (Rev. xv. 1).

There are spiritual and human workers of iniquity for whose fulness the inheritance waits. The book of the Revelation shows human and Satanic iniquity fully ripe. The bondage of the redeemed will then come to an end. Those that afflict them will be judged, and afterward the redeemed shall “come out with great substance”.

Another covenant is made by God, which defined the geographical boundaries of the land of promise. This land has never yet been possessed by Israel. It is the “good land and large” that awaits them. When they enter it they will dispossess 10 nations, “the Kenites. . . . the Jebusites”, which is typical of the overthrowing of the 10 antichristian kings at the time of the end. An episode follows this chapter of faith which again shows the failure of the flesh.

Abraham believed that the son and heir promised to him should be his own flesh and blood, but both Abraham and Sarah seemed to have concluded that Sarah was not to be the mother of the child. Indeed Sarah says that the Lord had restrained her, when He had done nothing of the kind. One of the hardest things for the believer to do is to WAIT. The promise seems to tarry, and the flesh counts the longsuffering of God “slackness”. The flesh also seeks to help God to fulfil His own unconditional covenant, and the end is always disaster.

Ten years had passed, and the trial of faith proved too much. “Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai”, sad repetition of Gen. iii. 17. The transactions of this sixteenth chapter of Genesis seem strange to our ideas, but it was strictly in accord with the law of the land at the time. This is specially to be remembered when considering verses 3 and 6.

The result of the intrusion of the FLESH into the realm of FAITH was the birth of Ishmael. The epistle to the Galatians has much to say concerning the flesh and the spirit and the enmity between the son of the bondmaid and the son of the freewoman. The one indicates law which can only touch the flesh. The other indicates faith which can only apply to the spirit. The reader is referred to the whole epistle as an inspired comment upon these chapters. The individual working out of the comparisons and allusions will be

a helpful study. We have the beginner in mind in this series, and nothing is worse than never to allow the beginner the opportunity of searching the scriptures and receiving the training which results from exercise.

Hagar had a wonderful experience. If Hagar was to wander later in the wilderness of Beer-sheba (*the well of the oath*) she is first of all to know Beer-lahai-roi (*the well of living after seeing*). Another interpretation of this name is *The well of the living and the visible One*, and when we remember the revelation of Christ to a fallen woman of Samaria (John iv.), the possibility of this equally wonderful revelation being made to the outcast Hagar is not to be dismissed.

When Ishmael was born Abram was eighty-six years old. Faith had yet to be strengthened by longer waiting, for chapter xvii. opens with a childless Sarai, when Abram had reached ninety and nine years of age.

We shall continually meet with these examples of failure because of not waiting. May the lesson be not wasted upon ourselves. "Wait, I say, on the Lord." "Which worketh for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa. lxiv. 4, R.V.).

### **#30. Circumcision and its relation to being "perfect" (Gen. xvii.). pp. 161 - 165**

Abram has had several trials of faith. We see his progress much like the climbing record on the meteorological chart. Not one straight undeviating line does Abram's record leave. He falls a few degrees, and advances a few more, but it is to be thankfully noted that he does advance. One, and One only, ever walked the straight path of perfect faith, and while Abraham may twice figure in the list of those who received a good report through faith, Christ Himself alone is the Author and Perfecter of faith (Heb. xi., xii.). Nevertheless, Abram is a follower of the Lord, and to him as to all believers comes the call to go on unto perfection:--

"And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him. I am El Shaddai; walk before Me and be thou perfect."

When He was revealed as Abram's shield and reward, Abram believed Him unto justification and inheritance. Something fuller and deeper lies before Abram now. Up to this point Abram is the father of all that believe. Every believing child of God is justified and will receive a share of His inheritance. Not all believers, however, "go on unto perfection". Even Paul, sure as he was of his justification and of his fitness for the inheritance in the light, yet says, "Not as though I were already perfect". When Abram is called upon to "be perfect", a fuller revelation of God is made to him. It will be helpful to observe the different titles of God that appear in the various phases of Abram's walk of faith.

Stephen tells us that “The God of glory” appeared to Abram and bade him leave Ur of the Chaldees for the land of promise. This title of the Lord is in vivid contrast to the idolatrous and passing world of Abram’s nativity. As “The Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth”, the Lord was revealed to Abram before he met the temptation of the king of Sodom. As Abram’s shield and exceeding great reward the Lord is revealed Who was to justify him and pledge his inheritance through all the trials that awaited him and his seed.

His title, when He lets Abram know that his inheritance is sure, is “The Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees”—implying the truth otherwise expressed “that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ”. This characterized Abram’s faith (*see* Rom. iv. 21). As “The Almighty God”, or *El Shaddai*, the Lord appeared to Abram when he would urge him on to perfection. If justification by faith supposes the deadness of nature and the resurrection power of the Lord, subsequent perfection will necessitate that God Himself shall be all in all. *El Shaddai* has been curiously rendered, “The enough God”; the idea is expressed by the apostle when he said, “Our sufficiency is of God”.

Abram’s name is here changed to Abraham, “The father of many nations”, and this is spoken of at some length by the apostle in Rom. iv. 16-25. The land of Canaan is given here to Abraham and his seed for “an everlasting” possession, by an “everlasting” covenant, or a possession for the age of undefined limits. Thus Israel is called the ancient people, or the everlasting people, the people for the age (Isa. xlv. 7). The connection of this “everlasting” character of the blessing with “perfecting” will be more fully dealt with in the articles on *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

The first occurrence in the New Testament of the title “Almighty” is II Cor. vi. 18 where it is preceded by separation, as in Abram’s case, and followed by cleansing from the filthiness of flesh and spirit, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God”. Seeing that the word “perfect” in Gen. xvii. is the word used of Noah in Gen. vi. 9, who “was uncontaminated in his pedigree”, and considering the insistent attempts of Satan to corrupt the line of the promised Seed, as in the case of Pharaoh and Sodom already noticed, there may be an allusion here to the intrusion of the flesh resulting in the birth of Ishmael.

Three important aspects of truth are indicated in Gen. xvii.:--

1. The Lord reveals Himself.—“I AM” (1).
2. The Lord reveals His intention.—“I WILL” (seven times, 2-8).
3. The Lord reveals something for Abraham to do.—“Thou shalt keep” (9-14).

The Lord is Alpha (*I am*), and Omega (*I will*) before Abraham is called upon to do anything. The seventh “I will” pledges the fulness of *El Shaddai* in that day to Abraham’s seed, “I will be their God”. Further, Abram’s name is changed to Abraham before a conditional covenant is made with him.

Abraham can be *justified* without circumcision, but not *perfected*. This is vividly brought out by the apostle in Phil. iii. where before speaking of the perfection to which he pressed, he spoke of those who were likeminded believers as “the circumcision who had no confidence in the flesh”. That is the true significance of the rite. The flesh is repudiated. After having begun in the spirit, asked Paul of the Galatians, are you now made perfect by the flesh? To the Colossians the apostle expressed his earnest desire that he might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. This statement *follows* the record of their perfect acceptance in Christ, and is *followed by* the reference to their circumcision in Christ.

1. “In the body of His flesh to present you holy and unblameable” (i. 22).
2. “That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (i. 28).
3. “In Whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the *putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ*” (ii. 11).

So it is that the changed name follows the command to be perfect, and is in turn followed by “My covenant which ye shall keep”. This was to be the token of the “everlasting covenant” already mentioned.

Sarai’s name is now changed to Sarah. The meaning of the two names does not differ much. Sarai means “princely” and Sarah “princess”. The same letter “H” which was added to Abram’s is added to Sarai’s.

There are eight covenants that are made with Abraham, and each is suggestive when we observe its numerical order:--

1. The great nation. “Thee” (personal) seven times (Gen. xii. 1-3).
2. The Seed. Redemption. Altar (Gen. xii. 7).
3. The land. Only Abraham’s in resurrection (Gen. xiii. 14-17).
4. Boundaries. 400 years. 4<sup>th</sup> generation (Gen. xv. 13-21).
5. Grace, the changed name. “H” = 5 in Hebrew. Circumcision and perfection. “Abraham laughed” (Gen. xvii. 1-22).
6. The flesh a failure. “Sarah laughed” (Gen. xviii. 9-15).
7. Isaac, not Ishmael. “Let him laugh” (Gen. xxi. 12).  
AFTER THE OFFERING OF ISAAC.
8. Blessing in resurrection. The oath (Gen. xxii. 15-18).

It may also have been remarked that in chapter xvii. we have a fuller statement of the sevenfold covenant of Gen. xii. This covenant has seven “I wills”, but the promises are fuller. It commences the second set of four covenants. The first four are concerning the great nation, the promised seed, the promised land, and its geographical boundaries. These are covenants made with *Abram*. The second four are covenants made with *Abraham*. They include circumcision as the token, the promise concerning Sarah, the exclusion of Ishmael, and the “better promises” obtained by Abraham, revealed for the first time centuries after in the epistle to the Hebrews. The earthly inheritance is given in xv. 13-21, the heavenly is contained in xxii. 16-18.

Doctrinally we must repudiate the Ishmaels of our failures, but practically we may have to shoulder our burdens and responsibilities to them. Thus the apostle did not instruct a believing husband to put away his wife who may have still remained a pagan. This would have brought the name of the Lord into disgrace. Abraham remembers his responsibility regarding Ishmael. Rightly or wrongly, Abraham was his father, and he pleads for Ishmael before the Lord. The Lord replied:--

“Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. *But my covenant will I establish with Isaac*, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And He left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham” (Gen. xvii. 19-22).

Ishmael should be blessed, but the covenant was in Isaac. Both Ishmael and Isaac were circumcised, yet one was of the flesh, while the other was of promise. Isaac was circumcised on the eighth day—the day of resurrection, whereas Ishmael was circumcised in his thirteenth year, the number of rebellion.

Thus Abraham was instructed, when he set out upon his walk before God, that to be perfect involved the putting off of the body of the flesh. Ishmael cannot inherit the promises of the covenant. All must be of God and not of the flesh. Thus did Abraham learn his first lesson when he was ninety years old and nine. Thus did he laugh the laugh of faith when he believed that a child should be born to one a hundred years old.

The scriptures in setting forth the truth of *perfection* allow no room in connection with it *the flesh*.

## The Dispensations. pp. 143, 144

(These notes, contributed by a reader, should be read in connection with articles of "Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth".)

Readers of THE BEREAN EXPOSITOR and lovers of the Word know the scriptural significance of numbers, but possibly some may not have noticed how the different Dispensations are in accord with the other occurrences in the Word.

The definitions given below are culled from Appendix 10 of that much valued Word, *The Companion Bible*:--

1. *Adam unfallen.*—**One** denotes unity and commencement. First day, Light.
2. *Fall to Flood.*—**Two** denotes difference; if two different persons agree in testimony it is conclusive, otherwise it implies enmity, opposition, division, as was the work of the second day.
3. *Flood to Call of Abram.*—**Three** denotes completeness. The number includes resurrection, for on the third day the earth rose up out of the deep.
4. *Call of Abram to Exodus.*—**Four** denotes creative works and always has reference to the earth and things under the sun.
5. *Exodus to Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.*—**Five** denotes Divine grace. It is God adding His blessing and gifts to the works of His hands, and it is the leading factor in the Tabernacle measurements.
6. *Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to Ministry of our Lord.*—**Six** is the human number. Six (and multiples thereof) is the hall-mark of all connected with man. The great men who have stood out in defiance of God (Goliath, Nebuchadnezzar, and Antichrist), are all emphatically marked by this number.
7. *Our Lord's Ministry and that of those that heard him until Acts xxviii.*—**Seven** denotes spiritual perfection. It is the number or hall-mark of the Holy Spirit's work. He is the Author of God's Word, and seven runs through it as the water-mark in paper.
8. *The Mystery.*—**Eight** denotes resurrection, regeneration, a new beginning. The eighth is a new first. It has to do with the Lord who rose on the eighth or new first day. Together with its multiples it is impressed on all that has to do with the Lord's names, people, and works.
9. *The Day of the Lord to the Millenniums.*—**Nine** denotes finality of judgment: it or its factors is seen in all cases where judgment is the subject.
10. *The Millennium.*—**Ten** denotes ordinal perfection.
11. *The Final Rebellion.*—**Eleven** denotes disorder, disorganization, being one short of the number twelve.
12. *The New Heaven and New Earth.*—**Twelve** denotes governmental perfection. It is the number or factor of all numbers connected with government, or things appertaining thereto in the heavens or on the earth.

## The Epistles to the Hebrews.

### #11. The Inherited Salvation (Heb. i. 14). pp. 20 – 23

Our last article was headed *The Inherited Name, better than Angels*. This one is entitled “The inherited Salvation”, as it too is better than the inheritance of angels, for angels are ministering spirits to these heirs of salvation. Quoting from the previous article we remind ourselves that

“Angels are sons of God by creation, men become sons of God through faith in Christ. Christ in resurrection was declared Son of God by inheritance.”

This argument is equally true in the present case. All who are saved receive salvation by faith, but some of the saved will, in addition, receive salvation by inheritance. Christ suffered and learned obedience by His sufferings, was perfected, and became the Author of aionian salvation to all them that obey Him. Christ is set before the Hebrews as the Author and Perfecter of faith, “Who for the joy set before Him endured a cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.” Those who “inherit” salvation also suffer, endure, run the race set before them, and, like Moses and Abraham, have respect unto the recompense of the reward. To be an heir presupposes sonship: “If children, then heirs”; but before salvation no man is a child of God.

Does the word salvation in Hebrews point to something other than salvation from sin? Let us see. We shall not be at all surprised to find that such a word occurs *seven times*, viz.:--

#### **Soteria (Salvation).**

Inherited salvation (i. 14).  
Neglecting so great salvation (ii. 3).  
The Captain of salvation (ii. 10).  
The Author of aionian salvation (v. 9).  
Things that accompany salvation (vi. 9).  
Without sin unto salvation (ix. 28).  
Unto the salvation of his house (xi. 7).

Passing by for the moment the first reference, let us briefly notice the others.

Heb. ii. 3.—This salvation is called the “so great” salvation, which title indeed, we gladly agree, justly describes the redemption of the sinner. Those who were in danger of neglecting this so great salvation, however, are those who have had its testimony confirmed to them, which hardly applies to unbelievers. Much also depends upon the meaning of the word “neglect”, which must be considered in its place. We hope to show that this salvation does not refer to salvation from sin.

Heb. ii. 10.—The underlying idea in this reference is contained in the words, “bringing many sons to glory”. This is accomplished by One called “The Captain”, who like Joshua *leads on* to the promised possession, but unlike Moses, who *led out* of the land of bondage.

Heb. v. 9.—This passage is almost parallel with ii. 10, but gives fuller detail. It is concerned with obedience, and the perfecting effect of suffering. We believe we shall be able to demonstrate that the *aionian* salvation of this passage, the *so great* salvation of ii. 3, the *inherited* salvation of i. 14, and the “glory” of ii. 10, all point to the one thing.

Heb. vi. 9.—“Things which accompany salvation” certainly link us with our first deliverance from sin; yet remembering the purifying and stimulating character of hope, we cannot exclude future salvation and inherited glory from this passage. One has only to read on in the near context to hear of showing “full assurance of hope unto the end”, of “inheriting the promise”, through “faith and patience”, and of “the hope set before us”. These all have a bearing upon the salvation of verse 9 and influence its interpretation.

Heb. ix. 28.—This passage not only puts salvation into the future and speaks of believers waiting for it, but it also definitely rules out the idea of salvation from sin, that having taken place once for all. This salvation is connected, not with the first but with the second appearing of Christ, and is expressly spoken of as “apart from sin” altogether.

Heb. xi. 7.—The salvation of Noah’s house in the ark is the nearest approach to the salvation of the sinner that these seven references provide, yet the deliverance from the future day of wrath is clearly foreshadowed, Noah himself being already a saved and justified believer, and the record is part of a series illustrating faith as the substance of things hoped for, rather than faith that saves from sin, the “saving of the soul” of Heb. x. 39 notwithstanding.

Whatever the exact meaning of the word salvation may be, as used in this epistle, it is evident that no reference gives a clear *evangelical* statement of the way of salvation. On the other hand, the type of the wilderness journey, its tabernacle, its camp, and the rest that remaineth, its temptations and its perils, is so fully applied in this epistle, that we cannot dismiss them without losing light upon this subject.

The title “Saviour” never occurs in Hebrews. In Acts v. 31 Christ is called both a “Prince and a Saviour”. In Hebrews the title of Prince is retained (ii. 10, xii. 2 Gk.), but the title Saviour is omitted. The contexts of both occurrences speak of suffering in view of glory, rather than suffering to expiate sin. Other epistles speak of Christ as Saviour, this one speaks of Him as Captain and Leader. Other epistles tell of salvation from sin, this one speaks of the salvation that is to be inherited at the second appearing of the Lord.

Coming back to Heb. i. 14 we notice that angels are called ministering spirits to these heirs of salvation. Ministering angels are seen from the days of Abraham onward. One is specially remembered by Jacob (Gen. xlviii. 16). An angel was sent before Israel to lead them on their wilderness journey (Exod. xiv. 19; xxiii. 20, 23). Angels interposed

throughout the chequered history of the Judges. David has dealings with angels (I and II Kings and Psalms); Daniel and Zechariah are instructed by them, and the New Testament commences, continues, and concludes with angelic ministry—with one notable exception. Angels do not, so far as we can discover, minister to the members of the church of the one body, who are in immediate contact with their glorious Head. While the four gospels speak of angels some 50 times, the Acts some 20 times, and the Revelation some 70 times, or 140 times in all, Paul's epistles, omitting Hebrews, contain only 14 references between them. Of this number one only is found in the prison epistles, viz., Col. ii. 18, where the apostle warns against adopting the worship of angels in contrast with "holding the Head". Consequently it is true to say that the ministry of angels is never once referred to in the epistles of the mystery.

The epistle to the Hebrews is written to a different company of believers. They have a different calling than that of the one body, and in this epistle the apostle speaks of angel 13 times. Angels are the "servants" of the spirit world. The church of the one body have as their associates the nobility of heaven, principalities, authorities, thrones and dominions. Angels are the lowest order in that glorious world. They are God's messengers, not the princes of that sphere of bliss. These ministering spirits are "sent forth for service on account of those who are about to inherit salvation".

"About to."—This is an expression frequently used in Scripture. In the Hebrews we find it 10 times. It is often connected with the future kingdom, as may be seen in Heb. ii. 5, "The habitable (world) about to be." vi. 5, "The age about to be." ix. 11, x. 1, "The good things about to be." x. 27, "The judgment about to be.", and xiii. 14, "The city about to be."

The salvation in view in Heb. i. 14 is about to be inherited. It is something future and related to that world which shall be subjected to the Lord Jesus Christ, the age to come, and the city which hath foundations whose maker and builder is God.

## **#12. Confirmed Covenants and their responsibilities. (Heb. ii. 1-4). pp. 52 - 56**

The passage from the second half of verse 2 to verse 14 of chapter i. is a parenthesis, enlarging upon, and explaining by a series of O.T. references, the superiority of the inherited Name of the Son to that of the angels. Chapter ii. reads on from i. 2:--

"God.....hath in these last days spoken to US IN SON.....THEREFORE, we ought to give the more earnest heed....."

It may be of service to repeat the structure given in Volume VIII, page 183:--

## Hebrews i., ii.

- A | i. 1, 2. God once spoke by prophets. Now by His Son.  
B | i. 2-14. The Son. His glories. God and Lord, better than angels.  
A | ii. 1-4. God once spoke by angels. Now by the Lord.  
B | ii. 5-18. The Son. His sufferings. Man and Abraham's seed, lower than angels.

The “therefore” of ii. 1 is *dia touto*, “on this account”, or “for this reason”. We must not look for the prime reason in the preceding verse, which speaks of the ministry of angels, but to the preceding clause which speaks of the superior testimony of the Son (i. 1, 2). “On this account it behoves us to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let slip”. We differ from the A.V. in the rendering of this verse, agreeing more with the R.V. which reads, “drift away *from them*”. *Rotherham* renders the word, “drift away”; J.N.Darby renders it, “we should slip away”. A great deal of controversy has arisen over this word, one set of interpreters taking the passage to mean, “lest we should fall or stumble”, the other taking it to mean, “lest we forget”. The one makes the passage teach that we should give earnest heed lest WE slip away, the other that we should give earnest heed so that we do not let the WORDS slip away. Both sides refer to Prov. iii. 21 to prove their point. J.N.Darby says:--

“Proverbs is a free translation, for the Hebrew is plural ‘let them slip away from thine eyes’, that is, what is spoken of in the end of the verse; but it shows the sense of the word.”

Moses Stuart says:--

“This is the very proverb to which Chrysostom and Theophylact appeal as an illustration of the word in question: but the true sense of this word in Prov. iii. 21 they do not seem to have apprehended. *Pararrheō* here plainly does not mean to *perish, to fall*, but is the antithesis to *tērēson*, keep, attend to, practice, and consequently means, to pass by, to neglect, to transgress.”

Dr. Bullinger in his Lexicon and Concordance says:--

“*Pararrheō*, to flow near, flow by, glide away; here the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aorist passive, carried away, beside, or with, referring, not like the active, to the act of floating away, but to being carried beside, or floating away past anything with the stream (the marginal reference is quite wrong and follows the Vulgate *pereffluamus*).”

The reader may wonder how it can be possible to arrive at a settled understanding where so many learned writers have so differently expressed themselves yet it is possible to perceive truth in both sets of interpretation. It is certain that if earnest heed be not given, we are apt to let the words slip, it is equally scripturally true that, if we do not give earnest heed, we ourselves shall slip. It appears therefore that the true meaning of the passage is a combination of both thoughts; we cannot let slip the words of truth without sliding away ourselves. An extension of the argument comes in chapters iii. and iv.:--

“And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who believed not; let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem *to come short of it*.”

The two sides of the question appear in chapters v., vi. In both the “dull” of hearing or the “slothful” are mentioned (same word in each case). Heb. v. 11,12: “Ye are dull of learning....ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again”; here is the parallel with the A.V. “let *them* slip”. Heb. vi. 12-19: “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises”. These are “anchored”, and this passage parallels the R.V. rendering, “drift away *from them*”. On the whole the grammatical form and the general teaching of the epistle inclines to the second meaning—that the lack of diligence was fraught with the danger of slipping away.

The argument of the verses which follow is to the effect that, if Israel had to give earnest heed to the message sent by prophets or angels lest they should fail of entering into the rest that remained for them, those who have had the word spoken to them, not merely by prophets or even angels, but by the Son Himself, must even more diligently heed the words spoken, for it is impossible, we shall learn, to renew such unto repentance if they should “fall away”—or, in the words of the verse before us, “how shall *we* escape if we neglect so great salvation”.

The apostle leads to this question by reverting to an argument parallel with that of the opening of the first chapter. God spoke in the past by many agencies, now He has spoken in the Son. Here the form of the argument is repeated, the details being altered:--

“For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?”

The apostle does not say “the law”, but “the word”, a term which is wider and embraces the whole of the old covenant. It will be found that the two covenants came with new laws. There can be no difficulty in connection with the law being given by the mediation of angels, even though the Scripture definitely declares that “God spake all these words”. The problem would meet us in Heb. i. 1 where God speaks, yet uses the mouth of a prophet. Stephen, speaking to Israel, said, “ye received the law by the dispensation of angels” (Acts vii. 53). The apostle teaches that the law was “ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator”. The awful accompaniments of the giving of the law at Sinai are presently to be compared with the wonderful miracles that were wrought to confirm the testimony of the Lord and the apostles. The word spoken by angels was “stedfast” (*bebaios*). It is the word used for establishing a promise (Rom. iv. 16); for the hope of the believer which rests upon “an oath for confirmation” (Heb. vi. 16-19); for the establishing of a covenant over the dead body of the appointed victim (Heb. ix. 17); and for the confirmation of the prophetic promise (II Pet. i. 19).

In the verbal form *bebaioō* the word occurs again in Heb. ii. 3, “was confirmed”. This fact helps us to see the force of the word “stedfast” better. Both the old and new covenants have been miraculously confirmed, and that confirmation added to the degree of the guilt on the part of those who broke the terms. This is brought out in Heb. vi., and again from another standpoint in Heb. x. 28, 29. “Every transgression and disobedience”; the word are nearly synonymous, they indicate a transgression

accompanied by stubbornness and rebellion. Let us remember the many examples of those under the old covenant who transgressed or rebelled against the terms of the covenant confirmed by God. Let Moses himself bear witness that his act of transgression caused him to forfeit that land of promise, let all Israel who wandered forty years in the wilderness enforce the same principle, and let Caleb and Joshua also declare that the “recompense of reward” took into account good as well as evil. It is the transgression, however, that is in view for the time being.

“The recompense of reward” (*misthapodosia*), and “the rewarder” (*misthapodotes*) are both peculiar to Hebrews. They indicate the idea of the epistle upon which we have again and again insisted, namely, that Hebrews is parallel with Philippians, which speaks of the prize, and of working out our own salvation. “The recompense of the reward” comes as follows, ii. 2, x. 35, xi. 26, where the two sides, the good and the evil, are illustrated. The parenthetical way in which verse 6 comes in chapter xi. indicates that all those witnesses whose overcoming faith is instanced in that remarkable chapter, believed that God was the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Without suggesting that the following is verbally accurate, it will nevertheless set out the argument of the apostle sufficiently for the general reader:--

#### Hebrews ii. 1-4.

- A | a | Warning, lest let slip.
  - b | Things spoken by angels.
  - c | Confirmed (*bebaios*).
- B | No escape from just recompense.
  - B | How escape from similar recompense?
- A | a | Warning, if neglect so great salvation.
  - b | Spoken by the Lord.
  - c | Confirmed (*bebaioð*) in special manner by God.

The argument is resumed in Heb. xii. 25, 26, after a vast ground has been covered:--

“See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they ESCAPED not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth” (i.e. at Sinai, when the law was given by the disposition of angels).

That there was a tendency on the part of the Jews to think that they would escape is indicated by the question in Rom. ii. 3:--

“And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”

Covenant relationship and privilege notwithstanding, the Jew was in error. There are some believers to-day who so estimate free grace that it may do good to draw attention to these things.

**#13. The so great Salvation (Heb. ii. 1-4).**  
**pp. 85 - 89**

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so GREAT SALVATION?” What is this salvation, which is so great? None would be found to demur at the designation if it thereby indicated the salvation of the sinner by the blood of Christ. How great that is, none can tell: salvation, as used in Hebrews, however, does not carry with it the evangelical meaning (*see* pages 20-23). Shall we allow the Hebrew usage to help us? Granting that the word often means individual salvation as in Rom. i. 16, there are other usages which show that the word has a wider meaning.

Psalm xiv. 7. “Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad.”

The national restoration of Israel is here called their salvation.

Psalm xcvi. 2, 3. “The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen.”

What is this salvation which has been “made known”?

“He hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God.”

Isaiah xi. 11, xii. 1-6. “And it shall come to pass *in that day* that the Lord shall set His right hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people....and in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me, behold God is my salvation.”

Isaiah lii. 9, 10. “The Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem, the Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

The close connection between “salvation” and the restoration of Israel makes comment unnecessary.

Rev. xix. 1. “Hallelujah; Salvation and glory and honour and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments.”

Here the overthrow of Babylon ushers in the full redemption of Israel.

Just as we saw in *The Hope and the Prize* that there was something that was beyond the initial salvation from sin, so those who are under the new covenant have to learn that there is some aspect of salvation which is beyond the testimony of the Scriptures just quoted. The “so great salvation” is something that could be neglected, the salvation of the Psalms and Isaiah referred to above is unrelated to human faith or faithfulness.

Now we know that Abraham while dwelling in tents in the land of promise looked for the city which hath foundations, *but we do not learn that from the O.T.*. There is no hint there of anything of the kind. This special aspect of salvation had its commencement in

being spoken by the Lord. Literally the passage reads, “which having received a commencement to be spoken by Lord”. The idea is that the Lord Jesus was the first One to give shape and expression to this new aspect of salvation. It may be asked why. In the first case, He was born King and came preaching the Kingdom, and until it became manifest that He would be rejected by His people the “so great salvation” was not prominent. When, however, the signs began to multiply, showing that His ministry would end in rejection, then He spoke more openly of the added glory that should be shared by those who in His day of humiliation shared His rejection.

A hint is given in the distinction made between the treasure which having been found in the field was hidden again, and the one pearl (Matt. xiii.). When the Lord “began” to speak of His own death, He also began to speak of the qualifications of those who should attain the “so great salvation”. He speaks of self-denial, of losing one’s soul, and finding it when the Lord comes with His angels (Matt. xvi. 21-28). To the young man the Lord said:--

“If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.....and come follow Me.....he went away sorrowing for he had great possessions.....Peter said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee, what shall we have THEREFORE? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

The parable which comes later in the Gospel, that of the Marriage of the King’s Son, is a warning to those who “neglect so great salvation”—the very word translated “neglect” in Hebrews being here rendered “to make light of” the invitation. The unwise and unready virgins of Matt. xxv. speak again of the folly of neglect, they neglect the word spoken by the Lord, “Watch therefore”, as the others we have seen despised His exhortation to give up now for His sake. The Hebrews on the contrary were commended in that they had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and were urged not to cast away their confidence which had great recompense of reward. Parallel with the “so great salvation” of Hebrews is the “saving of the soul” of Peter. The link is found in Heb. x. 39, where the true rendering is, “believe unto the acquiring of the soul”. Acquiring is the rendering of *peripoiēsis* which occurring but five times in the N.T. will not take long to consult:--

Eph. i. 14. “Unto the redemption of the PURCHASED POSSESSION.”  
I Thess. v. 9. “To OBTAIN salvation.”  
II Thess. ii. 14. “To the OBTAINING of the glory.”  
Heb. x. 39. “Unto the *obtaining or the purchasing* of the soul.”  
I Pet. ii. 9. “A PURCHASED people” (*margin*).

The passage in Heb. x. is parallel with Matt. xvi. 24-27. Peter’s expression, “the saving of the soul”, contains a very different idea from that which is intended in present day gospel preaching. Paul never taught the saving of the soul when writing to the churches, he does when addressing the Hebrews. Peter does when writing to the dispersion. Those to whom Peter addresses his epistle were redeemed (I Pet. i. 18), yet the salvation of their souls was something they could receive as “the end of their faith”.

This salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. Concerning this salvation the prophets spoke and searched what the Spirit testified beforehand, “the sufferings FOR Christ (*see* R.V.) and the glories that should follow....the grace to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (I Pet. i. 5-10). “Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings: that when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (iv. 13). “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto His aionian glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (v. 10).

This aionian glory, this share of the glory of the regeneration, this entry into the marriage feast, is all related to suffering, vigilance, not neglecting—or as it is in the Revelation, overcoming. The aionian glory is similar to the aionian salvation of Heb. v. 8, 9, which is closely connected with obedience and suffering. Those who attain this salvation are the church of the firstborn (Heb. xii. 23). To this salvation the apostle addresses himself here, he brings the wilderness wandering in to illustrate the failure to attain the promise, he exhorts to endurance, he gives a list of overcomers, and cites the Lord Jesus Himself in chapters v. and xii. as an example of the overcomer. It is in view of this and the miraculous testimony that was given that Heb. vi. is written, and the solemn conclusion of Heb. xii. is addressed.

The difficulty that many have regard to Heb. vi. will be solved as we realize the nature of the subject and the character of the confirmation. The miracles which were wrought by the apostles are called the “powers of the age to come”, and to refuse their testimony was fraught with special danger. In this same context comes the nearest hint of the so great salvation in Abraham’s history. Let it be observed what portion of Abraham’s history is brought forward. Romans bases its teaching upon the testimony of Gen. xv. “Abram believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” The whole argument excludes works. James bases his argument upon the twofold testimony of Gen. xv. and xxii. Hebrews goes at once to Gen. xxii. The epistle to the Hebrews does not speak of imputing righteousness without works, its special theme demands such statement as “they wrought righteousness”, and “the righteous shall LIVE by faith”, “he obtained witness that he WAS righteous”, “he became the *heir* of the righteousness which is by faith”. The passage in Gen. xxii. referred to in Heb. vi. goes beyond justification by faith, as James ii. 22 declares, “thou seest how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith *perfected*”. After Abraham had passed the supreme trial of faith the words come:--

“Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying thee, and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise.”

It was here when Abraham had reached this stage of “perfecting”—the master key of “Hebrews”—that it would seem God revealed to him the “so great salvation”, the city which hath foundations.

## #14. The Confirmatory Gifts (Heb. ii. 3, 4). pp. 118 - 122

The great salvation which began to be spoken by the Lord, was as surely *confirmed* as was the first covenant. It will be remembered that the word “stedfast” in verse 2 is but another grammatical form of the word “confirm”. The first covenant was confirmed in many ways, both Moses and those who followed after receiving abundant testimony from God that their ministry was from Him. The second confirmation spoken of is “unto us by them that heard Him”. The nature of this confirmation must now be considered.

First we observe that in giving the special blessing to Abraham, as related in Heb. vi., God “interposed with an oath”. This is spoken of as “an oath of confirmation” (*bebaiōsis*). The confirmation of the Lord’s words by the apostles is further explained in ii. 4: “God also co-attesting both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and distributions of holy spirit, according to His will”. “God hath spoken” (i. 1). Whoever the mouthpiece may have been, responsibility to hear follows. Yet an increased responsibility comes with the fact that God hath spoken unto us in the person of the Son. God’s “co-attesting” must make each miracle something more than a mere “wonder”. As a translation of *sunepimartureō*, Dr. Bullinger’s concordance gives; “to bear conjoint additional decided witness, to bear further or emphatic witness with”.

It may be remembered how repeatedly the apostles are called “witnesses” during the Acts: “ye shall be witnesses unto Me” (Acts i. 8), but notice well what goes before, “but *ye shall receive* power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and *ye shall be* witnesses unto Me”. “Ye shall receive” must come before “Ye shall be”. Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, v. 32, xiii. 31, and xxvi. 16 should be consulted. Notice v. 32, “and we are His witnesses of these things, *and so is also the Holy Ghost*, whom God hath given to them that obey Him”. This is a scriptural exposition of the word “co-attesting”. So also Acts xiv. 3: “Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which *gave testimony* unto the word of His grace, and granted *signs and wonders* to be done by their hands”. So again Acts xv. 8: “And God....bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost”.

Looking at the epistle to the Hebrews we see that God testified to Christ, (1) that He liveth, (2) that He is a Priest for the age after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. vii. 8, 17). The elders were attested, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying over his gifts. Enoch received this testimony that he pleased God; and so it was with Noah, Abraham and the rest, “these all having been attested by means of faith” (Heb. xi. 2, 4, 5, 39). In a special manner God co-attested the word of the Lord through the apostles. The closing verses of Mark’s Gospel seem to refer to Heb. ii. 3, 4:--

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My name shall they cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven,

and sat on the right hand of God, and they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them (co-operating), and CONFIRMING the word with SIGNS following.”

The parallel with Heb. ii. is too obvious to justify any detailed comparison, but a word with regard to the character of these confirmatory miracles may be of service.

- (1) They were “signs following”, not mere prodigies, or marvels, but signs, mighty acts that SIGNified something.
- (2) They were “the powers of the coming age” (Heb. vi.). Into this present evil age of demonic control comes the power of that age when such influences will be cast out. Into this veritable Babel comes the power of that age with its new tongues; in that age the serpent will no longer tempt and destroy; in that age deadly things shall do no hurt; in that age sickness shall flee away.

As an illustration of the miracles being a “sign”, see the healing of the lame man by Peter, and his own application of it to the salvation of the nation (Acts iii., iv.). To the Corinthians, among whom miraculous gifts abounded, the apostle wrote:--

“In everything ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge, even as the testimony (*marturion*) of Christ was confirmed (*bebaioō*) in you, so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall confirm (*bebaioō*) you unto the end” (I Cor. i 5-8).

Here again Heb. ii. 3, 4 is seen, the testimony, the confirmation, the miraculous gifts, all coming together. In II Cor. i. 21 the apostle writes:--

“Now He that *confirms* us with you with a view to Christ, and hath *anointed* us is God.”

Here confirmation and anointing come together, the anointing referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The three words, “signs, wonders and miracles” of Heb. ii. 4 are found written of the Lord’s own personal work.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved (publicly attested) of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you” (Acts ii. 22).

It will be remembered that His ministry was a confirmatory one, “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. xv. 8). So the subsequent signs, wonders and miracles were confirmatory also. Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles (Acts ii. 43), “a notable sign” is what the rulers called the healing of the lame man (Acts iv. 16). This sign of the healing is the Scripture’s own testimony (Acts iv. 22). Other passages are iv. 30, v. 12, vi. 8, viii. 6, 10, and xv. 12. It will be observed that “signs and wonders” usually go together. The “wonder” was indeed a “sign”, not some prodigy to cause men open-mouthed astonishment. Even the terrible things which usher in the day of the Lord will be of similar character, “I will show WONDERS in heaven above, and SIGNS in the earth beneath” (ii. 19). The word rendered “miracle” in Heb. ii. is as often translated simply “power”, e.g., “ye shall receive power” (Acts i. 8), “as though by our own power” (Acts iii. 12, iv. 7, 33, vi. 8, x. 38), the last reference (“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Ghost and with power: Who went about doing

good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him, and we are witnesses of these things”) being a commentary upon the meaning of the anointing already noticed in II Cor., the enduement of the apostles in Acts i. 8, and the close connection between this “power” and the “miracle” which was its outflowing.

The scientific mind defines a miracle as the suspension of the laws of nature at the introduction of a higher law. The Scriptural definition seems rather to be that a miracle was the power of the age to come, brought forward as a pledge and a sign. What will be normal in that age of glory appears abnormal and supernatural in this. Added to the signs, wonders and miracles for this special confirmation are “the distributions of holy spirit”. This is described as a *taste* of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. Those who tasted are described as having become partakers of holy spirit (Heb. vi. 4, 5). Not until the Lord was about to leave His disciples did He say, “Receive ye holy spirit” (John xx. 22). With this read John vii. 39, “this He spake of the spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for holy spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified”. I Cor. xii. 8-11 gives a full comment upon the “distributions of holy spirit”. These gifts, however diverse, are the working of that one and self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. These distributions of holy spirit covered the ministry of apostles, prophets, teachers, as well as miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (I Cor. xii. 28).

Let us notice the explanation of the Scripture as to how the gift of tongues was a sign. In the law it is written:--

“With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear Me, saith the Lord, wherefore tongues are for a sign.”

What the law prophesied is foreshowed in the possession and exercise of the distributions of holy spirit. When the people to whom the signs applied were removed from the scene, the signs went too. It is often stated, but with no Scriptural proof, that the miraculous gifts possessed by the early Church have been lost because of the worldliness and carnality of the Church. The most carnal Church in Scripture is indicated in I Cor. as the most richly endowed with supernatural gifts. I Cor. xiii. 9-12 indicates a dispensational change, associated with the passing of the gifts, and this is the testimony of the whole of the New Testament.

One word in closing seems necessary. The same words that are used of the mighty works of Christ and His apostles are used of the wicked one, “whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs and lying wonders,” the only added word being *lying*. This reveals the awful deception which will be thrust upon the earth in the last days. These miracles constitute the “strong delusion” which shall lead men to believe the lie. The fact that the false prophet will work actual miracles, and the three froglike spirits of demons seen in the Revelation will work miracles, should cause us most carefully to pause before we conclude that the possession of a supernatural power to-day is an evidence of divine approval.

**#15. Crowned with Glory and Honour (Heb. ii. 5-9).**  
**pp. 148 – 155**

We now commence section *B* ii. 5-18. “The Son, Man, Seed of Abraham, Lower than angels.” Here suffering and death are prominent, and the position of the Lord is “for a little lower than angels”. The structure is so manifestly complete, that it will be as well to set it out before considering any further details.

***B* | ii. 5-18.**

- A1 | 5-8-. Not angels.
  - | a | A little lower than angels.
  - b | Crowned with glory and honour.
- B1 | -8. But now we see not yet.
- B1 | 9-. But we see Jesus.
- A1 | -9-. Jesus.
  - | a | A little lower than angels.
  - b | Crowned with glory and honour.
- C | -9, 10. The *archēgon* (captain).
  - | c | It became Him.
  - d | Perfected through sufferings.
- A2 | 11-13. All of one, the sanctified, brethren.
- B2 | 14. Flesh and blood, took part, destroy death.
- B2 | 15, 16. Seed of Abraham, took not angels, deliver fear of death.
- A2 | 17-. Made like to brethren.
  - C | -17, 18. The *arhiereus* (high priest).
    - | c | It behoved Him.
    - d | Suffered being tempted.

“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, *concerning which we speak*”. We have already drawn the reader’s attention to the fact that the miracles of the early church were called “the powers of the coming age”, and it will be seen that the statement quoted above, following immediately upon the reference to the signs and wonders, emphasizes this the more.

A more remote connection which it is important not to miss is that the “so great salvation” is in fact “the world to come”, concerning which, said the apostle, he was speaking. “The world to come” is literally “the habitable (world) about to be”. In the original the word “habitable world” is *oikumenē*. This word has occurred already in Hebrews, being used in i. 6. It is used of the Roman Empire (Luke ii. 1; Acts xxiv. 5). This is in line with secular usage, Polybius and Plutarch using it in this connection. The LXX in a similar manner uses the expression *he oikumenē holē* (“the whole inhabitable”) for the Babylonian Empire (Isa. xiv. 17). Alexander’s Empire is called *he oikumenē* (Ælitan, V.H. iii. 29). This combined testimony makes it appear very probable that the term must not be applied to the whole “world” as we know it, but to that portion which will become the final sphere of Nebuchadnezzar’s sovereignty as pictured in the great

image of Dan. ii. The word is still further limited in its usage in such a passage as Acts xi. 28, for Josephus speaks of a famine in Judea at that time, and not to one of world-wide extent. The “habitable world about to be” is set forth in Dan. ii. as a stone which struck the image on its feet, and ultimately fills the whole earth.

The word is used three times in the Revelation:--

“I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which is about to come on the whole habitable world, to try those who dwell on the earth” (iii. 10).

“Satan, the one who is deceiving the whole habitable world” (xii. 9).

“Which go forth to the kings of the whole habitable world, to gather them together unto the war of that great day of God Almighty” (xvi. 14).

These kings appear to be those which are connected with the Beast, and are kings of the “civilized” part of the earth. Now what do we learn by thus restricting the meaning of the word *oikumenē*? Surely this, that the great salvation, which is connected with overcoming and being made perfect, has to do with the initial phase of the future kingdom, when it will be necessary to rule the nations with a rod of iron (*see* Rev. ii. 26, 27). Parallel also is the blessing of Rev. xx. 4, “they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”. The wonderful change indicated in Isa. xi. is at first limited to Israel’s land:--

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all *my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas.*”

Isa. lxxv., which repeats part of Isa. xi., links the creation of the new heavens and the new earth with a newly-created Jerusalem. Isa. lx. makes a distinction too:--

“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, for behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon THEE, and His glory shall be seen upon THEE, and the Gentiles shall come to THY light, and Kings to the brightness of THY rising.”

What redeemed Israel will be in relation to the other nations, those who partake of the “great salvation” will be to the remnant of Israel. Further teaching concerning this word *oikunmenē* will raise out of chapter iii.

There is, possibly, a glance backward in Heb. ii. 5. If we put a little stress on the “world *to come*” the question will at once arise whether angels ruled over the world in any period of the past? We believe that Satan is called in Scripture “the prince of this world”, “the prince of the power of the air”, and “the god of this age”. There are others also who are called “the world rulers of this darkness” (Eph. vi. 12). Michael the archangel stands for Israel, and angels carry out Divine commissions right through the Scriptures except during the dispensation of the mystery. There is evidence of an inductive character which makes one feel that angels had much to do with this world before man and the creation associated with him. Be this as it may, angels are not the appointed rulers of the world to come:--

“But one in a certain place hath testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

There is a strangeness in the manner of the apostle's reference. Why did he not say, "DAVID, in the eighth Psalm", or "as it is written in the eighth Psalm", or "as it is written in the book of the Psalms", or even "as the Scripture testifieth"? If we turn back to chapter i. we shall find similar vagueness: verse 5 simply says, "for unto which of the angels", etc.; verse 6 and 7 simply have "He saith". Right through these verses, which are composed mainly of quotations, there is not a single reference to chapter, verse, or book. In chapter ii. 12 the only word used is "saying", in verse 13 "and again". At last in chapter iii. 7 we have a reference to Scripture, and the speaker is mentioned *by name*. Quoting from Psa. xcv. the writer says, "wherefore AS THE HOLY GHOST saith". When this same Psalm is quoted again (in iv. 7), then the apostle says, "saying by David". The reason is that by then his special object had been attained. "GOD hath spoken" (i. 1), "the LORD hath spoken" (ii. 3); all other names, such as David and Moses, or Psalms and Law, are but the "sundry times and divers manners". The important thing is that these quotations are from the Word of God.

In the second place, of course, the apostle was writing to those who were very familiar with the Scriptures, and who would not need continual reference to chapter and verse for their guidance. Had he been writing to Gentiles only recently brought to the knowledge of the Word, he would doubtless have followed the mode of reference found in Romans.

"Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst Him with glory and honour and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands, Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet" (ii. 7, 8).

The apostle does not refer to every particular in his quotation, but centers his exposition upon three features. His first item is the subjection of all things under the feet of the Son of man.

- (a) As to its universality.
- (b) As to its fulfillment.

(a) *Its universality*:--

"For in that He put all things in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him" (ii. 8).

How similar this mode of reasoning is to that in I Cor. xv. 27!:-

"But when He saith, all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him."

Its universality in the one case is proved by the word "all" which leaves "nothing" that is not put under Him; its universality in the other case is proved by one obvious exception—God Himself. All, whether principality, or power, heavenly, earthly or subterranean, all must be subjected unto Him.

In I Cor. xv. the "all" includes enemies, which are to be "destroyed". This fact will prevent us from reasoning that since all are to be subject beneath his feet, all must

necessarily be saved. In I Cor. xv. death as the last enemy is to be destroyed; in Heb. ii. the devil, the holder of the power of death, is to be destroyed, so the parallel is completed. Before passing to the second feature of this Psalm the apostle makes another observation upon the subjection of all things:--

“But now we see not yet all things put under Him.”

This constituted a real difficulty. The Messiah had come, but the long promised kingdom had not yet been set up. Peter confesses that the subject was accompanied by difficulties, but he certainly did not endorse the words of the scoffers who said, “Where is the promise of His coming?” The Lord was not slack concerning His promise, but the writings of Paul, in which were things hard to be understood, contained the explanation of this apparent delay, while, so far as the dispensational position of the “Hebrews” is concerned, it was true, “but now we see not yet all things put under Him”. The dispensational view-point of the Mystery put things in a different light. *At the very same time* that the apostle could say Heb. ii. 8, he could personally be rejoicing in Eph. i. 22, 23:--

“And *hath put* all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church which is His Body.”

Universal headship has not yet been taken by the Lord, but headship over all things *to the Church* is His position now. What He will be universally, He is now in mystery. What He will be in heaven and in earth is anticipated now in the super-heavenlies. We however are dealing with Hebrews, not Ephesians, and the point of view there is “we see not”. Not until the seventh angel sounds shall the mystery of God be consummated in the universal sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second feature of Psalm viii. is the reference to man being made a little lower than the angels. Psa. viii. looks back to Adam and forward to Christ. Rom. v. 14 supplies the link:--

“Adam.....who is the figure of Him that was to come.”

and I Cor. xv. 45-47 supplements:--

“The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving Spirit. The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

Psa. viii. looks at the first and second man. Viewing Adam in his frailty and fall the Psalmist says, “What is man that Thou art mindful of him?” Viewing man in the person of the Lord from heaven he sees the crown of glory and honour placed upon One who will never fail or forfeit. The apostle’s eye is not fixed upon frailty and forfeiture, but upon honour and glory—“but we see Jesus”, “consider the apostle and High Priest of our profession” he writes; rather than Moses and Aaron (iii.), “look off unto Jesus”; rather than the cloud of witnesses enumerated in chapter xi., consider the end of the conversation of those who have spoken unto you the word of God—“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and unto the age” (xiii.).

1. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels.
2. We see Jesus, crowned with glory and honour.

Both the A.V. and the R.V. read, “a little lower than the angels”, and place in the margin, “a little while inferior to”, “for a little while lower”. The element of time does not enter into Heb. i. 4. There is shown the superior dignity of the Son in virtue of His inherited name. This influences the interpretation of Heb. ii. He who now is infinitely above angels achieved that glory by humbling Himself, suffering and dying. It is as important to the right understanding of the crown of glory and honour that we see the depth of the Lord’s humiliation, as it is to the right understanding of His excellent glory that we realize His position at the right hand of God. In both cases angels are taken as the standard of comparison, for their position remains unchanged, whereas man fallen in Adam will be exalted in Christ, and so cannot be so easily compared.

The Psalmist does not glory in the exalted position of man. He does not bid us look at his excellency—only just a little lower than angels—he rather considers man’s low estate, saying, as he looks abroad upon the creation, “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?” The humiliation of the Lord was for a purpose:--

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same that through death He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil.....for verily He took not upon Him the nature of angels”  
(ii. 14-16).

The argument is parallel, and is the apostle’s own expansion. This we can readily follow by referring to the structure. In both cases it leads to Christ, either as the *archēgon* or the *archieus*, and in both capacities He is set forth as One who has suffered. Phil. i. 6-13 is a passage to which all readers should prayerfully refer.

With what does the apostle link the words “for the suffering of death”? Does he intend us to understand that the Lord was made a little lower than the angels that He might suffer death? or does He intend us to understand that Christ was crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death? If we read it as meaning that Christ was crowned with glory as a result of His death, we shall have a difficulty in the conclusion of verse 9, “that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man”; He was not exalted to taste death, but was humbled. The grammar of the apostle’s phrase seems to lead to the following as the meaning:--

“But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that so He by the grace of God, might taste death for every man.”

With this agrees Heb. x. 5:--

“Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me.”

While this translation appears to conform to the requirement of grammar, we cannot help feeling how fully the alternative rendering fits the theme of the epistle.

Phil. ii. 8, 9 links the death of the cross with the glorious exaltation, and with the name above every name, which immediately attracts attention to Heb. i. 4. Heb. xii. 2 also links the suffering and cross very definitely with the exaltation at the right hand of the throne of God. The whole driving thought of the epistle is that endurance now is necessary to obtain that aionian glory and that so great salvation. By transposing the order of the words and placing the reference to the glory immediately after the reference to Jesus we may be more *grammatical*, but we have nevertheless taken a liberty with the way in which the apostle by Divine guidance arranged his sentence, and have robbed ourselves of the very ambiguity he intended. Why not leave the words as they are, and allow both the meanings their force?

The Lord did not take hold of angels, He took hold on the seed of Abraham. He was made flesh and received a body that thereby He might suffer the death of the cross. By that very act of humiliation, however, He intended a more excellent name than the angels, beneath whose dignity and nature He had voluntarily stooped, and therefore by reason of the suffering of death we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour.

The remainder of verse 9 we leave for another article.

## **#16. The Tasting of Death, and its relation to the theme of the Epistle (Heb. ii. 9). pp. 180 - 184**

Before we turn our attention to the last clause of verse 9 a further word seems necessary with regard to the *glory and honour* with which the Lord Jesus was crowned. Apropos of this we quote from a note sent to us from Rev. Geo. Parker, of Honan, China:--

“You have not attempted sub-grouping of sevenfold ascription (Rev. v. 12), nor did Roe in 1834. I suggest:--

Power.		
Riches.	\	Solomon.—King.
Wisdom.	/	
Strength.		
Honour.	\	Aaron.—Priest.
Glory.	/	
Blessing.		

The second pair, honour and glory, gives the clue.”

When these kingly and priestly functions are united we have no longer Solomon and Aaron but the King-Priest of the Apocalypse, the Priest after the order of Melchisedec. The crowning with glory and honour (Heb. ii. 9) is the consecration of Christ as the Priest after the order of Melchisedec. “And no man taketh this HONOUR unto himself.....so

also Christ GLORIFIED not Himself” (v. 4, 5). We shall find an allusion to this position in iii. 3: “for this man was counted worthy of more GLORY than Moses, inasmuch as He who hath builded the house hath more HONOUR than the house”. Thus we find Christ superior in honour and glory to both Moses and Aaron, and when we see Him crowned with honour and glory we are indeed considering Him Who is the apostle (Moses) and high priest (Aaron) of our profession.

It will be remembered that immediately following the revelation of the Lord’s approaching sufferings (Matt. xvi.) comes the transfiguration (Matt. xvii.). In order to have “an entrance ministered richly into the aionian kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”, the apostle Peter bids the believers of the dispersion remember the transfiguration:--

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His greatness, for He received from God the Father HONOUR and GLORY” (II Pet. i. 16, 17).

We pointed out in Article No. 13 that the “so great salvation” of which the Lord began to speak commences with His rejection, and is related more closely to the testimony of the second half of Matthew’s gospel than to that of the first. Those disciples who saw the rejection of the King (Matt. xii., xiii.) could say after the transfiguration, “We see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Jesus.....crowned with glory and honour”.

We now turn our attention to the close of verse 9, “that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man”. How are we to understand the expression “taste death”? Is it merely a synonym for death itself? Some say so, but we are afraid of this interpretation of so many expressions as synonyms. We feel that there must be a clear reason why this word is used here, and therefore we turn to the Scriptures for light upon its meaning.

The word is translated in the A.V. “eat” three times, and “taste” twelve times. We shall never plumb the profoundest depths of the Scriptures “unto perfection”, but we shall never find the Scriptures lapsing into the slightest approach to error or slovenly usage of language. That *Homer* may nod is proverbial, that the Scriptures are infallible is one of the first articles of faith. It is also the impression consistently gained by continued searching. We are not at all surprised therefore in the case of such divinely-arranged words to find that the first occurrence of the expression “taste of death” takes us back to the close of Matt. xvi., immediately before the record of the transfiguration (Matt. xvi. 28). Parallel with this are Mark ix. 1 and Luke ix. 27. There is one feature common to all these passages: immediately before the reference is the statement concerning losing the soul for Christ’s sake, and immediately after it comes the transfiguration. Now Peter’s epistles have as their theme present suffering followed by future glory: This is the lesson also of Matt. xvi., xvii.

To John viii. 52 we need not refer, for the Lord said “see death” (verse 51) and we are not certain enough of those children of the devil (verse 44) to follow them here. That to “taste” does not mean to “drink” Matt. xxviii. 34 shows and thus in the figurative

sense also to taste of death need not necessarily mean to die. When the ruler of the feast “tasted” the water that was made wine, he certainly did not drink the whole six pots (John ii. 9)! and when the Lord said “none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper”, it is equivalent to the more modern colloquial phrase, “they shall not have a bit of it”. When Peter became hungry and would have “tasted” he wanted a very little, not a full meal (Acts x. 10). Again, the phrase in Acts xx. 11 does not indicate what we call a meal. The curse under which the enemies of Paul bound themselves was not that they would not eat, but that they would not even taste food, so great was their enmity. Those who during this present evil age experienced in any measure the powers of the age to come are said to have “tasted” of the heavenly gift, and to have “tasted” the good word of God (Heb. vi. 4, 5). They “sampled” these things, but it will be true of them, as of the Queen of Sheba, that “the half has not yet been told”. I Pet. ii. 3, 4 is quite in line with the rest. The new born babes, though feeding on the milk of the word, have but “tasted” that the Lord is gracious. As they grow thereby and feed upon the stronger food, they will realize that blessed truth more. Every passage we have referred to leads us to draw distinctions between tasting and fully eating. Coming back to Matt. xvi. let us notice how this helps us:--

“Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom.”

It is a difficulty with many that these men died before the Lord’s return. Now apart from all other factors in the true explanation, this difficulty is a fallacy. The Lord did not say “shall not die”, but shall not taste of death, *and he refers to what He had just been teaching them:--*

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross* and follow Me, for whosoever will save his soul shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his soul for my sake shall find it.”

This is surely “tasting” death. To take up the cross and to lose one’s soul—this, though not actual death, is tasting death. The disciples however were not permitted to suffer anything for their Lord until they had first of all seen the vision of His glory so closely connected with His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke ix. 31). This word “decease” impressed Peter, for he uses the very same word immediately before he speaks of the transfiguration in his second epistle. This time it was his own decease, but the link is there and visible. That bitter sorrow of soul “even unto death” experienced by the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane reveals the awful character of the taste of death to which Heb. ii. 9 refers, while the words “nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt” link it with Heb. v. 4-10. Who were they that were chosen to be near the Lord in this dread hour? *The very three* who witnessed the foreshadowing of His glory on the mount of transfiguration. When the Lord tasted that bitter cup, He prayed:--

“O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done” (Matt. xxvi. 42).

As we stand upon this holy ground and witness that agony and bloody sweat, we see the Lord Jesus tasting death. How pointed therefore the words are to those who are

exhorted to follow Him in this path of suffering when they are told, “He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted”. Temptation hung over that garden of Gethsemane, as is seen by the Lord’s words to His disciples. “Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.” The garden of Gethsemane is no sentimental idea foisted upon Heb. ii. 9. This is seen by Heb. v. 7:--

“Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared, though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect, He became the author of aionian salvation unto all them that obey Him.”

How fully this agrees with Heb. ii. 9, 10. We have only to read on to verse 10 to complete the parallel:--

“For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

His sufferings therefore in this context are viewed as having an effect upon Himself, which is a thought distinct from that of Christ dying for the ungodly.

One more point we must notice: the words “for every man” are literally “on behalf of all”. There are some who take the word “all” in a universal sense, but we must remember that the word is always limited by the context. Salvation from sin is not in view, suffering in view of glory is the theme, and the word “all” refers here to the “many sons” who are being led along the pathway of the fellowship of His sufferings to the glory that shall be revealed.

We trust that those who have read the articles on *The Hope and the Prize* will remember to notice the many parallels which Hebrews bears with Phil. ii. and iii. While we must not confuse the two sets of teaching, much light will be received if we remember that, although on differing planes, the ways of God with His people are actuated by similar principles, and all find their cause and goal in the same blessed Son of God.

## Lessons for Little Ones.

### #6. Redemption.

pp. 26, 27

We have seen from Rom. v. that to be in the line of Adam involves us in sin, condemnation and death, and that to be in the line of Christ brings us into righteousness and life.

REDEMPTION.—In Romans v. will be noticed the recurrence of the words, “free gift”, “grace”, righteousness”. How are these blessings made ours? Are any righteous in themselves? (*see* Rom. iii. 10). Can any make himself righteous by his own efforts? (*see* iii. 20). How then can this righteousness be ours?

“But now, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.....even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified (accounted righteous) freely (as a gift) by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (iii. 21-24).

Here we see that without works (Rom. iv. 4) and so by *grace, righteousness* is made ours as a free *gift* THROUGH REDEMPTION. What that redemption is the next verse goes on to explain:--

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (a mercy seat) through faith in His blood.”

The Passover (Exod. xii.) will illustrate this: note verse 7, the blood sprinkled; the blood a token or sign; the blood saves (13). Lev. xvii. 11 shows that the “blood is the life”, and so when the Lord Jesus shed His blood He gave His life to pay the price of redemption. Rom. v. 9 speaks of being justified by His blood, Eph. i. 7 says we “have redemption through His blood”, Heb. ix. 14 shows that the blood of Christ cleanses the conscience, I Pet. i. 18, 19 tells us that we were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold, “but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot”, I John i. 7 says, “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin”. Reading on in Rom. iii. 25, 26 we find that by reason of the redemption of the Lord Jesus God declares His righteousness, not merely kindness for the remission of the sins of the past and of the present. We may not therefore that

<b>R</b>	edemption brings emission of sins, and ighteousness.
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How this becomes ours we shall see in our lesson. Read through together the story of the Passover, drawing out the gospel lesson in all its fullness; consider as many types of redemption by blood as the child can appreciate: the book of Leviticus will supply many; do not forget Isa. liii. Learn John x. 1-8.

**#7. Faith.**  
**pp. 47, 48**

We found that the wonderful transfer from Adam to Christ, with the change of condemnation and death for righteousness and life, was “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Lessons Nos. 5 and 6). One thing more must be added to make the lesson complete. The gift of righteousness is said to be “unto all that BELIEVE”. The offering of Christ becomes a mercy-seat “through FAITH in His blood”; and God is called “the Justifier of him that BELIEVETH in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 22-26). As a conclusion, the apostle again makes a clear division between *works* (or the idea of trying to earn salvation), and *faith* (or the idea of receiving a free gift in grace):--

“Where is boasting then? It is excluded (locked out). By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of FAITH. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by FAITH without the deeds of the law” (Rom. iii. 27, 28).

We said just now that “believing” was like “receiving a free gift in grace”. This is the thought in John i. 12:--

“As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

All were by nature sons of Adam; faith gives the authority for this marvelous change. That well-known verse (John iii. 16), shows the exchange again very clearly:--

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Believing makes the change from *perishing* to *life*. Perishing is Adam’s legacy; life is the gift of God.

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Again, the Lord Jesus said:--

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation but is PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE” (John v. 24).

Here again the transfer is connected with “believing”, and this time also with “hearing” the Word. Verse 25 says, “they that hear shall live”.

Go through the Gospel of John, and make a collection of the texts that speak of “believing”. Then note the two ends again, viz., “perish”, “everlasting life”. Note also what is behind “His name”, viz., “Him that sent Me”, etc.

Learn John i. 1-13. Read together Rom. i. 1-18.

**#8. Gospel.**  
**pp. 78 - 80**

We saw in our last lesson that faith receives the gift of God. This is good news to those who are sinners and under condemnation. They cannot work for their salvation; they are not asked so to do any more, for the *law* has given place to the *gospel*, which simply means “God’s good news”.

The same epistle which has told us so clearly about the blessings of the gospel, tells us about the gospel itself. “The gospel of God.....concerning His Son”. The first part of the gospel, or God’s good news, is about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is the Saviour, and to hear of Him and His love and sacrifice is to hear “God’s good news”. The apostle especially points us to the Lord Jesus as the risen One, here “declared to be the Son of God with power....by the resurrection” (Rom. i. 1-4). So full was this “good news” concerning the One who died and rose again, that Paul said that he was willing to preach it to all sorts and conditions of men. Some may have been better educated than others, some may have had more civilized conditions than others, but all were in the line of Adam, and so were “perishing”, and had not “passed from death unto life”, for they had not believed the gospel. This “good news” of God was powerful in its effect. It came with the power of God, and “they that hear shall live”. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”.

The gospel is divided into two parts. The first half has to do with God, the second half with us. We have already looked at John iii. 16; let us look at it again so that this lesson may be impressed upon us.

Write down the capital letters G.O.S.P.E.L., but place them the one under the other as shewn below. We will call the first three God’s half of the gospel, and the second three our half. Now we will start reading John iii. 16 and when we come to a word that begins with either of these six letters we will put it down so:--

<b>GOD</b>	/	<b>GOD</b> <i>so loved the world that He gave His</i>
	{	<b>ONLY</b> <i>begotten</i>
	\	<b>SON</b> , <i>that whosoever believeth in Him should not</i>
<b>US</b>	/	<b>PERISH</b> , <i>but have</i>
	{	<b>EVERLASTING</b>
	\	<b>LIFE</b> .

The first half of the gospel starts with God and tells of His great love to a world of sinners; a love so great that He gave His only begotten Son. The second half shows that

by simply believing in the Son of God, the believer is taken out of the line of death, and put into line of life.

Learn Rom. i. 16-18. Read John iii. 14-21. Collect the various sets of “God’s good news”, e.g., “The gospel of the kingdom”, “The gospel of the grace of God”. Note any peculiarities.

Emphasize, as much as may be necessary, that the gospel begins with God as concerning His Son, and is preached as a completed message to us.

## **#9. The Glory of God.** **pp. 95, 96**

We have been looking at a few of the subjects connected with God’s great purpose in man’s salvation, and we shall find that the title of our lesson this month is very comprehensive: we shall limit our study at the first to the Epistle to the Romans.

MAN’S FAILURE.—“When they knew God, they *glorified* Him not as God, neither were thankful.....and changed the *glory* of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man” (i. 21-23). This section of Romans (i. 19 - ii. 1) is a black page of human history, it shows that although God, by means of the creation, on every hand manifested “that which may be known of God”, man turned his back on the *Creator* and worshipped the *creature* (25); such was the state of the Gentile world when Paul wrote this epistle. In chapter ii. 17-29 the apostle turns to the Jew, and shows that even though the Jew had “the oracles of God” (iii. 2), which taught them so much more fully than the works of creation could, yet of them the apostle had to say, “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you” (ii. 29). So then both Jew and Gentile have failed. This brings us to the apostle’s summary given in Rom. iii. 23.

JEW AND GENTILE.—“There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the *glory of God*.”

This passage (iii. 21 – v. 11) sets aside the possibility of salvation for Gentile or for Jew by his own efforts under law, and reveals the way of salvation to be by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter v. opens with the conclusion to which this blessed truth leads, peace with God, access into grace, rejoicing in hope of the *glory of God* based upon the fact of being justified.

THE BELIEVER’S HOPE.—What fallen man, whether Jew or Gentile, failed to reach the believer may now look forward to. As an unsaved sinner he had “come short of the glory of God”, but as a justified believer he may “rejoice in hope of the *glory of God*”. If there is “no difference” with regard to their salvation (“for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” x. 12, 13), this brings us to the next quotation, “wherefore receive ye one

another, as Christ also received US to the glory of God” (xv. 7). This is connected with verse 6, “with *one* mind and *one* mouth glorify God”.

Chapters xiv. - xvi. 7 are occupied with the practical application of “no difference”. The chapter opens with the words, “him that is weak in the faith RECEIVE YE”: even though some have scruples about certain ceremonial observances, *receive them*, for the strong and the weak differ nothing in this respect—that they were originally, whether Jew or Gentile, coming short of the glory of God. In chapter xv. 1-7 the apostle is seeking to prevent the Jewish believer and the Gentile believer from making a “difference” between each other. Christ had received them both, and had saved them both; let them now with *one* mind and *one* mouth glorify God.

The universality of sin, the free grace of salvation, and the lowly spirit of the redeemed, can be made clear from these passages. Rom. x. 1-13 may be learned, and other references to the “glory of God” in the Scriptures collected, and their contexts noted.

*“Do all to the glory of God.”*

### **#10. New Life (John iii. 1-13). pp. 159, 160**

It will be necessary, as the little learner grows in grace and in years, to draw attention to the rightly-divided Word, and some of the items of John iii. will then be seen to apply primarily to others than the church of the one body. There are some doctrines that are true for all time, whether to Jew, Gentile, or church of God, and one of them is the supreme necessity of new life. If every Christian, of whatever denomination, really grasped the simple fact that the church is LIVING and the world is DEAD, the awful mixture and dangerous drift to-day could not be tolerated.

In John iii. 1-13 we read how a ruler of the Jews came to the Lord Jesus and began to speak concerning the Lord, viz., (1) being a teacher, (2) being sent from God, (3) being attested by miracles, and (4) being one of whom it could be said “God was with Him”. Each one of these four statements is perfectly true, yet neither was the truth of Nicodemus at the time. The Lord’s answer shows us that Nicodemus was without life. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” The word “born” is better rendered “begotten”, and “again” is better rendered “from above”. In the spiritual sense Nicodemus was without life, sight or father; all three were his upon re-birth. We must remember that this re-birth does not mean starting all over again as a little baby and growing up all over again, this time avoiding the errors of the previous life. No, it is a new kind of life that is here given. This will be seen first by the Lord’s own words to Nicodemus, where He corrects the idea of making a new start: “That which *hath been* born of the flesh *is* flesh”. Notice the words “hath been”, “is”. There is never any

possibility of change. That which hath been born of the flesh never changes into spirit, “that which *hath been* born of the spirit is spirit”. We have a saying, “like father, like son”. The flesh can never produce anything but that which is fleshly, and the mind of the flesh is enmity with God, “it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*: so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 7, 8). This new life is connected with the Word (I Pet. i. 23).

It is spoken of as a new creature in II Cor. v. 17.

It is connected with the death of Christ in John iii. 14.

It is also connected with His resurrection in Rom. vi. 4.

It is life unto God (Rom. vi. 10).

How do we receive this blessing? There are two verses in John iii. which use the word “must”, which will point the way: “ye *must* be born again”, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so *must* the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life”.

A passage to learn might be I John v. 1-13; such passages as II Cor. v. 14-21, Rom. vi., Ezek. xxxvii., might be read with the child.

Do all that you can to make it clear that, as in the case of Nicodemus, life must come before recognition of the Lord as a teacher sent from God, or as a pattern for us to follow.

## **#11. Three tests for the true gospel (Rom. i.). pp. 189 - 191**

The word *gospel*, as you probably know, is “a good message”, or “good tidings”. To believe the gospel means salvation, life and peace (find Scripture to substantiate this); to reject the gospel means death; it is important therefore that the “good tidings” we believe should be really “good”, and really “true”.

The apostle Paul speaks of the possibility that some would preach “another gospel”, and even preach “another Jesus” (find passages—this is intended to teach in the use and appreciation of the Concordance). We believe the opening verses of the epistle to the Romans will provide us with three tests which the true gospel will stand, but which a false gospel will not endure.

1. THE TRUE GOSPEL IS “THE GOSPEL OF GOD” (Rom. i. 1).—God is the author, the One who planned it, the One who provided all things necessary for its success. The true gospel always places God first, the false gospel will place man, his works, his prayers, his desires in a prominent position. The true gospel tells us that GOD so loved the world, that this love is seen by the fact that GOD spared not His only Son. The righteousness revealed in the gospel (Rom. i. 17) is the righteousness of GOD, not of

man, the power of the gospel is the power of GOD, not of meetings or promises or prayers: many other items of a similar character should be traced out under this heading.

2. THE TRUE GOSPEL IS IN HARMONY WITH GOD'S WORD.—“Which He had promised afore by His prophets in the HOLY SCRIPTURES” (Rom. i. 2). In Eph. i. the “gospel of salvation” is called the “word of truth”; in I Pet. i. 25 we read “the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and this is the word which by the GOSPEL is preached unto you”; from a child Timothy knew the “holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. iii. 15); “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. x. 17). Further testimony under this head should be collected.

While it is of the first importance to know that the gospel preached is the gospel of GOD, it is surely of the next moment to know that there is an infallible test for this—does it agree with GOD'S WORD? A book recently published by a D.D. says, speaking of natural man:--

“Deep, hidden, silent, yet unceasing, that river of goodness flows on eternally in the heart of man.”

Test this statement by reading Rom. iii. and let the child come to a conclusion as to whether this is a part of the gospel of God, or whether it is “another gospel”.

3. THE GOSPEL OF GOD IS CONCERNING HIS SON (Rom. i. 3, 4).—“The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus” (Rev. xix. 10). As the body without the spirit is dead, so would be the Bible without Christ, and so must be the gospel. The true gospel preaches Christ. Philip in Acts (find the passage) is said in two brief narratives to have preached *Christ*, and from the prophet Isaiah to have preached *Jesus*. A closer examination of Rom. i. 3, 4 will show that the preaching of Christ, if it is to constitute a complete gospel, will be concerned with:--

- (1) Christ as Son of man according to the flesh, and
- (2) Christ as “Son of God with power” according to the spirit, and this in RESURRECTION.

To preach “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by mighty works” is only a partial gospel, and really no gospel at all. To preach that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” is but a portion, a foundation, but not a liberating, saving gospel. We must include Christ RISEN. This gives us a full gospel, this provides the power, the life, the hope.

Search these things out, remember the three tests:--GOD, HIS WORD, HIS SON. Learn Rom. i. 1-3. Read the sermons recorded in the Acts.

# The Miracles.

## #1. Introduction. pp. 9 - 11

In earlier numbers of *The Berean Expositor* we had a series of articles dealing with THE PARABLES of Matthew, and while they touched upon Scriptures which were familiar to *all* readers, some aspects of their teaching, particularly their dispensational aspect, were set out and proved, we believe, of help to those who were just beginning to become acquainted with the right division of the Word.

The present series on THE MIRACLES is intended as a supplement to *The Parables*, for both parable and miracle formed a part of one definite witness. While these studies are intended to be somewhat elementary in character, we believe that the most advanced student will not fail to find that study profitable which has as its central figure the Lord of glory, acting as the sent One of God on earth.

It may be as well here if we notice the scriptural words and expressions used for miracles in the New Testament:--

DUNAMIS.—An act of power. The English dynamo, dynamite and dynamics have power as their dominant note.

SEMEION.—A sign. Used chiefly by John.

TERAS.—A wonder, a prodigy, something which strikes terror. John iv. 48 and Acts ii. 22 are the only references to Christ, the remaining fourteen occurrences are used of false christs, the Apostles, and Moses.

ERGON.—A work. The miracles are spoken of as the *work* of God, good *works*, and *works* which none other man did.

EUDOXIA.—Glorious things (Luke xiii. 17).

PARADOXIA.—Strange things (Luke v. 26).

THAUMASIA.—Wonderful things (Matt. xxi. 15).

Many of the miracles of Christ were miracles of healing. Never did He work a miracle of judgment upon a son of man. The withered fig-tree and the destruction of the herd of swine are the nearest approaches to miracles of judgment, but in neither case did they touch a human being. On the contrary, the blind receive their sight, the dumb speak, the deaf hear, lepers are cleansed, and infirmities are cured. Even the dead are brought back to life again, thousands are fed with a few loaves and fishes, and the marriage at Cana is graced by His miraculous provision. The winds and waves obey the voice of the Lord, the fish of the sea yield themselves to the net, or to pay the tribute at His command; demons and evil spirits are cast out, and the possessed set free. On two occasions the Lord passed through a crowd unseen.

The first record of miracles in the gospels is that of Matt. iv. 23, 24:--

“And Jesus went about all Galilee,  
TEACHING in their synagogues, and  
PREACHING the gospel of the kingdom, and  
HEALING all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, and His  
fame went throughout Syria, and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken  
with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with demons, and  
those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy;  
AND HE HEALED THEM.”

The result of these mighty works was that:--

“there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and  
from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”

A glance at the map shows that thus early in the Lord's ministry His mighty works were known throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is important to observe the setting in which these miracles were wrought. The miracles were not mere exhibitions of power, neither were they performed to strike terror into the observers, for they were all of one character, viz., miracles of healing, and attracted followers from all parts of the country. The miracles formed a supplement to TEACHING and PREACHING. The last reference to miracles in the Gospel narratives says the same thing, “and they went forth and PREACHED everywhere, the Lord WORKING with them, and confirming the WORD with signs following” (Mark xvi. 20). Again, in Matt. x., we find the same connection, “As ye go, PREACH, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons”. Yet again the necessary association of preaching and miracles is implied in Matt. xi., “He departed thence to TEACH and to PREACH in their cities. Now when John had heard in prison the WORKS of Christ”. The object (or at least a prominent object) with which the miracles were wrought is given in Matt. xi. 20, “then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, *because they repented not*”. The close connection between the miracles and the testimony is also indicated in Matt. xiii. 58, “He did not many mighty works there *because of their unbelief*”. Matt. ix. 35 presents a practical repetition of Matt. iv. 23, as the reader can observe, and should be read in connection with the commission of Matt. x.

One of the characteristic accompaniments of the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom was the *presence* of miracles. One of the characteristic features of the preaching of the mystery is the *absence* of miracles. We might notice the extent of the miraculous healing given in Matt. iv. 23, 24, “healing *all manner* of sickness and *all manner* of disease”; “all sick people that were taken with *divers* diseases, and torments, and those which were possessed with *demons*, and those who were *lunatick*, and those who had the *palsy*, and He healed them ALL”. The details are given more fully as the narrative advances, and when we see the complete list of the mighty works that are recorded in the Gospels we shall begin to realize what a confirmation is given to His ministry; and when we add to that the testimony of John xxi. 25, “there are also many other things which Jesus DID, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written”, the confirmation of His Messiahship must have been overwhelming. Yet they crucified Him! Yet they repented not! What a testimony then to the nature of the human heart.

**#2. The Leper, the Centurion's Servant,  
and Peter's Wife's Mother (Matt. viii. 1 - 15).  
pp. 42 - 46**

After the record of Matt. iv. 23, 24, which we considered on page 9, the Lord ascended a mountain and *taught*. Teaching begins the chapter and teaching is the last thing spoken of in Matt. vii. 28, 29, viz., "sayings", "doctrine (or teaching)", and "taught as one having authority". Mighty words on the mountain are immediately followed by mighty works in the valley, "And when He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him, and behold there came a leper". The three miracles that are recorded in Matt. viii. 1-15 are suggestive of much teaching.

The Leper. . . . .	Israel.
The Lord touched him.	
The Centurion's Servant. . . . .	The Gentile.
Healing at a distance.	
His faith compared with that of Israel.	
Peter's Wife's Mother. . . . .	A Woman.
The Lord touched her.	

The Pharisee in his prayer thanked God that he was not born (1) a Gentile, (2) a slave, or (3) a woman, which position of "splendid isolation" is gloriously done away "in Christ" for Gal. iii. 28 shows that there is

(1). Neither Jew nor Greek.	The Gentile.
(2). Neither bond nor free.	The Slave.
(3). Neither male nor female.	The Woman.

Here in these three opening miracles the Lord breaks through many traditional barriers; He *touched a leper!* He healed a *Gentile!* He healed a *woman!* There is a dispensational lesson here which the reader should observe, as well as a moral one. Both the leper and the woman were healed by personal contact; the Gentile, however, was healed at a distance. This peculiarity comes out again in Matt. xv. 21-28; in both cases, too, reference is made to the *great* faith of the Gentile.

Going back again to the first of these miracles, let us see for what the leper prayed, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me CLEAN". The response equally insists upon the same thought, "immediately his leprosy was CLEANSED". The command that followed still keeps cleansing uppermost, "show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them".

Lev. xiv. contains the intensely instructive "law of the leper in the day of his cleansing". Christ's dying and rising again is clearly set forth; the cleansed leper is

atoned for by the blood, and re-consecrated by the oil. Here in the leper may be seen Israel's condition before God, "no soundness, but wounds, bruises and putrifying sores". The leper's condition cut him off from worship and service, rendering him quite unfit for any act of ministry in any shape or form; such was Israel—Israel that was destined to be a kingdom of Priests, Israel of whom the Gentile will yet say, "They are the ministers unto our God"; Israel - a leper.

The two questions that appear in this miracle are those concerning the Lord's power and will. Of the Lord's power the leper had no doubt, "If thou *wilt*, thou *canst*". The Lord alone could decide the question of willingness, and He did so, saying, "I will, be thou clean". Think for a moment of a mere man, confronted by the awful plague of leprosy (incurable still in this day of medical knowledge), daring to say, "I *will*". The One before whose will leprosy flees away at a word, who can say, "Be thou clean", is the same One who uttered the words recorded in Gen. i., "Let there be light, and there was light". The miracle is full of prophetic hope for the uncleansed nation. He who was and is their Messiah is both ABLE ("thou canst"), and WILLING ("I will"), and in God's good time the leper will be cleansed and receive the anointing oil of re-consecration. After Israel's cleansing will follow that of the Gentiles; this is the consistent theme of prophecy, type and doctrine, e.g., Gal. iii. 12-14:--

"Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law. . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on *the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ."

Acts iii. 25, 26, "Saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall *all kindreds* of the earth be blessed. Unto *you* first, God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

The cleansing of the leper by personal touch is followed by the healing of the centurion's servant by a word spoken at a distance. The Lord is no sooner acquainted with the servant's condition, than the gracious willingness is again made manifest. Before the request is actually made the Lord said, "I will come and heal him"; then follows an exhibition of faith so great that it is written of the Lord that He *marveled*. On only one other occasion is it recorded that the Lord "marveled", but then it was at the "unbelief" of those who were of His own country, and kin and house (Mark vi. 6).

The words of the centurion reveal how clearly he recognized the Lord as the SENT ONE. All who see Him thus will be brought to the same estimate of themselves, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof". Then come the words of faith that cause the Lord to marvel, "but speak *the words only*, and my servant shall be healed". What a contrast with another military Gentile—Naaman, who said, "behold, I thought he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and move his hand up and down over the place".

Great faith can dispense with all means and accessories, and can rely on "the word only". It was faith indeed on the leper's part to say to the Lord, "if thou wilt, thou canst", but it was greater faith for the centurion to dare to decline the personal visit of the Lord and rest confidently in His spoken word. We suggest that he recognized Christ as the Sent One, because of his added explanation. He said more than the A.V. records; not merely did he say, "for I am a man under authority", but he said, "for I ALSO am a man

under authority". The fact that he was under authority gave authority to his words; he said to a soldier, "Go, and he goeth", and the authority under which he himself was placed gave, in its turn, all the weight to his commands. So with the Lord, He spoke not His own words, but the Father's; the works He did He declared were not His, but the Father's that sent Him. The whole of John's Gospel rings with the fact that Christ was the Sent One. The healing of the centurion's servant was John v. 24 in tableau,

"He that heareth My word ('speak the word only'), and believeth on Him that sent Me ('for I *also* am a man under authority'), hath everlasting life."

The words of Christ that follow show that the miracle was connected, in some way at least, with teaching:--

"I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The centurion's faith was real and strong, for the Lord said:--

"Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, and his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

The parallel record in Luke vii. 1-10 should be read. *The Companion Bible* considers this a second miracle of healing, suggesting that the Lord had blessed the centurion before (Matt. viii. 12, 13), i.e., before the calling of the twelve in Matt. x. 1, etc. The second healing of the centurion's *bondman* took place *after* the calling of the twelve (vi. 13-16). It must be remembered that Matthew selects his items with a view to the object of his gospel, and nowhere claims that historical order is maintained. Luke, however, does claim that he writes "in order", and we take Luke's record of any incident to be the true historical order of its happening. Many have found a "discrepancy" in the fact that whereas Matt. v.-vii. was evidently spoken on a mountain, Luke vi. 17 says that a body of teaching of exactly the same character was spoken "in the plain". "There", says the critic, "the narrative is contradictory, one says a mountain, the other a plain". Others, to avoid the difficulty, say (and with truth), that the Lord could have repeated His teaching again elsewhere. The whole controversy is dispelled by looking at the original, and using simple common sense. First as to the mountain, Matt. v. 1 says:--

"And seeing the multitude, He went up into a mountain, and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him."

Luke vi. 12 says:--

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God and when it was day He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom He also named apostles."

This passage supplements Matthew's record. Matthew evidently had no reason to say why the Lord went up the mountain, except that it was because of the multitude. The multitudes which followed Him were from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and

beyond Jordan, according to Matthew; they were from all Judea, Jerusalem, the sea, and coast of Tyre and Sidon according to Luke. Both records are true, each gives his own account which does not contradict, but complements the other.

Now as to the plain. The actual words are *este epi topou pedinou*, which rendered literally are, “He on a level place”. These words are only another way of saying, “and when He was set”; no one could address a company of people upon the oblique slopes of a mountain side, but coming down a little way until He reached “a level place” such as is often to be found at any height, He could then address them comfortably. The contradiction therefore vanishes, as does the need for two separate occasions when the actual facts are considered. Both Matthew and Luke record the entrance of the Lord, after this “Sermon on the Mount”, into Capernaum. Matthew adds the miracle of the leper, and both record the miracle of the centurion’s servant. What Matthew speaks of as being simply the words of the centurion without mediators, Luke explains in fuller detail. The reason why the centurion spoke of his unworthiness appears in Luke’s account, because there it is recorded that the elders of the Jews had said that he was worthy for whom He should do this.

In verse 3 of Luke vii. the word “sent” is *apostellō* = sent away, the sender remaining behind. In verse 6 it is *pempō* = to send with. The word “saying” (*legon*) indicates that the centurion is personally present and speaking to the Lord. It seems more reasonable that we should have the variations of one event, than that on two separate occasions the Lord utter a similar lengthy address, then enter Capernaum, then be asked to heal the centurion’s servant, be answered in exactly the same way, and marvel for the second time at the great faith evidenced. Then as to the calling of the twelve, Luke vi. 13-16 positively states that after that night of prayer the Lord chose the twelve, whereas Matt. x. 1 says that He called unto Him the twelve disciples without stating when He had chosen them. The only reason why these two passages should have been confounded, is the fact that the names of the twelve are given at length.

The healing of Peter’s wife’s mother could easily be misunderstood in the same way. In reading Matthew’s account we should naturally assume that the miracle took place after the healing of the centurion’s servant, but both Mark and Luke place it considerably earlier (*cf.* Mark i. 29 and Luke iv. 38). The fact that Peter’s house was in Capernaum (Luke iv. 31-38) links this miracle with the others that were associated with Capernaum, and Matthew, without pretending to keep the historical order, has grouped them together. The Lord again *touched* the object of His compassion, and this time the restored one arose and ministered unto Him.

So will Israel in the day of her healing, and so may we since He put forth His grace to us.

### #3. The Twelve Miracles that precede Rejection (Matt. viii. - xii.). pp. 74 - 78

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 for 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, “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 that 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 and 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?

In 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 shall reign not only in the world of sense, but also of spirit, all things in heaven and earth, yea and under the earth, shall 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.

#### **#4. The Third Group. The Culmination of Israel’s Rejection (Matt. ix.). pp. 105 - 109**

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 this 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.

## **#5. The Miracles of the Rejection (Matt. xiii. - xxi.). pp. 139 - 142**

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).

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". As a result of the disobedience of the blind men who were healed to the Lord's injunction, 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 shewing 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., 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 | 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 | 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 seems 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.

## **#6. Two Miracles of Dispensational Importance (Matt. xv. 21 – 28, and xxi. 19).**

### **The Syrophenician Woman (Matt. xv. 21 – 28). pp. 173 - 175**

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 a woman 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 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?

**The Barren Fig Tree (Matt. xxi. 19).  
pp. 175, 176**

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.

## Studies in the Epistles of the Mystery.

### #36. The Grace-by-Faith-Salvation (Eph. ii. 8, 9). pp. 17 - 20

Having carried us on into the ages to come, and given us a glimpse of what the *exceeding* riches of grace will bring, the apostle returns to the present to speak of the salvation which is now in operation. Salvation is of grace, and as we begin to understand something of its fulness, we shall begin to realize the unspeakable glory that lies ahead, wherein *exceeding riches* of grace may be displayed.

While salvation *from* sin and death and wrath is most prominent in our eyes owing to their immediate presence, salvation *to* the glory yet to be is in fact the greater. The salvation from sin is indeed the foundation without which the glorious building could never be erected, and for the moment this will occupy our attention.

The first thing to notice is the emphasis upon grace, and the resulting exclusion of works—"for by grace are ye saved". Grace is all of God, it is utterly incompatible with meritorious works:--

"And if by grace then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace, but if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Rom. xi. 6).

"For by grace are ye saved. . . . not of works" (Eph. ii. 8, 9).

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done. . . . being justified by His grace" (Titus iii. 7).

"Who hath saved us, . . . . not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace" (II Tim. i. 9).

"By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. . . . being justified freely by His grace" (Rom. iii. 20, 24).

Scripture presents us with two methods of salvation, salvation by our own works, and salvation by God's grace. It knows no other. The blending of works and grace as a means of salvation is an abomination, it is the "Linsey-wolsey garment" of one of Hart's quaint, yet forcible hymns. The robe of our own weaving must be either a white robe of righteousness, or filthy rags—there will be no patches seen in heaven.

Grace is linked to faith, just as law is linked to works. This salvation which is by grace is through faith. God who planned *salvation* by grace planned the gospel of *grace*. A gospel is good tidings, and tidings have to be heard and believed before anything further can be done. Faith is by no means a modified work, it is rather an acceptance of a work done. Let us not miss the emphasis upon faith because of our inability to define it satisfactorily: salvation by grace becomes our salvation, through faith; a man who is an unbeliever is at the same time unsaved.

Justification is free and by grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that redemption of Christ is spoken of as a propitiation—a propitiation through faith in His blood (Rom. iii. 24, 25). The redemption becomes mine through faith. The Scripture

carefully distinguishes between work and faith in this same chapter—“where is boasting then? it is excluded, by what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith”. This argument is very parallel with that of Eph. ii. 9, “not of works lest any man should boast”. All ground of boasting is removed when we complete the sentence of Eph. ii. by the words: “it is the gift of God”. If we should be tempted to look upon faith as in any sense a work of merit, these words will bring us sharply to order. Some are caused to stumble by these words, some make a kind of fatalism of them. Does this passage teach that faith is the gift of God, does it teach that no man can believe the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, unless God in sovereign grace gives to that one faith? The word rendered “that” does not agree with the word faith. Rotherham gives, “and this [hath come to pass] not from you”. If we consider the word, “salvation by grace through faith”, as a whole, we shall then better realize the meaning, “for by grace are ye saved through faith, and this grace-by-faith-salvation is not of yourselves—it is the gift of God”. God is the author and donor of this wondrous gift, it is the gift of God. He singles it out by the word He uses. Never in any epistle to the church or to its ministers does Paul use the word again. This salvation is THE GIFT of God; what do you think of it, beloved reader?

To understand the abyss of sin, the power of the dominion of sin and death, to realize the grasp of corruption, to ponder the vanity of life which ends in the grave, to know only too well the utter inability of the flesh to accomplish justification by works is to realize something of the sweetness, the blessedness of the word *salvation*. It is the exchange of the horrible pit and the miry clay for solid rock. This puts a song, a new song, into our mouths; not praises unto ourselves or our systems, but “to the praise of His glory”. Had this salvation cost us our all, it would then be beyond all estimation; what shall we say when we consider that the salvation which rid us of our sins, struck off our fetters, robbed death of its sting and the grave of its victory, which lifted us verily from the dunghill and seated us with princes that this salvation is FREE, it is the *gift* of God? He has done all, we simply are the unworthy recipients. That is salvation by *grace*, that is salvation through *faith*, that is a salvation certainly not of ourselves, that is a gift worthy of the God of all grace. God will have no boasters before Him, except those who boast in Christ.

“We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 3).

As in Eph. ii., it is Christ or self—one or the other. God has purposely arranged that the preaching of the gospel, which seems “foolish” to the flesh, shall rob the flesh of any ground of boasting, “that no flesh should boast in His presence”. Salvation and all its outgoings are of Christ, and not of self; the presence of a little particle *te* in I Cor. i. 30 emphasizes this, and the verse may be truly rendered:--

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God became to us wisdom, and righteousness *as well as* sanctification and redemption.”

Not one part, but all parts, of the plan of redemption are in Christ Jesus, and this with an object, “in order that, according as it hath been written, he that boasteth, let him boast IN THE LORD”. In contrast to those who wanted to make a “fair show in the flesh”, and who desired to “boast in the flesh”, comes the glorious renunciation of the apostle Paul:--

“But it is not for me to boast, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Gal. vi. 12-14).

This grace-by-faith-salvation is the gift of God. What manner of persons ought we to be, who have been so saved and so blessed! To God be the glory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **#37. Not of Works. . . Unto Good Works (Eph. ii. 9, 10). pp. 49 - 52**

We saw in our last paper the clear distinction which the Scriptures draw between grace and works, and realized that there could be no possible amalgamation of the two where salvation is concerned. One would think, however, from the attitude of some who have grasped the teaching of the Word concerning grace, that the Lord Himself had a repugnance to good works, and that anyone daring to speak of good works was to be reckoned as unsound, if not unsaved. We have brought together in our heading that which God has joined together in His purpose of redemption. Salvation is indeed not *out of* works, but nevertheless it is *unto* good works. Let us allow the scriptural emphasis to have its way with us.

Take for a commencement the emphatic words of Titus iii. 5, “NOT by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us”. Yet observe in the near context the equal emphasis placed upon works for those who are saved. “This is a faithful saying” (a phrase which is used in these pastoral epistles to mark out a passage of special importance), “and these things I will that thou affirm constantly (J.N.D. translates “insist strenuously”), that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain GOOD WORKS” (Titus iii. 8). Here we have a close parallel to Eph. ii. 9, 10. While Titus iii. 5 rules out works as a means of procuring our salvation, there is no other epistle which gives “good works” a more prominent place. Look at i. 16, “They profess that they know God, but in *works* they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every *good work* reprobate.” This verse shows the place of good works in any profession of the knowledge of God. Notice ii. 1, 7, 8:--

“SPEAK thou the things which become doctrine. . . . in all things showing thyself a pattern of GOOD WORKS. . . . sound SPEECH that cannot be condemned.”

See how the speech is closely related to the good works. *Sound* speech that cannot be condemned will never be separated from good works. The next passage is specially important:--

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches us that. . . . we should live. . . . looking. . . . zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 11-14).

Here is another close parallel with Eph. ii. 9, 10, “by grace are ye saved”; yes, but grace does not stop there; the same grace that saves now teaches us to “live. . . . looking for that blessed hope”. The Saviour for Whom we wait gave Himself for us, (1) that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and (2) purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. There should be an enthusiasm for these good works, as it is such a joy to be able at last to accomplish anything worthy of the name. Redemption from the bondage of sin and death has placed us in a position where for the first time in our lives we can attempt with any hope of success “good works”. Such are indeed a “peculiar people”; for how few there seem to be who are “zealous” for good works, and who realize that this indeed is one of the ends of that redemption which is not of works.

Titus iii. 14, speaking of good works, adds “that they be not UNFRUITFUL”. The tree is supposed to be rooted; salvation has already taken place, and good works are as “natural” as grapes on a vine. Their absence should cause surprise and enquiry. The same teaching is found in II Tim.: there works are repudiated where salvation is concerned, and inculcated when saintship and service are concerned:--

“Who hath saved us. . . . NOT according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the age times” (i. 9).

The exclusion of works is complete, for if our salvation was according to the grace that was given us so long ago, or, to take the parallel word of Ephesians, if we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, how can works possibly enter into the question? Yet, strong as this passage is, the same epistle, speaking to the same men, says:--

“If a man shall purge HIMSELF from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good word” (ii. 21).

The means to be used for this desired end are suggested in iii. 16, 17:--

“All scripture. . . . that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Again, I Tim. ii. 10 links the profession of godliness with good works; the very desire to fulfil the office of a bishop is set down as desiring a “good work” (iii. 1). The widow who was to be taken into the number (presumably of those who were supported by the Church), was to be “well reported of for good works. . . . diligently following every good work” (v. 10), a qualification which must have been one of a high standard. Good works, while finding no place in our salvation, form a foundation against the time to come (vi. 19). Time would fail to tell of all those who “wrought righteousness, obtained promises”, who chose to live as strangers and pilgrims, who chose affliction rather than the pleasures of sin for a season. Think of the Philippians, who although instructed by the example of the apostle to count all things loss, and to desire that righteousness which is not of the law, nevertheless were instructed by that same apostle to “work out” their own salvation with fear and trembling. Not “work *for*” salvation, be it noted; against that idea all Scripture is ranged, but upon possessing salvation, to work it out as one would a gold mine, to be fruitful, as does a branch that abides in the vine—this

equally is a true and faithful sayings of Paul. “By grace are ye saved. . . . not of works” is the true and faithful saying which is worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. “Created in Christ Jesus unto good works” is the faithful saying which the apostle willed that Titus should constantly affirm, that they which had believed God should be careful to maintain good works. The fact that we are not under the law but under grace, instead of being an argument against good works, is an argument quite in their favour. For how could we, under the law, and under the dominion of sin, produce good works at all? This is the teaching of Rom. vi. 11-14, “Likewise reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ”.

What is to be the result of this? Shall such a mighty change have no effect and produce no results?

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof, neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.”

Grace which excludes works includes them; it just depends upon where we attempt to introduce them. That makes the difference. Those who are “alive from the dead”, and therefore “under grace”, have the peculiar privilege of CHOOSING THEIR MASTER. They had no choice under the *dominion* of sin. His delivered ones can now yield their members to sin, or to God. Difficult and even “dangerous” as the outworking of this doctrine may be, truth it is, and it is needed to make our gospel complete. The righteousness of the law could not be fulfilled in those who walk after the flesh, but what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His Son, Who delivered us from sin, united us with Himself in His death and resurrection, with the object that now the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

We have not finished with Eph. ii. 9, 10, and must return to the verses again; all that we have done in this paper is to press upon the reader’s mind the scriptural doctrine contained in the words, “NOT OUT OF WORKS. . . . but UNTO GOOD WORKS”. May the Lord be glorified by much fruit.

**#38. “Before Ordained” (Eph. ii. 9, 10).  
pp. 81 - 85**

We have noticed the relation between works before salvation and works after salvation, but this theme of course does not exhaust the subject of these verses. We must return to them to consider their teaching from another standpoint. Verse 10 reads:--

“For we are HIS workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, for which God prepared beforehand in order that we should walk in them.”

There is a grammatical reason for printing HIS in capitals. There is a logical reason too. The order of the words in the sentence is, “Of Him are we for a work”. “Him” comes first. If we read on from verse 9 the emphasis will be appreciated: “not of works lest any man should boast, for we are His workmanship”. Instead of OUR works having a place, we are forcefully reminded that we are HIS work. Work and walk are related, the works of the flesh are in contrast to the fruit of the spirit and a spiritual walk (Gal. v. 19-25).

“Walk as children of light: for the fruit of the light (R.V.). . . . have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Eph. v. 8-11).

In the doctrinal section of Ephesians (i. - iii.) the whole outgoing and energy of man is summed up in the word “walk”. God knows of two walks, and two only; all else are but sub-divisions. Eph. ii. speaks of them both: “wherein in time past ye walked according to the age of this world”, verse 2, and the good works, pre-ordained, of verse 10. Between the “time past” and its walk and the present and its walk lies death, quickening, resurrection, ascension, and seating with Christ. There was no attempt made to *alter the walk*: God made a new creature. The walk of the unsaved is in the sphere of the dominion of sin and death. A mighty spirit energizes them. Deliverance from this fearful dominion is only found in the death and resurrection of Christ, and in union with Him. The life is not altered by the walk, the walk merely expresses the life:--

“For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience, in the which Ye also WALKED some time, when ye LIVED in them” (Col. iii. 6, 7).

“As ye have therefore RECEIVED Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK ye in Him” (Col. ii. 6).

The walk, like the good works, accompanies salvation. It does not bring it about, “for we are His making CREATED in Christ Jesus”.

It will be noticed that we have the word “making” instead of “workmanship”. The word is *poiema*, and comes from *poieō* – “to make”. Gen. ii. 3 brings the two words “make” and “create” together:--

“And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because that in it He had rested from all His work which God *created* and *made*” (or “created to make”-margin).

If we look through the record of creation in Gen. i. we shall find some things are said to be *made*, like the firmament (verse 7), some things are said to be *created*, like the great “whales”, and in some cases both words are used: “let us *make* man in our image. . . . so God *created* man in His own image”. “In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth.” After that He *made* the present heavens, the earth and some orders of life on it, introducing by creation fresh orders for the new purpose.

When we read of the generations of the heavens and the earth, we must remember that we are not dealing with their *origin*, but with their offspring. The generations of Adam, or of Noah, tell us of their respective descendants. The generations of the heavens and the earth then are what follow the creation of chapter i., and include the creation, temptation, and fall of man. We here make a suggestion regarding the interpretation of Gen. ii. 4. The generations set out are events that follow the creation of the heavens and the earth, and commence with the making of the present heavens and earth. Verse 4 therefore we would interpret as follows—these (events now to be chronicled) are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created (not showing how they were created, but speaking of those things which took place afterwards: “being already created” expresses the suggestion), in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, after the “overthrow” indicated in Gen. i. 2.

The same idea seems to underlie Eph. ii. 10, “we are His making, created”. We too as individuals have had our “overthrow”, darkness has covered us, and God Himself, Who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness of Gen. i. 2, shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The word rendered “workmanship” (*poiema*) occurs twice only in the N.T., once for the present creation, and once for the new creation. The two passages are Rom. i. 20, and Eph. ii. 10. When we deal with salvation by grace, we deal with a new creation. A new creation seems to indicate a greater change than does regeneration. The prophetic time referred to as “the regeneration” is this side of the great day when the earth and its works shall be burned up. It is not a new creation. The doctrine and ordinances of the *Kingdom* are largely related to the *Regeneration*, whereas the doctrine of the One Body is connected with a new creation. *Kitzō* (“create”) occurs four times in Ephesians, viz.:-

- A | ii. 10. God. The Church His creation.
- B | ii. 15. The New Man doctrinally considered.
- A | iii. 9. God. “All things” His creation.
- B | iv. 24. The New Man practically exhibited.

It will be noticed that three out of the four references speak exclusively of the new creation. One (iii. 9) may be regarded as doubtful, but personally we consider the reference there is to the new creation equally with the other passages.

It is a tremendous thought—creation. Scripture nowhere seems to define it, it is an act essentially Divine and beyond the scope of the human mind. Nevertheless it is a wondrous fact. If the heathen were without excuse by the evidence of Deity in the things that are made, what shall we say of ourselves? Is there not demonstrated even more

forcibly, “His eternal power and Godhead” by the new creation? Littleness of faith stands condemned before this “manifold wisdom of God”. The passage seems to take us to another genesis. No longer a creation of man out of the dust of the earth is described, but the creation of a new man in Christ Jesus. The thought of the image of God, borne even by unregenerate man, is exchanged for that of the renewed image in righteousness and true holiness.

Returning again to Eph. ii. 10 we notice the purpose of this new creation—“unto good works”. The word usually translated “unto” is *eis*, but in this verse it is *epi* followed by the dative case. It indicates the purpose for which anything is done (Matt. xxvi. 50; Gal. v. 13). Good works were impossible under the old creation. God makes a new creation, and His purpose is that good works shall become possible. The remaining item to consider is somewhat difficult as it stand in the A.V.: “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them”. Is all our walk after salvation fixed by predestination? Does it mean that the new creation launches us out into irresponsibility? Is it an unnecessary thing to say to a believer, “walk worthy”, “walk not as the gentiles”? If the walk of the believer is pre-ordained, what purpose does it serve to say:--

“Walk in love. . . . let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things (the opposite walk) cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience”?

*Proetoimazō* is literally, “to prepare beforehand”. “I go to prepare a place for you” (John xiv. 3); “the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. vi. 15); “they that were ready went in” (Matt. xxv. 10); “the third time I am ready” (II Cor. xii. 14), are examples of *etoimazō*, *etoimos*, and *etoimōs*, respectively. If the word “hina”, which is rendered “that”, be translated “in order that”, the meaning of the passage will become clearer; “for good works, which God prepared beforehand, in order that we should walk in them”. We might now notice two passages of Scripture:--

“If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, having been sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and having been prepared unto every good work” (II Tim. ii. 21).

Here, it will be observed, the man purges *himself*, and the result is seen. The means used, or one of the means, is indicated in II Tim. iii. 16, 17, where the Scriptures make the man of God prepared unto every good work. Titus iii. 1 enjoins “to be ready to every good work”. These passages speak of the *believer* being prepared, and not the *good works* being prepared. One translation of Eph. ii. 10 (the Emphatic Diaglot) reads, “good works, for which God before prepared us, that we might walk in them”. This we believe is the meaning of the passage. This is parallel with the words of Eph. i. 4, “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world that we might be holy and without blemish”.

Our materials need just a little sorting before we proceed. II Tim. ii. 21 speaks of the believer’s own activity, Eph. ii. speaks of God’s. The “before preparation” must necessarily precede the outworking. Rom. ix. 20 contains the only other occurrence of “being prepared”. To walk in these good works, to seek to fulfil the object of our redemption, should be the great goal of our pilgrimage. All our queries, problems,

hesitations, lapses, failures would be sanctified, minimized and eliminated did we ever seek these good paths.

When we come to the practical section we shall find the repeated exhortation is to walk. Only to walk worthy of our calling will fill out our whole life and witness. Summarizing we learn:--

That in this dispensation God has introduced a new creation, of which He is the Creator and Maker.

That the immediate goal of this new creation is good works.

That He has afore prepared each member of the one body to walk therein.

And so while works can find no place before our salvation, to us is addressed the words:--

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God Who worketh in you both to will and to work on account of His good pleasure.”

### **#39. The Dispensational Disability of being a Gentile. (Eph. ii. 11, 12). pp. 113 - 118**

We now enter the second section of this chapter (for structure and relation of the two parts *see* Volume IX, page 49).

Verses 1-10 have dealt with what we might call, for the sake of a term, the *doctrinal position*. “Sin”, “death”, “life”, “salvation”, “grace”, “faith”, “walk”, these are the key words. The words “with Christ” sum up the relation of the believer to the Lord. In the second section (verses 11-22) we have what we might call *the dispensational position* set forth. Here we do not read the words, “sin”, “death”, “raised”, “seated”, “life”, “salvation”, “grace”, “faith”, nor “walk”. We read instead such words as “aliens”, “strangers”, “far off”, “hope”, “peace”, “reconciled”, “made nigh”, “access”. “Through Christ” and “in Christ”, sum up the relation to the Lord.

What was the dispensational position of those who had been so wondrously saved by grace? They were told to remember that in time past they were:--

- A | Gentiles in the flesh.
- B | Without Christ.
- C | Aliens from commonwealth of Israel.
- C | Strangers from covenants of promise.
- B | Having no hope.
- A | Godless in the world.

This is the condition of those whose salvation and blessing this epistle chronicles. To the praise of His glory such are urged to remember what they once were, that their high privilege may be the better appreciated. Let us pass these items under review, so that we may indeed look to the pit from which we were digged.

GENTILES.—There is nothing personally immoral or wicked in being a Gentile as there is in being a sinner. While the Jew from his exclusiveness spoke of Gentiles, publicans and sinners as all one and the same, there could be no personal responsibility attaching to the question as to whether one was born a Roman, a Greek, a Scythian, or a Jew. Why therefore should this national distinction be the first to be brought forward as indicating the dispensational disability of these persons? When we stand upon Jewish ground, we realize the distance that the Gentiles were from God. While He revealed Himself to Israel, giving them holy and righteous laws, proverbs and prophecies, He spoke not to the nations:--

“He sheweth His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel, He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them”  
(Deut. iv. 38; Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20; Amos iii. 2; Rom. iii. 2).

Over against this statement of Gentile dispensational disability, let us place the statement of Israel’s dispensational privilege:--

- A | According to the flesh.—Brethren.
- B | Israelites.
- C | Sonship.
- D | Glory.
- E | Covenants.
- E | Law.
- D | Service.
- C | Promises.
- B | Fathers.
- A | According to the flesh.—The Messiah.

The one reminds us of our Gentile position, the other puts prominently forward the favoured nation—Israel. The one speaks of alienation and strangership, the other of sonship. In the one case neither covenants nor promises are attached; in the other they are mentioned particularly. The Gentiles were without a Messiah: of Israel it is said that Messiah came from them and that salvation is of the Jews. In both cases the paucity or privilege is introduced by a reference to the flesh. The Gentile disability was “in the flesh”; *yet so also was the Jewish privilege*. When the Jew and the Gentile stood together on resurrection ground, the flesh with its disabilities and with its privileges also vanished. “In Christ” is in the Spirit. Those who were far off and without hope in the flesh have access unto the Father “by one Spirit”. This teaching commends that reading of Eph. iii. 5, 6 which makes the words “by” or “in the Spirit” to read with the peculiar privileges of the Gentiles recorded in verse 6. In the flesh the Gentiles could never be fellow-heirs, but in the Spirit they can. It is the flesh dispensationally considered that is dealt with and removed in this section. “The enmity in the flesh” Christ has abolished, it

is the Spirit that is related to the new sphere; access is by the Spirit. The building as an habitation of God is by the Spirit, the unity is the unity of the Spirit.

Writers of *Eugenics* and *Sociology* have emphasized the tremendous influence that heredity and environment have upon the individual. Scripture draws attention also to these two principles. The Gentiles were “in the FLESH”: that was the burden of heredity under which they suffered. They were “in the WORLD”: that was the environment in which they sank hopeless, Godless, Christless. No wonder that within two or three verses the apostle twice says, “by *grace* are ye saved”.

To be a Gentile was to be one of a vast number who had been “given up” by God (Rom. i. 24). If Eph. ii. sets forth Gentile distance, Eph. iv. shows us Gentile darkness:--

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk, not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

We cannot think that words could indicate a more hopeless and awful condition than the testimony of Eph. ii. 11, 12 and iv. 17-19. The reader is urged to read for himself the rest of the testimony concerning the state of the Gentiles, but we must pass on to notice some other items.

IN THE FLESH.—In this sphere are all men by nature, whether Jew or Gentile. It is written, “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. viii. 8). The term is used in a special manner in the epistle, as will be seen by reading verses 9-18. Those who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have received of that spirit of sonship whereby they can cry “Abba Father”, those who have received the spirit of Christ, the spirit of resurrection life (10, 11), are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The Gentile who believed the gospel of grace passed into a new life and a new environment; he became altogether “in the Spirit”. The boasted distinction between Jew and Gentile could only remain true “in the flesh”, all was radically changed by union with the risen Christ. The exposition of the Scripture teaching of the “flesh” is too vast for us to attempt it here. We can but suggest the position and pass on.

The apostle adds to the statement of the Gentile’s evil condition, by a parenthesis concerning circumcision in the flesh, made by hands. Until there was a circumcised person on earth there could not be a company called the uncircumcision. Israel’s superiority, like its sign, was artificial and temporary. Two qualifying statements used here are illuminating. Circumcision, which was such a ground of boasting for the Jew, was *in the flesh*; circumcision was “made by hand”. The apostle supplies his own commentary in Col. ii. 11-13, iii. 10, 11:--

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made WITHOUT HANDS, in putting off the body of the FLESH by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in the baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God,

who hath raised Him from the dead, and you, being dead to your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him. . . . and have put on the NEW MAN. . . . where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all.”

AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.—We can realize that to be of the uncircumcision involved one in hopeless gloom and distance, but when we add the above words the gloom becomes Egyptian darkness. To Israel a Messiah had been promised, the hope of His appearing burned like a star in the firmament, even though the conception of what the Messiah should be and what He should do fell far below the scriptural description. Nevertheless, nationally, and in a higher sense individually, the Messiah was of Israel and for Israel, “of whom concerning the flesh Christ came” (Rom. ix. 5). Like circumcision, this blessing was related to the flesh.

The apostle, before the revelation of the mystery, stepped beyond this limitation:--

“Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more, therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (II Cor. v. 16, 17).

As in Eph. ii., so here, the new creation, as the new man, is lifted beyond the “flesh” and is entirely in the “Spirit.

ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL, AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE.—Little comment is necessary. The Syrophœnician woman learned this dispensational fact (Matt. xv.). Whatever mercies fell to the Gentiles down the age were crumbs from the *master's* table. In the eyes of the circumcision Gentiles were “dogs”.

The word “commonwealth” and the pride and privilege it conveyed is well expressed in its one other occurrence: “the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this FREEDOM”. Israel had such a freedom, they had citizen's rights, from all of which the Gentiles were “strangers”. Israel could look back to the “fathers” to whom were made the “covenants of promise”; the Gentiles could look back to no “fathers” to whom God had made special and distinguishing covenants. While God was the Lord of Hosts, and the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, He was in a special sense the God of Israel, and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So the passage goes on to say that if the Gentiles were strangers from the covenant of promise, then they had.

NO HOPE AND WERE WITHOUT GOD.—This passage is speaking of dispensational disability, not moral depravity. The word *atheoi*, “without a God”, was used by the pagans of Rome to describe the Christians. They did not charge the believers with “ungodliness” by using this term, but with having a faith and a worship which had no visible God, and which caused them to deny “the gods”. With a Pantheon full of “gods” and altars dedicated to the unknown god; with Athens, to quote an ancient writer, “so full of idols that it was easier to find a god than a man”, is it not a tragedy that these nations were nevertheless *atheoi*, “without God”.

IN THE WORLD.—With these words the terrible catalogue closes, and all hope and all light are excluded. The world is an abandoned evil complexity, it is the enemy of God and of godliness, its prince is the devil; the whole world lieth in wickedness (or the wicked one), the things of the world are not of the Father (I John ii. 15, 16), the rudiments of the world are antagonistic to Christ (Col. ii. 8). The world is totally oblivious of the work and witness of the Spirit (I Cor. ii. 12), the elements of the world held the Gentiles in bondage (Gal. iv. 3). Believers are “not of the world” (John xv. 19), the world knows them not (I John iii. 1), they have, in Him, “died to the world” (Col. ii. 20), and by His cross the world is crucified unto them, and they unto it.

If such be a portion of the Scripture testimony concerning this abandoned, wicked, godless world, what utter bondage and hopelessness is written in the words “in the world”! According to the age of this world the Gentiles had walked, energized by a mighty spirit, the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2, 3). From this pit of corruption, and this godless, Christless, promiseless wilderness, God, in the riches of His grace, stooped to save those who are destined to sit with Christ at the right hand of God in the super-heavenlies, far above all principality and power. Such grace is unspeakable.

Let us bow our heads in silent adoring worship, and let us rise from our Father’s footstool, finding in our hearts as no stranger expression the words—*for me to live is Christ*.

**#40. “Made Nigh” (Eph. ii. 13).  
pp. 145 - 148**

“*But now.*”—The reader has possibly not brought with him the sense of utter despair with which the scriptural explanation of Eph. ii. 11, 12 left us. We cannot appreciate fully the glorious change introduced by these little words, “but now”, if we are unmindful of the apostle’s exhortation, “wherefore remember”. We will not repeat ourselves, but trust that the reader may feel it worth the while to re-read Eph. ii. 11, 12 before going further.

The Scriptures which were in the hands of the church at this time gave no clue to what God would do when the dispensation of the Acts period closed with the setting aside of an unrepentant Israel. All its prophecies bridged the present interval and spoke of the blessings attendant upon the second coming. The inspired apostles themselves could offer no explanation. Peter confesses that while he did not charge the Lord with slackness concerning His promise, there were certainly things that only the beloved brother Paul in his epistles could clear up (II Pet. iii.). Some one may interpose that the Gentiles were saved and delivered from the dominion of sin and death long before Eph. ii. was written. This perfectly true and only helps us to see that we are dealing with something *other than salvation* in this passage.

What does the verse say? “But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were sinners are now saved”? No, it says, “but now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were FAR OFF are made nigh by the blood of Christ”. The blood of Christ which effected our redemption has also cancelled the dispensational disability and made us nigh. If the reader will glance over the verse following this statement, he will see that the glorious change is indeed one of privilege and access, not of salvation and forgiveness. Cornelius was *saved*, as recorded in Acts x., but in comparison with the position of the saved Gentile in Ephesians he was “far off”. This glorious “but now” deals with “peace”, “the middle wall of partition”, the abolition of the enmity and the fullest expression of the reconciliation. It gives those who were strangers and aliens a citizenship; it makes those who were denied access to the temple on earth the very temple of the Lord, a temple not made with hands but an habitation of God in spirit. It is clear that the whole section is dispensational in character. The section Eph. ii. 11-13 is divided into two parts, as follows:--

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| A |  | “Once.”  |
| B |  | In flesh, aliens, strangers, hopeless, godless, without citizenship. |
| A |  | “Now.”   |
| B |  | In Christ, nigh, reconciled, fellow-citizens, a holy temple.         |

Look at the suggestive parallel:--

- “Gentiles in the flesh,” &c.  
 “Far off made nigh in Christ Jesus.”

To be a Gentile in the flesh was to be far off; to be in Christ Jesus was to be made nigh. Notice the “now” in connection with Paul’s special ministry of the mystery and with the subjects related to it, Eph. iii. 5-10, Col. i. 21-26. The grand dispensational change introduced by these words “but now” constitutes a unique revelation. As we proceed we shall see that the present interval, the “now” of these passages, is the dispensation of the mystery, a dispensation where all distinctions of nationality cease, yet at the same time a dispensation where peculiar blessings are directed towards the Gentiles. None of these blessings can reach the Gentile while “in the flesh”, they are all “spiritual”. None of them can reach the Gentile while he is “in the world” in the sense of Eph. ii. 12; these blessings are all “in the heavenlies”, and more than that, they are all “in Christ”.

The expressions “in Christ” and in “Christ Jesus” are limited in Ephesians to the doctrinal portion (i. - iii.). It may be worth while to note them:--

- i. 3. All spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, *in Christ*.
- i. 10. The gathering together in one, all things, *in Christ*.
- i. 12. Members of the One Body have a prior hope, *in Christ*.
- iii. 6. The Gentiles are joint-partakers of His promise, *in Christ Jesus*.
- ii. 6. They have been made to sit together in the heavenlies, *in Christ Jesus*.
- ii. 10. They have been created, *in Christ Jesus*.
- ii. 13. They have been made nigh, *in Christ Jesus*.
- iii. 11. The purpose of the ages was made, *in Christ Jesus*.

This sectional use of the title is the more emphasized when we note that the solitary expression “in Jesus” occurs in the practical section, “as the truth is in Jesus” (iv. 21). Out of the flesh, and out of the world, out of the dominion of sin and death, delivered in fact out of the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son, such is the blessed state of those sinners of the Gentiles who have been made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. The opening, therefore, of this blessed dispensation of grace must be “but now, in Christ Jesus”. These Gentiles were once “far off”. A review of verses 11 and 12 (*see* previous article) will be enough to reveal the deplorable distance at which they were placed. They are now “made nigh”, and who shall say how nigh?

When the Psalmist wished to glorify God for the blessing of Israel, he said:--

“He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all the saints; even of the children of Israel, *a people near unto Him*. Praise ye the Lord” (Psa. cxlviii. 14).

Again, in Deut. iv. 7 Moses says:--

“And what nation is there so great who hath *God so nigh unto them?*”

The nations are often referred to in prophecy as being “far off” (*see* Isa. viii. 9; Jer. v. 15; xxxi. 10). When Israel were deprived of their privileges, they were, among other punishments, dispersed into “far countries”; and when the time of their reinstating comes, they will be gathered “from afar” (Jer. li. 50, xlvi. 27). Yet, however nigh the children of Israel are, what can compare to the position of one who has been made a very member of the Body of Christ, for whom it is not only revealed that Christ died FOR him, but also that he is so identified with his Lord, that from a time as far back as before the foundation of the world until the time of being manifested in glory he may read his spiritual history as “in Christ” and “with Christ”?

This change of dispensation, this wonderful access to privilege, this light after darkness, this nearness after distance, though in Christ, is not ours if we stop at this point. Something more must be added before the blessings are secure, before the earnest can be given, before the seal is set. Is it the work of the Spirit that is needed to complete the work? No! it is *the blood of Christ*. It will be remembered that the first blessing recorded in Ephesians as flowing to us through the work of Christ is “redemption through His blood”, and not till after that do we read of the seal and the earnest of the Spirit. So here, not till the blood of Christ has removed all barriers do we read of the work of the One Spirit. Eph. ii. 13 tells us we are made nigh by the blood of Christ; Col. i. 20 tells us He made peace through the blood of the cross. This, together with the statement concerning redemption in Eph. i. 7, completes the testimony to the blood of Christ in the prison epistles—redeemed, forgiven, made nigh, and in peace, through the precious blood.

From the point of view of redemption the blood indicates the price that was paid; from the point of view of dispensational nearness the blood speaks of barriers broken down and a new basis laid; and peace arising out of the reconciliation effected comes through

the same blood of the cross. The blood of Christ is set in sharp contrast with all the many efforts of the flesh to accomplish redemption, access and peace. It tells us at once that we are not dealing with reformation, but with new creation. Bloodshed indicates life given. Any further movement therefore must be new life, resurrection life; and resurrection is the sphere and power of the spiritual blessings of the dispensation of the mystery. Let us withhold no praise, love and service, when we think of our distance, and try to realize our nearness, as we contemplate the altar of sacrifice, the blood of atonement, the price paid to set us free and bring us nigh to God.

#### **#41. Peace and Enmity (Eph. ii. 14). pp. 177 - 180**

We have followed the workings of Divine grace reaching out into the Egyptian darkness of the Gentiles without hope, without God, and without Christ, and bringing those who were far off nigh unto God. When we examine the doctrine and practice of this dispensation, we shall find that Christ Himself in a marked manner fills up the measure of Divine love and human need.

It is so in the passage under consideration. When the Gentiles are made nigh, they are made so “in Christ” and “by His blood”, and when they begin to enter into the fruit of this grace, instead of finding impersonal blessings, they find Christ. The passage before us does not say, “made nigh by His blood, therefore we have peace with God”; it says, “for HE IS OUR PEACE”. There is something about the Person of Christ that is found in no one else. Not merely what He has done claims our homage or ministers to our need, but what He is.

Christ is our LIFE (Col. iii. 4).  
Christ is our HOPE (I Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27).  
Christ is our PEACE (Eph. ii. 14).

The subject of *Peace* in Ephesians is beautifully complete and of a special character. Knowing the infallible accuracy of Scripture we are not surprised to find the word occurring eight times, eight being the number of resurrection:--

#### **Peace.**

*Emphasizing its connection with the dispensational position of the One Body.*

- A | i. 2. Salutation.
- B | Peace, and the unity of the Spirit.
  - a | ii. 14. The Lord Himself.—The Head.
  - b | ii. 15. The twain.—One new man.
  - c | ii. 17. Preached to those far off.
  - c | ii. 17. Preached to those nigh.
  - b | iv. 3. Bond of the unity.
  - a | vi. 15. The armour for the feet.
- A | vi. 23. Benediction.

If we consider these references we shall find that peace, in the sense in which it is used in such a passage as Rom. v. 1, is absent. Peace as a result of forgiven sin and justification is presupposed, but peace as opposed to faction and division is prominent and emphasized. The central member “B”, with its subdivisions must claim our attention. The six members flow out of the truth of ii. 14. In what way does it mean that He is our peace? The verse goes on to explain: “for He is our peace having made the both ONE”. We cannot consider the peace apart from the unity. “The both”: who are they? Are they God and the sinner? The fact that the subject returns on itself and comes back to its starting point in verse 15 (“in order that the two He might create in Himself into one new man, making peace”) shows that they are not. Here all is explained. Whoever *the two* may be, they form part of one new man. This rules out the idea that in verse 14 “the both” can mean God and the sinner, for God has not been made part of the one new man. “The peace” of verse 14 is explained for us, it follows as a result of the two being made one, it is not the peace of forgiveness or justification, it is the peace of unity and reconciliation. The words “He is our peace” are explained also by this verse; for the creation of the one new man is *in Himself*, there is no unity contemplated here that is outside Christ. He Himself is the ground of meeting, the ground of unity, the hope of glory, the foundation and the chief corner stone. The unity of the Spirit is not a unity where the manifestations of the Spirit will be prominent, but where Christ will be all in all. The peace of Eph. iv. 3 is the peace of Eph. ii. 14, 15.

We are sent upon a search the moment we look at the inspired original, “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of THE PEACE”. What peace is here intended? The answer is—the peace of Eph. ii. 14, 15. The unity of the Spirit stands in contrast to the divisions made by the flesh. These divisions being abolished in the new man, peace is attained, Christ Himself, being the peace of this unity, becomes in turn the bond that binds all together. It is the same aspect of peace that is intended in verse 17. He came to the far off Gentile and the dispensationally near Jew, and by the revelation of the one body preached peace. The members of that unity preach the same in their turn, their feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of the peace. The vexatious differences between Jew and Gentile have given place to the peace of unity, Christ Himself the meeting place of “the both”, Christ Himself the peace, Christ Himself the Head, and all the members equal. If ever the ideal expressed in the words “*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*” is realized, it is realized here.

As a further elucidation of the nature of the peace that is meant in Eph. ii. 14 come the words, “and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity”. Most readers know to what the reference is here. An inscription in Greek is to be seen in the British Museum, which translated reads:--

“NO ONE BEING A FOREIGNER MAY ENTER INTO THE ENCLOSURE  
AROUND THE HOLY PLACE, WHOSOEVER IS APPREHENDED WILL HIMSELF  
BE TO BLAME FOR HIS DEATH WHICH WILL CERTAINLY FOLLOW.”

This inscription was set up on the wall of the enclosure of the holy place in the temple at Jerusalem. Cornelius and Peter might both be saved, might both be baptized with the

same spirit and in the same water; yet Peter could pass through the barrier and Cornelius must remain outside. It was the cause of much enmity. Paul's imprisonment was humanly speaking due to the fact that the Jews charged him with bringing into the holy place a Gentile—glorious prophecy, unconsciously made, of the result of his prison ministry. The reader will have noticed that we have included the word “enmity” in verse 14. The A.V. and the R.V., J.N.D. and Rotherham agree in keeping the word to verse 15. The Diaglott reads, “And having removed the enmity, the middle wall of partition”. This places the word enmity first. Strictly the order of the original is:--

“And the middle wall of the partition having broken up the enmity in the flesh of Himself the law of the commandment in ordinances having put out of working order.”

The rendering we prefer makes the division of the sentence come after the word enmity. The A.V., R.V., and others put the stop before. He is our peace, for He destroyed the cause of enmity. That cause was the dispensational distinction between Jew and Gentile, the emblem of which was the middle wall in the temple. The Jews may make an uproar in the sacred building, they may exhibit all the enmity of their nature against the chosen vessel of the Lord, but in Him there is unity and there is peace.

Let us remember that we are exhorted to teach this unity. Let us remember also that enmity is a seed that grows only in the flesh—“the works of the flesh are. . . . enmities, quarrels, jealousies, resentment, altercations, factions, sects”. The multifarious enmities of the flesh do not make for peace, and they certainly have not been made by the Lord. While owning the whole family of faith, let us cleave to the Lord, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of THE PEACE.

## Passages from Proverbs.

### #3. The Guarded Heart.

pp. 23 – 25

“More than any guard-post, keep watch over thine heart, for out of it are the outgoings of life” (Prov. iv. 28, Miller’s translation).

The marginal reading of Prov. iv. 23, “above all keeping”, shows that the translators realized the intensity of the wording of the original here. There is a prefix M, which denotes “post” or “place” or “person”. Adopting the suggestive translation quoted above, we render it “guard-post”. The idea is this: if one or another out-post should be taken by a surprise attack, it may be won back again, but if the citadel, the central fort, be taken, all is lost. The out-posts begin to be enumerated in the verses which follow, “the mouth”, “the lips” (24), “the eyes”, “the eyelids” (25), “the path” (26), “the feet” (27).

That our attention may be drawn to these out-posts the scripture brings them before us in pairs: not only the mouth, but the lips; not only the eyes, but the eyelids; not only the path, but the feet. Important, however, as they are, we read, “above all keeping” keep the heart itself. Let us consider the teaching of the word with this thought in mind.

The importance of the hearts rests on the fact that out of it are the issues of life. It is so physically, and the physical world shadows forth eternal realities:--

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones”  
(Prov. xiv. 30).

Not only does soundness of heart mean life to the flesh, but the very countenance is an index of the heart within:--

“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken” (xv. 13).

Joys that come from without are illusive, transient and often unreal, the peace and joy that arise within enable the believer to face the trials and vexations of this wilderness with smiling face:--

“All the days of the afflicted are evil: but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast” (xv. 15).

The “afflicted” are those who among other things are “poor” (xiv. 21). The merry heart, however, spreads his table and turns the “evil” into “a continual feast”. The word “evil”, while often meaning moral evil or wickedness, many times means a “calamity”. The law of correspondence settles the question for us here, placing “evil” in opposition to “a continual feast”. This rule is to be observed in other passages, particularly in Isa. xlv. 7, where evil is contrasted, not with righteousness or good, but with peace. The merry heart is such because of the joy of trusting the Lord, and because the love of God

has been shed abroad within it. The Proverbs therefore expand the thought given in xv. 15 by saying:--

“Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith” (16, 17).

As the Lord hath said, “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”. Not only is the heart the well-spring of life, not only does it show itself in the countenance and in the attitude of the afflicted; it is further written,

“The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth, and added learning to his lips” (xvi. 23).

The mere “talk of the lips tendeth only to penury”, but a wise and instructed heart teacheth the mouth the words that shall be “in season to him that is weary”; it will add the “grace” to the lips, so that all shall be, as it were, “seasoned with salt”; “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”.

Another reference to the “merry heart” is found in xvii. 22:--

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.”

There is healing in the joyful heart that spreads through all the outgoings of life. The converse is true; a caviling, murmuring spirit (for as the word “broken” may be understood) “drieth the bones”.

“Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility” (xviii. 2).

Here again the vital relation between the heart and “the issues of life” is evident. The destruction that is sure to come may not yet have appeared on the horizon, but it is certainly indicated by the haughty heart. How forcibly, therefore, the words of the Proverb come! “*More than any guard-post, keep watch over thine heart.*” The word “keep” gives us the words “watchmen” and “watchers” in II Kings xvii. 9, Jer. iv. 16, and indicates the keeping or the guarding of a besieged city. When we think of the seductions of the world, the many snares and pitfalls that beset our path, the lurking enemy that is still within our very citadel, the greatness of the enemy that is still without, we may well shrink from the task of attempting to keep the heart. Here the words of the apostle come to our relief –

“Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding SHALL KEEP (as with a garrison) YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS through Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 5-7).

## Studies in the Book of the Revelation.

### #31. The Great Multitude (vii. 9-17).

pp. 1 - 5

There are some commentators of standing and repute who have, notwithstanding the definite statement of the early part of Rev. vii., interpreted the 144,000 of the tribes of the children of Israel\* as of the church.

It will be remembered that we considered this passage in our last article, and gave evidence that the statements of the chapter were to be taken literally. We now approach the second part of the chapter, and the questions arise, "Is the great multitude the church? Are they Gentiles?" By far the great majority of writers take it for granted that this company is composed of saved Gentiles. This we question, and ask the reader to reserve his judgment until we have examined the Scripture together. It is no argument to produce Scripture to show that the Gentiles will be blessed through Israel—that is a blessed fact, but it does not prove anything here. The words of verse 9 are taken to indicate the Gentile character of the great multitude:--

"After this, I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

The reader will doubtless be aware that the passage should be rendered, "out of all nations". We have met with a similar expression in chapter v. 9, 10:--

"Thou didst purchase for God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they reign over the earth."

In article #24 (Volume VIII, pp. 161-164) we considered the passage, and concluded that this was a redemption of scattered Israel, not out of one nation, nor as at the first from Egypt, but from many nations (Isa. xi. 11, 12); the fact that those redeemed were to be a kingdom and priests, pointed to Israel also. The great multitude likewise are Israelites gathered *out of* every nation, they too are invested with priestly dignity, "they serve Him day and night IN HIS TEMPLE". The great multitude were "clothed with white robes". The only other mention of robes outside this chapter is in chapter vi. 11. Under the fifth seal we heard the cry of the martyrs, to whom was given a white robe, with the injunction to await the vengeance for their blood until their brethren and fellow-servant who should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. When we see the great white-robed multitude, we see the fulfillment of the promise of the fifth seal. The white-robed throng bear palm branches.

#### [\* - A note regarding the Studies in the Book of the Revelation.]

"D.T.S., Guernsey.—You remark in November *Berean Expositor* that 'The omission of Simeon from the blessing of Moses is unexplained in the narrative and so far as we know is unexplained by any interpretation of Scripture.' Have you noticed in *The Companion Bible* that the note on Deut. xxxiii. 7 runs thus, 'Judah includes Simeon by Fig. Synecdoche; for their inheritance and blessing were one.' This is certainly confirmed by the two passages cited, viz.:--Joshua xix.1 and Judges i. 3. Doesn't this afford us some light, and it may be the only light that Scripture gives us."

Dr. Bullinger in his *Apocalypse* refers back to Lev. xxiii. 39-43. In that chapter we have the whole of Israel's history epitomized in the feasts. Commencing with the birth of the nation at the passover we follow its course through Pentecost, Harvest, Trumpets, Atonement, and lastly the feast of the Tabernacles. This is also connected with the ingathering of the fruit, and it is at this point that the palm branches are mentioned. Israel were to dwell in booths or tabernacles for the seven days of the feast. When the true feast of Tabernacles is celebrated it is written, "and He that sitteth on the throne shall TABERNACLE among them" (Rev. vii. 17). The reason for the feast of Tabernacles is given in Lev. xxiii. 43:--

"That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT."

The feast of Tabernacles is connected with the "year of release" (Deut. xv. 1; xxxi. 10). By comparing Rev. vii., xiv., and Lev. xxiii. together, we arrive at the following. The 144,000 sealed ones are the "FIRST FRUITS UNTO GOD". The great multitude constitute the HARVEST that follows. When we come to study xiv., we shall have further details given us as to the character of the 144,000, and why some tribes are omitted from the number. The church in Philadelphia had the promise, "Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of temptation". The promise says nothing about keeping out of the "great tribulation".—it speaks of an hour of *temptation*, and a temptation which comes upon all the world to try those that dwell on the earth. This will include the worship of the image, the reception of his name or number, and will involve these earth-dwellers in unclean ceremonies. From all this the overcomers will be kept, and so we read their undefiled character in xiv. 4.

The first-fruit is followed by a glorious harvest. If the 144,000 are sustained during the temptation, the great multitude are enabled to endure the great tribulation. The great multitude come out of "the tribulation, the great one". This we learn from the question that is put by one of the elders, the answer being, "these are they which came out of great tribulation". This great tribulation is the subject of more than one prophecy. Matt. xxiv. 15-22 links it with Daniel's *abomination of desolation* which is distinctly connected with a fearful outbreak against Israel. Dan. xii. 1 says:--

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a *time of trouble*, such as never was since there was a nation even unto that same time: and at that time *thy people shall be delivered*, every one that shall be found *written in the book*."

It will be remembered that only those whose names were "written in the book" withstood the pressure which was brought to bear upon them to make them worship the beast and receive his mark. Jer. xxx. 7 says:--

"Alas! for the day is great, so that none is like it, it is even *the time of Jacob's trouble*, but he shall be saved out of it."

The white-robed multitude who stand before the throne have come out of the great tribulation, “such as never was”, “so that none is like it”, they come out of that tribulation which oppressed Daniel’s “people”—Israel, which was called “Jacob’s trouble”.

Let us now seek to understand the meaning of the words, “they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”. It is a misconception to speak of this passage as a “standing of works”, in contrast with the “standing in grace” of the present dispensation. The dispensation is certainly different from the present one, but there is no question of a standing in *works* here. These are “overcomers”, whose salvation has been settled for good by the once offered sacrifice of Christ. The epistle to the Hebrews makes this clear, and we cannot find any scriptural warrant to convince us that any one will be saved, under whatever dispensation he may come, by a mingling of works and faith: the blood of Christ is spoken of four times in the Revelation:--

“Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins *by His Own blood*, and made us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father.” (i. 56).

“Thou wast slain, and didst redeem back to God, *by Thy blood*, out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation, and Thou didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign on the earth” (v. 9).

“They washed their robes and made them white by the *blood of the Lamb*, because of this are they before the throne of God” (vii. 14).

“And they overcame him because of the *blood of the Lamb*, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death” (xii. 11).

Let us notice the facts here recorded, and the order of their development. First is the redemption of the priestly nation, stated without any details except the fact of the redemption and the goal towards which that redemption was directed:--

*From sins. . . . By His blood. . . . A kingdom and priests.*

Secondly, the added item is now given that this redemption was not only from sins, but from exile and banishment, “out of every tribe, tongue, people and nation”; further, the sphere of their priestly kingdom is indicated, “they shall reign on, or over, the earth”. So far nothing has been said concerning the personal faithfulness of those redeemed, these two passages speak of *all Israel*. The book of the Revelation, however, from first to last is chiefly concerned with “him that overcometh”:

*Out of all nations. . . . By His blood. . . . A kingdom and priests on earth.*

The two remaining references do not speak of “all Israel”, but of a faithful number of witnessing Israelites who *overcome*. In the third reference therefore the question of redemption from sin is not in view, it is now, “the things that accompany salvation” (*Hebrews*), or the “working out their own salvation with fear and trembling” (*Philippians*) that is intended:--

*They washed their robes. . . . By the blood. . . . They are before the throne.*

The fourth reference makes the positive statement:--

*They overcame the devil. . . . Because of the blood.*

Again redemption from sin is not in question. Now “the washing of the robes”, a symbolical statement, is parallel with “overcoming”, a literal statement. Daniel refers to the effect of this trying time in chapters x. and xi., “and some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end” (xi. 35), “many shall be purified, and made white, and tried” (xii. 10). Zechariah is more specific. “I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried” (xiii. 9). Malachi also refers to a similar effect of “that day”, “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” (iii. 3). Coming to the book of Revelation itself:--

“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with Me IN WHITE, for they are WORTHY; he that overcometh, the same be clothed in WHITE RAIMENT” (iii. 4, 5).

The great multitude therefore are “overcomers”

“I saw the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God. . . . and WHITE ROBES were given unto every one of them (vi. 9-11).

“The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous (award) of saints” (xix. 7, 8).

Here are some who are pronounced “worthy”, some who “make themselves ready”. There is no mingling of grace and works, for it is purely a question of overcoming, not of salvation, that is in view all the time. Those who overcame, the preserved of the great tribulation, are said, in a figure, to have “washed their robes by the blood of the Lamb”. It was because of His blood they overcame, and to them is given the victor’s reward. God deals with the redeemed nation in companies. The great bulk are destined to rule on the earth, some by reason of faithfulness will be rewarded with a heavenly ministry, some will be numbered among a company called the Bride, which is chiefly connected with the New Jerusalem. What those had endured who had come out of the great tribulation is indicated in verses 15 and 17, hunger and thirst (for the Beast will control the supply of food); great heat through exposure and lack of home and covering; tears, for their sorrows were indeed great.

With these closing verses we break through the thick darkness of that day, and see the peace and rest of that which lies beyond for scattered Israel, and for blinded Gentiles; and nothing short of this can satisfy. Praise God! darkness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

## #32. The Seven Trumpets. Temple Judgments (viii). pp. 33 - 38

The sixth seal leads on to the day of the wrath of the Lamb, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll. This one statement is sufficient to prove that the sealing of the 144,000 does not follow the sixth seal in time. We are evidently taken back in the history covered by the six seals. The breaking of the seventh seal is therefore very markedly severed off from the breaking of the sixth. The seventh seal is the beginning of another series. A sevenfold judgment is revealed which culminates in the accession of Christ to the throne of universal dominion under the seventh trumpet.

The opening of the seventh seal is followed by silence, silence for about half an hour. While we can easily find “great voices” and “thunders” on other similar occasions which mark a contrast, the silence of this verse seems to indicate something deeper. Dr. Bullinger in *The Apocalypse* (pp. 294, 295) has brought together the following passages which we here quote:--

“On earth, the cry of the saints has been incessant. They ‘cry day and night’. In heaven the cry is now about to be answered, and there is a solemn pause—the silence of expectation.”

“The Heb. *dumeyyah* (silence) (fem. adj.) which occurs four times exactly expresses the position:--

(1). ‘O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; And in the night season there is no *silence* to me’ (Psa. xxii. 2, 3).

(2). ‘I was dumb with *silence*’ (Psa. xxxix. 2).

(3). ‘Truly my soul is *silence* toward God:

From Him cometh my salvation’ (Psa. lxii. 1).

(4). ‘There shall be *silence* before Thee,

And praise, O God, in Zion,

O Thou that hearest prayer,

Unto Thee shall all flesh come’ (Psa. lxxv. 1. R.V. margin).

In all these four passages the word denotes a period of waiting between the offering of the prayer, and the giving of the answer which shall call forth praise. The adverb in Lam. iii. 26 exactly expresses it. ‘It is good when one doth wait even *in silence* for the salvation of Jehovah’.”

The words of Hab. ii. 20 seem applicable to this scene, “The Lord is in His holy temple, be silent all the earth before Him”. So also Zech. ii. 13, “Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation”. Some action of intense moment seems imminent. All heaven awaits the moment when God shall speak.

The first movement that follows the silence is the giving of seven trumpets to the seven angels which stood before God.

*The seven angels (Tous hepta angelous)*. Before the throne, we read in iv. 5, were *the seven spirits*. According to v. 6 the seven spirits of God were sent forth into all the earth. Seven angels preside over the seven churches of Asia. The apostle Paul when writing to Timothy said, “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels”. This is comparable with Rev. i. 4, 5, “Grace be unto you and peace, from

Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, *and from the seven spirits* which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ". Here is heaven's supreme court. "The judgment shall sit", and it is because of the solemnity of that long-deferred judgment that heaven ceases as it were to breathe in dreadful sympathy and anticipation.

Before the seven angels sound their trumpets, another angel steps forward and by his action indicates the character of the impending judgments. They are TEMPLE judgments.

The sixth seal left us certainly at the *throne*, and the close of chapter vii. speaks of the throne, but that is not the case in chapter viii. Even the formula is altered. The seven angels are not said to stand before *the throne*, but simply before God. Further, it is not true exposition to draw a severe line between "throne" and "temple", for Rev. xvi. 17 reads, "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the *temple*, from the *throne*". The *Vatican Manuscript*, *Lt.*, and *Tr.* all agree to this reading, "out of the temple from the throne", which unites throne and temple together. The very passage before us does the same thing:--

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the *golden altar which was before the throne.*"

The throne is in the temple, and cannot be severed from it. Unlike all other kings the Lord unites priesthood and kingship together. The testimony of Zech. vi. 13 is fatal to the conception of a clear cut distinction between throne and temple in the Revelation:--

"He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne."

Isaiah's vision, as recorded in chapter vi., links the throne with the temple:--

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. . . . mine eyes have seen the King. . . . a live coal from off the altar."

Here again the intentional linking of throne and temple, king and priest, will be recognized, especially when we remember Uzziah's act. He attempted to unite in himself kingship and priesthood, and for his temerity he was smitten with leprosy. In the year that the king died, Isaiah had a vision of the true and only Priest-King.

As the Priest-King, the Lord Jesus appears before us in the opening vision of Revelation, and as the Priest-King He will rule and reign. When we read of one who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, we see a priest. When we read of his golden girdle, and his clothing, we read of the symbol robes of a priest.

What is true of the opening of this seventh seal is also true of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Rev. xi. 15-19 records the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and when that trumpet sounds:--

“The TEMPLE of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His covenant: and there were thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.”

This temple scene is closely connected with the proclamation, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ: and He shall reign for the ages of the ages.”

We will now consider a little more closely the record of chapter viii. The prayers that ascend, with the incense offered by the angel, are answered by a symbolic action of judgment:--

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were cries, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

This answer to the prayers which is here given, covers the period of the seven trumpets. The prayers of those under the altar who cry for vengeance are last to be heard. The “little season” (Rev. vi. 11) has passed, the seventh of these angels shall introduce the time when the dead should be judged, and rewards given to the Lord’s servants and saints. The judgments do not fall in one stroke. Each trumpet sound introduces an added plague. This *sevenfold* judgment seems to be a fulfillment of Psa. lxxix. 12. “And render unto our neighbours *sevenfold* into their bosom.” The whole psalm is prophetic of the period. The heathen have come into the Lord’s inheritance. The holy temple is defiled, Jerusalem is in heaps. The dead bodies of servants and saints are devoured by the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth. Their blood has been shed round about Jerusalem like water. The heathen have taunted Israel with the silence of God. They pray:--

“Let Him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of Thy servants which is shed.”

This prayer ascends unto the Lord. It is answered with fire from the altar. FIRE FROM THE ALTAR (viii. 5). *Then these judgments are temple judgments.* Let us look at the *fire from the altar* as it falls upon the earth at the sounding of these trumpets.

“The first angels sounded and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth, and third part of the earth was burned up, and the third of the trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up.”

Here is the effect of the fire from the altar. All human life is dependent upon the vegetable kingdom. It is not possible for man to assimilate for himself the elements which form his food. The lower orders of creation must lay hold of these for him. With an atmosphere around him four fifths of which is nitrogen, he would die of starvation. So with all the other necessary elements. What a stroke then it will be when a third part of the earth which stores the food, and the trees and grass which render that food available, are burned with fire.

Under the third seal famine is seen and here is a parallel affliction. The affliction of a *third part* is a feature of these early trumpet judgments. Let us, to save space, tabulate the references:--

1 <sup>st</sup> trumpet.	Fire.	Third part of the earth and the trees.
2 <sup>nd</sup> trumpet.	Fire.	Third part of the sea. Third part of the creatures in the sea.
3 <sup>rd</sup> trumpet.	Burning Lamp.	Third part of the ships destroyed. Third part of rivers and fountains of waters.
4 <sup>th</sup> trumpet.	. . .	Third part of waters becomes wormwood. Third part of sun, moon and stars darkened. Third part of the day and night affected.

There is mercy in this judgment, and it is more clearly seen when we turn to the seven vials. There mercy is withdrawn. The sea, not a third part, becomes as blood, and *every* living soul died in the sea. The rivers and fountains of waters become blood, not a third part. The close parallel between the trumpets and vials we shall see later.

Before we conclude we would draw attention to the equally close parallel between these judgments and the plagues sent through Moses upon Egypt.

The first plague in Egypt turned the river into blood and the fish died.  
The second filled the land with frogs.  
The third afflicts man with lice.  
The fourth corrupted the land with swarms of flies.  
The fifth afflicted the cattle with a grievous murrain.  
The sixth afflicted the Egyptians with boils.  
The seventh kills the cattle with hail.  
The eighth, by means of locusts, devours every herb and fruit.  
The ninth plunged Egypt into awful darkness.  
The tenth smote every firstborn.

The trumpet and vial judgments of the Revelation are repetitions or parallels upon a vaster and grander scale, but they are as literal. We wish to hurt no one's feelings when we speak of the interpretation of these judgments set forth by such men as Elliot, Wordsworth, and others of the same school, but with Exodus before us we refuse to believe that the first trumpet means the wars of the Goths and the Vandals, or that "trees" mean princes, and "grass" their power and glory. God Himself has said that in the day of the Lord He will show wonders in the heavens, and signs on the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood. The literal plagues of Egypt prepare us for the literal judgments of the Revelation. We do not rest however upon analogy, we have definite Scripture for our belief. Israel's future is connected by a parallel with Exodus.

"According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous things" (Micah vii. 15; Isa. xi. 15, 16).

The redemption of Israel from Egypt will be repeated on a grand scale (Jer. xxiii. 7, 8). Indeed God makes a covenant that He will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation (Ex. xxxiv. 10). As every prophecy that has been fulfilled has been fulfilled literally, we prefer to take our stand with those who believe that the sea, the trees, the rivers, and the ships of these trumpet judgments are to be understood literally.

We have only to call to mind the menace to national existence that the submarine campaign instituted, to appreciate, somewhat, the dreadful calamity it will be when a third part of the shipping is destroyed.

Our desire is single—we wish to believe God, and to help His people to be free to do the same, and any allusions to the teachings of other servants of God are not made in a carping spirit, but in an earnest desire for truth free of tradition.

### **#33. The First Woe.--The opening of the Abyss (ix. 1-11). pp. 65 - 70**

To set out in diagram form that the seventh seal sub-divides into seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet again sub-divides into seven vials, is attractive, and we have made several attempts to improve upon the efforts of those who had previously dealt with it. Being desirous of making our lay-out as scriptural as possible, we made careful examination of the Scriptures to obtain data upon which to work. The result is that no diagram has been prepared, for we have been obliged to confess that our notion on the subject was not supported sufficiently by the Scriptures.

We have seen that the six seals are complete in themselves. No event except solemn silence is chronicled upon the opening of the seventh seal. Instead of the seventh seal expanding to cover the events of the seven trumpets and seven vials, a new set of prophetic visions, ranging over parts of history already covered by the six seals, is introduced by the seven trumpets judgments. Just as the sixth seal completes the series, leaving the seventh detached and isolated, so the sixth trumpet appears to complete the series.

The narrative proceeds unbroken till the sixth trumpet is sounded (ix. 13-21). Chapter x. does not immediately follow with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Another mighty angel comes down from heaven, holding in his hand a little book. Seven thunders utter their voices and their utterances are sealed. The mighty angel refers to the days of the sounding of the seventh trumpet as a period when the mystery of God shall be finished. John, however, is told that he must prophecy again before many peoples and nations and tongues and kings. The temple of God is measured, and the two witnesses prophecy for 1260 days. There is therefore a considerable interval indicated. These trumpets are, however, connected by the fact that they are called the three woes (viii. 13; ix. 12; xi. 14). Chapter xii. must go back again in history, for the seventh trumpet proclaims Christ as heaven's King, while in chapter xii. Satan is active and the Lord's people are persecuted. Chapter xiii. tells of the rise of the beast and the false prophet, and chapter xiv. speaks of the 144,000 on Mount Zion, and of the fall of Babylon. Then after this long interval the apostle speaks of the seven vials as the seven last plagues. It will be seen, however, that under the seventh vial great Babylon comes into remembrance (xvi. 19), whose judgment is given in detail in chapters xvii. and xviii. This shows that

once again, under the vials, history is retraversed. Then follows the great Hallelujah of xix., the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the riding forth of Christ as King of kings.

It will be seen that a great interval separates the trumpets from the vials, and there is no possibility, so it appears to us, that the seventh trumpet which proclaims that the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ, can *develop* into the seven vials which culminate in the judgment of Babylon. The order of these seals and trumpets may be perceived more clearly if set out thus:--

- A | The Six Seals. A series of judgments ending in wrath of the Lamb. Heaven departs as a scroll.
- B | Episode separating the seventh seal from the rest. The 144,000 and the great multitude.
- C | The Seventh Seal. Silence in heaven.
- A | The Six Trumpets. A series of judgments characterized by the affliction of "a third part".
- B | Episodes separating the seventh trumpet from the rest. The little book. The two witnesses.
- C | The Seventh Trumpet. Christ proclaimed King.

So far there is a sequence of events which corresponds, but with chapter xii. we commence something quite different. There is, however, a very marked connection between the seven trumpets and the seven vials, which we must notice before we attempt to go further.

<b>Trumpets.</b> <i>(Partial, not complete, mercy still holding back).</i>	<b>Vials.</b> <i>(The last plagues. In these the fury of God completed).</i>
FIRST.	FIRST.
On the earth fire and blood. Third part trees and all grass burnt up.	On the earth grievous sore on worshippers of the beast.
SECOND.	SECOND.
On the sea. Third part became blood. Third part creatures died. Third part ships destroyed.	On the sea. It (the sea) became as blood of a dead man. Every living creature died.
THIRD.	THIRD.
On the rivers and fountains. Third part smitten. Third part wormwood.	On rivers and fountains. All smitten. They become blood.
FOURTH.	FOURTH.
On sun, moon and stars. Third part smitten. Third part of day and night.	On the sun. men scorched.
FIFTH.	FIFTH.
The Abyss opened. Darkness. Men tormented 5 months. King Appollyon.	The throne of the beast. Darkness. Men gnawed their tongues for pain.
SIXTH.	SIXTH.
The river Euphrates. The four angels loosed. Horsemen. Third part of men killed.	The river Euphrates dried up. Way for kings of East prepared. Three spirits like frogs. Armageddon.
SEVENTH.	SEVENTH.
Voices saying. Kingship of Christ.	Into the air. Voice says, "It is done."

By comparing the foregoing columns the reader will see that God in His longsuffering reserved the full outpouring of wrath till the end. A third part is smitten under the trumpets, yet men repented not, so the long-deferred stroke at last must fall. By reason of the terrible results that follow the sounding of the last three trumpets, they are called “three woes”.

“And I beheld and I heard one eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those that dwell upon the earth by reason of the sounding of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound” (viii. 13).

The reading “eagle” (*aetos*) is supported by the best texts (see R.V.). Eagles are often used in Scripture in association with judgment, and this may be the reason for its use here. Our interest is therefore focussed upon these three trumpets, and we shall observe that they are described at greater length than the first four.

The first four trumpets are somewhat preparatory, warnings as it were to men concerning the nature of their guilt and the judgment impending. Up till this point the seals and the trumpets have shown wonders in earth, sea, air, heaven, and the greater and lesser luminaries.

*The first woe opens the Abyss.* What this fact means the mind cannot conceive. The Revelation contains several such crises. The casting of Satan out of heaven to the earth is another such close contact with hell. So also when the beast arises out of the Abyss. What an awful place the world will then become. The nature of the judgment is suggested by the likeness used—locusts. The host of destroyers is headed by Apollyon, *the* destroyer.

It would appear also from a close following of the original, that a fallen star, not one of the angels of God, is commissioned to let loose this scourge upon the earth. “And I saw a star, out of heaven having fallen”. The idea is not so much that John saw the star *fall*, but that he saw a *fallen star*. To this fallen star is given the key of the pit of the abyss. The LXX uses this word *abussos* (“the deep”) in Gen. i. 2. The waters which at that time covered the earth were pushed back at the emerging of the earth, again to break their bounds at the flood, when “the fountains of the great deep were broken up” (Gen. vii. 11).

The loosing of these locusts is a forerunner of a greater scourge, for out of the Abyss arises the beast (Rev. xi. 7; xvii. 8). It will be the prison of Satan during the thousand years. It is not to be confused with gehenna or the lake of fire, as it is differentiated in xvii. 8 from perdition. Satan likewise emerges from the Abyss after the thousand years and is cast into the lake of fire. The Abyss, being so closely connected with the supernatural evils of the closing days of Gentiles dominion, will not, we might well expect, liberate blessing to the earth, when the pit is opened by the fallen star. Smoke and intense darkness prepare the way for the scourge now let loose, which is described as that of locusts.

When the prophet Joel would speak of the terrors of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, he uses the figure of the locust. It is probable that Joel i. 4 refers to the locust under four stages of its development. The children's children were to tell the children of another generation of this destructive scourge. "Alas", says the prophet, "for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come" (Joel i. 15). The second chapter under the blowing of a trumpet speaks of this terrible visitation in language that applies to man. "A great people and a strong". Yet they are not ordinary men for, "there hath not been ever the like, neither shall there be any more after it, even to the years of many generations" (Joel ii. 2).

The Assyrian invasions were foreshadowings of the day of the Lord. That is why Isaiah, in the midst of his prophecy concerning the future, breaks off to tell of Sennacherib and his overthrow. In Prov. xxx. 27 we are told that "the locusts have no king". As the locusts of Rev. ix. have a king, it follows that these are a different kind from the natural order.

The description of these strange beings is fairly full, if at the same time strange:--

1. They are like horses prepared unto battle.
2. They wore as it were golden crowns.
3. Their faces were like the faces of men.
4. They had hair as the hair of women.
5. Their teeth were like the teeth of a lion.
6. They had breastplates of iron.
7. They made a sound like many chariots
8. They had tails like scorpions.
9. And they had a king named Apollyon.

There is a resemblance between the natural and the supernatural order of locusts in that five months is the space over which their ravages extend. The natural order appear usually in May and cease in September. Ordinary locusts destroy vegetation. These locusts are forbidden to hurt the grass, green herb or tree, but only the men who have not the seal of God upon their foreheads. When the trees are smitten, or when the waters become blood, the innocent suffer together with the guilty. This first woe discriminates, and does not punish man by destroying his food, but signally attacks those only who are devoted to the beast. The power of death was not given to them, but the power to torment men for five months. The limitation imposed upon Satan in connection with Job will come into mind. The torment is indeed terrible, for men will seek death and not find it. The reference to the hair on the locust, together with the general setting of the vision, makes one think of Jer. li. 27:--

"Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her: cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars" (or locust bristling with hair).

In Rev. ix. 3 we read of the locusts that "authority was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have authority". There is nothing strange in reading that these locusts from

the Abyss have an authority given them to hurt, and it might have been written that their hurt was like that of a scorpion. It does say this, but it says more. It reveals the fact that the scorpion of the earth can actually hurt a man now because authority is given it. The permission to hurt and destroy is not limited to scorpions, but over the face of the whole creation creatures seem authorized to spoil, destroy, infect and corrupt the fair things of earth. All this is because of sin and the lost dominion of man. It is intensified in the case before us, and will only cease when the dominion is again vested in the Son of man when it shall at last be true that

“the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. . . . the weaned child shall put his hand in the adder’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain” (Isa. xi. 6-9).

Both the names of the king of these locusts of the Abyss mean destroyer, and Joel, who uses the locust to describe the terrible day of the Lord, speaks of it as, “a destruction from the Almighty”. A day comes, however, when God will “destroy them that destroy the earth”, when the last enemy shall be destroyed, when that abused term “reconstruction” shall be gloriously realized, because based upon the “reconciliation” accomplished by the Son of God.

### **#34. The Second Woe.-- The Four Angels of the Euphrates (ix. 12-21). pp. 97 - 101**

“One woe is past; behold, there are coming yet two woes after these things.”

In the first woe we see the Abyss opened and its immediate consequences. In this there is revealed the yet further relation between rivers and deeps with spirit powers. But first let us notice who it is that speaks and from whence the message comes:--

“And the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I hear a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.”

The golden altar stood, whether in tabernacle or temple, immediately before the veil. The command proceeds from the temple, and the judgment cannot therefore be called “political” in a sense which would sever it from connection with the temple. We ask our readers to be true *Bereans* over this point. The command is a singular one. “Loose the four angels which are bound at the river Euphrates”.

The river Euphrates meets us in Gen. ii. in association with the creation of man. It formed the eastern boundary of the promised land (Deut. xi. 24). Babylon’s doom was typified by the casting of a book bound to a stone into this river (Jer. li. 63). It is specially marked out for judgment under the sixth vial (Rev. xvi. 12). Babel and Babylon are linked with this river, and there at this eastern boundary of the land of promise four angels are bound:--

“And the four angels were loosed, even those having been made ready for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men.”

What stress this passage lays on the exact moment! In our puny computations of prophetic times we are full of suppositions. A published list of the dates and times suggested when certain prophecies are supposed to have been, or will be, fulfilled, would be its own confutation. There are no round figures with God. To us, as to Habakkuk, He speaks:--

“The vision is yet for the appointed time, and panteth toward the end, and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it: because it will surely come, it will not delay.”

Not only the year, but the month of that year is foreordained. Not only the month, but the day, yea, the very hour of that day is a matter of Divine provision. And what is all this careful provision for?—the killing of the third part of mankind! Upon the release of these four angels, there appears an army whose immense numbers, and whose monstrous character, while admittedly beyond our present comprehension, is not beyond our simple faith. The number is “two myriads of myriads”, or 200,000,000, and such an army passes beyond human understanding. Yet the number must not be explained away, for the apostle adds, “I heard the number”.

The description of these horses is unlike that of any creature known to man. Fire, smoke and brimstone come out of the horses’ mouths and kill the third part of men. The tails also of these horses have heads like serpents. Like the locusts of the preceding trumpet they belong not to our creation—they are from beneath. The description of these creatures is indeed strange, yet we are not therefore to conclude that the passage is figurative. The apostle has described these beings in full detail because they are so strange. God had said:--

“I will do marvels (*pala*, miracles, wondrous works, used of the plagues of Egypt, Psalm cvi. 22) which have not been done in all the earth nor in any nation” (Exod. xxxiv. 10).

What seems a greater marvel is revealed in the concluding verses of Rev. ix.:--

“And the rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

To think that this great woe should visit mankind, leaving behind one third of the race dead, and not bring about repentance, seems almost impossible. “The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, *who can know it?*”

Some commentators find a difficulty in interpreting these words literally, believing it to be impossible that the enlightened world should ever fall into idolatry of such gross a type. If the reader will reflect, he will soon discover incipient idolatry with the actual, literal idols of gold, silver, brass, wood and stone about him. How many have their

“mascots” in one form or another? From time to time grotesque figures are put on the market in the form of desk companions, motor-car mascots, watch chain ornaments, etc., which are “lucky”, or preserve from accident, or some other good that should be sought from the Lord only.

Then the passage specifies the worship of demons. As we write these words, two papers have come into the market. One is called PAN after the Greek god of that name. The other is called EVE which among other advertised attractions will be *Pagan!* One of these publications is for “Saints and Cynics”! Spiritism is demonism. The apostle Paul writing to Timothy says:--

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons.”

Witchcraft, necromancy, clairvoyance are all leading on to the same dreadful goal—a state of hardened unrepentance, deceiving and being deceived. Of those who are spoken of in Rev. ix. 2, II Thess. ii. seems to speak:--

“Then shall that wicked one be revealed. . . . whose coming is after the working of Satan. . . . with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion (a working of error, R.V.), that they should believe THE LIE.”

Men will actually worship the dragon, the beast and his image (see xiii. 4, 15). Men will be saved in that depraved hour simply worship Him as Creator that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (xiv. 7). Idolatry originated in the heart of man:--

“When they knew God they glorified Him not as God. . . . they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man. . . . they changed the truth of God into a LIE and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed forever.”

Immorality is always the handmaid of idolatry. The spirits that prey upon mankind are often “Unclean spirits”. If mankind sank so low when God “gave them up”, to what depth will they descend when God send them the strong delusion? These sins are essentially “religious”. This unprecedented judgment falls upon false worshippers. It is impossible to differentiate between the political and the religious, the throne judgment and the temple judgment, for the references to the temple and worship are not confined to any section. Social sins are spoken of as secondary in this awful list; and even of the four sins mentioned, sorcery and fornication have much to do with “religion” (ii. 20). The ready acceptance of the teaching of demons and the miracles that accompany their teaching are indicated in xvi. 13, 14.

The awful condition indicated in Rev. ix. 20, 21 is traceable to Babylon, and we need not go outside the Revelation to find that this is so. Babylon makes the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. Babylon is depicted as drunk with the blood of saints. Babylon deceived all the nations by her sorceries. Babylon becomes the habitation of demons. Since the days of Nimrod Babylon has been Anti-Christ.

Modernism, the super-man, civilization, are all so many phases of Babylonianism, and we do well to remember the horrible thing that surrounds us and entangles us, lest we forget our separate calling and bring that holy name into disrepute.

We shall miss the most powerful exposition of all if we do not realize that in Rev. ix. 20 we have a quotation from the Book of Daniel. It is common knowledge that Daniel's prophetic visions are preparatory to the vision of the Revelation, yet the quotation here is not from one of the visions of Daniel's book. It is taken from Daniel's solemn warning to Belshazzar, in the night in which he was slain.

“And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, *though thou knowest all this*; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: Then was the part of the hand sent from Him; and this writing was written. . . . God hath numbered thy Kingdom and finished it. . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting” (Dan. v.).

Belshazzar lifted himself against the Lord of heaven in spite of the example of Nebuchadnezzar. He did not receive the love of the truth that he might be saved. So likewise, in spite of the most unprecedented judgment that had fallen upon mankind, it is written, *the rest of the men. . . . repented not.*

If Belshazzar sets forth the character and doom of the last phase of Babylonianism, Daniel and his companions set forth the faithful remnant, who pass through fire and who are cast to the lions, rather than bow down to the idol of the state. We may have sung with little thought, as children, “Dare to be a Daniel”. May we pray with a deeper realization that both we and our dear ones may stand as steadfast as did that man of God.

So ends this phase of the sixth trumpet judgment, with a world mad upon its idols, and given up to evil. As it was with Belshazzar, so must it be again; the next act in this mighty drama will be the “taking of the Kingdom”, not indeed by Darius the Mede (who will follow the folly of Belshazzar), but by Christ the Lord, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

### #35. The Mystery of God finished (x). pp. 129 - 134

The result of the sounding of the with trumpet revealed mankind with a heart like that of Belshazzar. The quotation from Dan. v. makes one feel that judgment severe and without remedy is imminent. The kingdoms of this world are about to pass under the blessed sway of Christ the Lord. Before the seventh angel sounds and the proclamation of heaven's King is made, two most solemn episodes intervene. The first is recorded in Chapter x.

A mighty angel with insignia of covenant-keeping power descends from heaven. In chapter iv. a rainbow encircled the throne. Here the rainbow is seen on the head of the mighty angel. His face also was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. There is a close parallel here with the description of the Lord as the King-Priest in Rev. i. This mighty angel comes, clothed with the authority of heaven, and comes to announce with mighty voice that the Lord at length will take unto Himself His great power and reign. "The nations tumultuously assemble, and the peoples imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, the rulers take counsel together (a league evidently in operation) against the Lord and against His Anointed." These words of Psa. ii. seem prophetic of this period. "Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." These words speak of the judgment of the Revelation. "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill in Zion." This is the substance of the result of sounding the seventh trumpet. In spite of all, in spite of Satan, the beast, and all the infernal hosts, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth".

The power indicated in Psa. ii.—"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel"—is referred to in the Revelation more than once. The decree announced in this Psalm has reference to the Son as the King. In Psalm cx. we find the words, "The Lord said unto My Lord, 'Sit Thou at My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool'." This is what has been happening under the seals and the trumpets. At the sixth trumpet the enemies of the Lord are seen as His footstool. "The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies." This is not the reign of peace, it is the rule of the great David, before the Solomonic reign can begin.

Instead of the decree we have here an oath, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec'." Heaven's King is also Priest. Throne and Temple are united in Him. His nearest subjects are a kingdom of priests, and these two functions cannot be divided in the Revelation.

"The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through Kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations. He shall fill the places with dead bodies. He shall strike through the heads over a great land."

These words vividly anticipate the remaining Chapters of the Revelation.

The mighty angel who descends from heaven in Rev. x. holds in His hand “A little scroll open”. There are three contrasts here with the scene of chapter v. There, it is a scroll; here it is a little scroll. There none but the Lamb of God could be found worthy enough to take the scroll; here a mighty angel has it. There it was sealed with seven seals; here it is open. It seems evident that this mighty angel comes with full authority and with all the evidences to make formal claim for his Lord. When Christ, as the Son of man, was about to come in lowliness to Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Calvary, a man of the wilderness in camel’s hair was His forerunner. Now that the same Son of man is about to take the kingdom and reign in glory, His forerunner is a mighty angel. John Baptist cried “Repent”, but the sixth seal reveals the utter impenitence of man. The mighty angel makes no call to repentance.

Majesty accompanies this great forerunner’s every act. “He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.” This first act symbolizes possession. At His first coming though “the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not”. He was pointed out by His forerunner as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. At His second coming the world made by Him will be claimed by Him. Creation will not be alienated for ever. His forerunner this time enters into possession. The inheritance is secured:--

“Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen, thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth, thy possession.”

No longer as the Lamb of God to die for sin, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah He is coming in power and great glory. The cry of this mighty angel was as the roar of a lion, and seven thunders utter their voices at his cry, “*the* seven thunders” to be exact. We have the seven angels, the seven stars, the seven spirits, and here the seven thunders. What were these echoes awakened by the angel’s voice? Were they the distant sounds of the seven vials? We do not know. For some wise purpose the apostle was commanded, “Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not”. Whatever they said, it was sealed. We believe that they are unsealed in the pouring out of the seven last plagues. The angel now:--

“lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which therein are, that there should be time no longer.”

Before saying anything about this, we shall be wise to notice a parallel passage in Dan. xii. The prominent figure is Michael, the great prince which standeth for Israel. The setting is the time of great tribulation and resurrection. Daniel is instructed to shut up the words, and to seal the book, even to the time of the end. Then comes the parallel with Rev. x.:--

“And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left unto heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever, that it shall be for a time, times and an half: and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.”

In both cases, it will be observed, time is the subject. The term time, times and a half, is one way of referring to that period which figures so largely in Revelation, and is spoken of sometimes as 1,260 days, sometimes as forty-two months, being three years and a half. This we will consider in its proper place. In Rev. x., instead of saying that a certain amount of time shall run its course, the angel says, “time shall be no longer”.

The word “time” here is *chronos*. This word is used four times in the Revelation, and its meaning will be ascertained by considering the four passages together:--

### **Chronos.**

- A | ii. 21. “Space to repent.”—*See* sins detailed in verses 20 and 21, and the threat in 22 and 23.
- B | vi. 11. “A little season.”—Souls slain for Word of God and testimony; told to wait.
- A | x. 6. “No longer time.”—*See* statement concerning non-repentance at the end of chapter x., and the judgment that follows.
- B | xx. 3. “A little season.”—Souls of beheaded for testimony and Word; now reign.

It will be seen that the passage in x. 6 corresponds with ii. 21, and leads us to see that the angel declares that “space for repentance shall be no longer”. Awful announcement! Yet who can say the Lord has not been longsuffering? The very complicated series of slowly increasing judgments are evidences that judgment is His strange act. Now however the wrath is come to the uttermost, and will be poured out without admixture. Coupled with this, we must read vi. 11. There delay is indicated until the martyr host is complete; here the delay is finished, heaven’s King is at hand, and the martyred souls are soon to be liberated to share the reign of the thousand years. A sharp contrast therefore is made in the messages of the two forerunners.

We said above that the mighty angel makes no call to repentance, we can now see that he indicates that the time for repentance is over. This is indeed a “Woe”. The angel’s statement however has not been completely given yet. After this declaration that there should be time no longer he continues:--

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished also, as He hath announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets.”

The mystery of God announced as a gospel (*evangelizō*) to His servants the prophets must not be confused with the mystery revealed only to the apostle Paul. It is the conclusion of the gospel of the kingdom, deferred owing to Israel’s unrepentance, and here strangely enough ushered in upon the impenitence of the Gentiles. There may be a connection however here of these two hitherto separate lines of truth. The hope of the church of the mystery is given in Col. iii. 4:--

“When Christ who is our life shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him *in glory*.”

Before the Lord takes to Himself His great power to reign He will be “made manifest” in glory. The church of the One Body will then be “made manifest” with Him. The time

when this takes place we are not told. Here, as we see in Chapter x., the mystery of God is brought to a conclusion in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound. All the mysteries of the Word seem to focus here. What are the mysteries referred to in Matt. xiii.? Most interpreters of the parables would have us believe that the Christendom of the past 1,900 years is the fulfillment of those parables. We believe they point to the closing day of the Lord.

The mystery of Christ's rejection is solved by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The mystery of Israel's blindness shall be finished when the trumpet sounds, for when "He shall send back Jesus", the times of restitution shall begin, and all Israel shall be saved. Israel's feast of trumpets in the seventh month, the trumpet of the jubilee with its liberty and re-entry into the forfeited inheritance, is consummated in the sounding of this seventh trumpet. The mystery of the sudden change from mortality to immortality without the necessity of death and resurrection will be solved when this trumpet sounds. This, together with the resurrection, takes place at the last trump. When this is brought to pass the prophecy of Isa. xxv. 8 is fulfilled, which in its turn will take place when the veil that is spread over all nations shall be taken away, the rebuke of God's people be taken away from off all the earth, and the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously (Isa. xxv. 6-8; xxiv. 23).

The proclamation of Christ as King is the solution of every mystery, the reason for all the chequered history of the world, the goal of the purpose of the ages.

John is commanded to take the little scroll and eat it. The effect of doing so was that while it was to his mouth as sweet as honey, yet to his belly it was bitter. Ezek. ii. 9-iii. 3 is parallel. "How sweet are thy words to my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth", said the psalmist, and this is echoed by the apostle. Yet the awful character of the judgments therein revealed could not be contemplated without emotion.

After having taken the little scroll and eaten it the apostle is told, "Thou must prophesy again concerning (or against, but not 'before', *epi* with dative) many peoples, and nations, and tongues and kings". The simplest interpretation seems to be that the remaining chapters of the Revelation, "the words of this prophecy", are here intended. Some who think that a future ministry is here indicated have wondered whether John was to be one of the two witnesses of Chapter xi., but this we do not believe is at all likely.

There is a sweetness and a bitterness at the consummation of God's mystery. It is the year of God's redeemed, but it is also the day of vengeance. This we shall see more fully when we read the actual passage in Chapter xi., which chronicles the sounding of the seventh trumpet. The book of the Revelation is essentially, "The revelation of Jesus Christ". The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. "Lo, I come", and "Lo, He comes" fill the volume of the book and bring the mystery of God to an end.

May the seventh angel quickly sound! The bitterness attending that trumpet note will soon be passed, and then bliss, glory, joy and life immortal! *Even so come Lord Jesus.*

### #36. The Two Witnesses (xi. 1-14). pp. 169 - 173

The second woe finishes with the testimony of the two witnesses, who are introduced by the measuring of the temple, the altar and the worshippers. This section therefore, like that of the opening one of the second woe, has to do with worship, and is a temple section.

“And there was given to me a reed, like a rod, and he said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and *take account of* those who worship therein. But the court that is without the temple cast without, and measure it not: because it is given up to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”

We are inclined to translate “a reed, like a sceptre”. Moses Stuart and Dr. Bullinger show that the Hebrew equivalent is used for a measuring rod (Psa. lxxiv. 2; Jer. x. 16; li. 19). These references, however, are not very convincing. The word *rhabdos* is used in the N.T. with the meaning of:--

1. An ordinary staff (Matt. x. 10).
2. A rod for correction (I Cor. iv. 21).
3. A sceptre as of a King (Heb. i. 8).
4. A rod as of the High Priest (Heb. ix. 4).
5. The shepherd's club (Rev. ii. 27, *rule* = to shepherd. The word occurs four times in the Revelation: ii. 27; xi. 1; xii. 5; xix. 15).

It will be seen therefore that three references speak of shepherding the nations, and one is connected with measuring the temple.

Two passages of the O.T. may throw a light on the meaning intended here.

“And concerning the tithing of the herd, or of the flock, even whatsoever *passeth under the rod*, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord” (Lev. xxvii. 32).

“I will cause you *to pass under the rod*, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant” (Ezek. xx. 37).

In these passages the Lord is either claiming a portion as His special tithe, or referring to the gathering again of Israel. In both cases there is an emphasis upon peculiar possession, protection and reservation.

It will be remembered that before the seventh seal was opened 144,000 of the tribes of Israel were sealed. Here, before the seventh trumpet sounds, the temple and its worshippers are measured. Taking the suggestion of peculiar ownership from Lev. xxvii. and Ezek. xx., and that of sealing and preservation from Rev. vii., it appears that such is the meaning of the measuring of the temple. Another parallel is found in Zech. ii.

“I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem,

to see what is the breadth thereof and what is the length thereof. . . . Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her” (Zech. ii. 1-5).

What is intended of the city here seems to be intended of the temple in Rev. xi. The passage in Revelation is concerned only with reserving the innermost part of the temple, the court is cast out and the city is trodden under foot. This emphasizes the fact that the temple and its worship is to be specially remembered in this section.

There are several passages of O.T. Scripture which refer to the time of trouble that will overtake the Lord’s people, and indicate their place of refuge. Take for example the following:--

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty” (Psa. xci. 1).

“. . . . to enquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a rock” (Psa. xxvii. 4, 5).

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues” (psa. xxxi. 20).

This secret place, the secret of His tabernacle and presence, seems intended in Rev. xi. The pride of man reaches its height in the blasphemy of the beast. This period is given as 42 months in xiii. 5, which is exactly the same period given for the treading down of the city in Rev. xi. 2. All except the inner shrine of the temple (*naos*) is given over to the Gentiles. But God has reserved His portion. There is a secret place. The sealed 144,000 will find a secure haven from the pride of men and the strife of tongues. The Lord (in Luke xxi. 24) says:--

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

We will not go into the question as to when these times commenced; it will be sufficient for us here to state broadly that they commenced with Nebuchadnezzar as the King of Babylon. Rev. xi. does not speak of the whole Gentile times but only of the final period of 42 months when blasphemy will reach its height. During this period two specially equipped witnesses will prophesy:--

“And I will endow My two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

This period, given in days, is the same as the 42 months already mentioned. While the final treading down of the city takes place, the two witnesses prophesy. As a result of Elijah’s prayer the heaven was shut for the same period, three and a half years, so that there was no rain (Luke iv. 25; James v. 17). The history of that event and character of the King should be remembered as a type of the end. Many expositors believe that Elijah will be one of the two witnesses, and those who argue that as he did not die he must come back to do so usually take Enoch to be the other witness. Others, by reason of the transfiguration, prefer Moses and Elijah. The better plan is to abide by the statement of

Scripture. “These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands which stand before the Lord of the earth.”

The title “Lord of the earth” is in line with the angel’s claim in Chapter x. over the sea and the earth, upon which he placed his feet. The alternative to worshipping the beast is that of worshipping the Creator (xiv. 7) for the condition of things has become so bad that this most elementary feature constitutes the whole of the gospel then proclaimed. The Gentile times revert back to the character given in Rom. i. 18-32. The two witnesses are spoken of as the two olive trees and the two lampstands. This is a reference back to Zech. iv. When the angel asked Zechariah whether he knew the meaning of the two olive trees which emptied their oil into the lampstands, he replied, “No, my Lord”. Then he answered Zechariah, saying:--

“This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, saying, Grace, grace unto it.”

The olive branches are differentiated from the lampstand, and are “the anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth” (14). In the Revelation the witnesses are called the two olive trees and the two lampstand. However, much is parallel. In both cases there is a return from captivity in progress. Great opposition is rising against the people, the city and the temple. Nevertheless, the seventh angel shall sound and the headstone shall be brought forth with acclamation. The great mountain foreshadows Babylon, and when Babylon falls, heaven rings with Hallelujahs and the Lord rides forth on the white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The secret of power for the two witnesses is, “by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”. These witnesses have the power of devouring their enemies with fire and of shutting up the rain of heaven. They can turn water into blood, and smite the earth with every plague as often as they will. The plagues brought upon Pharaoh by Moses and the judgments brought about by Elijah were literal; so will these be, no power, not even that of Satan himself, can cut short a testimony given and sustained by God. For three years and a half Satan, the beast, and the false prophet with their host of followers, both demon and human, try in vain to stop this testimony. All the while that men are enrolling themselves on the side of the beast, God sustains a powerful miraculous testimony to Himself and His truth. The whole world have this testimony and become thereby involved in guilt.

It is important to observe the order of the words in Rev. xix. 20, “with which he deceived those that *had received* the mark of the beast”. The *receiving* came before the *deceiving*. They are without excuse. Heaven’s witnesses have given unceasing warning, and at last repentance becomes impossible.

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast, which cometh up out of the abyss, shall make war upon them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie on the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where our Lord also was crucified.”

The two witnesses die at Jerusalem. Its character at the time is vividly presented under the two similes Sodom and Egypt, and by the connection of the martyrdom of the two witnesses with the crucifixion of their Lord. So far as God's purpose is concerned Jerusalem is "the holy city", but viewed in its apostacy it is not even named, being described instead by a threefold description which reveals its complicity with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

By reading chapter xiii. it will be seen that while these two witnesses are working their miracles, the false prophet is working his. It is a repetition of the days of Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh. A short-lived rejoicing is followed by a great fear, for these servants of the Lord are raised from the dead and a loud voice from heaven says:--

"Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in the cloud and their enemies beheld them. At the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell, and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand names of men."

The result of this judgment causes great fear to fall upon men, and they give glory to the God of heaven. No evidence is given that these men experience any change of nature, and the giving of the glory may be a passing admission that "this is the finger of God". On the other hand we do not limit God. The aionian gospel distinctly says, "Fear God and give glory to Him, because the hour of His judgment is come" (xiv. 7), and therefore we leave it without expressing an opinion. With this incident the second woe passes, and the third woe is spoken of as coming quickly.

God has never left Himself without witness. In the utter corruption and apostacy of the final three-and-a-half years of this world's Christless history two miraculously endowed, and miraculously sustained, witnesses bear their testimony. The longsuffering exhibited toward Pharaoh is repeated toward his antitype, and the miraculous ministry of Moses and Aaron is repeated in that of the two witnesses. But, alas, as it was with Pharaoh, so will it be again: the waters will cover the oppressor, and all his pomp will descend to perdition.

The next sound to break forth is that of the seventh trumpet. Surely in those days the urgent prayer will be, *Even so, Come, Lord Jesus.*

## Sidelights on the Scriptures.

### #27. Greek and Roman Antiquities.

pp. 11 - 14

THE ELGIN ROOM.—The object of this series of notes being expressed in the title, *Sidelights on the Scriptures*, reference to the many objects of interest and beauty that the visitor will have before his eyes is precluded.

Architects and artists know the high ideal that the Greek architects and sculptors had before them when they planted and wrought the buildings that crowned the Acropolis at Athens. The Temple known as the Parthenon reached perhaps the highest mark of aesthetic refinement that has ever been reached in architecture. The mouldings and ornaments of this period are repeated to this day, all innovations and changes proving somehow failures. Yet all is vanity. The apostle Paul, when he visited Athens, was not stirred at the exquisite statuary, or the dignity and excellence of the Temple—“his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city full of idols.” His reference to the marvellous temples is recorded:--

“God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

His note concerning the Art for which the land and people were famous is :--

“We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.”

There is no spirituality in being devoid of artistic appreciation, else were the Philistine a pattern; spirituality is evidenced when the highest refinements of art are still recognized as of the flesh, and are seen to be the product of the *soul*, and not of the *spirit*, a distinction made by the Word which is sharper than any two-edged sword.

In this room will be found an architectural model which presents the Acropolis much as it appeared in Paul’s day, when on *Mars Hill* he preached the risen Christ, God’s new attitude to men, and man’s new responsibility to God (Acts xvii.).

THE MAUSOLEUM ROOM.—The tomb of Mausolos, one of the seven wonders of the world, has no direct bearing upon the Bible, but an alabaster jar, discovered upon the right of the Mausoleum, is of interest to all students of the ancient languages of the cuneiform inscriptions. The jar is inscribed with the words, “Xerxes, the great King”, in the Persian, Median, Assyrian, and Egyptian languages. This repetition, though small, affords a good opportunity for testing the differences in the languages of the inscriptions.

THE EPHEBUS ROOM.—Another of the seven wonders of the world was the temple of Diana of the Ephesians. On the left wall is a drawing, showing what the temple looked like when complete. So devoted were the Ephesians to the worship of Diana that the city

is styled *Neokoros*, or “temple-keeper” (see Acts xix. 35, *margin*), as an official title of honour. The Ephesian Diana differed from the Roman and the Greek Artemis, bearing the attributes of the great mother goddess rather than the virgin.

One of the great capitals that reared its head high above the earth when Paul was the object of Ephesian rage now stand within a few feet of the ground in the Ephesus room, and students of geometrical drawing will be interested to notice, in the eye of the volute, the pin points still visible, whereby the mason swung the curves of the Ionic volute of the capital.

THE ROMAN GALLERY.—Here are portrait busts of Roman Emperors: Cæsar Augustus, in whose reign Christ was born; Tiberius Cæsar, whose “image and superscription” was probably upon the “penny” shown to the Lord, and of whom the Jews said, “We have no king but Cæsar”; Nero, under whom Paul was first a prisoner and finally a martyr for the faith and for Christ; Titus, who as the General of his father’s army brought about the fall of Jerusalem.

THE ROOM OF GREEK AND LATIN INSCRIPTIONS.—There are two slabs here that we should notice. One, No. 171, a Greek inscription from Thessalonica, contains names of magistrates styled *Politarchs*, a local title quoted in Acts xvii. 6, 8. The fact of this being local and yet finding its place in the record of the Acts is one of those little touches which are worth volumes of argument with regard to the question of the inspiration and accuracy of the Scriptures. The other slab is a cast of an inscription which was set up over “the middle wall of partition”, which divided the court of the Gentiles from the court of Israel in the Temple at Jerusalem. The following is a translation.

NO ONE BEING A FOREIGNER MAY ENTER WITHIN THE ENCLOSURE AROUND THE HOLY PLACE. WHOEVER IS APPREHENDED, WILL HIMSELF BE TO BLAME FOR HIS DEATH WHICH WILL CERTAINLY FOLLOW.
--

Let the reader open his Bible as he faces this slab, and there read the glorious emancipation, access, and blessing that is recorded in Eph. ii.

Together, we have considered the antiquities of this Museum that have touched upon practically every phase of Bible History. It seems fitting that one of the greatest facts of the dispensation of the mystery should be so powerfully presented to our notice as we take our leave of this wonderful collection of Bible evidences. Before we leave the Museum, shall we not lift up our hearts in thanksgiving to God Who has caused so many incontrovertible proofs of the trustworthiness and accuracy of His Holy Word to be brought to light, just at the time when so-called Higher Criticism was apparently reducing the verities of our faith to figments and fables. Our faith needs no such evidences; like the blind man in John’s Gospel, we know one thing, whatever else we may not know, once we were blind, but now we see; nevertheless, we do not undervalue the Providence

of God Who has seen fit to demolish the blasphemous theories of the Higher Critics with the pick and the shovel of the Eastern excavator.

**A brief SYNOPSIS of Study in  
The Epistle to the Philippians.  
pp. 155 - 157**

1. THE PRISON EPISTLES.

- A | The dividing line of Dispensational Teaching – Paul’s Roman imprisonment.
- B | The relation of the four Prison Epistles.
  - a | *Ephesians*. | Fulness. Boldness.  
Seated. Not of Works.
  - b | *Philippians*. | Emptying (*kenosis*, ii. 7).  
Things that differ (i. 10).  
The Prize (iii. 14).  
Defence; striving; conflict (i. 7, 27).  
Offer; depart (ii. 17, i. 23).  
Suffer (i. 29).
- a | *Colossians*. | Balances Ephesians.
- b | *II Timothy*. | Forsaken (i. 15, iv. 10, 16).  
Rightly divide (ii. 15).  
The Crown (ii. 5, 12, iv. 8).  
Defence; striving; fight (iv. 6, ii. 5).  
Depart; offer (iv. 6).  
Suffer (i. 12, &c.).

While Ephesians emphasizes certainty and boldness, Philippians speaks of “fear and trembling”. Philippians deals with a prize to be won, not salvation already received.

Philippians and II Timothy are the Epistles of the Prize and the Crown, hence their emphasis on “endurance”, &c.

2. EXAMPLES IN PHILIPPIANS (i. 27 – iv. 2).

- A | i. 27-ii. 4. Stand fast, same love, same soul.
- B | ii. 5. The MIND of Christ—*Now*.
- C | ii. 6-11. The sevenfold humiliation and consequent exaltation of Christ given as an EXAMPLE.
- D | ii. 12-30. The Philippians.—“Wherefore.....work out.”  
Paul.—“If I be offered.....I rejoice.”  
Timothy.—“He did not seek his own.”  
Epaphroditus.—“Nigh unto death in service.”
- C | iii. 1-14. The sevenfold loss and gain of the Paul.  
Suffering in view of the Prize.  
Paul bids us note his walk as an EXAMPLE.
- B | iii. 21. The BODY of His glory.—*Then*.
- A | iv. 1, 2. Stand fast, same mind.



## 5. THE PERFECTING. (Phil. iii. 12).

### The Analogy of “Hebrews”.

1. The Law made nothing perfect (vii. 19, ix. 9, x. 1).
2. “Perfect” in contrast with “babes” (v. 13, 14).
3. The Perfecter (x. 14, xii. 1, 2).
4. The Perfecting of Christ (ii. 10, v. 8, 9).
5. The spirits of perfect righteous ones (xii. 23, xi. 40).  
(The parallel with Phil i. and iii.).
6. Marks of perfection.
7. Factors in Perfection.

## 6. THE OUT-RESURRECTION. (Phil. iii. 11).

This cannot be the general resurrection of all believers, for Paul says, “If by any means I might attain” unto it.

The words of the original are *tēn exanastasin tēn ek tōn nekrōn*, “the OUT resurrection, that which is OUT from the dead”.

Let us analyze the teaching of Scripture as to resurrection:--

1. *Anastasis nekrōn*. The simplest expression of all. Believed by Pharisees (Acts xxiii. 6).
2. *To ek nekrōn anastēnai*, “The rising out from the dead”. (Mark ix. 9, 10). This was something new to the disciples. This new expression gives us such passages as Rom. i. 4.
3. *Tēs anastaseōs tes ek nekrōn*, “The resurrection, that which is out from the dead”. (Luke xx. 35). This is connected with being “worthy to attain”, and approaches to Phil. iii. 11.
4. *Tēn exanastasin tēn ek tōn nekrōn*, “The out resurrection, that which is out from dead ones” (Phil. iii. 11).

Parallels are:--“The better resurrection” (Heb. xi. 35). “The spirits of perfected righteous ones” (Heb. xii. 23), and “Enoch, who was translated that he should not see death (Heb. xi. 5).

## 7. THE PURSUIT.

The essential condition.—“One thing I do” (iii. 13).

The essential feature. (iii. 8-10).

The essential rule. (iii. 14, 16, 17).

“Work out.”—Other references.

“Walk.”

What is “The Prize of the High Calling”? the spiritual characteristics? and the special dangers connected with this pursuit?

“SO RUN THAT YE MAY OBTAIN” (I Cor. ix. 24).

### **The Epistle to the Ephesians.** p. 158

#### 1. THE PLACE OF THE GENTILE IN THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES.

The setting aside of the Gentiles and the election of the one nation (Gen. x. - xii.).

The Times of the Gentiles. The transference of temporal power (Daniel).

The ministry of the reconciliation. Believing Gentiles—sons of Abraham (Acts).

The Prison Epistles. Their special Gentile ministry (Ephesians).

#### 2. “THE PRISONER OF JESUS CHRIST FOR YOU GENTILES” (Eph. iii. 1).

Paul’s commission (Acts ix.).

Paul’s separate ministry (Acts xiii.).

Paul’s twofold commission (Acts xx., xxvi.).

Paul bound for the hope of Israel (Acts xxviii.).

Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1).

#### 3. “REMEMBER, IN TIME PAST, YE WERE GENTILES” (Eph. iii. 1).

Chapter ii. is divided as follows:--

1-10. Doctrinal,

11-22. Dispensational.

“Dead in trespasses and sins” (ii.). Does this teach human depravity, or the great essential for *Ephesian* truth?

“With Christ.”—The sevenfold gospel for the believer.

Grace and Works (ii. 8-10).

Gentile disability (ii. 11, 12). The Middle Wall. Access. The both.

4. "THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF THIS MYSTERY AMONG THE GENTILES" (Col. i. 17).

Paul's claim to a dispensation. Meaning of *oikonomia* and occurrences.

Does Eph. i. 10 refer to the future or the present?

Can the consummation of the Ages be called a dispensation?

Paul's connection with the "mysteries". Meaning of the word and occurrences.

How introduced into Scripture. Significance of the fact.

5. THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY (i., ii., iv.).

The meaning of *ekklesia*. Many churches in Scripture.

Underlying principles ; characteristic differences.

Does I Cor. xii. deal with the Church which is His Body?

Does Eph. v. teach that the Body is the Bride?

The Head and the members.

6. "ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS" (i. 3-14).

The Father's Will.—Time, Sphere, Position.

The Son's Work.—Redemption, Headship, Inheritance.

The Spirit's Witness.—The Seal, the Earnest.

7. THE WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING (iv. - vi.).

The two walks of Chapter ii.

The walk worthy of the calling and the unity of the Spirit (iv.).

----- d o ----- and the truth (iv.).

----- d o ----- and love, light and wisdom (v.)

----- d o ----- and the sixfold division of society.

8. A STUDY OF KEY WORDS.

Peace, Grace, Mystery, *Aiōn* (Age, etc.).

Summary.