

The Berean Expositor

Acts xvii. 10, 11

“Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the Word of truth”

II Tim. ii. 15

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DEAR FELLOW-MEMBERS,

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”

As the darkness deepens with the close of this dispensation, and as the day approaches unto which we press, so it becomes increasingly incumbent upon us to “redeem the time”. In view of “the night” and “the day” may every article of *The Berean Expositor* be written—and read.

We cannot please all our readers, as some would appreciate this or that innovation, but we seek to fulfil our ministry as accountable to one Master only. It is, however, with great thankfulness that we quote from a letter just received, and we trust it may find an echo in the hearts of our readers. It expresses what is, at least, our desire if not our achievement.

“We are thankful for *The Berean Expositor*; and the friends who are willing prayerfully to study, and to go over things quietly, are learning to appreciate it. It does not appeal to some—they want a reading magazine, quite easy—and such things as are written in this make demand upon us to tarry and seek the light and power of the Spirit of God.”

“Let us therefore cast of Let us put on Let us walk decently” (Rom. xiii. 11-14).

Yours in the fight of faith,

CHARLES H. WELCH
FREDK. P. BRININGER

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Sufficient.

p. 175

“I am the Almighty God.” *El Shaddai* (“The God Who is enough, or sufficient”) carries the meaning.

“Lord, show us the Father, and it *sufficeth* us” (John xiv. 8).

“My grace is *sufficient* for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. xii. 9).

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all *sufficiency* in all things, may abound to every good work” (II Cor. ix. 8).

Answers to Correspondents. pp. 12, 13

No. 29. An esteemed reader (W.H.G.T.) of *The Berean Expositor* writes:--

“I am preparing a series of papers on Hebrews, and I have just given special attention to your most interesting interpretation of Heb. ii. 16, on p. 120 of Volume XI. While I do not yet see that your view is correct, I readily and gladly recognize that it is worthy of careful attention. My object, however, in writing to you is to raise one question connected with it. You say in the B.E. for last June (page 91 of Volume XII), that you continually find help and light on vexed questions by following the simple self-made motto, ‘When in doubt consult the Septuagint’. But I cannot see in your treatment of Heb. ii. 16 that you have applied this principle. In the Septuagint of Isa. xli. 8, 9, the phrase ‘seed of Abraham’ occurs, together with the verb found in Hebrews, and I observe that some commentators think that Hebrews is a reminiscence of this passage in Isaiah. Now there can be no doubt that the verb in Isa. xli. 9 means, ‘taken hold’ in the sense of the Revised Version of Heb. ii. 16. While, therefore, you rightly say that the word itself is colourless, with no moral meaning inherent in it, I should much like you to consider Heb. ii. 16 in the light of the Septuagint and give a further comment on the passage.”

Of all the letters that we receive, one of this description is the most encouraging. It has been suggested that we take a dose of our own medicine, and test the suggested interpretation of Heb. ii. 16 by the Septuagint. This we gladly do, and should the further investigation indicate that our suggestion is not tenable, we shall gladly set it aside and still seek the mind of God in His Word. The interpretation referred to reads:--

“For truly it (i.e., the fear of death, or death itself) does not lay hold of, or seize on angels, but of the seed of Abraham it does lay hold.”

Upon opening the LXX at Isa. xli. 9 we find the word used is *antilambanomai*, whereas in Heb. ii. 16 the word is *epilambanomai*. The difference is slight, but as the inspired Word uses every word with precision, we have to conclude that the two passages are not strictly parallel. We drew attention to the usage and meaning of *antilambanomai*, and as both words occur in the N.T. we must believe that the word that expresses the Spirit’s meaning has been rightly chosen. While we set Isa. xli. 9 aside, we very gladly give heed to the usage of *epilambanomai* in the LXX:--

“His hand *took hold* on Esau’s heel” (Gen. xxv. 26).

“*Take it by the tail*” (Exod. iv. 4).

“They *took* him, and slew him” (Judges xii. 6).

These first occurrences are a fair sample of the thirty or more passages that contain the word; “colourless and without moral meaning inherent” must be said of the LXX usage as of the N.T. There are however three passages where the usage of the word turns the scale of evidence in favour of the suggested interpretation of Heb. ii. 16:--

“Fear *took hold upon* them there, and pain, as of woman in travail” (Psa. xlviii., [xlvii.] 6).

“Fear hath *seized on* her: anguish and sorrows have taken here, as a woman in travail” (Jer. xlix. 23, [24]).

“Therefore this evil *hath happened unto* you” (Jer. xlv. 23).

If “fear” and “evil” can be said to “take hold upon” those concerning whom the Psalmist and the Prophet wrote, “the fear of death” can be said “lay hold of” those concerning whom the Apostle wrote. It is suggestive that those passages, which do take upon themselves any colour at all, are parallel with the suggested interpretation of Heb. ii. 16. While we would not say that these three passages prove anything, we must say that Heb. ii. 16 should still be considered on its merits, our survey of the LXX giving us just a little more inclination to believe that the interpretation offered above is the true one.

Will others readers *search and see* and let us hear from them? Our desire is the truth, and while endeavouring to teach others we are anxious and willing from others to learn also.

pp. 46-48

No. 30.—K.E.B.(Lanarkshire). “There seems to be a contradiction in Exod. xxxiii. 11 and 20. ‘The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend’, and ‘He said, Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me and live’.”

The sense of contradiction arises out of the mental addition to the statement in verse 11, that Moses *saw* the face of the Lord, which you will observe is neither the statement nor the meaning of the passage. It will be a help to us to notice that the Hebrew word “face” is of wider application than the English usage, and we must not fall into the error of judging Hebrew thought and expression by modern western ideas. We will confine ourselves in the first place to chapter xxxiii., and give every occurrence of the Hebrew word “face”:

“I will send an angel *before thee*” (verse 2).

“The Lord spake unto Moses *face to face*” (verse 11).

“*My presence* shall go with thee” (verse 14).

“If *Thy presence* go not with me” (verse 15).

“Upon the *face* of the earth” (verse 16).

“My goodness pass *before thee*

the name of the Lord *before thee*” (verse 19).

“Thou canst not see *My face*” (verse 20).

“*My face* shall not be seen” (verse 23).

It will be seen that in the immediate context of the verses under consideration, the word “face” is used in a way which demands the recognition of a figurative sense in order to interpret the passages truthfully and intelligibly. This usage will be abundantly confirmed if we glance at a few more verses in this same book of Exodus:--

“Evil is before you” (lit. *your faces*) (x. 10).

“Laid *before their faces* all these words” (xix. 7).

“Thou shalt have no gods before *Me*” (lit. before *my face*) (xx. 3).

“*Shewbread*” (lit. bread of *faces*) (xxv. 30).

“Upon the *forefront* (lit. over against *the face*) of the mitre” (xxviii. 37).

“*Before* the tabernacle” (xxix. 10).

Coming to Exod. xxxiii. once again, let us notice what is actually said in the verses which appear contradictory. First the positive statement of verse 20:--

“Thou (i.e. Moses) canst not see My face: for there shall no man (Heb. *Adam*) see Me and live.”

There is no ambiguity in the wording here. Privileged as Moses was, in this particular he was like the rest of mankind, utterly unable to look upon the face of God. Let us now look at verse 11. verse 9 says:--

“And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses.”

Note, it was the Lord Who talked with Moses, and not Moses who talked with the Lord. Verse 11 adds:--

“And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.”

The only part of the verse which demands attention is the expression “face to face”. Now seeing that in the same chapter it is categorically stated that neither Moses nor any other man could see the face of God, and seeing that verse 11 does not say that Moses *did see* the face of the Lord, and moreover, remembering the great latitude which the figurative use of “face” has in the Hebrew of Exodus, the contradiction is one more of the imagination than of the text. Unless we are prepared to understand the word “face” literally in every occurrence quoted above, “face to face” can mean no more than that in the case of Moses the mediation necessary in the case of Aaron and others was not demanded.

In Numb. xii. 8 the figure is retained, but the wording is altered, there instead of “face to face” we read “mouth to mouth”. The context too illuminates the intention of Exod. xxxiii. 11:--

“If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in A VISION and will speak unto him in A DREAM. My servant Moses is NOT SO, who is faithful in all Mine house. With him will I speak MOUTH TO MOUTH, even apparently (plainly), and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold” (xii. 6-8).

We are not to be found trifling over the literality of the words “mouth to mouth” (would not “mouth to ear” be more literal?), but see them as contrasted favourably with the lesser means of communication, i.e. a dream, a vision. Face to face, mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, hip and thigh, head to foot, these and many more will come to the mind of the reader, and not one figure, if found in ordinary literature, but what would be accepted without question.

Before leaving this subject, we would observe that the quotation from Numb. xii. introduces a deeper theme than that of the question of figures of speech.

“The similitude of the Lord shall he behold.”

This is a definite statement, and demands attention. There can be no question as to the meaning of the word “similitude”, for it comes in the law of Sinai:--

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any *likeness* of anything”
(Exod. xx. 4).

Numb. xii. 8 can only be understood in the light of the following passages, which speak of the Son of God.

“Who is the IMAGE of the INVISIBLE God” (Col. i. 15).

“Who being in the FORM of God took upon Him the FORM of a servant”
(Phil. ii. 6, 7).

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John i. 18).

If we stress the contradiction of Exod. xxxiii., we must also carry our objection over into the N.T. and find that the words of Christ, of John, of Paul also come short. This is by its very presumption revealed as a false objection, and is met by the simple recognition of the anthropomorphism of the language of revelation, without which God Who is Spirit and Infinite would remain unknown to the sons of men. Till we attain to that perfect day when we shall know even as we are known, let us thank God for the condescension revealed in the use of “figures of speech”.

Studies in Ecclesiastes.

#18. Wisdom (viii). pp. 24 - 26

Chapter viii. opens with a reference to the wise man, “Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?” (viii. 1). Speaking of the work of God, the writer concludes the chapter by saying, “though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it” (viii. 17).

We must keep well in mind that Ecclesiastes is discussing “What is that good”, and among other things he has declared that “Wisdom is good, like an inheritance it giveth life to them that have it” (vii. 11, 12). Though wisdom is so excellent, there are bounds set to its flight; if we observe them it shall be well with us, but if we despise or ignore them, we shall surely come to grief.

“I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me. That which is far off, and exceeding deep, who can find it out?” (vii. 23, 24).

So the Preacher asks the question, “Who is like the wise man?” and explains the special feature of the wise man that he has in mind by adding “And who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?”

The Hebrew *peshar* = “interpretation” occurs but once in Scripture, but the parallel Chaldee *p’shar* is used in Dan. ii. 4 - vii. 16 thirty-two times, and always in connection with the dreams of prophetic import given to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar and Daniel. This is entirely in line with the recurring thought of Ecclesiastes as to “what shall come after”, or as Daniel said, “what should come to pass hereafter”, which the wise men of Babylon could not interpret.

It is very suggestive that another expression that comes in Eccles. viii. 1, “The strength of his face shall be changed” is also found nowhere else but in Daniel. Dan. v. 6 reads “The King’s *countenance was changed*”: so also verses 9, 10. The passage however that bears most upon Eccles. viii. 1 is that which relates to Daniel himself. In Dan. vii. Daniel had a dream which revealed the future of the kingdoms of earth and the final triumph of the kingdom of the saints of the Most High. At the close he wrote:--

“Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my *countenance changed* in me.”

Yet another connection is made by the word “cogitation”, which in Eccles. i. 17, ii. 22, and iv. 16, is rendered “vexation”. We return to Eccles. viii. 1, and guided by the most evident parallels of Daniel, find that this verse divides up as follows:--

- A | The wise man.
- B | Interpretation.
- A | Wisdom makes face to shine.
- B | Interpretation often, by lifting the veil of the future,
changes the strength of face and plunges one into sorrow.

A little further on in Eccles. viii. the writer returns to the same thought by saying, “A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment” (verse 5). So far this is wisdom and will made the face to shine, but the Preacher continues:--

“Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be: for who can tell him when it shall be?” (verses 6 and 7).

What is troubling the man? Verse 8 explains:--

“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.”

Here we have an example of those who all their lifetime were held in bondage by the fear of death. Resurrection we have already seen unlocks the teaching of Ecclesiastes.

“All this have I seen”, said Ecclesiastes, “and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun”, and then he gives some examples. He sums up his observations in verse 12:--

“Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before Him.”

This is true, even though there be a vanity done upon the earth:--

“that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again there be wicked man to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous” (verse 14).

This in no wise alters the previous conclusion that *it shall be well with them that fear God*. We now come to “that good”, which is the object of search in this book:--

“Then I commended mirth (joy, gladness), because a man hath no better thing (see the series of ‘better things’ in chapter vii.) under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry, for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun” (viii. 15).

The question arises as one reads these words, Is this God’s truth, or is it merely the opinion of man? To arrive at a satisfactory conclusion necessitates a continuance of our study into chapter ix. We will therefore suspend judgment and seek grace that we may find the truth as we proceed. Meanwhile we may profit by what we have seen. Wisdom may give us a child-like and simple faith. It will enable us to see all the baffling perplexities of every-day life, the wicked prospering and the righteous suffering, and it will keep ever before our minds the fact that:--

“It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand; for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all” (vii. 18).
“I know that it shall be well with them that fear God” (viii. 12).

This is wisdom, it causes the face to shine. To probe and worry about all the mysteries of Providence however, to ignore the fact that “Though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it out”, this is seeking trouble, vexation, misery. Wisdom believes God, and the only persons who can really “enjoy life” are those who have thus realized *practically*, as well as theoretically:--

“that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are IN THE HAND OF GOD” (ix. 1).

We must pursue the subject further in our next paper.

#19. Contentment (viii., ix.). pp. 55 - 57

We arrived in our last article at the point where the Preacher commended mirth saying, “A man hath nothing better than to eat, and to drink, and be merry”. It must be admitted that these words are associated in some parts of Scripture with worldly unbelief, e.g., Luke xii. 19, but we must see whether this is the only context of these words before we judge the passage in Ecclesiastes. Prov. xvii. 22 says:--

“A merry heart doeth food like a medicine.”

Of Boaz it is written:--

“And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn” (Ruth iii. 7),

but there is no suggestion that Boaz was anything but a proper and God-fearing man in so doing. The Scripture describes the peace and prosperity of Israel under the reign of Solomon with these words:--

“Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry” (I Kings iv. 20).

It is rather unfortunate that the present-day conception of the word “merry” dissociates it rather from spiritual things. While however the occasions are few where the word is translated “merry”, it is rendered many times “rejoice”, “joy”, “glad”. Such passages as “In Thy presence is fullness of *joy*”, “Serve the Lord with *gladness*”, will shew that the word carries a wider and deeper meaning than merely that of merriment.

Mirth may be very wrong, as Eccles. ii. shews, but like many things mirth, merriment, joy, gladness, may also be very right. Many there are who can walk by a hard and fast rule, few there are who can rise to the height of the apostle who can say

“Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing”. Partisans for either side could easily be found. So with eating, drinking and being merry. It may be a sign of reckless worldliness. It may also be a sign of godly contentedness. In Eccles ix. 7-9 the subject is repeated, and with emphasis:--

“Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy (same word ‘mirth’ and ‘merry’ in viii. 15) and drink thy wine with a good heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no perfume. Live joyfully (Hebrew ‘see life’) with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun.”

We can imagine that such language comes as a shock to some, whose conception of spirituality is something devoid of either natural affection, a merry heart, or a cheerful countenance. If however I have given up the futile search into the mysteries of providence and have gratefully fallen back upon the blessed words of Eccles. ix. 1 that “The righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God”; if when I see oppression and injustice I remember that “He that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they”; then I too can say with the Preacher:--

“Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him: for it is his portion power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God” (Eccles. v. 18, 19).

This by no means conflicts with the teaching of vii. 4, “The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth”, for a house of mirth, in that sense, can never be a true description of the house of one redeemed by precious blood and taught by God. Sin and its ugly accompaniments press too closely for that. Nevertheless the admonition of the Preacher is salutary and true.

The commendation of mirth or rejoicing, and the finding that a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat, drink and be joyful, follows immediately upon that inequality seen in the affairs of men where the righteous suffer evil, and the wicked prosper. The parallel in ix. 7-9 “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, etc.” follows immediately upon the statement concerning the “one event’ that comes alike to all. In the centre, between the two passages, comes ix. 1:--

“The righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God.”

The man who believes *that*, in face of the inequalities of providence and the “one event” which comes alike to all, he of all men can “eat, drink, and rejoice”, and “live joyfully with the wife whom he loves”, etc.

“There is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes” (viii. 16).

“The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep soundly” (v. 12).

The reference to eating and drinking is incidental; the true and inner thought is summed up in the word “content”. What Ecclesiastes expressed in his way and for his hearers Paul says to us:--

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am *to be content*” (Phil. iv. 12).

#20. The Conclusion of the Matter. **pp. 86 - 88**

We have passed in review many of the outstanding features of this book, and while many and weighty passages remain unexamined, we feel the key-thought of the book has been discovered and applied. The quest before the writer was to discover “what is that good” that should be the aim and portion in this life. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter”. Ecclesiastes does not leave it to his readers to draw their own conclusions; he sets it out before us:--

“Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (xii. 13, 14).

“FEAR GOD.”—It is fitting that this book which so emphasizes the excellence of wisdom should conclude thus. In Prov. i. 7 we read, “The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge”, and in Ecclesiastes the fear of God is the *conclusion* of the matter. The outstanding features of Ecclesiastes may be said to revolve around the following words and themes.

1. VANITY.—We have already considered the reiterated cry of the Preacher, “Vanity of vanities”. The number of references prevents us from citing them all again; and their scope takes in all the activities of this mortal span from birth to death. Does Koheleth apply his “conclusion of the matter” to this? He does. “In the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities: but *fear thou God*” (v. 7). “A dream cometh through the multitude of business”, says verse 3, and therefore, instead of becoming entangled therein, “Fear God”.

2. INEQUALITIES.—Over and over again the Preacher speaks of the righteous suffering as the wicked, or the wicked prospering. He speaks of the vanity of the careful labour of a father being dissipated by a foolish son. He further sees that the wise man dieth as the fool, and that one event happens to all, to him that is wicked and to him that is righteous. Does Ecclesiastes find refuge in his “conclusion of the matter”? He does:--

“There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this. Yea, also from this withdraw not thine hand: for he THAT FEARETH GOD shall come forth of them all” (vii. 15-18).

Under this same head may be included viii. 12:--

“Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that FEAR GOD, which fear before Him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he FEARETH NOT GOD” (viii. 12, 13).

What is there in this wholesome fear of God that can so compensate, so calm one in the midst of the surge and strife of life?

3. THE TRUTH CONCERNING THE AGES.--

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for the AGE (*olam*) and God doeth it that men should FEAR before Him” (iii. 14).

Associated with this thought is the fact that:--

“God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time THERE for every purpose and for every work” (iii. 17).

and knowing this, the believer quietly holds on his way. Connected with the fear of God is the keeping of His commandments. Israel was allowed to wander in the wilderness, to suffer hunger, to experience the miraculous supply of their needs, that they may be humbled, proved, and shown what was in their hearts, whether they would *keep His commandments or no*. Ecclesiastes sees that every believer’s life is typified in the wilderness experience of Israel.

Psa. xix. 8 says, “The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes”, and this thought enters into “the conclusion of the matter”. Dispensations change, and the commandments of the Lord change with them, but to keep whatever is the truth for the time is the one sure way of peace.

To fear God and to keep His commandments is the whole of man. The word “duty” is not needed. Instead of vexing himself with the crooked things that God alone can straighten, he fears God, keeps His commandments, lives his life as the Lord prospers, and knows that a future day, a future life, a future judgment are a necessity and that there all crooked places will be made straight, all inequalities rectified. So the book ends:--

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (xii. 14).

“EVERY WORK.”—Many saints hold such a view of grace as to preclude a judgment of their works. The judgment of works is found in both sets of Paul’s epistles, those of the Mystery as well as those of the Acts. While it is right to ponder with chastened heart the judgment of secret things that are evil, surely it is an encouragement to know also that the secret things that are good shall also be fairly judged in that day?

Many problems arising out of this book are still left unsolved, but we feel that the main issue, the search for what is that good that man should do in this life, had been rewarded, and is now in the possession of the reader.

If the articles on Ecclesiastes have been of no help to our readers, the writer has drawn great comfort and guidance from the book while preparing them. We commend a further and fuller reading and revision of Ecclesiastes to all our readers, and pray that its salutary findings may be a continual help to all while walking “under the sun”.

Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth.

#43. The Beginning of Months (Exod. xii.). pp. 37 - 39

Nine plagues had descended upon Egypt afflicting man and beast and exposing the grossness of Egypt's idolatry and the utter failure of their gods. At the end of the ninth plague Pharaoh had brazenly told Moses that if he saw His face again he should die. Moses went out from the royal presence saying, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more" (x. 29). Nine separate solemn warnings had fallen upon deaf ears and a hard heart. Before Moses entered into the presence of Pharaoh, the Lord had said:--

"I am sure that the King of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand" (iii. 19).

When Moses was ready to leave Midian and return to Egypt, the Lord said:--

"See that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hands: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go" (iv. 21).

One verse throws a strong light upon the vexed question of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart:--

"But when Pharaoh saw that there was *respite*, he hardened his heart" (viii. 15).

Again in ix. 34:--

"When Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, *he sinned yet more*, and hardened his heart."

It is not our intention to presume to defend the righteousness of God; Rom. ix. silences all replies against God. Some can only accept the teaching of Rom. ix. concerning Pharaoh if it be allowed that God foresaw the salvation of Pharaoh at or before the reconciliation of all things. Rom. ix. however cuts all argument short, and leaves us and all men as clay in the hands of the Potter. Nevertheless be it noted that Pharaoh *sinned* when he hardened his heart, "as the Lord had said". To return however to Exod. iv. 21-23. Moses was commanded to say to Pharaoh:--

"Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My Son, even *My firstborn*: and I say unto thee, let My Son go that he may serve Me! and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even *thy firstborn*."

And so, as we have seen, plague after plague fell, revealing the long-suffering and the goodness of God which should have led to repentance. The destruction of the firstborn, though threatened first, falls only after nine plagues had revealed the obdurate character of Pharaoh's heart:--

"Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" (xi. 4, 5).

Before the stroke falls Israel is instructed concerning the Passover, the first great typical ordinance of redemption given to this people. It is a matter of great importance to realize that indissolubly connected with the Passover is the unleavened bread. The connection is maintained in the reference by Paul to this great chapter of Israel's history in the epistle to the Corinthians. How does he introduce this glorious type of redemption? Does he speak of it in chapter i., where he speaks of the gospel as the preaching of Christ crucified? No, neither does he refer to it in chapter ii. It is in chapter v., where he is dealing with moral evil in the assembly, that the Passover is brought to bear, and it is introduced by a reference to the unleavened bread:--

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. FOR even Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed for us, THEREFORE let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Cor. v. 7, 8).

Possibly, in our view, the Passover appears so great, so essential, that it overshadows the associated feast, but not so in the eyes of God. The sprinkled blood *outside*, and the unleavened bread *inside*, present a complete picture. This relation between the Passover and the unleavened bread is shewn by the structure.

Exod. xii. 1-20.

- A | 1, 2. The beginning of months.
- B | 3-11. The Passover.
- C | 12, 13. For I will pass through I will pass over.
- B | 14-17-. The Unleavened Bread.
- C | -17. For this day I brought you out.
- A | 18-20. The first month.

It will be noticed that the section is bounded by the reference to the month:--

“This month shall be *unto you* the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year *to you*” (xii. 2).

It was not the first month naturally, the first month of the year was originally *Tisri*, corresponding to our October. The Jews still keep their New Year at this date, in spite of the definite change instituted at the time of their redemption, sad evidence of their unregenerate condition. From the Autumn of falling leaf and fading flower we are called to Springtime with its parable of resurrection. Notice the words “To you”, indicating that the change was not intended to interfere with unredeemed Egypt. In this change of time, made when the nation of Israel was born and redeemed, we have the great truth of regeneration. The two “musts” of John iii. come to mind here:--

“Ye must be born again” (7).
“Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (14).

Newness of life is the blessed fruit of redemption by blood. We must pause here, and more carefully consider the further teaching of Exod. xii. in another paper; but may the truth of the “beginning of months *to you*” be no strange doctrine to any of our readers.

#44. The Lamb without Blemish (Exod. xii.).
pp. 73 - 76

“A lamb”, “The lamb”, “Your lamb”, such is the suggestive progression in verses 3, 4 and 5, as they speak of the shadow and type of the Lamb of God. Surely in every heart there is the prayer that Christ shall become increasingly the great central and personal factor. That from *A* Saviour, we may have passed to *The* Saviour, and not have rested until we can also say *My* Saviour.

“The whole congregation of Israel shall kill IT” (Exod. xii. 6).

So merges the type, the many lambs, into one “it”, the one great Passover of God.

“Your lamb shall be without blemish” (Exod. xii. 5).

The law in Leviticus is most particular, descending to minute details, that the holiness and perfection of the great Antitype should ever be before the mind of the faithful:--

“Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut” (Lev. xxii. 22-24).

all such are set aside.

“Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you IT SHALL BE PERFECT TO BE ACCEPTED” (Lev. xxii. 19-21).

The lamb was to be taken on the tenth day of the month, and sacrificed on the fourteenth. This would give time and opportunity for careful inspection. Luke xxiii. contains the finding of those who examined the true Lamb of God.

PILATE. “I find *no fault* in this man.”
“I have found *no fault* in this man.”

HEROD. “No, nor yet Herod: for I send you to him, and lo,
nothing worthy of death is done unto Him.”

PILATE. “What evil hath He done? I have found *no cause of death* in Him.”

The
MALEFACTOR. “We receive the due reward of our deeds,
but this man *hath done nothing amiss*.”

The CENTURION. “Glorified God saying, Certainly this was a *righteous* man.”

Matt. xxvii. adds further evidence.

JUDAS. “I have betrayed *innocent* blood.”

PILATE’S WIFE. “Have thou nothing to do with that *just* man.”

Scripture everywhere teaches and assumes the holiness and spotless sinlessness of Christ the Lamb of God. If doctrine necessitates the tremendous statement that Christ was “made sin for us”, it immediately adds “Who knew no sin” (II Cor. v. 21). If it is emphasized that Christ as Kinsman-Redeemer actually took our human nature, it is careful to say that while He *actually* was made flesh, it was in the *likeness* of sinful flesh that He came (Rom. viii. 3). Before Peter says, “Who His Own self *bare* our sins”, he writes of Him, “Who *did* no sin” (I Pet. ii. 22-24), and in the same epistle Peter speaks of redemption as being by “the precious blood of Christ, as of lamb without blemish and without spot” (i. 18, 19).

If Heb. iv. declares that Christ was touched with the feeling of our infirmities and in all points had been tempted like as we are, it does not omit to add “*sin excepted*”. There is need that every believer should hold with no shadow of uncertainty that Christ was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners”. “It shall be PERFECT to be accepted.” Such is the Lamb of God, such is our Saviour.

**“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are:
and when I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exod. xii. 13).**

The word “token” will repay a little study. It first occurs in Gen. i. 14 “Let them be for *signs*”. Gen. iv. 15 A.V. reads “The Lord set a mark upon Cain”; it should read “The Lord set a token for Cain, lest any finding him should kill him”. It was a token for Cain’s safety. The bow in the cloud is called “the token of the covenant” (Gen. ix. 12) as also is circumcision (Gen. xvii. 11).

Many times the word translated “sign” in Exodus is this word, and indeed this is its most frequent translation. “The blood shall be to you for a sign.” The blood signified something. It signified life laid down:--

“The soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement by reason of the soul” (Lev. xvii. 11).

The blood atoned for “YOUR SOUL” “BY REASON OF THE SOUL” in it. The blood sprinkled upon the doorpost was a “sign” that redemption had been made. Nothing else was a “sign”, nothing else did the Lord “see”. No genealogy showing direct descent from Abraham could be a “sign”, no promises, vows, prayers, nothing but the sprinkled blood.

The words “I will pass over you” must also be considered. As they stand, they give the mind the impression that the Lord “passed over” the houses of Israel without smiting them, and went on to the houses of the Egyptians. In verse 23 however this idea does not seem fully to fit the statement there made:--

“The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.”

The “passing over” here is synonymous with protecting. In I Kings xviii. 21 we meet the word in the question of the prophet “How long *halt ye* between two opinions”. The idea of “hovering” or “suspense” suits the thought better than “passing over” and leaving. Isa. xxxi. 5 says:--

“As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and *passing over* He will preserve it.”

The allusion to Deut. xxxii. 11 here seems clear.

“As an eagle stirreth up her nest, *fluttereth over* her young, *spreadeth* abroad her wings.”

Instead of repeating the words “fluttereth over”, Isaiah goes to Exod. xii. for a synonym, and says “passing over”. This gives us the blessed meaning of “Passover”. The Lord, like the eagle, spread abroad His wings, hovered over the house, and protected it from the destroyer that went through the land. Psalm xci. 4 expresses the feeling of *pasach* “To pass over” without using the word.

“He shall *cover* thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.”

We would not suggest any alteration in the A.V.; the words are too precious and have too sacred associations, but we can keep in mind the meaning as we read as being “When I see the blood I will PAUSE over you, (not PASS over you)”. “The two *side* posts and the *upper* door post” were sprinkled with the blood, but not the threshold, not the floor. The apostacy is characterized by “Trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood common” (Heb. x. 29).

The Jews reckoned a double evening, the first from noon to three, the second from three until sunset. In Exod. xii. 6 the margin shews that the Passover Lamb was killed “between the two evening”, which would be at three o’clock. Matt. xxvii. 46 shews that the Lord Jesus died at the ninth hour, and after that “when even was come” Joseph of Arimathea begged of Pilate the body. The sixth hour was noon, the ninth hour was 3.0p.m. Even such a detail as the exact time was fulfilled. John xix. 36 draws attention to yet another feature which links type and Antitype together.

“These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken.”

Roman practice must give place to the sure word of prophecy. The Roman soldiers must bear their testimony together with the Centurion that “this was a righteous man”, for Psa. xxxiv. 20 speaking of the righteous says:--

“He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.”

When David was led to see his sinfulness before God, instead of saying, “I am unrighteous”, he said:--

“Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the *bones* which thou hast *broken* may rejoice.”

Unblemished in life, unbroken in death, God's true Passover Lamb was *perfect* , and in Him alone can we find redemption and acceptance.

**#45. Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod. xii.).
pp. 101 - 104**

We imagine that some readers may say occasionally, "We do not come across the word dispensational, or rightly divide, very much in this series; why then does it use the title, "Fundamentals of *Dispensational* Truth"? We desire to correct a wrong impression. All truth is dispensational. The whole circle of God's *aionian* purpose is subdivided into a series of dispensations. The preaching of the gospel cannot be accomplished with clearness apart from dispensational truth.

It was suggested to the Editor by those responsible for another magazine, that they would accept a series of articles on Romans *if the dispensational side were kept out!* How could one ignore the dispensational bearing of such passages as "To the Jew first", and "My Gospel"? How could one deal with Rom. v., ix.-xi., or xv. without reference to dispensations?

The Scripture record of Adam or Abraham, of Israel or the Church, is so written because God's dealings with these men, nations, or assemblies show the varying dispensations in which the purpose of the ages is unfolded and accomplished. The Passover is a part of dispensational truth, and to see where and how it applies is to grasp the very fundamentals.

We must now give attention to the associated feast of unleavened bread. Throughout Scripture the truth set forth by the Passover and the unleavened bread is constantly associated. Take for instance Eph. ii. 8-10. "For by grace are ye saved through faith not *out of works*", this is the N.T. doctrinal presentation of the truth set forth in the sign of the sprinkled blood. "Created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*": this is the equivalent to the unleavened bread. The blood, outside, of the unblemished lamb calls for the unleavened bread within.

"And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it" (Exod. xii. 8).

In the law given subsequently in Exodus occurs this command:--

"Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread" (Exod. xxiii. 18).

In Lev. ii. 11 we read:--

"No meal offering shall be made with leaven."

In the N.T. leaven consistently typifies evil. Matt. xvi. 6-12:--

“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees
Then understood they how that He bade them beware of *the doctrine* of the
Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

Luke xii. 1 adds the words:--

“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*.”

I Cor. v. 8 speaks of “the leaven of *malice* and *wickedness*”, contrasting it with the “unleavened bread of *sincerity* and *truth*”. Summing up the evil that had corrupted the simple faith of the Galatians, the apostle says, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (verse 6). Leaven therefore represents evil in doctrine and practice. It is the purpose of God that His children should be “without blemish”. As a result of the great offering of Christ they shall one day be presented “holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight” (Col. i. 22).

Notice the basis of the exhortation of I Cor. v. 7:--

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, *as ye are unleavened*.”

In Christ the Corinthians were “unleavened”. They are addressed as “saints”, but their walk was far from being “as becometh saints”. They could not make themselves holy, but being sanctified in Christ they can be urged to walk worthy.

Another associated meaning which Scripture attaches to the feast of unleavened bread is connected with the pilgrim character of those who first partook of it:--

“Thus shall ye eat it (the lamb, the bread and the herbs), with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste” (xii. 11).

“And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders” (xii. 34).

“And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry” (xii. 39).

The feast of unleavened bread speaks of separation from Egypt, of a people who are not at home, whose hopes are beyond and above.

It is evident that the observance of the feast of the Passover lamb alone was not a sufficient memorial:--

“Ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; FOR in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: THEREFORE shall ye observe this day in your generations for an ordinance for ever” (xii. 17).

Redemptions saves *from* and saves *to*. The Passover not only saved Israel from the destroyer, but from further contamination with or service to Egypt. The Passover naturally led to the Red Sea and the wilderness. The lives of the people had been made “bitter with hard bondage”. This is easily forgotten, as can be seen in the case of Israel in

the wilderness. There, when the dreadful experiences of the Passover and the Red Sea were things of the past, they remembered “the flesh pots” and “bread to the full” (xvi. 3).

“We remember (said they) the fish which we did eat in Egypt gratuitously; the cucumbers, *and* the melons, *and* the leeks, *and* the onions, *and* garlick” (Numb. xi. 5).

That is what they “remembered”, six items! They soon forgot the wonders of their deliverance and the bitterness of their bondage. Therefore added to the unleavened bread was “bitter herbs”, “bitterness” as the Hebrew really is. God it is that appoints the bitterness of the pilgrim’s path. Israel met it at the beginning of their wilderness experience, and the first stage of their journey is named Marah, or Bitter.

Let us accept these indications without murmuring, for they are sent in love to wean us from the flesh pots of Egypt, and to remind us of the bitterness of our former bondage. May we all rejoice in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and experimentally realize the place and importance of the feast of the unleavened bread.

#46. The Great Mixture (Exod. xii. 37, 38). pp. 116 - 118

We have seen the emphasis which the close association of the unleavened bread with the Passover lamb gives to the fact that redemption must always be manifested by separation from evil: that those who are “called saints” should act as “becometh saints”; that those who are “unleavened” should put away the “leaven of malice and wickedness”. This is the ideal, and nothing lower than this can have the sanction of the Word. The Scripture, however, reveals the fact which everywhere presses upon us to-day, that the meaning and truth of the unleavened bread is not practically realized.

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. *And a mixed multitude* went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle” (xii. 37, 38).

When Moses stood before Pharaoh he demanded that not only should the men go, but said he:--

“We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds we will go” (x. 9).

When the exodus actually took place it is found that in between the “men and the children” and their “flocks and herds”, is “a mixed multitude also”, or as the margin reads “a great mixture”. The effect of this mixture is seen in Num. xi. 4: “And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a-lusting”: that is what we might expect. There is however a sad echo of the “also” of Exod. xii. 38, for Numb. xi. 4 continues:--

“And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? . . . there is nothing at all, beside this manna before our eyes.”

“This manna” is elsewhere called “angel’s food”, “bread from heaven”, and is type of Him Who is the bread of life that came down from heaven. The influence of the mixed multitude is clearly seen. The heart is turned back to Egypt, and the things of God are lightly esteemed.

Some of this mixed multitude were allied to Israel by marriage. This is no fancy, for we have at least one such alliance and its disastrous effect recorded in Lev. xxiv. 10:--

“And the son of an Israelitish woman, *whose father was an Egyptian*, went out among the children of Israel.”

The words “went out among” seem to imply some definite purpose. We are told in Exod. ii. 11 that when Moses was grown:--

“*He went out* unto his brethren and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew.”

Here, however, we find, “The son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp”. To the fleshly lusts of Numb. xi. therefore must be added the “strife” of Lev. xxiv. Not only so, but the dreadful sin of blasphemy must be included:--

“And the Israelitish woman’s son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed.”

Instead of loving that name, and revering it, this son of an Israelitish woman blasphemed, and blasphemy is the germ of Antichrist.

Neh. xiii. 1-3 shows how Israel, when returned from the captivity, mingled with the Ammonite and the Moabite, and these are called “the mixed multitude”. In Neh. xiii. 23, 24 Ashdod, Moab and Ammon are cited as nations which had intermarried with Israel, and Nehemiah draws a sad lesson from Solomon:--

“Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel, nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin” (Neh. xiii. 26).

Ezra ix. 1, 2 likewise mourns over the fact that Israel had not:--

“separated themselves from the people of the lands the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands.”

Jehoshaphat was another king who had a good record, for he “walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim, but sought the Lord God of his father”. In the third year of his reign he sent Princes and Levites with the book of the law of the Lord to teach in Judah. Yet like Solomon and like Israel of the exodus he failed, for II Chron. xviii. 1 says:--

“Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.”

and that “affinity” was his ruin. It is interesting to note that *chatan*, “to join in affinity”, is translated “to be a son-in-law”, “to make marriages”, “father-in-law”, and “mother-in-law”, showing the closeness of the union between Jehoshaphat and Ahab.

Returning to Israel and the mixed multitude we see the failure to put into *practice* the truth contained in the type of the unleavened bread.

The Corinthians, we have seen, were “called saints”, and Christ had been made to them “sanctification” as well as “redemption”. They were “unleavened” in Christ, but they had failed to realize their position.

II Cor. vii. 1, summing up the argument of II Cor. vi. 14-18 where the unequal yoke and unholy fellowship is seen in all its ugliness, says:--

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, PERFECTING holiness in the fear of God.”

Holiness we can neither make nor merit, but when the grace of God separates us, by the blood of Christ (as of a lamb without blemish and without spot) from sin and death with its bondage and its bitterness that are worse than those of Egypt, then “our reasonable service” must include this heart and life separation, the absence of which worked such disaster in the spiritual experience of Israel, of Solomon, of Jehoshaphat and of the Corinthians. This is “perfecting holiness”.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Cor. vi. 17).

#47. The Self-same Day (Exod. xii.). pp. 150 – 152

As one reads the book of Exodus, especially that part which deals with Pharaoh’s opposition, the interplay of human fear and cupidity, of Divine forbearance and judgment, the long period of Israel’s bondage, or the policy of the new king that knew not Joseph, all seem to move so naturally, cause and effect is so obvious, that the sovereign will and purpose of God is not apparent on the surface. Yet through all the years of Israel’s changing fortunes, whether the inhuman hatred of Joseph’s brethren, the famine that forced Jacob into Egypt, the dreams of Pharaoh, or the change of dynasty, God’s great purpose was unfolding, and neither the premature advent of Moses, nor the obstinacy of Pharaoh altered the prearranged plan by so much as one day:--

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel (who dwelt in Egypt) was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, EVEN THE SELFSAME DAY it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord” (Exod. xii. 40-42).

The “sojourning” of the children of Israel dates back beyond the birth of Jacob’s twelve sons, and includes the pilgrimage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From the call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees he became a “sojourner”, and all his children were sojourners too. Incidentally Exod. xii. says that they “dwelt in Egypt”, but this did not alter the fact that they were sojourners and away from the land of promise. Gal. iii. 17 gives the same period time, namely 430 years, as covering the time that elapsed from the promise given to Abraham in Gen. xv. until the giving of the law from Mount Sinai, which took place soon after the exodus from Egypt.

There is another period connected with the same event (the exodus) that starts from another point, and covers a period of 400 years. This prophetic utterance is given in Gen. xv. 13-16, and it will be seen that not only did God speak of a definite period of time, but of the chief features that led up to the exodus. Let us enumerate them:--

1. “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs (and shall serve them and they shall afflict them) 400 years.
2. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge;
3. And afterward shall they come out with great substance.
4. In the fourth generation they shall come hither again,
5. For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

How are we to account for the fact that Gen. xv. speak of a period of 400 years, whereas Gal. iii. 17 speaks of the same events as occupying 430 years? At the time of writing this article, the writer endorsed the explanation of *The Companion Bible* which makes the 400 years commence with the recognition of Isaac as the seed when Isaac was 5 years old. Since writing, however, a beloved fellow-helper has suggested a much simpler explanation which we gladly give in his own words.

“This explanation (referring to that of *The Companion Bible* and also our own), I have always personally regarded as unsatisfactory. Surely Isaac was ‘recognized as the Seed’ before his birth—‘In Isaac shall thy seed be called’. Surely the point is that Gen. xii. 4 tells us that Abraham was seventy-five when he left *Haran* (*not Ur*), where he had remained till the death of Terah. But Stephen (Acts vii. 1) says that the glorious God appeared to Abraham while he was still in Ur, before he went to live in Haran. If we reckon that the sojourning began (as Stephen implies) when Abraham left *Ur*, the five years are accounted for by the sojourn in Haran. Thus:--

Departure from Ur . . .	Abram	70	0	
Death of Terah and departure from Haran . .	Abram	75	5	
Birth of Isaac . . .	Abraham	100	25	

			30	
Sojourning of Seed . . .			400	

Total: Sojourning until Exodus . . .			430”	
			=====	

We are grateful for this explanation and commend it to our readers.

The Scripture tells us that at the end of the 430 years, even *the selfsame* day, the children of Israel went out of Egypt. Such is the way that God keeps His word, and carries out His purpose.

We believe it to be a fundamental of dispensational truth that prophecy shall be fulfilled *literally*. The prophetic statements of Scripture concerning the Messiah which have found their fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ at His first coming have been fulfilled literally. His place of birth, His manner of life, His ministry, His death, burial and resurrection, have all been literal fulfillments of prophecy. These Scriptures which concern Him that await their fulfillment at His second coming, these too, we most surely believe shall be likewise fulfilled to the very letter. How comforting it is to realize that “all are in the hand of God”! Habakkuk was assured that in spite of apparent delay:--

“The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, *wait for it*; because it will surely come, it will not tarry” (Hab. ii. 2).

Job seemed to perceive this grand fundamental, when he said:--

“If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee; Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands” (Job xiv. 14, 15).

To the one who looks upon the Bible as a collection of “texts”, this article may not mean much, but to everyone who has learned to look upon the Word as the unfolding of the purpose of the ages, every confirmation of the faithfulness of God in the fulfillment of His word is a source of joy and peace:--

“Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want here mate” (Isa. xxxiv. 16).

#48. The Lord’s Leading (Exod. xiii. 21, 22). pp. 172 – 175

How many readers could say, without referring to the chapter, with what subject the book of Exodus closes? Some may say the tabernacle, and be partly right, but the actual closing reference is to the pillar of cloud and fire “throughout all their journeys”.

In the book of the Psalms the exodus of Israel is several times epitomized, and among the features of that memorable time that are remembered is the fact that He who redeemed the people, led them out and on through sea and wilderness until they reached the land of promise. Notice the following:--

“In the daytime also He led them with a cloud and all night with a light of fire” (Psa. lxxviii. 14), “And He led them on safely, so that they feared not; but the sea overwhelmed their enemies” (Psa. lxxviii. 53).

He “guided (same word as *led*) them by skillfulness of His hands” (Psa. lxxviii. 72).
“He spread a cloud for a covering; and a fire to give light in the night” (Psa. cv. 39).

So in Exod. xiii. 21, 22 we read:--

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way: and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”

Let us notice the following features:--

1. The leading was Personal.

“*The Lord* went before them.” When Moses rehearsed, before his death, the ways of the Lord with Israel, speaking of His leading he said, “So the Lord *alone* did lead him” (Deut. xxxii. 12). It is the Lord’s prerogative to lead His people, and the solemn statement of Moses here seems to suggest that all other “leading” is nothing less than idolatry. This should give pause to any who rather freely use the expression “I felt led”. This personal Presence of the Lord was clearly realized by Moses as being essential to the accomplishment of the Lord’s purpose:--

“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with men, carry us not up hence” (Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15).

This presence of the Lord was manifested by an angel. “Behold Mine angel shall go before thee” (Exod. xxxii. 34). So in Exod. xiv. 19, 20 we find:--

“The angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them; and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these.”

The presence of the Lord, the leading of the Lord, is a great dividing line between the saint and the world. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom. viii. 14). The leading may be by lowlier means than that of an angel. Psa. lxxvii. 20 says, “Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron”, yet though the means be more fallible, the Lord alone is the leader, whatever medium He may choose from time to time. The children of God to-day may not see visible signs of the Lord’s presence, nevertheless the Lord still leads His people, and largely uses the inspired Word. “Send out Thy light and Thy truth, *let them* lead me” (Psa. xliii. 3). We may be more certain that we “feel led” when we are led by God’s own Word.

2. The leading was adapted to the need.

By day a pillar of cloud, but this would not have been visible by night, and so the Lord manifested His presence at night by means of a pillar of fire. The experience of one time is not necessarily the experience of another. In the daytime and sunshine of life the Lord’s presence will be manifest in one way. In the dark night of life’s experiences His

presence, just as real, will be manifest in another way. Whatever the mode of manifestation, the Lord's personal presence is the blessed fact.

3. Leading is a part of redemption.

“HE TOOK NOT AWAY the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Exod. xiii. 22).

Israel many, many times failed, so grievously indeed that many forfeited the land of promise and perished in the wilderness; nevertheless, the pillar of cloud went before them. This is the closing testimony of the book of Exodus. Coming where it does in the book (Exod. xl. 34-38) it reveals the reason why the presence of the Lord manifested in the pillar of cloud could remain. Exod. xl. speaks of the setting up of the tabernacle, and Lev. xvi. 2 says:--

“I will appear (or, I am wont to appear) in the cloud upon the mercy seat.”

Num. ix. 15-23 speaking of the same event says:--

“And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of testimony; and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire until the morning, SO IT WAS ALWAYS.”

Notice the way in which this closing statement of Exodus is introduced:--

“So Moses FINISHED the work. THEN a cloud covered the tent” (Exod. xl. 33, 34).

The Lord's leading is one of the results of the Lord's redemption, one of the fruits of a finished work. The Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, as the risen One leads them in green pastures for His name's sake.

4. The pillar of cloud regulated all Israel's journeyings.

“When the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, THEN AFTER THAT the children of Israel journeyed: and IN THE PLACE where the cloud abode, THERE the children of Israel pitched their tents” (Numb. ix. 17).

The time *when* and the place *where* is decided alone by the Lord. Further, we read, “whether it was *by day* or *by night* that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed”. The Lord's leading did not always conform to custom, nor to convenience, but day or night Israel had to be prepared to follow. “Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year” that the cloud tarried, there in unquestioning obedience Israel had to remain (Num. ix. 15-23). What a blessed condition to be in, led by the Lord! By day or by night, to Elim with its palm trees and wells, or on into the desert, all is well if we are led by the Lord.

“And 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” (Deut. viii. 2).

“Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies” (Psa. xxvii. 11).

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

#29. Melchisedec. The Priest of the Perfected (v.-viii.). pp. 30 - 32

We have reached a passage in this epistle which is of great importance. It reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Before seeking the relation of this order of priesthood with the theme of the epistle we must be clear as to its place in the context, and therefore call the reader's attention to the structure of Heb. v., vi.:-

Hebrews v., vi.

- A | v. 1-6. Melchisedec. Priest.
- B | v. -6-10. The Priest perfected.
- C | v. 11-vi. 1. The Slothful (dull) *versus* the Perfect.
- B | vi. -1-10. The Saints. Let us go on unto perfection.
- C | vi. 11-19. The Slothful *versus* the Overcomers.
- A | vi. 20. Melchisedec. Priest.

It will be seen that the subject enclosed within these references to Melchisedec is that of the two classes under notice through this epistle, namely:

- (1). Those who attain unto perfection.
- (2). Those who fail of it—slothful.

There must be something peculiarly fitting therefore in this great title of Christ, and we propose to seek its meaning and connection.

The opening reference is in a sphere of suffering:--

“Prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and being made perfect (by these sufferings, ii. 10) He became the author of a salvation which is age-lasting unto all them that obey Him, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec” (v. 7-10).

The closing reference in this section gives to Christ the further title of “The Forerunner”. The Greek word *Prodromos* does not occur elsewhere in the N.T., but in the LXX it occurs twice. In Isa. xxviii. 4 the Hebrew is unfortunately rendered “hasty fruit”. The Hebrew equivalent *bikkur* is translated elsewhere by the word “Firstfruit” 14 times. Cognates are translated firstborn, firstling and birthright. This reflects upon the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for the saints who go on unto perfection are Firstfruits, and The Church of the Firstborn, who do not, like Esau, sell their birthright for a little ease in this life. The other occurrence of *Prodromos* is found in Num. xiii. 20 and is very similar; there the word is a translation of the Hebrew from which we have the English “First-ripe”. It will be seen therefore that if we keep to Scriptural usage we shall not think of our Lord as having gone to heaven as a kind of Forerunner going on before us to clear the way, but as the first ripened fruit, a pledge to the Father of the harvest that

was to follow, a harvest of the many sons that He was leading through suffering to glory. The passage in Heb. xii. 1-3 which speaks of Christ as the Captain and Perfecter of faith, the race to be run, the endurance ending in exaltation and glory, will come before the mind as we think of Christ as the Forerunner, and the Apostle uses the word *Dromos* in the parallel passage of II Tim. iv. 7.

In Heb. vii. we find a further explanation given of the Melchisedec priesthood. We are taken back to Gen. xiv. where Abraham is met by the Priest after his victory over the armies of the Kings. It was here that Abraham renounced all rights and dues as a result of his triumph, taking not a thread nor shoelatchet, lest the King of Sodom should say "I have made Abraham rich". There he also learned something more of the all-sufficiency of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth. The Melchisedec Priesthood *blesses the overcomer*. That is an important truth to be remembered here.

The greatness of this priesthood is further emphasized by an elaboration of a number of details that occur in the passage in Genesis. The name has a meaning. Melchisedec means King of Righteousness, and King of Salem means King of Peace. The fact that no genealogy is given in Scripture is taken to typify the risen and unending priesthood of the Son of God. The greatness of this priesthood is still further shewn by the fact that even Abraham the Patriarch gave a tenth of the spoil to Melchisedec, and the blessing of Abraham by Melchisedec shewed that "without contradiction the less is blessed of the greater". The perfection of which the epistle speaks is not connected with the Levitical priesthood (vii. 11), and the essential difference between the Aaronic order and that of Melchisedec is found in the fact that this priesthood is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (vii. 16). The introduction of the Levitical order of priesthood moreover was not accompanied by an oath, but in the case of Christ:--

"The Lord SWARE and will not repent by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant" (vii. 21, 22).

The subject is summed up in viii. 1, 2 in these words:--

"Now of the things of which we have spoken, this is the sum: We have such a high priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

The verse, so often repeated in this section, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec", is taken from Psa. cx., which speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Lord until His foes be made a footstool, and which speaks of His people presenting themselves as free-will offerings in the day of His power, which day seems closely linked with the day of His wrath (5) when He shall strike through Kings. The first mention of Melchisedec is connected with the slaughter of the Kings near Sodom, the last (in the O.T.) speaks prophetically of "striking through Kings in the day of His wrath". In the book of the Revelation we have Christ presented to us as both Priest and King. Hebrews dwells mainly on the priestly side, Revelation unites the two offices and shews how this royal priesthood of Christ in the heavens, and fashioning of that royal priesthood on earth

(“kings and priests unto God”, Rev. i. 6) is the goal of the “perfecting” of Hebrews and the “overcoming” of the Apocalypse.

We have much more to learn concerning this wonderful King-Priest, but the main associations which we find in Scripture have now been indicated. We will return to chapter v. in order to gather up some further instruction, and this we must do in our next article.

#30. Dull of Hearing (v. 7-11). pp. 61 - 63

At the close of chapter iv. we have brought before us the (1) Greatness, and (2) Sympathy, of Christ, the High Priest. This is expanded in chapters v.-viii. First the greatness is touched upon in v. 4-6, and then His sympathy. We are taken both to Gethsemane and to Calvary to witness the strong crying and the tears. He was saved *out of death (ek)* by resurrection.

The parallel is enforced in Heb. xii, where it is said that for the joy set before Him the Lord:--

“Endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God Ye have not yet resisted unto blood.”

Suffering before glory, cross before crown, is the testimony of these passages.

Of Christ it is written, “He was heard in that He feared”.

The Greek word *eulabeia* does not occur anywhere else except Heb. xii. 28:--

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and *godly fear*.”

Here the word is used of those who seek perfection and are thus “all of one” with Him Who sanctifies them (*see* chapter ii.). The R.V. renders v. 8 “Though He was a Son”, which is better than the A.V. “Though He were a Son”, for the use of “were” indicates an hypothetical case, whereas Christ WAS a Son and YET went through all the suffering of Gethsemane and Calvary. “Though He was a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered”. Turning yet again to chapter xii., we find that Sonship includes the thought of chastening, and that with the object that we might be partakers of His holiness. He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

There is a paranomasia in Heb. v. 8, which seems intentional, *emathen* and *epathe*, “learned” and “suffered”, as though by the very similarity of sound their intimacy should be established. This is no book learning, not the secondhand knowledge of other people’s

history, it is personal. In that closely parallel epistle, Philippians, the Apostle shews that he too had passed along this pathway as he sought perfection (iii. 12-15) saying:--

“I have learned, in whatsoever state I am to be content. I know both what it is to be brought low, and I know what it is to abound; in every place and in all things *I have been initiated* both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to be destitute” (iv. 11, 12).

This is the only pathway to scriptural perfecting. The Sermon on the Mount teaches it, Philippians teaches it, Hebrews teaches it:--

“And having been perfected, He became to those obeying Him a cause of aionian salvation, having been declared by God a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec” (v. 9, 10). [It must be observed that “obedience” is the word that is carried over. “He learned *obedience* those *obeying* Him.”]

By reading Heb. ii. 10 with v. 8 we understand that to be perfected through suffering and to learn obedience through suffering are allied, and further, that He Who became the Cause of aionian salvation to those obeying Him must be considered together with Him Who became the Captain of salvation leading many sons to glory (ii. 10) and the Captain and Perfecter of faith who has endured and overcome before us (xii. 1-3). Concerning this High Priest with His suffering and glory, His perfecting and His reward, the Apostle said he had “much to say, and of difficult interpretation”, not because he himself did not know, but because his hearers had become “dull of hearing”. We drew attention in the structure to the fact that the word here translated “dull” and the word in chapter vi. “slothful” are the same, and as these are the only occurrences of the word in the N.T. the parallel is evidently intentional.

The LXX uses the word in Prov. xxii. 29 to translate “mean” in the expression “mean men”, and the verse speaks of one diligent in his business. In Prov. xii. 8 it is used for “perverse”. It would appear from the usage of the word that the A.V. “dull” is hardly strong enough. The Hebrew word in Prov. xxii. 29 is *chashok* = “obscure”, or “darkened”, and the cognate *choshek* is translated scores of times “darkness”.

The spiritual ear and eye are of the first importance. Peter in his second epistle uses the word *myopia* (“cannot see afar off”) of those who had become forgetful of the purification of old sins. We trust our readers will immediately remember the strong emphasis upon “purification for sins” found in Hebrews, especially the fact that in the opening summary this alone is written of the Lord’s work on earth. “When He had made purification for sins” (Heb. i. 3) (see also Volume IX, page 150). II Pet. i. speaks of “adding to their faith”, a parallel expression to the words of Heb. vi., “things that accompany salvation”. These added things have in view the rich furnishing of the entry into the *aionian* kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Pet. i. 11). So in Hebrews the perfecting is connected with the aionian salvation.

This reference to the dullness of hearing is further a gathering up of the words of the great historic type of chapters iii. and iv. “To-day if ye will HEAR His voice.” “Some when they had HEARD, did provoke.” “The word preached did not profit them, because

they were not united by faith with them that HEARD.” Dullness of hearing, moreover, is another mode of expressing the truth of chapter ii. 1:--

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we drift away.”

“Hearing” together with “seeing” may be reckoned as the chiefest of the senses. How sad to allow any precious sense, even in the physical realm, to be atrophied through lack of use. How doubly sad to have the precious gift of hearing spiritually, and then through not having “the senses EXERCISED” (Heb. v. 14) to fail, to come short, to drift. Over against this drifting and dullness the apostle places endurance, obedience, suffering, steadfastness unto the end. Surely we, too, need the exhortation of the Lord, “Take heed *how* you hear”.

#31. Babes v. Perfect (v. 12-14). pp. 104 - 107

The apostle in verse 12 proceeds to expand what lies in the expression “dull of hearing”.

(1). It indicates *lack of progress*.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you.”

(2). It indicates *spiritual infancy*.

“Ye have need of milk and not of solid food.”

(3). It indicates *lack of experience*.

“For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness.”

(4). It indicates *the opposite of being “perfect”*.

“But solid food belongeth to them that are perfect.”

(5). It indicates *a culpable neglect*.

“Perfect, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised.”

(6). It indicates *lack of discernment*.

“Senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Let us take these six points and gather their lessons.

1. Teachers are placed together with those who can take solid food, have senses exercised and are perfect. No articles could be written for this or any magazine did we understand the word “perfect” in its ultimate sense. The passage does come to us very solemnly however and says that the qualification for teaching is something more than head knowledge and ready speech. In the Sermon on the Mount breaking the commandments and doing them are associated with teaching men so, and also with losing or gaining a position in the kingdom of heaven. James utters the warning, “My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment” (iii. 1). Instead of progress there was retrogression.

“For even when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again certain rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God.”

Ta stoicheia tes arches, “The rudiments of the beginning”. Stoicheia are the initial steps in knowledge, and also the “elements” of the natural world. See Gal. iv. 3, 9; Col. ii. 8, 20; II Pet. iii. 10, 12. The verb *stoicheo* comes in Acts xxi. 24, “*Walkest orderly*”; Rom. iv. 12, “*Walk in the steps of the faith*”; Gal. v. 25, “*Walk by the Spirit*”; Gal. vi. 16, Phil. iii. 16, “*Walk by rule*”.

These Hebrew believers had progressed no further than the initial steps of the faith, and indeed needed teaching in these things all over again. An intellectual grasp of the teaching of men on any subject may be sufficient. The doctrine and faith of the early church was rightly called “The Way”, for it was *walk* as well as *word*, *life* as well as *lip*.

“Then shall we know, if we *follow on to know* the Lord” (Hos. vi. 3).

What these “first principles” were that they needed to be re-taught we shall see better when we come to Heb. vi.

2. The spiritual infancy of these saints is indicated by the figurative use of foods for doctrine. “Ye have need of milk and not of solid food”.

The apostle had occasion to use this same figure when writing to the Corinthian Church, and for similar reasons:--

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you AS unto spiritual, but AS unto carnal, even AS unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able” (I Cor. iii. 1, 2).

The milk, the rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God, to them had been “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (ii. 2). “Howbeit”, said the apostle, “we speak wisdom among them that are PERFECT” (ii. 6). The thought is resumed and developed in chapter xiii. 8-13.

Milk diet is natural and right for infants, but it has a purpose and a limit. “As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may GROW thereby.” The apostle Peter adds a word to this that links it with Heb. vi. “If so be ye have *tasted* that the Lord is gracious” (I Pet. ii. 2, 3). Some believe that there is a definite reference to the

epistle to the Hebrews in II Pet. iii. 15, 16, where Peter speaks of “our beloved brother Paul” who had written unto the readers of I & II Peter. In verse 16 there is a word very like the word “difficult to interpret”, *dusermeneutos*, of Heb. v. 11, where “some things hard to be understood”, *dusnoetos*, which those that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction, are spoken of. In contrast Peter urges them to “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Pet. iii. 18).

There is much in Peter’s two epistles that bears upon the teaching of the epistle to the Hebrews. Such subjects as the saving of the “soul”, the “fiery trial”, “suffering and glory”, come to mind at once as obvious parallels.

3. The outstanding feature of the babe that the apostle mentions in Heb. v. is that such is “without experience”. We have drawn attention in previous articles to the place that “temptation” occupies in the epistles of the race and the crown, *see* Heb. ii. 18; xi. 17, 37; James i. 2, 12; I Pet. i. 6; Rev. iii. 10, etc. The Greek word for “tempt” is *peirazo*. The Greek word for unskillful is *apeiros*, and carries with it the thought “untested”. Solid food belongs to the perfect. The perfect are placed in opposition to the untested. It is one of the marks of those pressing on to perfection that they endure “temptation”. The wilderness journey, we have seen, is the great historical type of the early part of Hebrews, and that wilderness journey was a “day of temptation” in more than one sense.

An important note is struck in the expression “senses exercised”. In Phil. i. 9, where the apostle prays for the saints who, like the Hebrews, were reaching forward unto perfection (see chapter iii.) he writes:--

“And this I pray, that your love may yet abound more and more in knowledge and in all *discernment*, or *perception*.”

The word is *aesthesis*. Luke ix. 45 uses the verb *aisthanomai*, “to perceive”. The word “senses” in Heb. v. is *aistheterion*. It will be seen that the senses in their capacity of discernment, of discrimination, of right division, of trying the things that differ, are intended. These senses are “exercised” in the perfect. The word “exercise” comes from *gumnazo*, which gives us our word gymnasium, etc. In Heb. xii. 11, where the discipline and correction of the son by the father is the subject, the word occurs again:--

“But all discipline, indeed as to the time being, does not seem to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it gives back the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been EXERCISED thereby.”

This exercise of the perceptions enables the perfect to discriminate between good and evil. It does not necessarily mean moral good and moral evil. *Agathos* is the usual word for “good”, here it is *kalos*. Those concerning whom the apostle entertained doubts had “tasted the *good (kalos)* word of God”, but had failed to realize the difference between that which belonged to perfection and that which was “the word of the beginning”. The two words *kalos* and *kakos* differ only in one letter. The doctrines for which they stand are often confused and said to be “all one and the same”. We need “senses exercised” if we are to discriminate, and “go on unto perfection”.

**#32. “The Word of the Beginning” (vi. 1, 2).
pp. 124 - 128**

Whatever view we may entertain as to what constitutes “the principles of the doctrine of Christ”, one thing is certain and beyond controversy—that Heb. vi. 1 bids us LEAVE THEM:--

“Therefore *leaving* the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto *perfection*” (Heb. vi. 1).

Whatever view we may entertain as to these “principles”, this verse not only says “leave them”, but sets over against them “perfection”.

“Therefore LEAVING let us GO ON.”

Yet again, whatever place in the doctrine of Christ we may give

“Repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and aionian judgment.”

the same verse says “not laying again the foundation”. Leaving for the moment the question of the exactness of this translation, we feel that no system of sound exegesis can ignore the obvious relation established in this verse between the commands “Leave go on not lay again”. “Leave” is echoed by “not lay again”, and by parity of reasoning and structural correspondence “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” are echoed by the six items of doctrine mentioned in verses 1 and 2. It must strike the ordinary reader as somewhat strange to be urged by Scripture itself to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and therefore it becomes us patiently to search the Scriptures to find the mind of God on the subject.

Casting our eye back to chapter v. we find that these Hebrews who for the time ought to have been teachers were so dull of hearing that they needed to be taught *again* certain rudiments of the beginning of the oracles of God. The word “principles” in Heb. vi. 1 is the same word “beginning”. The word, “doctrine” is the ordinary *logos*, very like *logion* (“oracles”) in v. 12. So that the theme of Heb. v. 12 is resumed in vi. 1: “Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of the Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” Let us return to Heb. v. These believers who needed re-instruction in the rudiments were “babes”, who are set in direct contrast with “full-grown” or “perfect” (*teleios*); this is parallel with the thought of Heb. vi. 1, which says, “let us go on unto *teliototes*”. We are not told to forsake PRINCIPLES, but leave rudiments, babyhood, beginnings.

“NOT LAYING AGAIN A FOUNDATION.”—Most readers of *The Berean Expositor* know that we translate the words “Before the foundation of the world” by “Before the overthrow of the world”. In an earlier Volume evidence is given of the usage

of *kataballo* and *katabole* in the LXX and the N.T. and the new rendering appears abundantly justified. The word “laying” in Heb. vi. 1 is *kataballesthai*, and has been translated by *Erhard*, among others, “not demolishing”. *Bloomfield’s* note is:--

“ ‘Not demolishing’ is forbidden by the *usus loquendi* , for I cannot find a single example of the Middle form in the sense ‘to demolish’, but only in the sense of *jacere* ‘to lay down’, whether in a literal or figurative sense.”

While therefore leaving the new translation of Eph. i. 4 unimpaired we allow this Middle form of the verb its meaning as in the A.V. “not laying again”. Following the word “baptisms” in verse 2 is the word “of instruction” which is somewhat peculiar. We might have felt that *didache* could as well prefixed to repentance or faith. There must therefore be some reason not quite visible on the surface, and it appears to be this. Before a believer could be accepted for baptism and the laying on of hands, he must have already accepted these four words of the beginning of Christ:--

1. Repentance from dead works.
2. Faith toward God.
3. Resurrection of the dead.
4. Aionian judgment.

Although this explanation is not devoid of difficulties no explanation offered is entirely free from them, and an open mind is necessary so that we may be ready to follow the light as the Lord shall give it.

REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS.—Repentance is a foundation truth. In I Thess. i. 9 it is suggested in the words, “how ye turned to God from idols”. It is manifest that it is not to be contemplated that this act of turning or repentance was to be repeated. Turning from idols and repentance from dead works, alike were marks of a great and vital change. To need a repetition would indicate a most serious lapse. Similarly with the balancing doctrine of—

FAITH TOWARD GOD.—In Acts xx. 21 the apostle sums up his testimony in the words:--

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Repentance *from*, and faith *toward*, are two views of one movement, much in the same way as “turned *to* God *from* idols” contains the negative and positive aspects of the same action.

“THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS AND OF LAYING ON OF HANDS.”—This pair has reference to ordinances and recognition in the church. It will be observed that the word is “baptisms”, not “baptism”. Reference is made again to these “baptisms” in Heb. ix. The context of the occurrence is a valuable commentary upon Heb. vi. 2 and we must therefore give it. The chapter opens with a description of the tabernacle and its

furniture, going on to distinguish between the daily service of the priests and the annual ministry of the High Priest alone:--

“The Holy Spirit shewing this, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was standing (which was a figurative representation for that season which was present) according to which both gifts and sacrifices were offered that could not make him that did the service PERFECT, as pertaining to the conscience, being imposed (as to meats and drinks and divers BAPTISMS, fleshly ordinances) until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more PERFECT tabernacle” (Heb. ix. 1-11).

Here we see the place of these “baptisms”; they were fleshly or typical ordinances, and while they may have some place in the education of babes, and had a place in the church of the Acts period, they had no place with those who sought to go on unto perfection.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS was the means used to bestow spiritual gifts. One has only to be familiar with the teaching of I Corinthians to understand that the possession of these miraculous gifts was not one of the marks of the “perfect” (*see* I Cor. xii., xiii., xiv.). To rest in them would be to fail. The third pair is eschatological.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.—Some think like “baptisms” have to be left behind in the sense of being undispensational, others like repentance and faith because they are elemental and do not bear the idea of continual repetition. Others, like resurrection, are fundamental, and to be under the necessity for continual proof and instruction on such a point argued no good for the doubter. The further teaching of Heb. xi. 35 and 40 where a “BETTER resurrection” is linked with being “made PERFECT” naturally assumes as fundamental the resurrection of the dead.

AIONIAN JUDGMENT (*Din Olamim*) is the eleventh fundamental of the Jewish creed. The student of Ecclesiastes will the more clearly see the fundamental nature of this truth. It involves both reward and punishment. It is the basis upon which alone the apostle could urge believers to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and to follow in the steps of those who obtained a good report, who in this life were losers, but who believed unto the “GAINING OF THE SOUL” (x. 39).

Such is the *foundation*. There was something more needed for the “perfect” however than a bare foundation. I Cor. iii. is a commentary upon that fact. To have the foundation beneath one’s feet means salvation, but to have *nothing more* means salvation “so as by fire”. The reader has only to glance along to Heb. vi. 8 to see the parallel. None such have gone on unto perfection. This is the goal of the epistle and every item introduced is a factor in the process. It will be easier when we have gone over them all to bring them together and observe their inter-relation than it would be now at the beginning of our enquiry. The word of the beginning of Christ and of the oracles of God is milk for babes. The perfect must have solid food. “Therefore”, says the apostle:--

“Leaving let us go on not laying again and this we will do if God permit” (Heb. vi. 1-3).

#33. If God Permit (vi. 3). pp. 142 – 144

“*If God permit.*”—It is most essential that every believer who contemplates running the race, pressing for the prize, gaining the crown, and being numbered among those who are called “the Perfect”, should realize the meaning hidden behind the apostle’s words, “If God permit”. The verses that follow are an explanation, speaking as they do of the impossibility of renewing again unto repentance those who, having tasted the heavenly gift, fall away. The type given later, of Esau, is very explicit.

“Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of REPENTANCE, though he sought it carefully with tears” (xii. 16, 17).

The only occurrences of the word “repentance” in Hebrews are in vi. 1, 6 and xii. 17. It is evident that the case of Esau is an amplification or an illustration of the case of those spoken of in Heb. vi.

The words “If God permit” glance back to that period of Israel’s history that has already provided the great basis of exhortation in chapters iii. and iv.—“the day of temptation in the wilderness”. It will be remembered that upon hearing the evil report of the ten spies Israel murmured, and said, “Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt”. The Lord then bade Moses say:--

“As truly as I live, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness and the people mourned greatly.” It would appear also that their mourning was in some measure a repentance, for “they rose up early in the morning and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up into the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you: that ye be not smitten before your enemies *But they presumed to go up into the hill top:* then the Canaanites smote them” (Num. xiv.).

In the words “but they presumed”, we have a parallel with the expression in Heb. xi. 29, “the Egyptians *assaying* to do”.

This passage together with those of Heb. vi. and xii. cause one to pause and think of the seriousness of the lesson here being taught. Of a similar import is the saying of the Lord:--

“No one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking unto *the things that are behind*, is well placed with a view to the kingdom of God” (Luke ix. 62).

The exact repetition of the words “The things that are behind” in Phil. iii. 13 is too pointed to be a coincidence, the context being so closely connected with those we have been considering. Having turned to Phil. iii. it may be as well to observe another

parallel before proceeding. In Heb. vi. 6 there occurs that strong expression, “having crucified again the Son of God, and are exposing Him to shame”, and again in x. 29, “having trampled on the Son of God, and having esteemed the blood of the covenant a common thing”. So in Phil. iii. we have “Many walk as the enemies of the cross of Christ”.

Returning for a moment to Num. xiv., we must remember that although that great multitude perished in the wilderness, they were a pardoned people. Moses had prayed:

“Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, and the Lord said, I have pardoned” (verses 19, 20).

Yet it was not possible to renew again unto repentance that people, pardoned though they were. If this had been remembered when dealing with Heb. vi. many would have been spared the awful error that some have taught from this chapter, namely, the possibility of a child of God losing his salvation. This epistle, as we have said again and again, and this chapter particularly, deals with things that accompany salvation, things that belong to the perfect and the overcomer. These things may be lost or forfeited, but salvation is by grace, and works or reward have no place in it.

“If God permit” therefore reveals that sometimes God may not permit. To attempt to ascend the mountain and enter the land of Canaan without the assurance of His presence was madness and destined to fail. Our first and greatest concern must be to walk with Him. If for any failure on our part the permission to go on unto perfection should be withdrawn, let us humbly bow to the will of God, and in lowliness of mind seek the presence of the Lord. While we feel the crown and the prize will but add to His glory, and therefore we should run with patience the race set before us, the prize is valueless, the crown a bauble if it does not glorify Him.

#34. The Special Character of the Falling Away (vi. 4-6). pp. 152 - 155

It is impossible to be too keenly sensitive to the serious nature of the failure dealt with in this chapter. To be “dull of hearing”, to remain “a babe”, to be satisfied with the “milk” of the word, and to make no advance may seem bad but not serious. The inspired apostle takes another view. To remain a babe is really to go back, and this may be the beginning of apostacy. Let us see how the Scriptures speak of those who failed to go on unto perfection.

“It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance if they should fall away, having crucified again to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. vi. 6).

“If we should voluntarily sin after having received the full knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins having trampled under foot the Son of God” (Heb. x. 26-29).

We must distinguish between the fact that many, if not all, saints after conversion lapse into sin of one sort or another, and the falling away intended here. It is the teaching of the Scriptures that if a man be overtaken in a fault, the spiritual ones of the church must restore him in a spirit of meekness, considering themselves lest they also should be tempted (Gal. vi. 1). The exhortations to the seven churches of Rev. ii., iii. are further illustrations of the same truth. It is evident that here in the epistle to the Hebrews something more serious is involved.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the coming age, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. vi. 4-6).

We must first of all seek to understand the nature of these blessings so that we may the better understand the nature of the falling away from them.

1. *They were once enlightened (photizo).*—In chapter x. this word occurs again, and the context is so helpful that we must draw attention to it. To save space we will not quote fully:--

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together for if we sin willfully after receiving the full knowledge of the truth no more sacrifice fearful expectation of judgment consume the adversaries trampled on the Son of God but remember the former days in which having been *enlightened* ye endured a great contest of sufferings cast not away your confidence, which has great recompense of reward if any man draw back we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them who believe unto the acquiring of the soul” (Heb. v. 26-29).

This is a valuable commentary, setting Heb. vi. in its true light and preventing us from making erroneous applications of its solemn teaching. Some who do not realize the setting of Heb. vi. have sought to minimize the force of the word “enlighten”, so that it only means an external, but not a real and inward illumination. If this be proved, then of course we are dealing merely with professors and the problem is ended. But Heb. x. 32, wherein is the only other occurrence of the word *photizo* in Hebrews, does not allow of such an interpretation. These enlightened ones were believers, not empty professors.

2. *They had tasted of the heavenly gift: They were made partakers of the holy spirit.*—These two statements explain one another. They moreover look back to the laying on of hands which usually was instrumental in the bestowal of this gift. It will be remembered that when “Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostle’s hands the holy spirit was given, he offered them money”, and that Peter said, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that THE GIFT OF GOD may be purchased with money.”

3. *They had tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the coming age.*—The promise of restoration from Babylon is thus called in Jer. xxix. 10:--

“After seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform *My good word* toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”

The miraculous gifts of the “Acts” were foretastes of the age to come. It will be seen that a great place is occupied in this list by the Holy Spirit and His gifts. This we find is likewise true of Hebrews. There, as we find in Heb. x., the punishment that followed the violation of the law of Moses is small when compared with that which shall follow the despising of the Holy Spirit’s witness of Christ:--

“How shall we escape if we neglect which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and distributions of holy spirit according to His own will? For unto the angels hath He not subjected the world to come whereof we speak” (Heb. ii. 3-5).

One quotation from Heb. x. we now include, as bearing out the strong emphasis placed upon the Holy Spirit here—“and done despite unto the Spirit of grace” (Heb. x. 29).

This falling away which occupies so large a place in Hebrews is variously referred to as “letting slip”, “neglecting”, “hardening hearts as in the provocation”, “lest any fall after the same example of unbelief”, “forsaking the assembling of selves together”, “sinning willfully after full knowledge”, “drawing back unto perdition”. The falling away was after enlightenment and partaking of holy spirit, and herein lies the extreme danger. This aspect of teaching in Hebrews is but the application to the Hebrews of the teaching of the Lord given in Matt. xii. 31, 32:--

“All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men, but blasphemy of the Spirit shall NOT BE FORGIVEN. And whoever may speak a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him: but whoever may speak against the Holy Spirit, it will in no wise be forgiven him, *neither in this age, nor in the coming one.*”

Here is the sore punishment awaiting those who after having all the confirmation of the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and after having embraced the witness and having become partakers of the Spirit’s gifts, fall away. They echo the fatal words of Num. xiv., appointing themselves a Captain to return to Egypt. The more one penetrates into the structure and atmosphere of Hebrews, the more marked the gracious distinctions of the dispensation of the mystery become. Let us try the things that differ and approve those things that are more excellent, at the same time learning from these other records the essential need for growth in grace.

#35. “Things That Follow Salvation” (vi. 7-9).
pp. 170 - 172

The character of the falling away of Heb. vi. 4-6 may be understood by a consideration of the illustration which immediately follows in verses 7 and 8. The figure is that of a field. The Greek word translated “earth”, *ge*, stands for “land, as distinct from water; or earth as distinct from heaven; or region or territory, used of one special land or country, as distinct from other countries, in which peoples dwell, each on its own soil” (*The Companion Bible*, Appendix 129/4).

“For land which hath drunk in the rain which often comes upon it, and which bringeth forth vegetation useful to those for whom also it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but that yielding thorns and thistles is disapproved and near to a curse; the end of which is for burning” (Heb. vi. 7, 8).

Two words are of special importance as indicating the line of teaching that we are to observe here, the word “disapproved”, which in the A.V. is rendered “rejected”, and the word “near” or “nigh” unto cursing. *Adokimos* = “disapproved” is best understood by observing the context of the word in I Cor. ix. 27. The scene is the Corinthian racecourse.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race course run all, but one receives the prize? So run that ye may obtain. But every one that striveth in the games, in all things useth self-control; they indeed then that a corruptible crown they may receive; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly. I am boxing, as not beating air, but I am beating my body under, and leading it captive, lest by any means having proclaimed the contest to others, I myself become disapproved” (I Cor. ix. 24-27).

The verses that follow, viz., I Cor. x., are very strongly reminiscent of Heb. iii. & iv. The argument hinges upon the “all” and the “many”. All may have passed out from Egypt as the redeemed of the Lord, but all did not enter the promised land. We now see that the whole of Heb. vi. is dealing with the question of “going on unto perfection”, or of being disqualified or disapproved in the race. The entry into the land of promise is placed in the same place as the crown at the end of the race. The showers of God’s love and grace had fallen for many years upon Israel, but comparatively few brought forth fruit.

We must observe that it does not say that the alternatives are blessing or *cursing*, but blessing or *disapproval*, which places such *nigh unto* a curse. Take for example the two servants of Matt. xxiv. 44-51. The one is rewarded by being made ruler over all his Lord’s goods, the other servant is cut asunder, and finds his position with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The same fate awaits the unprofitable servant of Matt. xxv. who hid his talent in the earth. Both suffer loss and are certainly perilously “near unto a curse”. In neither case is salvation in view, but service. “The end of which is for burning.” When a field produces thorns and thistles “the end” is burning. The field itself is not destroyed, but that which it has produced. This is quite in harmony with I Cor. iii. The foundation remains unchanged whether the building be destroyed by fire or whether it stands the test:--

“He shall suffer loss, *but* he himself shall be saved, YET SO AS BY FIRE” (I Cor iii. 15).

In Heb. xii. 16, 17, Esau is brought before us as one who forfeited his birthright. There is an evident parallel with Heb. vi., the words “he found no place of repentance” echoing “it is impossible to renew unto repentance”. So also the word *adokimos* (disapproved or rejected) is echoed by Heb. xii. 17, *apodokimazo* (“rejected”). The “blessing” also is one received by “inheritance”. The chapter ends with the words “For our God is a consuming fire” which are parallel with the words “whose end is burning”. The whole situation is summed up in Heb. vi. 9 where the apostle says:--

“But beloved, we are persuaded THE BETTER things.”

Readers will remember that the word “better” is a key word of Hebrews, closely associated with “perfect” throughout the epistle. “The better resurrection” is expressed by the words, “The spirits of perfect righteous ones”. Here in chapter vi. those who go on unto perfection produce the better things, “even those things which accompany salvation although we thus speak” (verse 9). The word “accompany” is a rendering of the middle voice of *echo*, “to have, to hold”. So in Mark i. 38, “*next* towns”, and Luke xiii. 33, “the day *following*”. The epistle to the Hebrews does not deal with salvation, but the things that accompany it. Not the “resurrection of the dead” (vi. 2), but the “better resurrection”, not the exodus from Egypt, but the entrance of the land of promise. Not justification by faith, but the emphasis upon the fact that the just shall *live* by faith. We find the distinction observed in vi. 10 and throughout the chapter. May we, called though we be with a different calling, produce the better things, even those things that “*follow* salvation”.

#36. The work that perfects faith (vi. 10). pp. 177 - 181

The apostle, though uttering the terrible warnings against apostacy, hastens to tell his readers that though he thus speaks he is persuaded that they possess those things that accompany salvation. He now proceeds to unfold these “better things that accompany salvation” and to consider them from various points of view. It is evident from the very next verse (10) what these “better things” include.

“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye have shown unto His name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and are ministering” (Heb. vi. 10).

The word translated labour is not found in the best texts. In x. 22-24 we have a somewhat similar passage. There we have “full assurance of faith”; in v. 9-11 we have “full assurance of hope”. In the former the exhortation is based upon the fact that “He is faithful that promised”, whilst in the latter we are told that “God is not unrighteous to forget your work, etc.” and moreover that “He swear by himself” (verse 13) to make the assurance of hope doubly sure. In the former the believers are exhorted to “provoke unto

love and good works”, whilst in the latter “your work and love unto His name” is remembered. The things accompany salvation are those things that indicate the perfecting of faith. We have only to remember James ii. 11 where we learn that “faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone”. The great illustration of James ii. is the faith of Abraham, but not the faith of Gen. xv. when Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness, but the faith of Gen. xxii. when Abraham was willing to offer up his beloved son. Of this James says:--

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made PERFECT? and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness” (James ii. 22, 23).

We are upon exactly the same ground as in Heb. vi. The things that accompany salvation are those things that “perfect faith”. The perfected faith “fulfilled” the promise of its inception. Gen. xv. 6 was *filled* out when Abraham’s faith manifested itself in acceptable works. If we glance down Heb. vi. we shall find that the same illustration is used by Paul. There once again Abraham’s faith as manifested in Gen. xxii. is brought forward. It is therefore important to remember that a man is *justified* without works, but is *perfected* by works (Rom. v.; James ii.). A man is *saved* by faith “not of works”, but he has been saved to *walk* in “good works” (Eph. ii.). While Titus iii. declares that we were saved by faith and “not by works of righteousness which we have done”, Titus ii. reveals that we were redeemed in order that we might be a peculiar people “zealous of good works”.

It is surprising the antipathy that some of God’s children show to any mention of works. We yield to none, we trust, in a steadfast belief that grace and works, so far as salvation is concerned, cannot blend. If we are saved by grace, then that initial salvation cannot be “of works” for grace excludes works as works exclude grace (Rom. xi. 6). We do however feel that much vital truth is dimmed to the eyes of many by carrying their opposition to works beyond the limits of truth. It is a case of failure rightly to divide the Word of truth. What is true in the case of the origin of salvation may not necessarily be true in the case of the fruits of that same salvation. The law is excluded as a factor in justification, but the law is nevertheless holy, just, good and spiritual, and it is the will of God that it shall operate in the kingdom yet to come.

“But the God of peace adjust you by every good work unto the doing of His will, doing in you that which is well pleasing in His presence, through Jesus Christ” (Heb. xiii. 20, 21).

We cannot “do His will” without at the same time “doing good works”, but these good works will not take their rise from the flesh, but will be the Lord’s own “doing” within us, through Jesus Christ. Heb. x. 24 says, “provoke unto love and good works”; Heb. vi. 10 links work and love together. This reveals the essential character of the good works that are well pleasing to God. It is a good work to bestow all one’s goods to feed the poor; it is a good work to suffer one’s body to be burned rather than give up the faith, but only so if love is the spring of such actions; if love be absent “it profiteth me nothing”.

“For in Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith through love inworking for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. v. 6, 14).

The same emphasis upon “serving one another” is found in Rom. xiii. 8:--

“Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”

Then the commandments that relate to man’s relations with man. Adultery, murder, stealing, false witness, coveting. It is surprising to note that both in Gal. v. and Rom. xiii. that love which fulfils the law is manifested not to *God* but to *man*.

“And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Rom. xiii. 9).

Are we to understand then that mere philanthropy satisfies the requirements of the case? Not at all. The strong emphasis upon the manward side is because of a weakness in human nature. It does not say in I John ii. 9, 10 that he that loveth God is in the light, but:--

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth *his brother*, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth *his brother* abideth in the light.”

Again, I John iii. 14 does not say that the possession of new life is manifested by our love to God, but:--

“We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love *the brethren*.”

The same test is applied to the profession of the love of God in verse 17:--

“Whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, HOW DWELLETH THE LOVE OF GOD IN HIM?”

The same apostle brings the argument to a climax in iv. 20, 21, when he says:--

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he *hath seen*, how can he love God Whom he hath *not seen*? And this commandment have we from Him. That he who loveth God loveth his brother also.”

There is no thought in any of these passages of teaching that the love to our neighbour or brother comes before love to God. This is made clear in I John v. 2:--

“By this we know that we love the children of God, *when we love God* and keep his commandments.”

We may trace the same spirit in Mark vii. 10-13. The law said that a man was to honour his father and mother, but the tradition of the Pharisees allowed a man to assume a hypocritical piety, and say, “It is corban”. He could say to his parents, I have given all to God, and therefore that which I might have allowed you in your old age has been devoted to higher and holier uses. The Lord has only one word for such—*hypocrites*. There is a danger of similar hypocrisy among believers to-day. We speak about “the

Lord's work". What is the Lord's work? When we contribute to the expenses of a meeting do we more than the man of the world who pays for his ticket for a lecture or concert? When we subscribe for a copy of a magazine have we done more than the man who pays for his morning paper? May we not be deceived with meaningless words. On the other hand, to withdraw from the claims of those connected with us by ties of flesh and blood because we are devoting our means to the Lord may come under the severe censure of Mark vii. and I John. When we have these things clearly before us we may learn without distraction the true order as given in Heb. vi. 10:--

“The love which ye have shewn forth *unto His Name*, in that ye have ministered *unto the saints*.”

The love shown for the name of God was manifested towards His people.

Unto His name.—Why does the Scripture use the “name” and not the “Lord”? What is a name? Is it not the sum of many qualities, and used by us as a convenient means of expression? When we speak of *The Berean Expositor* we use the sum of the following component parts, viz., paper, print, articles written on special themes. When we say the word *house* it is the sum of such items as bricks, mortar, wood, glass, &c. Thought would for ever remain unexpressed if it were not for this ability to “sum up” in one name. The name of God expresses all that He is. The varied names of God express his many-sided relations with His creatures. What attributes are expressed in the names *Father, Saviour, Lord, God!* Love shewn to His name is love that goes out to One who possesses those wondrous qualities that have been revealed to us in Christ. We pray in the name of Christ. We are forgiven for His name's sake. His name is called upon us. We are enjoined to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Love unto the name of the Lord is *shown* by ministry unto the saints. This does not bring the love of God *down*, but lifts the ministry to the saints *up* to a higher level. We minister to the saints and we love our brethren because we love the Lord.

“Every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him”
(I John v. 1).

We cannot love the Father if we do not love the Son, and we cannot love the Father if we do not love His sons also. Here then is the practical manifestation of the apostle's desire. “Let us go on unto perfection.” Faith is perfected in such works of love. These are the things that accompany salvation; these are the things that:--

“adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. For the grace of God *saves teaches* us . . . that we should live looking zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 10-15).

Key-thoughts of I John.

#1. “Manifest.” pp. 100, 101

If we compare John’s Gospel with his first Epistle, we find several items which, if not in contrast, yet by their different point of view indicate for us the peculiar key-thoughts of the Epistle.

The Gospel commences with Him Who was IN the beginning, whereas the Epistle commences with Him Who was FROM the beginning. The Gospel declares that IN Him was life, the Epistle however tells us that the life was *manifested*.

“For the life was *manifested*, and we have *seen* it, and bear witness, and *shew* unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been *manifested* unto us” (i. 3).

The words “manifest” and “appear” in this epistle are translations of *phaneroo* and *phaneros*, the former occurring nine times, the latter once, and such is the inimitable character of the inspired Scripture, that God’s supervision of the distribution of single words is seen to be perfectly planned and harmoniously arranged.

“Manifest” (I John).

- A | i. 2. LIFE manifested.
- B | ii. 18, 19. ANTICHRISTS manifested “not of us”.
- C | ii. 28, iii. 2. EFFECTS of future manifestation.
- C | iii. 5, 8. EFFECTS of past manifestation.
- B | iii. 10. Children of GOD and the DEVIL manifested.
- A | iv. 9. LOVE manifested.

The opening statement of i. 2 is savourless or powerless without the grand conclusion of iv. 9. Life may be manifested, yet the darkness comprehends it not. To a lost world came the Son of God, not to demand the homage of His creatures, though He was Creator (John i. 3), not to claim His kingly prerogatives, either as Israel’s King, or as the only rightful occupant of the throne of universal dominion, but He came as the meek and lowly, the despised and the rejected, the sorrowing, sin-bearing, suffering Son of man. This leads to I John iv. 9. If life was to be *received* as well as *manifested*, love must be made manifest also. He Who manifested the life manifested also the love of God, in death, “*that we might live through Him*”. Life can only be fully realized when righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The fact that God IS love does not save. The fact that God IS righteousness does not justify. The love must be manifested, the righteousness revealed, before it can become effective.

How and in what way was the love of God manifested and with what object? The epistles declares that God’s love has been manifested in the gift of Christ. “Because that

God sent His only Begotten Son into the world.” With what object? “In order that we might live through Him.” This life once received begins in its turn to manifest itself.

This brings us to the second pair in the structure. The parallel between the many Antichrists who were manifested as being “not of us” and the manifestation of the children of God and the children of the Devil is obvious. The central pair brings us to the pivot of the whole issue. First it deals with the future manifestation of Christ:--

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall be made manifest, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it has not yet been made manifest what we shall be. We know, however, that when He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is” (I John ii. 28-iii. 2).

Secondly it deals with the past manifestation which alone makes the future one possible.

“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins for this was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil” (I John iii. 5, 8).

May we who have received life through His name increasingly *manifest* the same, until made manifest with Him in glory.

#2. “As He is.” pp. 135-137

Likeness to the risen Christ, both here and in the glory, is the theme of our meditation under the heading of “As He is”.

“If we walk in the light AS HE IS in the light” (i. 7).

“HE IS IN THE LIGHT.”—Verse 5 declares the “God is light”. In the full blaze of the Shekinah glory our Saviour stand. Not only is He there by reason of His own Deity, He is there because of the perfectness of His redeeming work. Nothing but absolute righteousness and perfect holiness could endure the light in which our great Advocate stand. Yet, fellow-believer, weak and failing though we be in ourselves, *that and nothing less* is our position in Christ. Chapter ii. 29 tells us “He is righteous”; iii. 3 tells us “He is pure”, both statements being implied in the words “He is in the light”. In iv. 17 we have another strong statement.

“In this hath been perfected love with us, in order that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, that AS HE IS, SO ARE WE in this world.”

To understand the meaning of the verse, and to realize the goal of God’s perfecting love, we must distinguish the main sentence. Let us read it again, placing the secondary part in brackets:--

“In this hath been perfected love with us (. . .) that as He is, so are we in this world.”

God’s love to us is perfected *in this*, that the believer be as His Lord. God has revealed nothing higher than this throughout the Scriptures. Every grace-taught believer echoes the words of the Psalmist in Psa. xvii. 15, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness”.

“We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him” (I John iii. 2).

“AS HE IS—WE ARE” (iv. 17).

“AS HE IS—WE SHALL BE” (iii. 2).

What is to be the outcome of such a blessed position?

“Every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even AS HE IS pure” (iii. 3).

“If ye know that HE IS righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him” (ii. 29).

By comparing iv. 17 with ii. 5, 6, it will be seen that God’s love to us and our love to God meet together in the same goal, viz., likeness to the Lord Jesus. The believer’s love urges him continually to seek closer conformity to the likeness of Christ, and God’s love has fixed nothing less as the goal and glory of redemption. We will quote ii. 5, 6:--

“But whoso keepeth His word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, as He walked.”

Here then is the balancing teaching of the Word.

AS HE IS--*we are.*

AS HE IS--*we shall be.*

AS HE WALKED--*let us walk.*

#3. “We Know.” pp. 145 - 147

When John wrote his “gospel” he tells us that what he wrote was with the object that:-

“Ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (xx. 31).

While this aspect is by no means omitted from the epistle (iii. 23, v. 1, 5, 10), it is better expressed in the words of I John v. 13:--

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, THAT YE MAY KNOW that ye have eternal life.”

There is such a thing as “blessed assurance”. What a triumph! what a testimony! to be able to stand in the midst of the wrecking of one’s life-work, to be deserted by those for whom labour and toil unstinting have been given, and still to be able to say:--

“Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED” (II Tim. i. 12).

There are some who hesitate to express certainty with regard to salvation. This is because they are not clear on the fact that salvation is of the Lord, is by grace, is not of works, and is entirely the work of Christ. John, however, does not provide us with a meaningless emphasis, that parrot-like we may repeat “we know” without a “reason for the hope that is in us”. He says “*These things* have I written that ye may know”. What “things”?

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, BECAUSE WE LOVE the brethren” (I John iii. 14).

In the gospel we have the fact of passing from death to life connected with faith. In the epistle it is manifested by love.

“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).

Love to the brethren is one of the “things” whereby we “know”. “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.” The apostle enforces his argument by an appeal to the action of God. How do we *know* the love of God?

“Hereby we know (A.V. perceive) the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (I John iii. 16).

Again in I John iii. 19 the apostle says:--

“Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”

How shall we know that we are *of* the truth? By loving not in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth, for the apostle says:--

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (I John iii. 17).

To such there is no “blessed assurance” and rightly so, for a graceless doctrinaire is an abomination. To this same thought the apostle returns at the close of chapter iv.:-

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar (see above ‘we are of the *truth*’): for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John iv. 20).

Thought answers to thought in this chapter, as the mirror reflects the face. “No man hath seen God at any time.” We know His love by His great gift. We have never seen God. Our profession of love to Him will be measured by the love we actually show to the brethren we can see. As the first epistle nears its end, the number of “knows” seems to increase.

“That ye may *know* that ye have eternal life” (v. 13).

“If *we know* that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, *we know* that we have the petitions that we desired” (with the condition, of course, of verse 14) (v. 15).

“*We know* that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but He that is the Begotten of God keepeth him, and that wicked one toucheth him not” (v. 18).

“*We know* that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. And *we know* that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that *we may know* Him that is true” (v. 19, 20).

It is a blessed thing to know. Lack of love plunges us in darkness, and we know not whither we go, because that darkness hath blinded our eyes:--

“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth” (I John ii. 21).

May we all perceive that such knowledge is not barren or unfruitful, but is expressed in life, light, and love.

#4. “The Liar.” pp. 161, 163

The words translated “liar” in the N.T. occur thirteen times. Three of these occurrences are found in the epistles of Paul, one in Acts, and nine in the writings of John. Of these nine the first epistle has five. A cognate word “To lie” comes twelve times, but only one of these references is found in I John. Once, in combination, we have in this epistle the word “false prophets”, making in all eight passages therein where *psuedos, pseustes, pseudomai* and *pseudoprophetes* occur.

In the immediate context of the two passages where the word “lie” occurs, we have a reference to the spirit of *truth*. In ii. 21, “Ye know that no lie is of the truth”. Immediately before we read, “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things”. In ii. 27, “The same anointing (same word as ‘unction’) teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie”. In the early church there were two kinds of supernatural gifts, the one of God, the other of Satan. In I Cor. xii. 3 the two kinds are noted, and an infallible test is provided.

No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus anathema, and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by holy spirit” (the gift of the Holy Spirit).

So in I John iv. 1-3 two sources of inspired gifts are noted with an infallible test.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist.”

The antichrist and *the* false prophet of Rev. xiii. are foreshadowed in the denial of these many forerunners. It is most important that we should pay attention to the actual words of inspiration here and in II John 7, for by so doing we shall add to our understanding. In the passage already quoted the words are “Has come in the flesh” (I John iv. 3), referring to the past. In II John 7 the words “is come” are a rendering of *erchomenon*, meaning “coming”, “The One who is to come” of Rev. i. 4, etc.

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (II John 7).

“HAS COME”, “IS COMING.” These two great facts are the supreme confession, and the supreme denial. Let it be observed that antichristianism does not so much deny the Deity of Christ, as that it denies Bethlehem and Olivet. The reality of the first and second comings “in the flesh” is vital to faith. The alternation of “truth” and “lie” is found in I John i. 8 and 10:--

“If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the TRUTH is not in us.”

“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a LIAR, and His word is not in us.”

Here is no mincing of matters. The apostle of love calls all men by a plain term who deny the scriptural truth of universal sin. But let not the believer, who does acknowledge the doctrine of Gen. iii. and Rom. iii. & v., plume himself on mere assent to truth, for the apostle, still pursuing the theme of mere affirmation, writes:--

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a LIAR, and the TRUTH is not in him” (I John ii. 4).

The liar is summed up in ii. 22 as the one that denies the Lord. The words are emphatic:--

“Who is THE LIAR, but he who denies that Jesus is THE CHRIST? This is THE ANTICHRIST, THE ONE WHO DENIES the Father and the Son.”

We are not allowed, however, to stay upon this ground of high doctrine, but are brought once more face to face with practical truth. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a LIAR” (iv. 20).

The final statement leaves doctrine, prophecy and practice, and deals with the witness of the gospel. It should be remembered that “witness”, “testify”, and “record” here are variations introduced for euphony. We will translate “witness” throughout:--

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath witnessed of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a LIAR; because he believeth not the witness that God gave of His Son. And this is the witness, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son” (v. 9-11).

The denial of human guilt, the denial of God’s witness of Christ in the gospel, the denial that the Son of God has come and is coming in the flesh, the denial that Jesus is the Christ, and the failure to practice what we preach, constitute the great antichristian LIE. Let us walk in truth. (III John 3).

The two questions that follow asked in addition to the above what was the meaning of the word under consideration.

Matt. xxvi. 14-25.--

- (1). Write the verses which speak of the words "Betray" and "Betrayed".
- (2). What does Betray mean?
- (3). What is the Greek word?

For the Greek the little one obtained the mother's help and wrote *parado*. We had to explain how the Concordance could not give every part of the word and that there we should find *paradidomi*.

Matt. xxvii. 11-26.

- (1). What verses have the word "release"?
- (2). What does release mean?
- (3). Who was released?
- (4). What is the Greek word?

In this case we had to show that some Concordances and Dictionaries use *apoluein*, while others use *apoluo*. This may sound very terrible to read, but our principle is to face the difficulties, and not shelve them. Even though the little one cannot follow the grammatical reasons, the puzzle and the mystery have been dispelled. In this last question, one further feature was added, "Who was released?" to test whether the more mechanical noting of words dulled the intelligent reading of the passage.

It will be seen that given a little *sympathetic* guidance, the little feet may soon be started upon that way, all the paths of which are peace and pleasantness. There is nothing exceptional we admit, and we have given the plain unvarnished record in the hope that it may stimulate others to go and do likewise.

Matthew.

#5. The Sermon on the Mount. Reward and Entry. pp. 5 - 8

Amplifying our last article we find that the majority express their views in some such way as "*The Sermon on the Mount gives the laws of Christ's kingdom*". Is this true? Let us again look carefully at the subject. By "The kingdom" is understood that future and literal kingdom of which Christ is King and saved Israel the first and nearest to the throne. If these words of Matt. v.-vii. are the "laws of that future kingdom", what do we find?

1. When Christ reigns in person on the earth, His people will *still be subject to persecution!* For this read v. 3-12, 44.

The most elementary acquaintance with prophecy will dispose of such an idea. Persecution for righteousness' sake is a mark of the *absent* Lord, not of the reigning king.

2. The "laws" of v. 21-48 legislate for those who entertain "murder" and "adultery" in their hearts, who evade the law concerning "divorce" and "oaths", who smitten on the cheek, who are sued at law for their cloak, who are pressed into the service of the state, who are cursed and hated, despitefully used and persecuted.

Is this the state of affairs that shall obtain when the kingdom comes?

3. The kingdom is future in this Sermon:--

"Thy kingdom COME, Thy will BE DONE in earth as it is in heaven" (vi. 10).

"They SHALL inherit the earth" (v. 5).

"They SHALL be filled" (v. 6).

"Many will say unto Me IN THAT DAY" (vii. 22).

4. These "laws" are in force while there lie before men two paths, the strait and narrow that FEW find and the wide and broad into which the MANY go.

If this represents the state of affairs when Christ reigns as King, then the glowing words of prophecy are an illusion, evil is supreme, hope will be made ashamed, vanity and vexation will still mark the steps of man. We believe that the Sermon on the Mount relates to the "kingdom" and not to the "church", nevertheless we believe much harm has been done to the cause of dispensational truth (which is the essence of all truth) by the rather hasty conclusion that this sermon gives the "LAWS of the kingdom". The passage contains its own explanation, which is enforced by the literary structure, and echoed by the whole of the Gospel according to Matthew. This explanation we will now consider.

Leaving the examination of opinions, we turn our attention to that which is more profitable, viz., the testimony of the Word itself.

The BEATITUDES, with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, contain the key thought, and if we do not find the key here we shall miss our way through the remainder of the passage. *That key word is REWARD.* Verse 12 sums up all that is said under varying aspects in verses 3-11:--

“Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your REWARD in heaven.”

The literary structure now comes to our aid by expanding this idea of reward. In chapter vi. the reward which the hypocrite receives now is set over against the reward which shall be given by the Lord at His coming. Almsgiving must not be done to be seen of men, otherwise there will be *no reward* from the Father in heaven. Those who give alms as the hypocrites do *have* their reward. The same thing is said of prayer and of fasting. There is a present reward given by mortal man, or there is a future reward to be given openly by the Father, and the section reaches its climax in the words, “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon” (vi. 24).

The second feature of this Sermon on the Mount, and one which expands and expounds the character of the reward, is the emphasis upon ENTRY INTO THE KINGDOM. Unless the righteousness of those addressed exceeded that of the Scribes and Pharisees, the Lord said they should in no case *enter* the kingdom of heaven. In the conclusion of the Sermon He says, “Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall *enter* into the Kingdom of Heaven” (vii. 21), and a little earlier He gives the exhortation to *enter* in at the strait gate (vii. 13). Suffering now, with the reward of the Father and entry into the kingdom as a future compensation, is held out by the Lord to those who possessed certain qualities which are summed up in v. 48, “Be ye therefore PERFECT”.

Our previous studies under the titles of “The Hope and the Prize” and the “Epistles to the Hebrews” will have prepared us to see the fitness of associating reward, and entry into the kingdom, with perfection. The structure places the “wise man” in correspondence with the perfect, which further emphasizes and illuminates the great theme. This we shall see the better when we deal with the Sermon in the light of the whole Gospels. There remain the references to the Law and the Prophets, and the sayings of the Lord Himself. The authority of the Law and the Prophets is upheld and enforced, while a deeper and more spiritual apprehension of their teaching is required of those who would enter the kingdom. We can now appreciate the main outline of the Sermon on the Mount:--

Matt. v.-vii.

- A | v. 3-16. Reward.
- B | 17. The Law and the Prophets.
- C | 19, 20. Entry into the Kingdom.
- D | 21-44. But I say unto you.
- E | 45-48. The Perfect.

- A | vi. 1 - vii. 11. Reward.
- B | 12. The Law and the Prophets.
- C | 13-23. Entry into the Kingdom.
- D | 24-29. These sayings of Mine.
- E | 24. The Wise.

It seems fairly clear that the “laws” of the Sermon on the Mount relate *not* to the time when the kingdom will be set up, but to the period that *precedes* the kingdom, when suffering for truth is sustained by hope of future blessedness, and when those that are to enter the kingdom shall be brought by means of the testings through which they pass to that condition which is called “perfect” and which figures so prominently in Phil. iii., Hebrews and James.

#6. The Sermon on the Mount.
“Entry” into the kingdom, continues a distinctive feature
in the remainder of Matthew’s Gospel.
pp. 40 - 43

We have seen that entry into the kingdom is the great feature of the sermon on the mount, and that the endurance and high standard of spirituality which is inculcated has in view the entry of that kingdom. Let us take a wider view of the subject, this time looking at the whole Gospel instead of sequel to the sermon on the mount, namely the prophecy on the mount, given in xxiv., xxv. After outlining before us the times that will lead up to the setting up of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord speaks of the characteristics of those who shall enter into that kingdom. The two passages are the parable of the ten virgins, and its fulfillment in the case of the living nations (Matt. xxv.).

Truth is truth, whether we who utter it realize its fullness at the time or not, and in Volume VI, page 183, 184, the fact is stressed that the words which are cognates of the verb “To enter” are “pivotal” in the structure of the parable of the ten virgins. We will not repeat the structure here, but call attention to the fact that the great point of the parable is that of “entering”. The five wise virgins “went in” (*eiserchomai*) to the marriage, and the door was shut. Here we have the Lord in His last discourses referring back to His first. The man who heard His sayings, and who did them, is likened to a WISE man who built upon a rock. The other man is likened to a FOOLISH man. In the day of testing the wise man’s building stands. Reward is promised to the servant who is not only faithful, but WISE (Matt. xxiv. 45-47). The Lord does not use the word “foolish” of any others except those cited in Matt. vii. and xxv. Immediately following the parable of the virgins comes the parable of the talents, where the reward for faithfulness is expressed in the words, “*enter* thou into the joy of thy Lord”.

We now come to another, but parallel case, where the two classes are not classified as wise and foolish, but as sheep and goats. The time when this takes place is when the Son

of man comes in His glory and sits upon the throne of His glory. Before Him all the nations are gathered together, and to those who have been kind to the least of the brethren of the King upon the throne are addressed the words:--

“Come, ye blessed of My Father, *inherit the kingdom* prepared for you since the overthrow of the world.”

By their own confession the nations did not render “Christian service”, for they will say, “When saw we Thee a stranger, etc.?”

In sharp contrast with these nations who, though they have never professed the name of Christ, yet did those things that were well pleasing, come those of the favoured nation who said:--

“Lord, Lord, have we not taught in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out demons, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works?”

To these the Lord will say:--

“I never approved of you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”

The threefold insistence upon “in Thy Name” is in contrast with “When saw we Thee?” Rom. ii. deals with these nations and the conditions of their entry, particularly in verses 6-11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 26, 27. A fuller exposition of Rom. ii. will be found in a subsequent publication (D.V.).

Let us come back a little. Matt. xxii. speaks of the marriage of the King’s son. This is the same marriage into which the five virgins had entrance. In verse 12 our special word “enter” (*eiserchomai*) comes. A man is observed by the King as being without the wedding garment, and he says:--

“Friend, how didst thou *enter* here, not having a wedding garment?”

His punishment is the same as that awarded to the evil servant (xxiv. 51), and the unprofitable servant (xxv. 30). Outer darkness and gnashing of teeth are always associated with the loss of place in the kingdom (*see* Matt. viii. 12; xiii. 42, 50). The context of the one occurrence in Luke (xiii. 28) includes references to the sermon on the mount, the shut door of the wedding feast, and the parallel to Matt. viii. 12. What is the wedding garment? It is the righteous award of the saints (Rev. xix. 8), granted to those who like the five wise virgins were “ready” (cf. Rev. xix. 7); in other words, the wedding garment is fashioned out of obedience to the higher law of the sermon on the mount. In Matt. xxi. 31 there is a statement concerning forfeiture of place in the kingdom:--

“The publicans and harlots GO BEFORE you into the kingdom of God.”

Chapter xix. however contains the fullest exposition of the spirit of the sermon on the mount. A rich young Ruler asks the Lord what good thing he must do in order to have aionian life (which Matt. xxv. 46 uses synonymously with inheriting the kingdom). Both in Matt. xix. and xxv. “doing good” and “keeping the law” are *the only terms*

given by Christ. How anyone can, without violence to context and conscience, preach *as a gospel message* eternal life and eternal punishment from these two chapters of works and law passes understanding. The Lord without ambiguity refers the young man to the Law of Moses. The first commandment is that dealing with murder, it is the same in Matt. v. The second is the command concerning adultery, which is also the second in Matt. v. Other laws are instanced which come in a different order. To this the young man replies:--

“All these have I kept from my youth up, what more do I want?”

The Lord did NOT say to the young man that he boasted of a false obedience, or possessed a false righteousness. He acknowledged the young man’s statement and bases His added teaching upon it; and here we arrive once more at the pith of the sermon on the mount:--

“Jesus said, If thou art willing to be PERFECT, go, sell thy possessions, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have *treasure in heaven*; and come and follow Me” (Matt. xix. 21).

Aionian life was one thing, treasure in heaven another. The good thing required for aionian life was obedience to the law of Moses. Perfection, however, came by the higher law of Christ. He said, “I say unto you” that murder is in the heart of the man who merely desires. This is the *strait* gate that few find. Many are going the easy road that ends in the destruction of all their works, “saved so as by fire”. When the disciples heard that it was more difficult for a rich man to *enter* into the kingdom than for the camel to pass through the eye of a needle, they expressed surprise. Both camel and rich man must be unloaded before such entry is possible (The eye of a needle is the small door fixed in the city gate and opened after dark). When Peter heard these things he said:--

“Behold, we have forsaken all and followed Thee: What shall we have therefore?” (Matt. xix. 27).

Then comes the reply which links all these great passages together:--

“Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and everyone that hath forsaken houses inherit aionian life” (Matt. xix. 28, 29).

Our last passage is Matt. xviii., where the little child is set in the midst as the pattern:--

“Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not ENTER into the Kingdom of heaven” (verse 3).

Verse 8 uses the parallel expressions “*enter into life*” and “aionian fire”.

Space is limited; much more might have been said in bringing out the underlying harmony of all these passages. We write for “Bereans”, and must leave the matter here.

We trust that it is at least clear that the question of gaining or losing an entry into the kingdom is one of supreme importance in this testimony of Christ while on earth, and that around this theme the sermon on the mount revolves.

#7. The Sermon on the Mount.
The Law for the Perfect.
pp. 77 - 79

Having gathered from the structure the emphatic words, and parallels in other parts, the scope and object of the Sermon on the Mount, we can safely look at some of its details without fear of misapplying their teaching.

It is perfectly evident that one and the same people are addressed throughout and the exhortations, warnings and teaching are focused upon one point. The kingdom of heaven of v. 3 is seen to be closely connected with the earth in verse 5. This is seen again in chapter vi. 10, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven". Those who are addressed here hold a twofold responsibility towards the world, which may or may not be fully entered and realized:--

"Ye are the salt of the earth" (v. 13).

"Ye are the light of the world" (v. 14).

Salt may lose its savour and so be worthless. Light may be hidden under a bushel and so be valueless. The light of good works was so to shine that men should be led to glorify the Father which is in heaven.

The coming of Christ to Israel with its proclamation of king and kingdom did not set aside the law:--

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil" (v. 17).

The "therefore" of verse 19 shows that the "least commandments" there spoken of are those of "the law". Whoever breaks (*lou*, destroy being *kataluo*) one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, forfeits position in the coming kingdom. Whoever shall do and teach them (note the order), this one shall be called great in the kingdom. But the doing of the law was not the highest attainment, as the rich young man learned in Matt. xix. Perfection requires something more. The Lord therefore proceeds to take the law and open its fuller and deeper spiritual application. A righteousness greater than that of the Scribes and Pharisees would obtain an entrance into the kingdom, but reward and treasure in heaven were connected with something more. Six times in chapter v. does the Lord speak of the old law and the new.

"Ye have heard." "But I say." (Matt. v. 22-44).

- A | v. 21-26. Anger.
- B | 27-30. Desire.
- C | 32. Subterfuge to avoid keeping covenant.
- C | 33-37. Subterfuge to avoid keeping oath.
- B | 38-42. Non-resistance.
- A | 43, 44. Love to enemies.

The words “without cause” in verse 22 are to be omitted. The law read, “Whosoever shall KILL shall be amenable to the judges”. Christ said, “Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be amenable to the judges”. To say “Raca” to one’s brother, that is, to speak contemptuously, is to make oneself amenable to the Sanhedrin, the great national council. To go further and say “wicked reprobate” is to make oneself amenable to the “Gehenna of fire”.

The three grades of punishment occur again in the sequel (25, 26) *viz.*, the adversary, the judge, the officer. Prison is equivalent to Gehenna. Some may feel that a proof text for the orthodox hell is being taken from them, but we make bold to say that the modern conception of hell does not enter into the scope of the passage. Entrance into the kingdom is joy; rejection is outer darkness and gnashing of teeth. It is not a question of salvation or damnation, nor of heaven or hell here, any more than it is in Matt. xxv. 31-46. It is entry or non-entry into the kingdom. The three stages of verse 22 indicate the straitness of the gate, and the “destruction” towards which the broad way leads. If the Gehenna of verses 29, 30 be taken literally, of course the cutting off of the hand and the plucking out of the eye must be literal too. We do not remember ever meeting, even among the most devoted advocates of the Sermon on the Mount, one who had plucked out his eye or cut off his hand, yet many if not all had been “offended” sometime or other.

The deeper spiritual commandment that is given to those who seek the kingdom and its blessedness is focused in the closing verses of the chapter.

- A | 45-. That ye may become children of your Father in heaven.
- B | -45. For. / Sun on evil and good.
 \ Rain on just and unjust.
- B | 46, 47. For. / If love them that love – what reward?
 \ If salute brethren only – where differ?
- A | 48. Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven.

This insistence upon being like the Father is seen in the great prayer of chapter vi., “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”, and in the Lord’s comment:--

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses” (verses 14, 15).

See also Matt. xviii. 23-35. This truth however is not a part of the gospel of the Grace of God and cannot be preached as such without confusion and harm. It is however

an essential element in the perfecting of the believer in view of the kingdom and its rewards.

#8. The Sermon on the Mount.
The Theme of Chapter vi.—“Seek ye FIRST.”
pp. 109 - 111

We have already seen that the subject of *Reward* is a prominent theme in Matt. v.-vii., forming the key-word of the opening verses, and punctuating the first part of chapter vi. The fact that “reward” is emphasized so much shows that the question as to whether the basis of the sermon is “law” or “grace” is not relevant. The subject is not a question of salvation, either by works or by faith, but of perfecting, of reward, of enduring in view of the kingdom.

Let us notice the way in which the subject of reward runs through chapter vi.:-

Verse.

1.	Alms given before men.	<i>No reward in heaven.</i>
2.	Hypocrites who seek glory of men.	<i>They have their reward.</i>
4.	Alms in secret.	<i>The Father shall reward openly.</i>
5.	Prayers as hypocrites.	<i>They have their reward.</i>
6.	Prayer in secret.	<i>The Father shall reward openly.</i>
16.	Hypocrites fasting.	<i>They have their reward.</i>
18.	Appear not to fast.	<i>The Father shall reward openly.</i>

If we were to concentrate our attention upon the subject of Alms-giving, of Prayer, of Fasting, etc., we should doubtless learn much for our good, but we should probably miss the essential lesson of the chapter, and the real object which the Lord had in view at the time. If we step back as it were and obtain a comprehensive view, the true theme is so evident that minor details can then be considered with safety. In the accompanying structure it will be seen that there is a repetition of theme too obvious not to be intentional. This repetition emphasizes *the* theme for us.

Matt. vi.

A	vi. 1-4. Almsgiving.		
B	5-15. Prayer.	a	Not as Gentiles.
		b	Your Father knoweth.
		c	Pray “Thy”, “Thy”, “Thy”.
C	16-18. Fasting.		

A | 19-24. Treasure.

B | 25-34. Anxiety. | a | The Gentiles seek.

b | Your heavenly Father knoweth.

c | Seek ye FIRST.

The first thing for us to notice is the fact that in the prayer which the Lord gave as a model the believer “seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”, and has the assurance that the Father knows his needs before he asks. Instead of elaborating the opening words of the prayer, “Our Father”, with subdivisions upon “Re-generation”, etc., let us see that the real import is in the fact that the believer does not say “my”, “me”, but prays, Hallowed be THY name, THY kingdom come, THY will be done.

In the corresponding portion (25-34) undue anxiety concerning food and drink and clothing is forbidden; the Gentiles seek these things; instead of so doing, the Lord says:--

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

The only prayer for temporal needs in the model given by the Lord is the clause, “Give us this day our daily bread”. The word which is translated “daily” is *epiousios*, and apart from the one other occurrence in the parallel passage of Luke xi. 3 this word is entirely unknown in either Biblical or Classical Greek—it seems to be a word invented by the Spirit of God to express His purpose. Literally we might translate it “The bread which cometh down upon us”. We cannot believe it possible for any Jew in the days of Christ to have missed the allusion to the *Manna* of the wilderness. It gives point to the prayer to notice this. Pilgrims journeying through the wilderness are here. They have no continuing city, but seek one to come. Their great prayer is for the coming of the kingdom. For the rest, just the daily manna will suffice until the land of promise shall be reached.

To have seen the Sermon on the Mount in the light of the wilderness with its teaching concerning suffering and glory, endurance and crown, temptation and perfecting, would have saved many a page of useless argument as to the meaning of “temptation” in this prayer, or whether the basis of the Sermon be “law” or “grace”. Future blessedness is held out as a “reward” to those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, who seek first the kingdom, who go on unto perfection.

Perhaps a few words upon the “evil eye” of verses 22-24 may be appreciated. Edwin Hatch in his *Essays in Biblical Greek* under the word *poneros*=evil gives as a secondary meaning “grudging”, “niggard”, and cites passages where “the grudging eye”, “the eye of the miser”, “the niggard eye” are placed in antithesis to liberality. The Hebrew word for evil (*ra*) is usually translated *poneros*, but is sometimes translated *baskanos*. This use of *poneros* in the sense of “niggardly” or “grudging”, especially in connection with the idea of the “evil eye”, throws a clear light upon a well-known passage of the Sermon on the Mount, which if taken in its context will be seen to refer not to goodness or badness in general, but specially to the use of money:--

“Lay not up treasures upon earth treasures in heaven where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be liberal, thy whole body shall be full of light: but if thine eye be grudging (*poneros*), thy whole body shall be full of darkness Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. vi. 19-24).

Matt. xx. 15, “Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” may be rendered, “Art thou envious at my being liberal?” This strong emphasis upon the snare of wealth brings the parallel of Matt. xix. closer. “The strait gate” which few find and the “eye of the needle” are the same.

One cannot have the niggard’s eye, or lay up treasure on earth, or seek first the things of self, or walk the broad and easy road, if one seeks perfection and an entrance into the kingdom. Matt. v.-vii., Hebrews, Philippians, and Rev. ii., iii. may each have their distinct departments in the Divine Plan, but one great principle runs through them all.

#9. The Sermon on the Mount. Parallels with Philippians. pp. 139 - 142

We have sought to show that the Sermon on the Mount, while not the “Laws of the kingdom” or the “Charter of the Church”, gives exhortations and commands to those believers who in a period of rejection look forward to the kingdom and give up all in their desire to be counted worthy to obtain an entrance and receive the reward.

It will be confirmatory evidence to show the parallels that exist between the Sermon on the Mount and the epistle to the Philippians. We already know that Philippians is the epistle of the Prize. It stand to the church of the one body in the same relationship as the Sermon on the Mount stand to the subject of the kingdom of heaven. While the sphere of these two parts of Scripture varies, the underlying principle is the same.

(1). THE PLACE OF SELF.—We observed that the believer is urged in Matt. vi. to “seek first the kingdom of God”, so in Phil. ii. the apostle writes:--

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others For all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ’s.”

(2). SUFFERING, REJOICING AND REWARD.—The Sermon on the Mount says:--

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. v. 11, 12).

Philippians says:--

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will . The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds what then? . . . I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (i. 12-18, 29).

(3). PERFECTION, THE STANDARD.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. v. 48).

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfected Let us therefore, as many as would be perfect, be thus minded. According to a mark I press toward the prize” (Phil. iii. 12-15).

(4). SONSHIP SHOULD BE MANIFEST.

“Love your enemies that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. v. 44, 45).

“That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke” (Phil. ii. 15).

(5). THE LIGHT MUST SHINE.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. v. 16).

“Shine ye (A.V. margin) as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life” (Phil. ii. 15, 16).

(6). A SPIRIT OF YIELDING IN CONTRAST WITH SELF-ASSERTION.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” “Blessed are the meek.” “Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Matt. v. 3, 6, 39-41).

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus The form of God the form of a servant He humbled Himself.” “Let your moderation (yieldingness) be known unto all men” (Phil. ii. and iv.).

(7). ANXIETY OVER DAILY AFFAIRS.

“Take no thought (*merimnao*) for your life.” “Take no thought for the morrow” (Matt. vi. 25, 34).

“Be careful (*merimnao*) for nothing” (Phil. iv. 6).

The verb *merimnao*, “to take anxious thought”, “Be anxious”, occurs in the prison epistles only in Philippians. There in that epistle it occurs twice. Seen together they present the truth complete.

“Be anxious for nothing” (Phil. iv. 6).

“I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care (be anxious) concerning your affairs, for all seek their own” (Phil. ii. 20, 21).

It is impossible to be anxious over self, if one seeks first the kingdom of God and the blessing of others. This spirit should be that of all who seek the prize.

(8). CONTRASTED WITH THE REWARD IS DESTRUCTION.

“Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction (*apoleia*), and many there be which go in thereat” (Matt. vii. 13).

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? depart from Me ye that work iniquity” (Matt. vii. 22, 23).

“Many walk whose end is destruction” (*apoleia*) (Phil. iii. 18, 19).

For further light on this meaning of destruction consider the bearing of I Cor. iii. 11-17, also Matt. xxv. 31-46, where entry into the kingdom is contrasted with *aionian* fire, “Depart from Me”.

(9). A CENSORIOUS SPIRIT IS TO BE SHUNNED.

“Judge not that ye be not judged.” “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matt. vii. 1, 3).

“In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” “Whatsoever things are true honest just if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, impute these things” (Phil. ii. 3 and iv. 8).

If it were necessary, we could turn to the epistles to the Hebrews and of James for further parallels, but we feel the truth is sufficiently established, and space is valuable. While clearly seeing the place which the Sermon on the Mount occupies, let us beware of that supercilious spirit, that spiritual pride which, alas, sometimes contradicts the professed faith of those who “rightly divide the Word of truth”.

We have dealt with the parables and miracles of Matthew in previous volumes, and without assuming to have in any measure plumbed their depths, we believe the dispensational character of these two great sections has been clearly demonstrated.

With the added light and direction we have now received by our study of the Sermon on the Mount, we feel that it is established beyond doubt that the Gospel of Matthew is concerned not with the Church of Christ, but with the Kingdom of the heavens, which kingdom embraces the throne of David and the wider inheritance of Abraham under the headship of Christ as the Son of David and Son of Abraham.

The Ministry of Consolation.

#8. “What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee” (Psa. lvi. 3). pp. 79, 80

The above words were uttered by David in the midst of daily conflict (vv. 1, 2). Trust in the Lord, is very closely related to trust in His Word. Immediately after David says “I will trust in THEE”, he adds, “In God I will praise His WORD” and balances it with “In God I have put my trust” (verse 4). Trust in the Lord and His Word dispels fear, even before deliverance itself comes. This was David’s experience as may be seen from verses 10 and 11:--

“In God will I praise His Word; in the Lord will I praise His Word. In God have I put my trust; I WILL NOT BE AFRAID what man can do unto me.”

We commence with “what time *I am afraid*”, we end with “*I will not be afraid*”. There is also a direct effect upon the cause of David’s fear, as well as upon David himself:--

“When I cry, then shall mine enemies turn back” (verse 9).

The very cry for help becomes a weapon of defence. Trust begets trust, even as fear begets fear. David’s confidence grows stronger as prayer leads him to the Most High (verse 2). He looks at what God has done in the past, and makes an *Ebenezer* of it, a starting point for future deliverances:--

“For Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not Thou deliver my feet from falling that I may walk before God in the light of the living?” (verse 13).

The “soul” is greater than the “feet”, and “death” is more than “falling”. He Who delivered from death and translated into *life* will surely continually deliver from falling that we may walk in the *light*.

Psa. lvi. should be read through, noting the progress of thought. David’s deliverer is called “God”, “The Most High”, “The Lord”. There are many things that occur around us that send the chill of fear into our hearts, but let us take courage and say with the Psalmist:--

“What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.”

#9. An Aspect of Answered Prayer. pp. 158, 159

What constitutes answer to prayer? To be able to comprehend the subject sufficiently so as to give a full answer seems to be beyond our present attainment, but it may be helpful to consider one of the many aspects of the question. The examples we give tend to show that many times the answer to our prayer is close at hand, and that in supplying our need God has no necessity to work a miracle, but only to open our eyes that we may see. The case of Hagar comes to mind in this connection.

“The water was spent in the bottle she lift up her voice and wept God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is and God OPENED HER EYES, and she saw a well of water” (Gen. xxi. 15-19).

There is nothing to lead us to believe that the well of water miraculously provided, it was there all time, and the child was dying of thirst not because of the lack of water, but because of the lack of vision.

In Gen. xxii. the great test of Abraham’s faith is recorded. Once more we do not gather from the narrative that the ram caught by its horns dropped down from heaven at the critical moment, rather do we understand that it was there *all the time*, but that Abraham did not see it until the necessity arose:--

“And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and *looked*, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day. In the mount of the Lord *it shall be seen*” (Gen. xxii. 13, 14).

In both cases there is a personal act of faith accompanying the vision:--

“And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water: and she WENT and FILLED the bottle.”

“And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked and Abraham WENT and TOOK the ram.”

The incident recorded in II Kings vi. will doubtless come to the mind of the reader. The servant of Elisha when he saw the great host encompassing the city cried:--

“Alas, my master! how shall we do?” (verse 15).

Elisha stilled his fears, not by saying that God would send deliverance, but by simply praying:--

“Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, THAT HE MAY SEE. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (verse 17).

Our greatest need is not for the miraculous provision of water in the wilderness, not for deliverance, not for chariots of fire, *but eyes to see*.

In Christ is our all. We do not need to pray so much for this or for that, but for the opened eye of faith that perceives that already in Him we are filled to the full:--

“And Jesus stood still, and called unto them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto Him, Lord, THAT OUR EYES MAY BE OPENED” (Matt. xx. 32, 33).

#10. “The Mould of Doctrine” (Rom. vi. 17). pp. 163, 164

The closing words of the book of Judges seem to epitomize the ideal latent or expressed in the heart of man.

“In those days there was NO KING in Israel, and every man did that which was right IN HIS OWN EYES” (Judges xxi. 25).

Iniquity according to Isa. liii. is synonymous with “turning every one to his own way”. Human nature rebels against the idea of being “run into a mould”, and this resentment is by no means confined to the unsaved and the ungodly. The schisms that have rent the church, the differences that ruin the unity of the Spirit, may be trace back to this source. It is true that no one of us has the right to endeavour to make other believers little copies of ourselves, that is the baneful travesty of the truth, and lends some colour of equity to the resentment expressed by Christendom. Nevertheless, it is the purpose of God that we should be “run into a mould”, the mould however being that of the image of His Son:--

“For Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. viii. 29).

As a means to that end is the doctrine of the Scriptures:--

“But thanks be to God, that—Whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient out of the heart unto the mould of teaching into which ye were delivered” (Rom. vi. 17, Rotherham).

A footnote adds “As if to be fashioned thereby”. The A.V. of this verse makes it appear that the doctrine had been delivered *to us*, the margin, agreeing with Rotherham, shows that we have been delivered into the mould of the doctrine instead. Do we come to the Word of God that it may mould us? It will lead us into close conformity to the walk (I John ii. 6), meekness (I Pet. ii. 21-23), death (Phil. iii. 10), resurrection (Rom. vi. 5, 6), and coming glory (Phil. iii. 20, 21) of Christ into Whose image we must one day be conformed.

Consequent upon this must come a growing likeness to each other. Phil. iii., which speaks of the wondrous conformity of the believer to the death and the glory of the Son

of God, is preceded by Phil. ii., which emphasizes a “like mindedness, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind”. In Rom. xv. 5, 6 also we read:--

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

While, therefore, we must rightly oppose any attempt on the part of man to mould us to his liking, or to make us all faulty repetitions of equally faulty patterns, let us not be misled by our zeal and turn aside from the great and glorious goal that God has placed before Him, that we shall one day be conformed to the image of His Son. May the whole Word of God, the great and glorious image of Christ, the lesser reflections of that image in the lives of those, such as Paul, who followed the Lord, the experiences of daily life through which we pass, may they all be blessed by God to us in fashioning and moulding us after “the image of the heavenly”.

#11. A Testimony to a Simple Faith. pp. 189, 190

It was an agreeable surprise to receive the following simple testimony from one who is, we believe, officially connected with one of our great national museums, and we pass it on that others may take heart both from the lesson itself and from the fact that in spite of the apostasy of these days, even in high places the Lord has His own who have not bowed the knee to the modern Baal of higher criticism.

The conversation had turned to the subject of Governments and Kings, the chaotic state of Europe, and the position of the child of God. This led to the following comment on the book of Daniel.

You remember that in the prophecy of Daniel there is recorded the two parallel incidents, the casting of the three Hebrews into the burning furnace, and the casting of Daniel into the den of lions. The first act was that of a despot. Nebuchadnezzar was an absolute monarch. Of him Daniel said:--

“Whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.”

The second act was that of a limited monarch Presidents of the kingdom, governors, princes, counselors, and captains are seen consulting together and advising King Darius to establish the decree that they had formulated. This decree, once signed and sealed, could not be altered, even by the King himself.

Now observe this fact for your help and encouragement. The most autocratic Sovereign that has ruled over the Gentiles *could not put to death* Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, and the other King, even though he wished to do so,

could not save Daniel from the den of lions. In both cases deliverance came from God independently of man. It would appear that while from one standpoint one form of government may be better than another, from another standpoint they are all much the same.

Whether we are called upon to live under the tyranny of absolute monarchy, or the equal tyranny of extreme democracy, both alike are under the control of God, and until He permits no harm can reach us, we are equally safe under the King or President.”

The conversation took a turn, as the result of this thought, in the direction of trust in the Lord, when the following suggestion was put forward which we pass on:--

When the Lord appeared to Solomon with the words, “Ask what I shall give thee”, it will be remembered that Solomon chose wisdom and knowledge. It so pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked this, and not for riches, wealth, honour, etc., that He said:--

“Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth and honour such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.”

At Solomon’s death Israel came to Rehoboam, and said:--

“Thy father (Solomon) made our yoke grievous; now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father.”

This makes it appear that Solomon’s riches grew out of the servitude and burden of the people. We read in I Kings x. 14 that :--

“The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold.”

Ominous number! connected by prophecy with the mark of the beast! Had Solomon trusted God to fulfil His promise, instead of exacting such as tribute from the people, he might have received 777 talents and have saved his kingdom.

The testimony is simple, but we feel that we should all be the better if the two lessons drawn from Daniel and Solomon were taken to heart:--

“Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Isa. ii. 12).

Studies in the Epistles of the Mystery.

#54. The Dispensation of the Mystery (Eph. iii. 9). pp. 8 - 10

The apostle had claimed that to him, less than the least of all saints as he was, grace had been given to preach as good tidings the unsearchable riches of the Christ (iii. 8). As we have seen, the word “unsearchable” suggests that no track had been made, “untraceable” perhaps conveying the meaning as well as any word. These untraceable riches form the subject of verse 9, and we suggest that instead of commencing the verse with “and”, the *kai* should be translated “even”. A parallel passage for this usage and rendering is found in Rom. xvi. 25:--

“Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, EVEN the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, kept quiet in age times, but now made manifest”

“My gospel” as used by Paul is nothing less than the preaching of Christ according to the inner teaching of Rom. v., which doctrine does not find an exposition in Scripture until then, for Paul and his chronicler Luke are the only ones who mention Adam in the N.T.; no other writer seems cognizant of the revelation of the mystery which is connected with Christ as the last Adam. This is not the mystery however of Eph. iii. 9, the reference to Rom. xvi. being only given as a parallel.

“Even to enlighten all as to what is the dispensation of that mystery which has been hidden away from the ages by that God Who created all things” (Eph. iii. 9). (The R.V. reads “dispensation” for the A.V. “fellowship”).

We believe this to be the third title given in the epistle for this present dispensation, the first being found in i. 10:--

“With regard to a dispensation of the fullness of the seasons, to reunite all things under one Head, in the Christ.”

The second is in iii. 2:--

“The dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to youward.”

The third is in iii. 9:--

“The dispensation of the mystery.”

It will be seen upon examination that the dispensation of i. 10 refers to the mystery, for verse 9 reads:--

“Having made known unto us the mystery with regard to a dispensation.”

The Gentiles, previous to the revelation of this mystery and the introduction of this dispensation, had lived in alienation from God and His covenant. Eph. ii. 12 uses the

same word, “You were in *that season* without Christ, aliens, strangers, hopeless, Godless”. “*That season*” is contrasted with “*This season*” implied in ii. 13 and defined in i. 10. Some there are who hold that i. 10 refers to the yet future glorious day spoken of in I Cor. xv. (24-28) when the Son of God shall lay at the Father’s feet a perfected universe “That God may be all in all”. This cannot be however, for two important reasons:--

1. In Eph. i. 10 the dispensation there spoken of is a mystery, but the consummation (“God all in all”) was not a mystery, having been revealed earlier in the epistle to the Corinthians.
2. That the future and final goal indicated in I Cor. xv. cannot with truth be called a “dispensation”.

A dispensation is a stewardship. It implies that the Lord or Owner is dealing immediately with his possessions. All mediation ends however when the Son brings to the Father the crowning work of the ages. Priesthood and kingship, rule and authority are terms consistent with varying stewardships, but they are all fulfilled and resigned before God can be all in all. Therefore that blessed period cannot be a dispensation of the grace of God to the Gentiles. It is the dispensation pre-eminently marked by the reconciliation of things on earth and things in heaven.

The Head of the church is Head also of principality and power. The sphere of the church is in the superheavenlies. *Now*, although the world believes it not, and though many a believer confesses “We see not yet all things put under His feet”, yet *now* “things in heaven and things in earth” are ranged under the one Headship of the ascended Christ. It was to enlighten all as to this that the apostle preached the untraceable riches of the Christ. The mystery of Rom. xvi. had been kept quiet in age-times, but the mystery here had been hidden by God from the ages. The apostle stresses this fact in Col. i. 25, 26:--

“According to that dispensation of God which was given me for you, to complete the word of God—the mystery which had been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.”

Let us seek to realize our calling and its privileges. Though the world knows neither our Lord and Head nor ourselves His body, let us remember that this present dispensation is the first complete foreshadowing of the end, when throughout the range of creation heaven and earth are to be reunited under the Headship of Christ.

#55. Our Spiritual Congregation (Eph. iii. 10).
pp. 26 - 29

An erroneous interpretation of Heb. xii. 1 encompasses the believer with a cloud of angelic and spiritual “witnesses”, using the word “witness” in the sense of “spectator”. This is not the meaning of the Greek word “*martur*”, which means “one who bears witness”, and so in a secondary sense “a martyr”. The idea read into Heb. xii. 1 is not however foreign to Scripture. Matt. xviii. 10 says:--

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.”

Heb. i. 14 says of the angels:--

“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

In the parable of Luke xv. angels are represented as taking a particular interest in the repentance of a sinner:--

“I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (verse 10).

Peter, when writing about the revelations given to the prophets concerning the sufferings for Christ and the glories that should follow, adds, “which things the angels desire to look into” (I Pet. i. 12). Angelic ministry follows the unfolding of the Divine purpose in Israel very closely, and is not absent from the Church, formed during the Acts. The Church of the Mystery after Acts xxviii. however is not associated with angels.

The worship of angels is forbidden in Col. ii. 18. The mystery of godliness was “seen of angels” (I Tim. iii. 16), and Timothy is charged by Paul before “the elect angels” (I Tim. v. 21). Apart from the reference in Col. ii. 18, the very word “angel” is absent from the Prison Epistles. Angels are messengers. The Church of the One Body is raised to such a degree that it is superfluous to teach that it is above angels, the revelation of Eph. i. and ii. is that Christ, and with Him His Church, is raised “Far above Principality and Power, Might and Dominion”, the very aristocracy of heaven. By reason of the reconciliation of things in heaven and things in earth, the Lord, when He ascended, became at the same time Head of both the Church and of Principality and Power (Col. i. 18; ii. 10).

Some Principalities and Powers are antagonistic to the Church of the One Body:--

“For we wrestle against principalities and powers spiritual wickedness in heavenly places” (Eph. vi. 12).

“And having spoiled principalities and powers He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. ii. 15).

These last passages, we believe, sound a great deep. Away back before man was created on the earth, there was a great falling away on the part of the angels and the higher orders of the heavenly host. Allusions to this defection are scattered through the Scriptures. The great controversy appears to have centred around the person and office of Christ. Pride was the snare and condemnation of the Devil. The rebellious Spirit seems to be challenged when the Lord again brings the first-begotten into the world, saying, "And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. i. 6). Man himself was made "for a little lower than the angels". The sin and the redemption of man is neither at the beginning nor the end of the purpose of the ages. Man, as it were, stands between two great opposing forces. The god of this age, the Devil, who for a little season seems to work his awful will, and the God of heaven and earth, the God of all the ages, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will, yet shew who is "the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (I Tim. vi. 15). It is with this knowledge that we read something of the meaning and purpose of Eph. iii. 10:--

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God."

Observe the connection which this verse has with the preceding verses:--

"The dispensation of the grace of God given me to youward, the Mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, according to that gospel whereof I was made a minister, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, EVEN to illuminate all as to the dispensation of the Mystery WITH THE OBJECT THAT (*hina*) the principalities and powers may learn through the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (verses 2-10).

The precious truth of the Mystery is misunderstood and those who hold it are misunderstood with it. They are sometimes charged with not taking part enough in active service. Let every member of the One Body remember that God has defined the sphere of his ministry and his warfare in Eph. iii. and vi. "We wrestle NOT with flesh and blood." We may not engage in this or join in with that propaganda—we have nevertheless a conflict, though unseen by the eye of the flesh. We may not preach from pulpits or platforms, yet each one of us has an ever-waiting and expectant congregation (not composed of men, but made up of heaven's brightest and highest spirits), they are being taught by God *through* the Church (taught *through* not *by*, the Church being the great object lesson ever before their eyes). Taught of what? Of grace, of mercy, of love—yes, but pre-eminently, the manifold WISDOM of God.

The heavenly host that has watched the unfolding plan of the ages can appreciate, with that great unfolding before it as a panorama, the diversified wisdom of God. His enemy is the very incarnation of wisdom, for he is "That old serpent, the Devil", and the proverbial utterance associates wisdom with serpents: "Be wise as serpents". "Yet God taketh the wise in his own craftiness."

The heavenly watchers who looked down upon this earth of ours in the year that Paul entered Rome were not feasting their eyes upon palace and temple of either Jerusalem, Athens or Rome. They were intent upon one spot, unknown to any of us to-day, the hired

house of Paul the prisoner. When the elders of Israel rejected the testimony of the Apostle and were dismissed with the quotation of Isa. vi. 9, 10, heaven itself might well have paused to ask, What can be done? Satan had brought about a deadlock. He knew that Israel were the destined channel of blessing for this earth. He knew that before they could be blessings to others they must first of all, repent and be blessed themselves. Israel did not repent, and it seemed as though Satan had thrust a spoke into God's wheel. Then came the revelation of the Mystery, never before made known, not even in the Old Testament Scriptures, revealing a purpose settled and completed "Before the overthrow of the world". How the heavenly host must have praised the only WISE God as this final demonstration of His manifold wisdom nullified the machinations of the evil one.

God's purpose still goes on, even though Israel are scattered and blind, even though the promise to Abraham for all nations yet awaits fulfillment. The superheavenlies are to be peopled with saved ones from among the Gentiles, and, when this company is complete, the Lord will set into motion the purposes of His grace to Gentiles and Jew once again. At the end of his survey in Rom. ix.-xi. the Apostle surveys the depths saying:--

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, *how unsearchable* are His judgments and His ways *past finding out*" (xi. 33).

The breadth and length and depth and height of the revelation given in Eph. iii. seems to baffle knowledge and be beyond words. Let us recognize our calling. Let us ever remember our unseen congregation, as God, through us, makes known His manifold wisdom.

#56. The Purpose of the Ages (Eph. iii. 11). pp. 43 - 46

The authorized version of Eph. iii. 11 is so very grand that truth alone can justify a departure from it. "According to the *eternal* purpose." The R.V. retains the A.V. reading, but puts in the margin Gr. *Purpose of the ages*. The Greek is the Word of God, let us be clear on that. Incomparable as the A.V. may be as a work in the English language, and still holding its place in spite of the Revision of recent years, it is not inspired, but is the work of men who to the best of their ability translated the Scriptures.

Then again it must be remembered that words change in meaning and value. Most Bible helps give a list of obsolete words, words whose meaning has changed since the A.V. was written. The language was in a state of flux when the A.V. was written, and it was once correct to translate *aionios* by the word *eternal*, for that word originally meant age-long. It comes from the Latin *aeternus*, which is a shorter form of the older word *aeviternus*, which coming from *aevum* turns out to be nothing more nor less than the Latin form of the Greek word *aion*, of which the English equivalent is *aeon*. It is, however, not possible to use the word *eternal* to-day without its modern meaning of everlastingness,

and as this meaning is foreign to the word, and in some cases most contradictory, we must in the interest of truth drop it, and adopt something better. That word is ready to hand, presented to us by the A.V. itself in the very epistle under review—"That in the *ages* to come" (ii. 7). To render this passage "That in the *eternities* to come" would be impossible. There is, moreover, a departure from the inspired grammar of Eph. iii. 11. "Eternal" is an adjective, but no adjective is found in the original of this passage. The wording is *kata prothesin ton aionon*. *Aionon* is a noun and must be rendered "of the ages". Instead therefore of a mystifying and indefinite statement like "according to the eternal purpose", we find that the revelation of the mystery, the unsearchable riches of Christ, by which through the church the principalities and powers are learning of the manifold wisdom of God, is all according to plan.

"According to a purpose of the ages which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Heb. i. 2, speaking of the Son, says, "By whom He made the ages".

The same word "made" occurs in Eph. iii. 11, "The purpose of the ages which He made (not purposed) in Christ Jesus our Lord". By Christ the ages were made, and in Christ the purpose of those ages was made too. The dispensation of the mystery is the capstone of the ages so far as the great preparatory period is concerned. We know but little of what the future ages shall bring of blessing, of glory, of knowledge, but we know that the present dispensation of the mystery "fills up the Word of God".

When God created Adam and when Adam fell, the purpose of the ages had already been made, and our part in it already settled. If the glorious inheritance became forfeit, love would provide a Kinsman-Redeemer who should redeem the forfeited inheritance. When God set aside the Gentiles and chose Israel, the purpose of the ages still stood, some Gentiles were already foreknown as members of the One Body "chosen in Him before the overthrow of the world". When the long-promised Seed came, and was despised, rejected and crucified, no erasure was made in the book of the Divine purpose.

If we trace our steps and view the varying developments from another angle, namely, that of Satanic opposition, it is a comfort to realize that, do what he may, no act of Satan can thwart the purpose of God. How strongly this is stressed in Eph. i.:--

"According as He hath CHOSEN us in Him" (verse 4).

"According to the good pleasure of His WILL" (verse 5).

"According to His GOOD PLEASURE which He hath purposed in Himself" (verse 9).

"According to the PURPOSE of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (verse 11).

Such is the nature of the purpose of the ages. The ages contain as sub-divisions times, seasons, days, dispensations. They span the period of Gen. i. 1 "In the beginning God", to I Cor. xv., "That God may be all in all". They include an age-long salvation, inheritance, life and punishment, all of which are so many factors in the outworking of the purpose. To intrude the modern meaning of everlastingness is to spoil the testimony that the ages roll on to their destined end, and shall one day cease. The dispensation of the mystery is no fabrication of the Apostle; it is an integral though

hidden part of the great purpose of the ages. It is the one section of that purpose that reaches to the highest heavens, sees Christ as the One Head of all things which are in heaven and earth, and manifests in miniature what the new creation will be when the glorious purpose of the ages has reached its fulfillment. Brethren, we have in this revelation a sacred deposit. Should all *our Asia* forsake us, let us still look up and say:--

“Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which has been committed till that day.”

The fact of a purpose running through the ages comforts the heart, if it does not unravel all the mysteries of providence. Ecclesiastes finds the thread in this great purpose that reaches out beyond death and the grave. The fact of a purpose enables the believer to wait patiently for God and God’s own time. Just as in “Pippa Passes” we read, “God’s in His heaven, all’s right with the world”, so we, while realizing all the sin and misery around and within, we too know that God’s in His heaven, and is working out His purpose of the ages, and individually makes all things to work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose.

**#57. “My tribulations Your glory (Eph. iii. 12, 13).
pp. 71 - 73**

As the words of A.V. iii. 13 stand they are ungrammatical.

“My tribulations for you, which is your glory.”

The relative “which” is in the feminine gender, and singular number, “tribulations” being plural. *Valpy* and *Macknight* call attention to this, but say:--

“The relative being placed between the two nouns ‘tribulations’ and ‘glory’, the one in the plural and the other in the singular number, it may, according to the idiom both of the Hebrew and Greek languages, be made to agree with either. Here it agrees with *doxa* (glory) which is in the singular number.”

It appears therefore that the translation that alters “is” to “are” gives us the sense and the truth, although being compelled by the different idiom of either language to depart from literality. There are some who would place verse 12 and part of 13 in parenthesis, reading:--

“The purpose of the ages which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord which is your glory.”

We feel however that the meaning is that given in the A.V. and that the sufferings of the apostle contributed or tended in some way to the glory of the church of Christ. Col. i. 24-27 is parallel with Eph. iii. 1-13, and there we read in direct association with the fact that Paul had been made a minister according to the dispensation of God given to him for the Gentiles, namely the mystery:--

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings FOR YOU, and fill up that which is lacking of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake, which is the Church Christ in you the hope of GLORY.”

The apostle suffered much and deeply not only because he believed on the Lord Jesus, but because to him had been given the ministry of the gospel to the GENTILES. It comes in Eph. iii. 1, “I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles*”. For the mystery of the gospel he was “an ambassador in a chain” (Eph. vi. 20). Writing later to Timothy, Paul concerning the gospel:--

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the GENTILES, *for the which cause* I also suffer these things” (II Tim. i. 11, 12).

“. . . . my gospel, wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with *aionian* GLORY” (II Tim. ii. 8-10).

The strong expression of Col. i. 24:--

“I fill up that which is lacking of the tribulations of Christ for His church.”

finds an echo in II Cor. i. 5, 6:--

“For as the sufferings *of Christ* abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is *for your consolation and salvation*.”

The faithful witness of the apostle Paul, humanly speaking, was for our glory. Had man had his way, the glorious testimony of the prison epistles would have been blotted out together with that which is most vital in the other epistles. At Jerusalem before the apostles and elders he gave place by subjection no not for an hour “that the truth of the gospel might continue right through” to us Gentiles (Gal. ii. 4, 5). When the apostle was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, Ananias was told by the Lord:--

“He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and Kings and children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts ix. 15, 16).

Paul knew when he started upon his ministry that suffering awaited him. He accepted the “good deposit” and through good report and evil report he maintained his witness. What shall we think of ourselves, we who are not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoes, when we bemoan the little, the petty inconveniences and losses that we may undergo for the same blessed truth? Some class us with the Higher Critics, because they say we cut up the Bible! Some say we put Paul above Christ. Some say—well, what do they say? We know Whom we have believed, and it is enough.

The *Emphatic Diaglott* translates verse 13 “Therefore, I ask that *I may* not faint in these my afflictions on your behalf”. Literally the wording runs “Therefore I ask not to faint” and leaves the meaning somewhat open. The saints even at Ephesus may not have been so mindful of the absent apostle as to “faint” because of “his” afflictions, but we can well understand the apostle praying for himself that he may not faint under them, just as

he asked for prayer that he may have boldness in making known the mystery of the gospel. What was the secret of the apostle's strength? How could he stand so firm, though so forsaken and alone? The secret of his strength is ours too:--

“In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence through HIS FAITHFULNESS” (for this meaning see reply to W.H.G.T. in Volume XII, pp. 91-94).

The man who has boldness, access, confidence before God, and knows that the One he trusts is FAITHFULNESS itself, need fear the face of no man. Brethren, the time is short. Signs thicken about us that the last days draw near. The perilous times into which we enter call for such as Paul the apostle. *“Quit you like men. Be strong.”*

#58. The Prayer and its connections (Eph. iii. 14-21). pp. 88 - 90

“For this cause I”—with these words chapter iii. opens. They are followed by the name “Paul” and the fact that he is a “prisoner”. The apostle however desires to make it plain to the Ephesians that he is a prisoner in a sacred cause, a prisoner as an essential part of his ministry, he is the prisoner OF Jesus Christ FOR you Gentiles.

He is now started upon a great explanation. What he intended to say when he commenced with the words “For this cause I” is not revealed in the first thirteen verses of this chapter. After he has shown that his imprisonment was indeed “for you Gentiles” by enlarging upon the unique revelation which he had received, namely the mystery, he rounds off the parenthesis as he had begun by referring to his sufferings “FOR you” as being “your glory”.

The chapter therefore stands thus:--

- iii. 1. | *“For this cause I”* (Paul's imprisonment “FOR YOU”;
His unique ministry; Paul's sufferings “FOR YOU”).
- iii. 14. | *“For this cause I”* (Then follows the prayer which had been in his heart when
he broke off into the illuminating digression of vv. 2-13).

It will be seen therefore that to get the right connection of the prayer, we must see it in association with, and arising out of, the truth revealed in chapter ii. The Gentiles, who previously had been aliens and foreigners, are now made nigh, created a new man, and fitly framed together as a building, and grow into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom, said the apostle, “Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in spirit”. The Vatican MSs reads “Christ” for “God” here. The key-word is “habitation”, which in the original is *katoiketerion*. The key-word in the prayer of 14-21 is *katoikeo* in the sentence “That Christ may DWELL in your hearts by faith”.

The main thought of the prayer is now evident. The apostle desires that those whose *collective dispensational* position can be described in the terms of a holy temple shall have some *individual* and *experimental* acquaintance with this truth. Many times teaching stops too short. We are far too satisfied with dogma and not so easily moved to prayer. Every doctrine of Scripture could be followed by the words “For this cause I bow my knees”. Having seen the true connection of this prayer, we must now seek to view it as a whole before looking at its parts in detail.

Eph. iii. 14-21.

A	14, 15.	a	Prayer to the Father.				
			b	According to riches.			
	B	The Prayer.		C1	16, 17.	<i>In order that.</i>	Strength.
		16-19.				Reason.	Christ may dwell.
							Rooted in love.
				C2	18.	<i>In order that.</i>	Mighty enough.
						Reason.	Comprehend.
							Love of Christ.
				C3	19.	<i>In order that.</i>	Filled.
						Reason.	Fulness of God.
A	20, 21.	a	Praise to the Father.				
			b	According to power.			

The prayer proper occupies verses 16-19, and the little word *hina* “in order that” divides it into three sections. Each section prepares for and leads up to the next, which ends on the high note of “all the fulness of God”.

The essential difference between the two prayers of this epistle, i. 15-23 and iii. 14-21, is found in the attitude which each takes with regard to Christ. In the first prayer we look away to the right hand of God and behold Christ there; in the second prayer we look within and are prepared to find Christ there. The first prayer strikes the note “in Christ”; the second “Christ in me”. This order is inspired and vital. To look within before I am established as to what Christ is for me, and what I am in Him, is disastrous. Only when I know the truth of death, burial, resurrection and ascension “with Christ” can I contemplate the possibility that Christ may dwell by faith in my heart. In the first prayer the request is made that we might know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead. In the second prayer that power is recognized. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” That power is “The power of His resurrection”. Nothing short of this can avail. Any other power mocks the death and corruption of our nature.

We must leave the prayer for further study in our next article, but we need not necessarily wait before we too “bow our knees unto the Father”.

A Word of Explanation.—An esteemed reader has drawn our attention to the wording of the closing paragraphs of the article in #55, page 29, suggesting that a superficial reading “cuts out the Jew entirely from the mystery and the one body”.

The constitution of the one body is “of the two”, “the both in one body” as Eph. ii. teaches, and therefore includes the Jew who believes the truth. At the same time Scripture speaks of the dispensation of the grace of God to the Gentiles. The predominance of the Gentile in the one body leads to the use of the word Gentile as a covering title, although the Jew finds a place by grace, the predominance of Israel in kingdom purposes leads us to speak of that phase of truth as “Jewish” without ruling out the evident inclusion of saved Gentiles.

We trust no one will be misled by the paragraph in question, and we shall always be glad to hear from readers in order that the truth may be faithfully and unambiguously stated.

#59. The Pater and the Patria (Eph. iii. 14, 15). pp. 108 - 109

The prayer is definitely made to “The Father (of our Lord Jesus Christ)”. Some MSS omit the reference to Christ. To enter here into the argument as to whether prayer should ever be addressed to Christ will lead us away from the real and helpful reason why the apostle so definitely prays to “The Father”. In the verse following the apostle continues, “Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named”.

The English word “family” is derived from the Latin *famulus* = “servant”. The Greek word however is derived from the word *pater* = “father” and is *patria*, a richer word. “The whole family” is in the original *pasa patria* = “every family”. Some are rather nervous of this rendering, owing perhaps to the generalizing that is so common. It is correct, however, and that alone is sufficient. We find a scriptural reason in the use of the word in Acts iii. 25:--

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

There are “families” therefore “of the earth” that are to be blessed and named with the name of the Father. These families, blessed under the terms of God’s covenant with Abraham, are not the families “in heaven”. Other callings and promises deal with that sphere, and pre-eminent among them is the church of the One Body, “blessed with every blessing that is spiritual in the superheavenlies”. That the church of the One Body is to be reckoned as a “family” in heaven is suggested by the correspondence of the opening and closing terms of the sevenfold unity of the Spirit:--

“One Body one God and Father” (Eph. iv. 4-6).

The word *patria* occurs in Luke ii. 4, where it has to do with the house and lineage of Joseph. Apart from this personal reference, Acts iii. 25 and Eph. iii. 15 are the only

other occurrences of the word. The one in a context, where Israel is prominent speaks of the families of the earth; the other, where Israel is set aside, speaks of the families in heaven, so beautifully fit together the different sections of infallible truth. Yet there are still some who look upon “Right division” as a species of “Higher Criticism”, because it cuts up the Bible! To get the truth the Scripture must be cut, but “rightly cut” (*orthotomeo*).

The prayer, further, is based upon the reconciliation, for the Father to Whom the prayer is made is Father of every family in heaven and earth. The prayer therefore is essentially related to the dispensation of the mystery, in which things in heaven and on earth are gathered together under one Head. Prayer often indicates the dispensational position of the one who prays. The prayer that is a model for kingdom saints does not necessarily express the needs of the member of the One Body. The titles of the Father and of Christ are not the same under different dispensations. The prayers of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians sound great depths and scale great heights, and the lives and experiences of many believers would be enriched if these prayers were to become their own heart-felt utterances.

#60. The Temple of the Lord (Eph. iii. 16, 17). pp. 119 - 121

It will be remembered that the prayer is threefold:--

1. *That* He may give to be strengthened.
2. *That* you may be mighty enough.
3. *That* you may be filled.

“That He may give you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His spirit in the inner man.”

Something of great value is evidently intended in this prayer, by the fact that the grant is to be “according to the riches of His glory”. Redemption accompanied by forgiveness of sins is said to be “according to the riches of His GRACE”. This grant is according to the riches of His GLORY. “Riches of glory” are associated with the Lord’s inheritance (i. 18); with the mystery (Col. i. 27); and “riches in glory” with the every-day supply of all our needs (Phil. iv. 19). What a sweep this seems to be! From the heights of future glory down to the every-day needs of the believer! Within this comprehensive scope comes the prayer of the apostle. The prayer is for strength, “strengthened with power”.

The word “to be strengthened” comes in I Cor. xvi. 13, and apart from that reference is used elsewhere of but two persons.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.—“And the child grew, and *waxed strong* in spirit, and was in the deserts, etc.” (Luke i. 80).

THE LORD JESUS.—“And the child grew, and *waxed strong* in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke ii. 40).

We can now understand perhaps a little better the reason for the “riches of glory”, for this is no mean or every-day petition. It is asking for an experience similar to that of John the Baptist and the Lord Himself! Power (*dunamis*) was necessary to equip the apostle for his ministry, “the energy of His power” (iii. 7). The same power is at work in connection with the abundant answer to prayer of verse 20—“the power that is energizing in us”. The same power is necessitated here.

By observing these references we can understand what distinctive power is intended by the apostle. It is none other than the “power of His resurrection”. In the first great prayer the petition is that we may KNOW

“What is the exceeding greatness of His *power* to usward who believe, according to the energy of the *strength* of His might, which He wrought (energized) in Christ, *when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him far above all*” (Eph. i. 18-21).

In the second prayer the plea is that we may EXPERIENCE this same mighty resurrection power. Two further clauses must be observed before we learn the necessity for this great power:--

“Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. iii. 16).

The strengthening is “through His Spirit”. We often hear great emphasis laid upon the work of the Spirit, often with a reference to Pentecost or I Cor. xii. Here is a work of the Spirit dispensationally right but sadly neglected. The Spirit Who seals is the Spirit Who strengthens. In both cases His work is the application of the resurrection of Christ. The strengthening is “with a view to the inner man”. Ephesians speaks of an “*old man*”, a “*new man*”, and an “*inner man*”. The inner man is connected with the “mind” in Rom. viii. 22, and contrasted with the “members” of the body. In II Cor. iv. 16 the “outward man” is spoken of as “perishing”, while the inner man is “renewed” day by day.

This spiritual inward strengthening completes the preparation. The preparation of the heart is for the reception of the highest and holiest Guest:--

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph. iii. 17).

We have already seen that this is a direct outcome of the glorious conclusion of Eph. ii. 22:--

“A *habitation* of God in Spirit.”

The parallel thought in Colossians is

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly” (iii. 16).

This is important. Christ may dwell in the heart *by faith*, but Christ personally is still at the right hand of God, there to remain until the time comes for Him to return to this earth. Christ dwells in the heart *by faith*. Colossians suggests that Christ cannot be

separated from His Word. “Let the *Word of Christ* dwell in you richly.” The Word of Christ represents His authority, His grace, His teaching.

If the apostle could say to the church at Corinth during the Acts: “What, know ye not that your body is *the temple of the Holy Ghost*?” he could say to the church at Ephesus, “Know ye not that your inner man is *the temple of the Lord* and the shrine of His Word?”

Brethren, do we sufficiently realize our calling? Do we seek enough to turn doctrine (Eph. ii.) into experience (Eph. iii.)? Has this model prayer been ours recently? or frequently? Let us, with the apostle, bow our knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#61. Mighty Comprehension (Eph. iii. 17, 18). pp. 137 – 139

It would be pardonable for the believer to feel that the prayer which leads up to the petition “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” can reach out no further. Yet this is not so. Wonderful as the thought is that the Church is the temple of the Lord and that each individual member may experience this blessedness, this blessing is not to be desired for its own sake. The second petition of the prayer leads on from this, and from the inner shrine of the temple reaches out to all saints and to fathomless depths.

The words “in love having been rooted and having been founded” form a connecting link much in the same way as do the words of Eph. i. 18, “The eyes of your heart having been enlightened”. The first prayer (Eph. i.) does not ask that the saints’ eyes *may be* enlightened, but makes the petition upon the assumption that they *have been enlightened*. So in the second prayer (Eph. iii.), “Having been rooted and founded in love” is not a subject for prayer but a basis for further advance. The double figure “rooted and founded”, which refers to a tree “rooted” and a building “founded”, is employed again in Col. ii. 7. There the words are “having been rooted and having been built up in Him”. May we once again emphasize the value of comparing Ephesians with Colossians? Where the idea is that of “founding”, the context is that of “dwelling IN US”; where the active and progressive word is “built up”, the context is that of “walking IN HIM”.

The prayer in Eph. iii. leads on to “being filled unto all the fulness of God” (verse 19). The exhortation of Col. ii. leads on to being “filled to the full in Him” (verse 10). Resurrection power, in other words *life* in all its fulness, must enter the inner man before the heart can become the dwelling place of Christ, but *love* must be the root-hold and the rock foundation of that one who would go further and know something of the nature of his glorious Guest.

In the first case love alone will enable us to comprehend with “all saints”, for all saints in themselves are not altogether lovely. Love as well as life moves on resurrection ground, and it is as those “accepted in the Beloved” that all saints are seen.

Hagios, which is the word translated “saints”, occurs fifteen times in Ephesians, nine occurrences being translated “saints” and four passages using the expression “all saints”. Love to all saints is the basis of the prayer of Eph. i. Comprehension with all saints is a requisite in the prayer of Eph. iii., and indicates one of the outgoings of that love. There is an extraordinary forcefulness in the opening words of this second section:--

“With the object that you may be mighty enough to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge” (Eph. iii. 18, 19).

Strength for the indwelling Christ, might for the understanding of His love, such terms are not usual, and emphasize the profound nature of the subject the more. The word which the A.V. translates “may be able”, and which we render “may be mighty enough”, is *exischuo*, and occurs nowhere else in the N.T. A lesser and more usual word is *ischuo*. The substantive *ischus* is used in Eph. i. 19—“according to energy of the strength of His *might*”, and in vi. 10—“finally, strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power of His *might*”. Now while the word *ischuo* has a variety of rendering in the A.V. such as “avail”, “be able”, etc., it seems impossible to ignore the evident connection of the two prayers of Eph. i. & iii., and not see the allusion to “the strength of His *might*” in the opening of verse 18. The R.V. recognizes the need for a fuller translation and gives “may be strong”. Once again we have resurrection power indicated, here for understanding something of the love of Christ, in chapter vi. for the conflict with spiritual foes.

The meaning of the word “comprehend” is better understood when we see how the apostle uses it in I Cor. ix. 24, and Phil. iii. 12, 13—“So run, that ye may *obtain*”; “If indeed I may apprehend”. In both of these passages a race with a prize is the context. In Acts iv. 13 the word is rightly translated “perceived”, in the sense of “laying hold” of a fact. Peter’s admission in Acts x. 34, “I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons”, suggests the idea that this “perception” was something forced upon him rather than a process of reasoning. So in Eph. iii. 18. The might is necessary if we are to “lay hold” together with all saints what is the breadth, etc.

From the inner shrine of the temple, where Christ dwells in the heart by faith, we go forth in the strength of the risen One to survey the whole glorious fabric. The figure of the building is maintained in the terms breadth, length, depth, height.

**#62. The Love that Passeth Knowledge (Eph. iii. 18, 19).
pp. 147 – 149**

A study of the text is needful before we attempt an explanation. As the passage stands in the A.V. we have two subjects before us.

1. *To comprehend*.—The breadth, length, depth, height.
2. *To know*.—The love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

The *Emphatic Diaglott* renders verse 19, “To know even that which surpasses knowledge”. Perhaps “even” is not a strictly literal rendering of the Greek *te*, yet it seems to catch the thought. *Booamfield* suggests that the sense of the passage is, “And (in short) to know the immense love of Christ though, indeed to *completely* know it surpasses the powers of all finite beings”. The sense is well expressed by using “even” as above. We translate the verses therefore:--

“In order that you may mighty enough to grasp together with all saints, what (is) the breadth and length and depth and height, to know even that which surpasses knowledge – the love of Christ” (Eph. iii. 18, 19).

As one meditates upon this passage, the necessity for such a term as “mighty enough” becomes more evident. “The *heaven* for height, and the *earth* for depth” is the teaching of Prov. xxv. 3. Breadth and depth are connected with the earth and the sea in Job xxxviii. In the triumphant conclusion of Rom. viii. the apostle includes “height and depth” among those things which are unable to separate us from the love of God. The subject is confessedly too vast for human knowledge, but what little we do see in the Word of that great love only makes us long to know more.

THE BREADTH.—“All saints.” “Far off made nigh.” “Gentiles.”

THE LENGTH.—“Before the overthrow of the world.” “The ages to come.”

“The generations of the age of the ages.”

THE DEPTH.—“The lowest parts of the earth.” “Children of wrath.”

THE HEIGHT.—“Far above all principality and power.” “Far above all heavens.”

The above is limited to the testimony of Ephesians, but as we extend our view and see this mighty love at work in other dispensations we shall with the apostle exclaim, “Oh the depth!” (Rom. xi. 33).

In the prayer of Eph. i. resurrection power is spoken of as the *exceeding* greatness of His power. In this prayer the love of Christ *exceeds* knowledge. This does not mean that we are not to seek to know, any more than the fact that the peace of God passes understanding prevents its enjoyment. In the new life, the “life that is life indeed” (I Tim. vi. 19) where love will be recognized as the greatest of all gifts (I Cor. xiii.), when we shall know even as we are known, this theme, the love of Christ, may well exercise our ransomed powers. Will there ever come a time when we shall have fathomed its deepest depths, or scaled its highest heights? We think not. Like God

Himself this mighty love must ever be beyond our full knowledge. The words of Eph. ii. 7 suggest possibilities that submerge the mind with their immensity:--

“That in the ages to come He may shew the EXCEEDING riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

For redemption, and that by His blood, including the forgiveness of sins, “*riches of grace*” have been shewn. What will it be then when *exceeding* riches of grace are brought into operation? While this love of Christ is so vast as to exceed knowledge, the apostle does not hesitate to apply that love in the practical section of the epistle.

“Walk in love, *as Christ* also hath loved us” (v. 2).

“Husbands, love your wives, even *as Christ* loved the Church” (v. 25).

While we may not be able to endorse the teaching of some, we would nevertheless avoid the error of others who certainly do assume that they know the breadth and length and depth and height of the love of Christ. We stand upon the shore of an ocean that stretches away beyond the horizon. Instead of devouring one another because we cannot agree as to its cubic measurement, let us rather trust ourselves upon puny denominational and theological computations will be gladly thrown aside as we learn to appreciate a little more what is the breadth and length and depth and height of that love that passeth knowledge.

**“To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge”
(Eph. iii. 19).**

How shall we sing the love that sought?
It s Breadth and Length, its Depth and Height:
Its fulness passes all our thought
As midday sun surpasses night.

Its breadth takes all in its embrace,
The middle wall no longer stands:
To Gentiles now of every race
God’s grace is preached in many lands.

What shall for us its length define?
No measure can to this extend:
The love that died to make us Thine
Has no beginning and no end.

What terms its soundless depth can tell?
True bottomless abyss, wherein,
Deeper than lowest depths of hell,
Lies buried, all Thy peoples’ sin.

Its height no angel wing can soar,
Far, far above all power and might;
Yet such His grace, for us in store:
To share the Holiest in the light.

(The Foregoing hymn, written by one of our readers who attends the Bible Studies in London, is one of a number which form a collection used at such meetings.)

#63. The Pleroma and the Age Purpose (Eph. iii. 19). pp. 165 – 170

We have seen that this wonderful prayer is composed of three sections, the third section being now before us.

“With the object that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph. iii. 19).

These words constitute not only the goal of the church and the climax of this prayer, they epitomize the very purpose of the ages, and the reason for all the complex scheme of redemption. “With all the fulness” is not a good rendering of the original. The R.V. reads “Unto all the fulness”. *Eis* literally means “into” in the sense of “direction of motion”, and *unto* often more truthfully expresses the meaning than *into*. In John xi. 38 “Cometh *to* the grave” means “unto”. To translate “Cometh into the grave” would be false; so in John xx. 1, as is proved by verse 11. The expression, “Bind them *into* bundles” (Matt. xiii. 30) is an instance of the English use of *into* that carries the idea of the object or the goal of the movement. Let us translate this passage therefore as follows:--

“That ye may be filled *with a view* to all the fulness of God.”

What do we understand by “the fulness of God”? Commentaries offer a great variety of interpretations, which, however varied in detail, seem to agree in the main idea that the “fulness of God” indicates His perfections, His gifts, His attributes. If the fulness of God indicates the glorious perfections of Deity, are we to understand that the apostle prays that the church may be filled with Divine omnipotence, omniscience, etc.? This does not seem scriptural.

In i. 23 the church which is His body is spoken of as “The fulness of Him that filleth all in all”. This passage is surely parallel. The church is to Christ what Christ is to all things. Again in Col. ii. 9, 10:--

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and you are filled to the full in Him Who is the head of all principality and power.”

Here once again we have Divine fulness residing in the Person of Christ, the church being closely associated with it, and with Christ in His capacity as Head over principality and power. This is certainly dealing with the same truth as Eph. i. 19-23 and iii. 19. Again, in Col. i. 18, 19:--

“He is the Head of the body, the church for it was well pleasing that in Him all the fulness should dwell.”

We will return to this verse again; meanwhile, what are we to understand by this word “fulness”. The several passages which we have already consulted seem to use the word

in a peculiar sense, as though it had particular reference to the purpose of the ages and the great goal of God. We lay aside the comments of men, and turn once more to the fountain of all truth, the *Word*. We look up to Him who used this word “fulness” with specific intent, and ask for that spirit of wisdom and revelation which He will give to those that ask Him. We turn to the first occasion where the word is used in the N.T. and the solution is provided. Over and over again we find that simply to turn to the Word afresh is in itself an inspiration. The passage is Matt. ix. 16:--

“No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment, *for that which should fill it up* taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made.”

The Emphatic Diaglott renders the verse:--

“No one puts a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; because the PATCH itself would tear the garment; and a worse rent be made.”

The word here translated “patch” is the word *pleroma*. We believe all Scripture to be inspired, and we refuse to believe that the Holy Spirit, knowing the use that would be made of the word *pleroma* in the epistles, would use such a word in a sense foreign to its meaning and misleading to the seeker after truth.

We often learn the meaning of a word by observing the word which is used in contrast. For example, we know that the word “evil” in Isa. xlv. 7 means “calamity” or “inflicted evil” because the contrasting term is “peace”. Had God intended the word to convey the meaning of moral evil, we believe He would have contrasted it with the word “good”. The contrast to *pleroma* in Matt. ix. 16 is the word *schisma*, our English word schism. It occurs in John ix. 16; x. 19; I Cor. i. 10; xi. 18; xii. 25, always with the sense of “division”. The verb *schizo* comes in Matt. xxvii. 51, where it speaks of the veil of the temple being “rent in two”. In John xix. 24 it is used by the soldiers who said concerning Christ’s garment, “Let us not *rend* it”. It is obvious therefore that to understand the scriptural meaning of *pleroma* we must understand the scriptural teaching concerning *schisma*.

Has there come into God’s creation a “rent”, a “division”, a “schism”? To ask the question is to perceive the intention of the word “fulness”. Readers of *The Berean Expositor* are already acquainted with the rendering of Eph. i. 4, “Before the *overthrow* of the world”. That indicates a rent. Gen. i. 2, “The earth became *tohu* and *bohu*”, likewise speaks of a rent. Into the fair creation of Gen. i. 1 came sin and all its accompanying misery. Sin divides:--

“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God” (Isa. lix. 2).

The very necessity for a Mediator speaks of division. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the great fulness of God. He is the One that shall “fill all in all”. When that goal is reached the “rent” caused by Satan’s rebellion and man’s sin shall be “filled in”, and God once more shall be all in all.

Returning to Col. i. 15-20 we see Christ presented as the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature. What is the meaning of the term, “The Firstborn of every creature”? and what is its connection with the succeeding verse, “For in Him were all things created, etc.” Our understanding of this entire passage is influenced by the meaning of the word fulness. The first step towards the construction of the *pleroma* was the creation of Gen. i. 2 - ii. 25, with man in the image of God. To all that constituted that creation which proceeded from the Lord as the Word, the Firstborn, the Son (Heb. i.; John i.) Christ stands as Firstborn. The fulness is closely associated with the reconciliation as Col. i. 15-20 will show, and these two terms are mutually helpful in understanding their meaning.

Many of the points demanding consideration must be left for the further Series on Redemption which is in hand; we must however in this article deal a little further with the meaning of the word fulness. In the LXX the word is used in the passages “the earth”, “the world”, or “the sea and the fulness thereof”, and always translates the Hebrew word *melo*. This Hebrew word makes its first appearance in Gen. xlviii. 19, “His seed shall become a *multitude* of nations”, where the margin gives more correctly “fulness”. This expresses much the same idea that is contained in the first occurrence of the word in the N.T., namely, something filling a gap, making complete, suggesting a previous rent or failure. In Isa. vi. 3 the A.V. reads, “The whole earth is full of His glory”, but the margin reads, “his glory is *the fulness* of the whole earth”. Here once again the thought impresses itself. The glory of the Lord has departed from this earth; the curse, sin and death are here. When these are put away and the glory of the Lord returns, earth will then be “complete”; it will have at last reached its goal.

In Rom. xi. 12 the “fulness” of Israel is set in contrast with their “fall” and their “diminishing”, and during the time of their blindness the “fulness of the Gentiles” is brought about (25). In I Cor. x. 26 and 28, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof” is the argument used by the apostle for (1) exercising the liberty which we have in Christ, “asking no question for conscience sake”, or (2) respecting the conscience of another and so curtailing one’s own liberty, “eat not”. The idea is expressed in verse 31, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”. As in Isa. vi., the glory of the Lord is associated with the fulness of the earth.

The use of the word in Gal. iv. 4—“the fulness of time”, shews that it does not mean the end of time, for nearly 2,000 years have passed since then. It was rather the complement, the generation which should bring in the glorious readjustment by the birth, death and resurrection of the One who was then born. So John i. 14-16 says:--

“We beheld His *glory* *full* of grace and truth and of His *fulness* have all we received, even the grace of the gospel for the grace of type and shadow, for the law was given through Moses, but true grace (the *pleroma*) came by Jesus Christ.”

That *pleroma* “declared” the Father, for “no man hath seen God at any time”. Col. i. 19 connects this “fulness” with the invisibility of God Himself, and the need for Christ as the “image”:--

“Who is the image of the invisible God for it was well pleasing that in Him should all the *fulness* dwell” (Col. i. 15-19).

Col. ii. 9, 10 associates the believer with it:--

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness (*pleroma*) of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete (*pleroo*) in Him.”

God’s fulness and our fulness meet together in Christ, Ephesians uses the word four times:--

“The dispensation of the fulness of the seasons” (i. 10).
“The fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (i. 23).
“That ye might be filled with a view to all the fulness of God” (iii. 19).
“The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (iv. 13).

These four passages present a complete theme:--

A | i. 10. Dispensation. The mystery.
B | i. 23. First Prayer. The Church’s goal.
B | iii. 19. Second Prayer. The Church’s goal.
A | iv. 13. Dispensation. The Saints adjustment to the new truth.

Eph. i. 23 bears most directly upon the clause we are considering. The church of the one body is to Christ what Christ is to God, namely, “the fulness”. The glory of God has left the earth and awaits the outcome of redemption for its return. Let the reader think of the many passages which speak of the desire and purpose of God to “dwell” among His people. Gen. iii. shewed the Lord God walking and talking with man, but this blessed fellowship was soon shattered. At the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden the Lord caused the cherubim to *tabernacle*, and later when Israel were chosen, the cherubim became the dwelling place of the Lord on earth. Israel failed, however, to reach their high calling, and the glory departed. When the Word was made flesh He *tabernacled* among us. He has since ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things (Eph. iv. 10), and when the time comes to which all scripture points, “the *tabernacle* of God” will be with men and “He will *dwell* with them”.

The prayer therefore of Eph. iii. leads on to this glorious goal, and does so in three steps:--

(1) Internal strength granted so that Christ may *dwell* in the heart by faith.

This is the first step. This internal indwelling in the individual foreshadowing the “fulness” when reconciliation shall be complete and the great rent healed.

(2) Comprehension with all saints of the dimensions of this vast edifice, its breadth, length, depth and height, which in other words is expressed by “the love of Christ”, which however passes knowledge.

This expansion from the tiny compass of the believer's heart to that glorious temple that shall include "all the saints" leads on to the third and last step.

(3) That ye might be filled, completed, set in your place with a view to that great rounding out of the purpose of the ages, which is expressed in I Cor. xv. 24-28, "Then the end that God may be all in all".

Without the last phase of God's purpose, viz. the dispensation of the mystery with its church of the one body, Christ would be incomplete in His office as Redeemer and Head. "The church which is His body" is the complement of that one who in turn completes all things. It is a necessity, if *heaven* as well as earth shall be "filled out" and the rent healed.

Here then is a prayer the magnitude of whose petition transcends all thought. Without slavish repetition or bondage shall we not approach the Father with this threefold petition more frequently? We shall, as we get to know the blessedness of our calling and its privileges.

#64. The Great Doxology (Eph. iii. 20, 21). pp. 186 – 189

With the sublime conclusion of the prayer of Eph. iii. doctrine reaches its utmost limit. The fulness of God as expressed in the love of Christ fills all breadth, length, depth and height. Nothing more can be said. All that lies beyond that blessed time toward which all scripture points is not a matter of present revelation, and therefore cannot be a part of Christian doctrine. There is but one note possible, the note of praise, and it is fitting that the section which commenced with the benediction, "Blessed be God Who hath blessed us", should conclude, "Now unto Him be glory". The doxology is expanded to describe more fully (1) "Him" to Whom the praise is given, (2) The medium through which the glory will be given, and (3) The duration of this praise.

"Now unto Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."—This is the character of the One to Whom such a prayer as that of Eph. iii. is made. Great as is the request, the Father to Whom the request is made is greater. Further, the suggestion is that even when we breathe these inspired petitions, we shall not apprehend nor appreciate one half of the magnitude of our request. For our encouragement however we learn that our God does not limit His answers to our understanding. He is able to exceed all our asking and all our understanding, and one of the reasons, perhaps the great reason, is explained in the next clause:--

"According to the power that worketh in us."—In the opening of the prayer the limitless source of supply is revealed—"according to the riches of His glory". In the doxology the power to grant these supplies is revealed:--

“Now unto Him Who is of *power* according to the *power* that worketh in us.”

What is this power that both works in us, and also moves the mighty arm of God? Eph. i. 19-23 presupposes that this fact will have been grasped before Eph. iii. is reached. There the apostle prays that we may know:--

“What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the inworking of His mighty power, which He inworked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.....far above all.....Head over all things to the Church.....which is His fulness.”

The power that worketh in us is the resurrection power, the power that placed Christ at the right hand of God, the power that put all things else under His feet, the power that made us members of His body, and His very fulness. That is the power that answers prayer. This power “in-worketh in us”. One may say, “I do not feel it”; “Should I not have a fuller demonstration of it if I really am energized thus?” In chapter ii. we read of the unsaved that they walk according to the age of this world: that is, they are just ordinary everyday people of the world, whatever “rudiments of the world” maybe they follow. They walk in the lusts, they fulfil the wills of the flesh and the mind, they are certainly not greatly conscious of the one fact we have omitted from our quotation, they are not conscious that when they are pleasing themselves they are nevertheless walking:--

“According to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now INWORKETH in the children of disobedience” (Eph. ii. 2).

In the same way we now seek to walk worthy of our calling, and fulfil the will of God, being guided by His written Word, and as we do, we must be INWORKED by the power of His resurrection, for no other power is possible. To this same power the apostle looked for the ability to fulfil his high office:--

“According to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the INWORKING of His power” (Eph. iii. 7).

The doxology has been interrupted while this revelation of the power has been made, and is now resumed by the repetition of the words “Unto Him”. There is a threefold ascription of praise in Eph. i. 3-14. The Will of the Father, the Work of the Son, and the Witness of the Spirit finish with the words “to the praise of His glory” or “the glory of His grace”. The first prayer is offered to the Father of glory.

“*Unto Him be glory by the church and by Christ Jesus.*”—Glory shall one day be seen as the rightful possession of One only, and all who shall in that day be glorified and presented “in glory” shall confess that it is in all its parts the plan and the perfecting of God alone. The company of saints gathered on earth and called “The church” will not be broken up and dissolved in the life to come, at least not for a period which can be spoken of as “the generations of the age of the ages”. A little previously the apostle had written that through “the church” the heavenly beings were learning the manifold wisdom of God (iii. 10), and in chapter ii. 7 he reveals that the church was raised to its high place in the heavenlies:--

“In order that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

What we may do now in our small measure, “whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do”, we shall do then in a fuller degree. All heavenly and high activities are summed up and embraced by these words, “To Him be glory by the church”. This is indeed “fulness”. It will be so for the earth as we have seen by the marginal reading of Isa. vi. 3, “His glory is the fulness of the whole earth”. It will be so, too, for those whose seat is in the highest heavens. When heaven and earth are united in the love of Christ, and the great dwelling place of God is again complete, Psa. xxix. 9 will be true, “every whit of it uttereth glory”. This glory is to be ascribed and rendered by the church.

”For all the generations of the age of the ages.”—One age is intended by the expression “the age of the ages”, viz., that one which shall be the climax and crown of them all. When we say, “A Hebrew of the Hebrews”, “A Pharisee of the Pharisees”, the same figure is used.

In Gen. ii. 4 we have “the generations of the heaven and the earth”, the history of which occupies ii. 5 - iv. 26. Within this short compass come Sin, Death, the Curse, the two Seeds (Cain and Abel), and finally Seth, the other Seed appointed to take the place of Abel. If we would understand the expression in Eph. ii. 21 we must ponder Gen. ii.-vi. How different will those generations be! Paradise restored, no more death, no more curse, no more sorrow or pain, and instead of “coming short of the glory of God”, then, by virtue of the redemption and power of the risen Christ, the church shall throughout the ages to come, and to all the generations of the climax and crowning age of all, be unto the glory of God.

Amen.—Surely every reader can heartily and joyously, if also humbly, say, Amen! to this glorious prayer and this magnificent doxology. What in effect will the outcome of such an Amen! be? Let Eph. iv.-vi. answer, “Walk worthy”. May the grace that saved us enable us to this end. Amen.

Redemption.

#7. Redemption, and the Covenant. pp. 3 - 5

Lest any reader should feel that the teaching of the previous article on this theme was based upon mere deduction and inference, we turn from Eph. i., which certainly assumes the knowledge of the more elementary parts of Scripture, to look at those earlier records where details of God's dealings with His people are more numerous and the typical teaching more obvious.

"Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. xii. 7).

This was an unconditional promise to Abraham.

"Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them" (Gen. xv. 13).

This foretells the interval of bondage.

"They shall come hither again" (Gen. xv. 16).

By this we see that the covenant of Gen. xii. 7 will be fulfilled by the way of redemption.

"The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. xv. 16).

This reveals the reason for the interval of bondage.

The book of Exodus is largely occupied with the period of bondage and redemption from it. Let us therefore see whether our teaching based upon Eph. i. stands the test. We read:--

"Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of the bondage" (Exod. ii. 23).

Let us now observe the effect of this cry upon the Lord.

1. "And God heard their groaning."
2. "And God remembered His covenant with Abraham, etc."
3. "And God looked upon the children of Israel."
4. "And God had respect unto them" (Exod. ii. 23-25).

Turning to chapter vi. we shall find the remembrance of the covenant stated more emphatically:--

"I have also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan.
I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel.
I have remembered My covenant.

I will bring you out.
I will rid you out.
I will redeem you.
I will take you to Myself.
I will be to you a God.
I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham,
to Isaac, and to Jacob.
I will give it you for an heritage" (Exod. vi. 1-8).

In the midst of chapter xii., which speaks of the passover and Israel's redemption, the Lord gives commandment concerning the keeping of the feast of unleavened bread:--

"When ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He hath promised" (Exod. xii. 25).

Again in Deut. vii. the Lord most plainly says that He redeemed Israel because of the covenant He had made:--

"Because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen" (Deut. vii. 8).

When Israel's idolatry caused the Lord to threaten to blot them out, Moses found the argument concerning the covenant sufficient:--

"And Moses besought the Lord his God and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? repent of this evil against Thy people. REMEMBER ABRAHAM, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed and they shall inherit it for ever, AND THE LORD REPENTED" (Exod. xxxii. 9-14).

We will not add to these examples, as the reader can find many confirmations of the close connection which exists between redemption and the covenant. Redemption not only redeems *from* but *to*, and each one who is redeemed is redeemed in order that he may enter into that inheritance promised by unconditional covenant, before or since the foundation of the world as the case may be, according to whether he is a member of a chosen nation or church.

In our survey of the scope of redemption we found that in the great types of redemption in Scripture one of two conditions was generally assumed: (1) Forfeiture of inheritance, or (2) Bondage. We now seek the light of Scripture upon this second condition, Bondage.

That redemption is from bondage the following passages will show:--

"And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15).

"The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii. 21).

This deliverance is by redemption, "the redemption of the body", which is also called the "adoption", and closely associated with being "heirs of God" (*see* Rom. viii. 17-23). In Rom. vi. 6 the words "serve sin" carry with them the idea of bondage, for "serve" is *douleuo*, which in John viii. 33 is rendered "in bondage". So then we have the dual bondage of "sin and death", and this bondage is referred to under the term "dominion":--

"Death hath no more dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9).

"Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14).

To return to the great type of Israel in Egypt: there over and over again we hear of "the house of bondage" (Exod. xiii. 3, 14; xx. 2, etc.). And many times they are commanded to remember that they were "bondmen" (Deut. xv. 15; xvi. 12, etc.). From this state they were delivered by redemption:--

"Because the Lord loved you, because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh King of Egypt" (Deut. vii. 8).

Israel's lives were made "bitter with hard bondage" (Exod. i. 14). Israel's sigh and cry was "by reason of their bondage and God heard their groaning and God remembered His covenant with Abraham" (Exod. ii. 23, 24). The deliverance from this bondage is placed in correspondence with redemption.

"I will *bring you out* from under the burdens of the Egyptians
I will *rid you out* of their bondage,
I will *redeem you* with stretched out arm and with great judgments" (Exod. vi. 6).

The close connection between the forfeited inheritance and bondage is seen in the next verses.

"I will bring you in unto the land, concerning which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob: and I will give it you for an *heritage*" (vi. 8).

The law indicates the cause of the bondage of sin and death under which the whole world lies:--

"If a thief be found he should make full restitution: if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (Exod. xxii. 2, 3).

The law provides for the case of an Israelite who by reason of poverty sells himself to a rich stranger; of this one the law says, "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again" (Lev. xxv. 48). What shadows of gospel substance the law contains! The parable of Matt. xviii. 23-35 is based upon the law, and in that parable the pardon of debt with its deliverance from bonds is typical of the forgiveness of trespasses.

The carnal nature of man seems to result from his bondage. "I am carnal", said the apostle, "having been sold under sin" (Rom. vii. 14). Whether the apostle here refers to his own sin, or by the words "sold under *the sin*" looks back to that one act whereby sin entered into the world and death by sin, we will not stay here to discuss. For our present purpose man is viewed as having been sold under sin, and no effort of his own can bring about his deliverance. If Israel were bondmen in Egypt and under the law, the Gentiles were in bondage too, as Gal. iv. 1-9 shews. All the sons of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile, are found under the bondage of sin and death, from which redemption, and that by the Kinsman-Redeemer, can alone deliver them.

#9. The Amorites, Dispossessed and Succeeded. **pp. 68 - 70**

We noted in article #8 four items in the unconditional promises made by God to Abraham, the fourth item being the explanation given by the Lord as to the reason why Israel should wait 400 years before entering into the land of promise. The reason is that "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full".

Israel's bondage and redemption had something to do with the Amorites' iniquity, strange as the thought may appear. When the iniquity of the Amorites had reached its height, then the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt, and upon entering the land of their inheritance were commissioned with the awful task of exterminating the Canaanites of which the Amorite was one. Amos, recalling the love of God to Israel manifested in their redemption from Egypt, says:--

"Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness to possess the land of the Amorite" (Amos ii. 9, 10).

This idea of dispossessing the Amorite and entering into his land in his place is evidently a feature to be noted, for Moses in Deut. ii. gives three illustrations of the same principle. Deut. ii. 1-5 speaks of the inheritance of Esau. The command is "meddle not with them". Deut. ii. 8-12 speaks of the inheritance of Moab. Again the command is "distress not the Moabites". Deut. ii. 18-21 speaks of the inheritance of

Ammon. And once again Israel is commanded, "distress them not, nor meddle with them". Explanations follow in each case, which are parallel.

"The Emims dwelt therein in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims, which also were accounted giants, as the Anakims: but the Moabites call them Emims" (Deut. ii. 10, 11).

This is Moab's inheritance.

"The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime: but the children of Esau *succeeded them* (margin Heb. 'inherited them'), when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead, *as Israel did unto the land* of his possession which the Lord gave unto them" (Deut. ii. 12).

So that Esau, he too, entered into the inheritance that originally belonged to another. The attention of the reader is also drawn to the parallel case of Israel. So with Ammon:--

"Giants the Lord destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead" (Deut. ii. 20, 21).

A further case, still parallel, is cited of the Capthorims who destroyed the Avims and dwelt in their stead (Deut. ii. 23). All this is introductory to the case of Israel and the Amorites:--

"Behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin! possess! and contend with him in battle" (Deut. ii. 24).

Surely this carefully repeated fact has a meaning and a lesson. It illuminates not only the bondage of Israel, but the whole course of human history. The Horims, the Avims, the Anakims, all giants, monsters, more than human, these are in their turn types of unseen principalities and powers in the superheavenlies, fallen angels and demons in the terrestrial heavens or "the air" (cf. Eph. ii. 2 and I Thess. iv. 17 and Rev. xvi. 17). With the case of the Amorites before us we can see more clearly the lesson of Eph. i. 3-14. The inheritance, secured by redemption in the heavenlies, to be occupied by the church of the One Body is at present held by those who are yet to be dispossessed. The Lord's dealings with Israel set forth His dealings with man, and with the church.

From hints scattered through Scripture, about which we do not care to dogmatize, we gather that Satan had, long before Adam, some close connection with this earth, and that one reason for his antagonism to man is that he sees in him one destined to dispossess him. For the purpose of redemption Christ did not take the nature of angels, principalities or powers, but the nature and likeness of men. Man too is made in the image of God, and though we may not be able to present a fully elaborated scheme before the reader, we feel that Scripture says sufficient to shew that the great conflict of the ages is *not* between man and God, but between Satan and God. Satan disputes each step in the purpose, the creation and the dominion of man, the choice of Jerusalem, the choice of Israel, the super-heavenly blessing of the Church, right through till the end when he is cast out unto the earth and knows his time is short. Satan, the angels that sinned, the principalities and powers that were made a show of openly, these are parallel with and

typified by the Anakims, the Amorites, who were to be destroyed utterly, man, woman and child, root and branch. The command of Deut. vii. 1-3 is repeated with verbal alterations over and over again. The nations cast out from the land of promise were to be utterly destroyed, no covenant was to be made with them, no marriages contracted with them, their name was to be destroyed "from under heaven".

Because the iniquity of the Amorites had not reached its limit Israel had to go down into bondage and be redeemed by the blood of the lamb. The fall of man, his bondage and redemption is likewise closely connected with Satan and the fallen angels, and unless redemption be considered in connection with this purpose of the ages, it will never yield its full teaching nor take its right place in the vast economy of grace.

#10. The Ransom. **pp. 94, 95**

One of the phases of the doctrine of redemption is expressed by the word "ransom", but whether the English conception of ransom be the meaning of the original remains to be seen. In the N.T. ransom is the rendering of *lutron* and *antilutron*, and in the O.T. of *kopher* and *padah*. *Lutron* and *antilutron* are derivatives of *luo* = "to loose", as one would a shoe (Mark i. 7), or more fully, as one would a person in bonds (Luke xiii. 16). *Lutron* is the *means of loosing*, whether that means be the payment of a price, the exhibition of power, is not directly specified in the word. The O.T. occurrences of the word ransom may be placed under one of two headings. They are either the translation of the Hebrew *kopher*, usually rendered atonement, or the Hebrew *padah*, usually rendered redemption. Let us give the O.T. passages first:--

"When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom (Heb. *kopher*, LXX Gk. *lutron*) for his soul unto the Lord to make an atonement (*kaphar*) for your souls" (Exod. xxx. 12-15).

Other references are Job xxxiii. 24, xxxvi. 18; Psa. xlix. 7; Prov. xxi. 18, and Isa. xliii. 3. In every case the word ransom could be replaced by the word atonement. In Hos. xiii. 14; Isa. xxxv. 10; Exod. xxi. 30, the word ransom is a translation of the word *padah* = "to redeem".

It will be seen that the idea of a ransom must be regulated by the Scriptural doctrine of atonement and redemption; we should not seek to colour the doctrine of atonement and redemption by the conception we have of the English word ransom.

The two N.T. passages are as follows:--

"Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45).

"Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. ii. 6).

There are several features in these two passages that are far reaching in their bearing upon doctrine:--

1. THE PERSON.--Matthew records the title "The Son of Man"; Paul writing by the same inspiration speaks of "The One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus".

2. THE OFFERING.--In both passages it is the Lord who "gives". Matthew records the Lord as saying, "The Son of Man came to give His life". Paul says, "Who gave Himself". "Life" in Matt. xx. 28 is *psuche*, usually rendered "soul".

3. THE RANSOM.--Matthew uses the word *lutron*. Paul uses the word *antilutron*. Matthew follows *lutron* by the word *anti* (translated "for"), Paul follows *antilutron* by the word *huper* (translated "for").

4. THE RANSOMED.--The ransom of Matt. xx. is *anti pollon*, "for many", the ransom of I Tim. ii. is *huper panton*, "for all". Each of these items demands careful study. To get down to the bed rock upon which they rest will necessitate a painstaking search into the Word of truth.

Studies in the Book of the Revelation.

#49. Babylon the Great (xvii., xviii.). pp. 20 - 23

On two occasions during the outpouring of woe and judgment Babylon has come into notice. First after the announcement of the aionian gospel by an angel, "There followed another angel, saying Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city", and the reason of Babylon's fall follows:--"Because she made all nations drunk of the wine of her fornication". At the close of the seventh vial there comes another reference to Babylon. "And great Babylon came into remembrance before God." This time instead of speaking of the wine which Babylon made the nations to drink, a parallel judgment is indicated, "To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath".

So important a place does the fall of Babylon occupy in the Revelation, that chapters xvii. and xviii. are devoted to it, and the opening verses of xix. contain Hallelujahs over the destruction of the city. The overthrow of Babylon is introduced by a vision of a woman. Then follows the explanation of the symbol. These two phases occupy chapter xvii. One of the seven angels that had the seven vials addressed John, saying:--

"Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (xvii. 2).

The apostle was thereupon carried away "in the spirit into the wilderness", an expression very similar to that of i. 10, "I was in spirit in the day of the Lord". The vision that he saw next described:--

"I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of the names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns" (xvii. 3).

There are further descriptions of the beast. The description of the woman follows:--

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (xvii. 4).

The symbolic significance of this vision is next indicated. In the A.V. the whole wording is printed in capitals, as though all formed a part of the title upon the woman's forehead. The R.V. margin, however, gives it as though the word "mystery" is an explanation, but not a part of the title. We read the verse then as follows:--

"And upon here forehead was a name written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT', the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth" (xvii. 5).

This passage is threefold:--

1. There is here a “mystery”.
2. There is the name itself, “Babylon the Great”.
3. There is the meaning of the mystery of the name, “The mother, etc.”

In chapter i. 20 we have a guide to the interpretation of the mysteries suggested:--

“The mystery of the seven stars in My right Hand
The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.”

The name therefore “Babylon the Great” was a secret symbol of something deeper. If however we are in ignorance or confusion as to the basis of this symbol, we shall not be ready to follow the inspired interpretation, and for the sake of clearness we must set before the reader the scriptural history and prophecy concerning Babylon before we go further into the intricate details of chapter xvii.

Babylon, as the seat of government from which commenced “the times of the Gentiles”, is that great city which existed in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, but Babylon, the mother of harlots, is that city founded by Nimrod the rebel. Idolatry when traced to its source dips finally underground, and is found originating in the secret rites and teachings of ancient Babel, and idolatry with its associated obscenities is the dark and persecuting background of the whole book of the Revelation. The ancient mystery cults were all derived from Babel.

Bunsen says that the religious system of Egypt itself, ancient as it is, was derived from Asia and “the primitive empire in Babel”. It is not our purpose to attempt to set forth the ramifications of the Babylonian system, the reader will find it most fully set forth in *Hislop’s* “Two Babylons”. There is practically no religious system on earth to-day that does not use the symbols, names and ritual of this leavening set of lies. What Jerusalem is yet to be in the hands of our God for blessing, Babylon has been and yet will be, in the hands of Satan, for a curse.

There are many expositors who believe and teach that the Babylon of the Revelation is the Roman Catholic Church. This we must set aside as not fulfilling the Scriptures. Isaiah wrote prophetically of Babylon. Did he speak of the Roman Apostacy or of the city of Babylon? Let him speak for himself:--

“And Babylon, the glory of the Kingdoms, the beauty of the CHALDEES’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. xiii. 19).

The whole of Isa. xiii. should be read, and its many parallels with Revelation noted. Its time period is spoken of as “the day of the Lord” (verse 9). Its signs are the darkening of the sun, moon and stars (10). Its object is the punishing of the wicked and the proud (11). Its accompaniments are the shaking of the heavens and the removing of the earth (13). These four points of resemblance are enough to connect the Babylon of Isaiah’s burden with that of John in the Revelation.

When we read on into Isa. xiv. and hear the proverb taken up against the “King of Babylon”, we again realize that prophecy is pointing onward to the great apostate head of

World Rule who is to seek universal worship for himself, saying “I will be like the Most High” (Isa. xiv. 4-23 and Rev. xiii.). Jeremiah prophecies concerning Babylon, and he too is careful to locate Babylon geographically:--

“The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the CHALDEANS” (Jer. 1. 1).

One incident that marks the overthrow of Babylon is the return of both Israel and Judah:--

“In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together let us join ourselves unto the Lord in a *perpetual covenant*” (Jer. 1. 4, 5).

This fixes the time of fulfillment as being yet future. The nation concerning whom Jeremiah prophecies is called “the hindermost (or the last) of the nations” (Jer. 1. 12), which is the position of Babylon at the time of the Lord’s return. The reader is urged to read Jer. 1. and li. for himself and note the many points of contact with Revelation. To stimulate the reader to make the comparison we transcribe the following list of parallels from *Dr. E. W. Bullinger’s “The Apocalypse”*. A similar list may be found in the prophetic studies of B. W. Newton:--

Jer. li. 13.		Rev. xvii. 1.
Jer. li. 7.		Rev. xvii. 4.
Jer. li. 7.		Rev. xvii. 2.
Isa. xlvi. 5, 7.		Rev. xvii. 18 and xviii. 7, 8.
Jer. li. 25.		Rev. xviii. 8.
Jer. li. 6, 45; 1. 8.		Rev. xviii. 4.
Jer. li. 9.		Rev. xviii. 5.
Jer. li. 15; li. 24-49.		Rev. xviii. 6.
Jer. 1. 29.		Rev. xviii. 6.
Jer. li. 8 (Isa. xxi. 9).		Rev. xviii. 2.
Jer. li. 63, 64.		Rev. xviii. 21.
Isa. xiii. 21.		Rev. xviii. 2.
Isa. xxiv. 8, 10.		Rev. xviii. 23.

When John saw the vision of the woman sitting upon the beast he said:--

“And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and I wondered when I saw her with a great wonder” (Rev. xvii. 6).

The question that arises sooner or later in this connection is “Will Babylon be rebuilt?” Zechariah, the prophet of Israel’s restoration, foretells the revival of Babylon. In Zech. v. 1-11 we have a woman, and wickedness taken back in an Ephah “to build it an house in the LAND OF SHINAR”. This prophecy necessitates the revival of Babylon. Babylon has never been destroyed as Scripture says it will be—“suddenly” (Jer. li. 8). When the stone cut out without hands struck the Colossus on the feet, the whole image, the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces *together*, and the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Gentile dominion and Satanic counterfeit will both be headed up again in Babylon, and there will be judge. Mesopotamia cannot be kept out of the world's politics any more than Jerusalem could be kept out of the last great war. The sands of time are running out. The coming of the Lord draweth nigh, and whether on the Mount of Olives, in the air, or in glory, may we be ready to meet Him.

#50. The Kingdom of Satan on Earth (xvii).
pp. 57 - 60

Upon the expression of wonder with which John greeted the vision of the woman and the scarlet coloured beast the angel said to him:--

“Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns” (xvii. 7).

This is encouraging, for the mystery is great. At first sight the explanation seems more difficult to grasp than the vision itself. The order in which the interpretation is given is (i) the beast, (ii) the woman. So far as the beast itself is concerned, its supernatural character is first put forward in verse 8. Then the meaning of the seven heads and the ten horns follow (9-14). The waters upon which the woman sits are interpreted in verse 15, and then finally the woman is explained in verse 18. This covers all in the vision that needs explanation.

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition” (xvii. 8).

These few words sketch the past, present and future of the beast.

1. *He was.*—He had therefore lived in the past.
2. *He is not.*—That is to say, when the time comes into which John had been taken by the spirit, the beast will have been slain. Rev. xiii. adds information here. There the beast rises up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads. One of the beast's heads had been slain as it were to death, and yet was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast.
3. *He shall be present.*—He is about to ascend out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. The A.V. reads “and yet is”, but all the best MSS read *kai parestai* = “shall be present” for *kaiper estin* = “and yet is”.

There is in this statement an indication that the beast will counterfeit the parousia of the Lord. In II Thess ii. 8, 9 we read:--

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His *parousia*, even him whose *parousia* is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.”

One of the Divine Titles in this book is the unfolded name Jehovah—“Him which is, and which was, and which is to come”. The counterfeit of this name is seen in the description of the beast—“He was, and is not, and shall be present”. There is also a very evident imitation of the glorious words of Rev. i. 18, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive unto the ages of the ages”.

The ascension of the beast from the abyss after it could be said of him “he is not” indicates that we are here dealing with something superhuman. In some form or other this is life from the dead. Just how far Satan has the power of giving back life we do not pretend to know, and how much is real and how much is deception we cannot say. The statements of Scripture plainly intimate the miraculous, and II Thess. ii., already quoted, uses the same words “power, signs, wonders” as are used in Heb. ii. 4, with the added qualification “lying”. In Rev. xvii. 8 we read:--

“And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the overthrow of the world.”

In Rev. xiii., after describing the superhuman phase of this beast, verse 8 says:--

“And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the overthrow of the world.”

Before the angel proceeds to give further detail, he adds the words, “Here is the mind that hath wisdom” (xvii. 9). This is a close correspondence with the closing verse of chapter xiii., “Here is wisdom, let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast”. There is evidently some close association between the number of the beast, 666, or his mark, and the threefold description “He who was, and is not, and shall be present”. It seems very probable that his mark, which all his followers will have to wear, will be some device that will set forth this great Satanic counterfeit of the resurrection. Practically all of the peculiar and sacred prerogatives of the Saviour have been appropriated by false leaders and systems, but it remains for the superhuman beast at the end to travesty His Name, “the One who was, and is, and is to come”, His resurrection and His *parousia*.

We must not omit another most important reference. In Rev. xii. we have the great sign of the woman and the birth of the man-child, and there we have a description of Satan—“a great red dragon having SEVEN HEADS and TEN HORNS”. There is war in heaven and Satan is cast out into the earth. Satan DESCENDS (xii. 12 *katabaino*), and the beast ASCENDS (xiii. 1 *anabaino*). Both words are used of Christ. The wild beast that ascends from the sea is described in exactly the same terms as was the great red dragon, “having TEN HORNS and SEVEN HEADS”. One important difference is made, which we must remember as we proceed, and that is, the dragon has “on his heads seven crowns”, whereas the beast has “on his horns ten crowns and on his heads names of blasphemy”.

The prophet Daniel saw this same monster in vision, and describes it in Dan. vii. Four beasts came up from the sea, the first like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard having four heads, and a fourth beast not likened to anything, and this beast had ten horns. Here again we have the seven heads and ten horns. The lion = one head; the bear = one head; the leopard = four heads; and the fourth beast = one head. Total, seven heads. Returning to Rev. xiii. 2 we find Dan. vii. is immediately before us:--

“And the beast which I saw was like unto a *leopard*, and his feet were the feet of a *bear*, and his mouth as the mouth of a *lion*.”

In Dan. vii. 14 we see the Ancient of Days sitting and the Son of man brought near Him, and

“There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.”

In Rev. xiii. 2-7 we read of this beast:--

“And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations.”

One thing seems clear amidst all the complicated imagery and wording, namely, that the last kingdom which shall be upon earth before the coming of Christ shall be “diverse from all Kingdoms” (Dan. vii.), for it shall be the kingdom of Satan on earth, the beast being possessed of all Satan’s authority and power, so that when men “wonder after the beast” they “worship the dragon”, just as there is yet to be a kingdom on the earth which is also to be diverse from all kingdoms, namely, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the Lion-Lamb, and when the world wonders after that kingdom of blessedness and shall see Him Who really died and rose again, they shall in their turn worship Him that sitteth upon the throne and also the Lamb. The beast that supports Babylon is Satanic in its fullest degree.

To this fearful end the Gentile world is moving. To this awful blasphemy apostate Israel too will incline, and make their covenant with hell and with death. Antichrist will be to the Jew what the beast will be to the Gentile, an outward manifestation of Satan’s final usurpation of the throne of God just before the end. What a blessed thing to be saved out of all this wickedness and horror. Yet science, and politics and religion will have so completely blinded the eyes of men that they will believe that the rising of the seven-headed monster from the abyss will be the millennial dawn, whereas it will be the setting down of the blackness of darkness for ever.

**#51. The Seven Heads and the Ten Kings (xvii).
pp. 91 - 94**

A further description of the seven heads and the ten horns is given by the angel in Rev. xvii. to that which is given in xii. and xiii. We must remember that the explanation which starts in verse 9 reads straight on and should be translated thus:--

“The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings.”

We may not be quite clear why there is this double interpretation here, but it is clear enough for us to understand that the seven heads represent seven kings. Possibly the introduction of the symbol of mountains is connected with the fact that the woman represents a city. The transition would be then:--

<i>The Woman.</i>		<i>The Seven-headed Beast.</i>
The woman is a city.		The heads are mountains.
The city reigns.		The mountains are kings.

The seven kings are further described:--

“Five are fallen” (the word indicates a violent death).
“The one is” (that is at the time of the vision).
“The other is not yet come.”

The order therefore is:--

1.	\	} Kings already fallen.
2.	\	
3.	}	
4.	/	
5.	/	
6.	The sixth king reigning at this point of the vision.	
7.	The seventh king not yet come.	

When the seventh king ascends the throne “He must continue a short space”. We are not here told how the seventh king comes to his end, but in chapter xiii. we find that one of the heads of the beast was wounded to death and the deadly wound was healed.

“The beast that was and is not, even *He is the eighth, and is of the seven,* and goeth into perdition” (xvii. 11).

In verse 8 we read:--

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and *shall ascend out of the abyss,* and go into perdition.”

The ascending out of the abyss is parallel with the statement that he is the eighth and of the seven. The eighth therefore is the superhuman stage after the deadly wound had

been healed. This eighth king does not add another head to the beast, for “he is of the seven”. Not merely “of the seventh” although that is true, the resuscitated king is “of the seven” and contains within himself the previous seven heads, so that this eighth king is spoken of not as a king merely, but as “the beast”. He is first mentioned in xi. 7, where speaking of the two witnesses it says:--

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the abyss shall make war against them.”

These witnesses occupy a period of 3-1/2 years before their death (verse 3). The holy city is trodden under foot of the Gentiles for the same period (verse 2). In chapter xiii. the beast receives power to continue 3-1/2 years. This period seems to be the extent of the reign of the beast, for the seventh angel sounds soon after the death of the two witnesses.

The satanic kingdom has *seven crowned heads* (xii. 3), but the final manifestation in the beast that ascends out of the abyss has *ten crowned horns* (xiii. 1). We are not definitely told that the seven heads were not crowned, and seeing that they represented reigning kings, we must understand the ten crowns to be additional. This is in line with the angel’s explanation:--

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, *which have received no kingdom as yet*; but they receive authority as kings one hour with the beast” (xvii. 12).

In Dan. vii. 24 the description is “And the ten horns *out of this kingdom* are ten kings that shall arise”. The ten kings arise out of the fourth kingdom which was diverse from the others. They are not human, they are Satan’s princes and are spiritual. *This observation is most important.* One *feels* their presence even in Dan. ii. The descriptions of the earlier kingdoms of Gentile dominion read smoothly enough, but when the *toes* of the image are described the language becomes involved:--

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly brittle. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, **THEY** shall mingle themselves with the seed of **MEN**; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of **THOSE KINGS** shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, etc.” (Dan. ii. 42-44).

Who are meant by “they”? If they are ordinary human beings, why speak of them mingling themselves with the seed of “men”? “Those kings” are evidently “they” and “they” are the toes. The toes are “ten” in number, and although this final phase of the Colossus was not a subject for Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel says enough to let us understand that Gentile dominion will finally merge itself into a confederacy of ten kings who shall be superhuman, and that although they will attempt to mingle with the seed of men they shall not do so properly. It was left for Daniel himself to see the vision of this monstrous kingdom and the ten kings that arose out of it. Some readers may be a little skeptical as to the possibility of these more than human kings, and therefore we might notice Dan. x. A glorious heavenly being appears to Daniel. The description of his glory is so like that of Christ in Rev. i., that some have felt that it must be the same. The effect upon Daniel was overpowering. This mighty messenger reveals to Daniel the fact that “the Prince of

the kingdom of Persia withstood him *one and twenty days*” and it necessitated the help of Michael the archangel before he could get through to Daniel! Not only is there this mighty Prince of Persia, but says the messenger, “the Prince of Grecia shall come”. These princes cannot be merely human, for no human being could withstand for one and twenty days such a glorious person as appeared to Daniel. Ten such kings form part of the beast at the time of the end. They had no kingdom until the beast ascends out of the abyss, then they reign together with him. How closely Satan travesties truth.

When the true King reigns, there will be associated with Him those who also received a deadly wound and had been healed:--

“I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Rev. xx. 4).

Of these ten kings it is written, Rev. xvii. 13, “These have one purpose”. *Gnome* comes again twice in verse 17:--

“For God inclined their hearts to carry out His purpose, even to carry out one purpose and to give their kingdom to the beast till the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

What a comforting thought in this awful nightmare that even Satan’s Princes are beneath the control of God! Seeking in this final desperate throw to accomplish the purpose of their fallen master, they nevertheless can do nothing against the truth.

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (xvii. 14).

This war is described more fully in chapter xix. Before that takes place however another part of the Divine purpose must be fulfilled. Babylon, the great city, rules over peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (xvii. 15), and the kings of the earth (not the ten kings) are in league with her. When the moment arrives the ten kings and the beast throw over the attitude of support hitherto given to Babylon and make her desolate. Thus Babylon, that wicked city, with its long history of infamy finds in the final phase of its anti-christian activity its own executioner. This overthrow is described in detail in chapter xviii., which we must consider in another paper.

#52. The End of Babylon (xviii). pp. 121 - 124

The whole of the xviiith chapter is devoted to the record of the destruction of Babylon. The fall of Babylon has been spoken of in earlier chapters, but the actual narrative is reserved until the last because it is the great tragic climax of the history of man on earth. When Babylon falls, the end has come, and the long-prayed-for kingdom of righteousness dawns.

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. xviii. 2).

There is a fulfillment here of the prophecy of Isa. xiii. 21, 22:--

“Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.”

Jeremiah says of Babylon:--

“It is a land of graven images, and they are mad upon the idols, therefore the wild beasts the owls shall dwell therein” (I. 38, 39).

“And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant” (Ii. 37).

Isaiah and Jeremiah both speak of dragons; Revelation speaks of demons and unclean spirits. In Rev. ix. 14 we learn that at the river Euphrates were bound four angels, and upon their being loosed a demon army of two hundred thousand thousand was let loose also. Babylon is to be the prison house (*phulake*) of every unclean spirit and the habitation of demons. The time for judgment does not come immediately at the destruction of Babylon, and here at this spot will be gathered and held all the unclean spirits and demons that have worked such mischief and ruin among men, while the thousand-year reign of Christ shall run its course. Behind the idols of the Gentiles were the demons, so taught the apostle Paul:--

“The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God” (I Cor. x. 20).

The fall of Babylon and its fate just described is because of its effect upon all the nations of the earth. There appears to be need for a revision of the text of Rev. xviii. 3. Instead of reading as the A.V. “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication”, we read “Because all nations have fallen by reason of the wine of the fury of her fornication”. Compare:--

“The nations have drunken her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed” (Jer. li. 7, 8).

As Babylon has caused the ruin of all the nations of the earth, so Babylon shall fall as a consequence. As Babylonianism has robbed the nations of their wits and their morals

as strong wine will, so let her cup be filled double. Let her become the prison-house of these demon and unclean spirit agencies of destruction. That there is this element of retribution intended Rev. xviii. 6, 7 will shew:--

“Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and indulged, so much torment and sorrow give her.”

A call goes forth at this point to the people of God:--

“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (verse 4).

”*My people.*”—When Nebuchadnezzar became the head of gold, Israel became *Lo Ammi*, “Not My people”. At the return from Babylon they came in favour again, but this position was again lost in A.D.70 at the destruction of the temple. When that great Babylonian dominion falls, the moment will have arrived for Israel once more to become “My people”. These “people” who are called upon to “come out” are bidden in Jeremiah to “remember the Lord afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind” (Jer. li. 50). At the fall of Babylon Israel repent:--

“In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, *going and weeping*: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward” (Jer. l. 4, 5).

The fall of Babylon is to be sudden:--

“Therefore shall her plagues come *in one day*” (Rev. xviii. 8).

“*In one hour* is thy judgment come” (Rev. xviii. 10).

“These two things shall come to thee *in a moment in one day* desolation shall come upon thee suddenly” (Isa. xlvii. 9, 11).

Babylon is to be utterly burned by fire (Rev. xviii. 8). Jer. li. 25 says that Babylon shall become “a burnt mountain”. The destruction of Babylon will cause universal woe:--

“The Kings of the earth shall bewail her and the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her” (Rev. xviii. 9, 11).

“At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations” (Jer. l. 46).

These features when taken together prove that this fall of Babylon is future, and therefore that Babylon must revive and once more take a prominent place in the earth. For the sake of clearness let us summarize these points:--

1. The return and repentance of Israel and Judah together.
2. The terrific suddenness of the blow.
3. The destruction by fire.
4. The world-wide consternation at her fall.

These features have never yet been fulfilled. Babylon slowly dwindled away. Arabs do pitch their tents there. There was a church there in apostolic times (I Pet. v. 13), and

before the war a Turkish governor found enough people there to pay taxes to the Sultan's government. An indication of the character of Babylon is found in the list of things which made up the merchandise whereby the merchants of the earth grew rich:--

“Gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and citron wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of most costly wood, and of copper, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and carriages, and bodies, and souls of men” (Rev. xviii. 12, 13).

It will be observed that while gold and silver are included, iron as a raw material is not wanted. Vessels of iron already made are included. The timber too is costly and beautiful (not the timber of commerce); spices, incense and unguents speak of luxury and ritual, and lastly the merchandise includes the “bodies and souls of men”. The papyri use the word “body” as a synonym for a “slave”; here the slavery is so deep that it includes both body and soul. The traffic in these articles with Babylon was so great that the merchants of the earth grew rich in their trade—“the abundance of her luxury” (verse 3). Babylon is not a commercial city. She imports luxuries, but does not export in exchange. It will be observed that shipmasters and mariners are included. Herodotus is referred to by Rawlinson as saying that the Euphrates was navigable 500 miles from its mouth. Not only do the kings of the earth, the merchants and ship owners raise a cry at the fall of Babylon, but the call goes forth:--

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets, seeing that God hath avenged you on her” (Rev. xviii. 20).

This rejoicing is recorded in the opening verses of chapter xix. Then comes the great symbol of utter destruction with the wonderful accompaniment of the prophetic dirge:--

“A mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found NO MORE AT ALL” (Rev. xviii. 21).

“Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her” (Jer. li. 64).

Music and mirth, craftsmanship and domestic work, the lamp and light of hearth and home, the voice of bride and bridegroom shall be known in Babylon NO MORE AT ALL. We do not know how words could be used to express more thoroughly and irrevocably the destruction that falls upon Babylon the great. Finally:--

“by her sorceries were all nations deceived, and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all the slain upon the earth” (Rev. xviii. 23, 24).

Such is the twofold indictment, deceiver and destroyer. With the judgment of Babylon is introduced the first of a blessed series of “no more's”, which expand and include the sea, sorrow, sin, death, and the curse.

**#53. Babylon. Is it literal? and its fall future? (xviii).
pp. 132 - 135**

Before entering into the teaching of chapter xix., some readers may appreciate a summary of the teaching of Scripture and an examination of the question, Is the fall of Babylon future? Let us seek Scriptural answers to the following questions.

Is the Babylon of prophecy to be understood literally?

There are two main prophecies, Isa. xiii., xiv. and Jer. l., li. Let us observe the way in which Babylon is there described. Isa. xiii. 19 speaks of Babylon as “The beauty of the *Chaldees*’ excellency”, and it is situated where it is a likely thing for Arabs to pitch their tents (20). Jer. l. opens with the words, “The word that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the *Chaldeans*”. The connection between Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans is seen again in verse 8, 10, 25, 35, 45; li. 4, 24, 35, 54. Not only so, but the symbol of Babylon’s fall is connected with the river *Euphrates* (Jer. li. 63). We don not think words could be plainer.

**Supposing we agree that the Babylon of Isaiah and Jeremiah is literal,
how does that prove that the Babylon of Rev. xvii., xviii. is literal too?**

Let us “search and see”.

<p style="text-align: center;">Jer. li. 13.</p> <p>“O thou that dwellest upon many waters thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jer. li. 7.</p> <p>“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, that made all the earth drunken. The nations have drunken of her wine: therefore the nations are mad.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Isa. xlvii. 5, 7.</p> <p>“O daughter of the Chaldeans the lady of kingdoms.” “Thou sadist , I shall be a lady for ever Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children; but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jer. li. 25.</p> <p>“I will make thee a burnt mountain.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jer. li. 45.</p> <p>“My people, go ye out of the midst of her.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jer. l. 15.</p> <p>“As she hath done, do unto her.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jer. li. 63, 64.</p> <p>“And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xvii. 1.</p> <p>“Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xvii. 4 and 2.</p> <p>“Having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations.” “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xvii. 18, xviii. 7, 8.</p> <p>“The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” “How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she hath said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xviii. 8.</p> <p>“She shall be utterly burned with fire.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xviii. 4.</p> <p>“Come out of her, My people.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xviii. 6.</p> <p>“Reward her even as she rewarded you.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rev. xviii. 21.</p> <p>“And a mighty angel took up a stone like to a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”</p>
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We believe the parallels are too evident to need further remark.

May not the fall of Babylon have taken place already?

We will answer this question by noting

(a) Marks of time.

“THEN shall his yoke depart from off them” (Israel) (Isa. xiv. 25).

“Her time (i.e. Babylon’s time) is near to come FOR the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land and they shall rule over their oppressors” (Isa. xiii. 22, xiv. 1-4).

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God join ourselves to the Lord by a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten” (Jer. l. 4, 5).

“In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none” (Jer. l. 18-20).

The fall of Babylon synchronizes with the restoration of Israel and Judah. It must therefore be future. Further, the Scriptures already considered declare that this blow shall fall in the *Day of the Lord*.

“Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand: it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. xiii. 6-19).

(b) Other signs.

The fall of Babylon is placed in a setting of world-wide judgment.

“I will punish the WORLD for their evil” (Isa. xiii. 11).

The fall of Babylon is accompanied by signs in the heavens.

“The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine therefore will I shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of Hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger” (Isa. xiii. 10 and 13).

This is dated for us in Matt. xxiv. as being “immediately after the tribulation of those days”, and is closely connected with the Lord’s parousia.

The fall of Babylon is to be sudden.

“Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed: howl for her” (Jer. li. 8).

“Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come” (Rev. xviii. 10).

The gradual decline of Babylon in no sense corresponds with this emphasis upon its sudden end. In the days of Alexander the Great, Babylon was a city strong enough to have attempted resistance against him. It did not do so, but welcomed the conqueror, who commanded the rebuilding of its temples. Babylon therefore was not suddenly destroyed when the Medes took the kingdom. In the time of Tiberius Strabo speaks of Babylon as being “to a great degree deserted”. Peter wrote his epistle from Babylon, where a church had been formed. In A.D.460 a writer says that Babylon was only inhabited by some Jews, and from Babylon soon after this was produced the Babylonian Talmud. In A.D.917 Ibn. Hankal speaks of Babylon as “a small village”. In A.D.1100 a fortified town is mentioned, named Hillah (from Arabic to rest, to take up abode). In A.D.1811 Hillah was visited by Rich who found a population of between six and

seven thousand Arabs and Jews. The land which supports even this number of people cannot be called “desolate, so that no man shall dwell therein” (Jer. l. 3). If Hillah has been built out of the stones that composed the greater buildings of Babylon, then the words of Jer. li. 26 have never yet been fulfilled: “They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever”.

No useful purpose will be served by lengthening these evidences. We believe that the testimony of Scripture is clear and unambiguous: that Babylon, in the land of the Chaldeans, on the Euphrates, will be revived to accord with the description of Isa. xiii., Jer. l. & li. and Rev. xvii. & xviii.: that in the day of the Lord, and accompanied by signs in the heavenly bodies, Babylon will be suddenly destroyed and become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Throughout the thousand-year reign of Christ, Babylon will remain a witness to all the world, a prison house of every unclean spirit, a place shunned and abhorred by all men. In direct contrast with this will be the glory of restored Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

We look upon Rome and Romanism as one of *many* corrupt streams that flow from Babylon, but do not believe that this most corrupt daughter can be called the mother of all abominations of the earth. The issues are vaster and deeper than can be contained within the history of the professing church, and we believe that the united testimony of Scripture demands a future rebuilt Babylon followed by utter destruction at the coming of the Lord.

#54. The Marriage of the Lamb (xix.). pp. 155 - 158

“Alas! Alas!” cried the merchants of earth, “Hallelujah”, cried heaven, when great Babylon fell. The heavenly cry is made by

- A | Much people in heaven.
- B | Four and twenty elders.
- B | Four living ones.
- A | A great multitude.

The cry of “much people in heaven” is followed by the reference to the “great whore, which did corrupt the earth”. The cry of the “great multitude” is followed by the reference to the wife of the Lamb. Babylon and Israel, the false and the true, start together in Gen. xi., xii. For a time the false is in the ascendancy, but at the end judgment is swift and without remedy and the true rises out of the dust.

The first ascription of praise in the Revelation arises from the redeemed company who have been made a kingdom of priests. We have a parallel in Isaiah. First, in Isa. liii. they look upon Him Whom they pierced and mourn for Him, then Isa. liv. opens with the word “Sing”. This time it is not as a kingdom of priests, but as a restored wife that the nation is addressed:

“Thou shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thy husband for the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God” (Isa. liv. 4-6).

The day of Israel’s return to the Lord is likened to the day when they came up out of Egypt, which likeness is often referred to when speaking of the end. So Hos. ii. 15-20 says:--

“She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me ‘My husband’ and I will betroth thee unto Me for the age, yea I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness.”

This wife who had been repudiated (Hos. ii. 2) is said to be “betrothed” upon her return, so Isa. lxii. 5 uses the figure:--

“As a young man marieth a virgin and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.”

This is followed in Isa. lxiii. with the prophecy of the coming of the Lord in vengeance, “their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments”, being parallel with the passage in Rev. xix., “He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood”; the “garments like him that treadeth the wine fat” being parallel with “He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. xix. 15).

The close association which is made by Isa. lxii. and lxiii. between the marriage of Israel and the treading of the winepress of the wrath of God enables us to see with the same sequence in Rev. xix. that we have there the fulfillment of these earlier prophecies of restoration. For a thousand years the marriage, here celebrated, shall last. Whether it be true to say that it is then done away, and that the Holy City which descends out of heaven called “The Bride” is something quite different, we will consider in its place. Of the Lamb’s wife it is said that she had “made herself ready”; in chapter xxi. the word appears again in the expression, “*prepared* as a bride adorned for her husband”.

Some see a distinction here between the standing of the Church and of Israel, as the Church can by no means be said to make itself “ready”. It is very likely that the question of grace and works has nothing to do with the passage, and that it simply refers to the adornment of the bride which was so customary in Bible lands. In the verse following, however, there is a reference to “works”:--

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and shining; for fine linen is the righteous award of the saints” (Rev. xix. 8).

There appears to be a need for careful distinction in connection with those who make up the marriage celebration of that day. The Wife cannot be “All Israel” because Israel has also to supply “the friend of the bridegroom”, “the virgins her companions”, those “bidden to the marriage of the King’s Son”, and those set forth under the figure of “the wise and foolish virgins”. This being so, it appears that a portion of Israel are chosen as

the wife. The “righteous award” seems to indicate some recognition of faithfulness, and this is quite in harmony with the whole of the book. To each of the seven churches a reward is promised to “him that overcometh”. Those who come out of the great tribulation are said to have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”. Some are said to have done His commandments, or to have washed their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and to enter into the city. In this very chapter there are two companies, the Lamb’s wife, and the guests:--

“Write, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”
(verse 9).

As may be expected the word “Blessed” comes seven times in the Revelation, and the words just quoted from chapter xix. come centrally in the list.

- A | i. 3. *Blessed*.—Reader, hearer and keeper of the words of this prophecy.
- B | xiv. 13. *Blessed*.—The Dead which die in the Lord.
- C | xvi. 15. *Blessed*.—He that watcheth and keepeth his garments.
- D | xix. 9. *Blessed*.—They which are called to marriage supper.
- C | xx. 6. *Blessed*.—He that hath part in the first resurrection.
- A | xxii. 7. *Blessed*.—He that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy.
- B | xxii. 14. *Blessed*.—They that do His commandments. Right to tree of life.

Apart from the passages which speak of hearing or keeping the sayings of this prophecy, the other passages under B and C speak of the overcomer. This helps us to see that those who respond to the call to the marriage supper are overcomers too. The case of the man who had not the wedding garment will come to mind, and by reflection from xix. 8 we see that this also indicates the “righteous award” of the saints. In the case of the ten virgins, it was the “ready” ones that entered into the marriage.

In concluding this section the angel said, “These are the true words of God”. We take it that these words cover chapters xvii., xviii. and xix. 1-9. There follows a series of visions commencing with the formula “and I saw”, which concludes in xxi. 5 where again we read, “These words are true and faithful”. One of the seven angels again comes forward and “shews” John the bride, the Lamb’s wife, and also he “shewed” the river and the tree of life. Again come the words, “These sayings are faithful and true”. These passages punctuate the grand conclusion of the book. Babylon judged, the marriage of the Lamb, the riding forth of the Word of God, the first resurrection, the great white throne, the new heavens and earth, the abolition of the curse, sorrow and death, the detailed description of the New Jerusalem, and at last, Paradise restored. What a galaxy, what a constellation, thrice confirmed to us by the words, “These are the true and faithful words of God”!

Dark as the outlook may be now, and thicker the darkness yet to come, faith pierces the gloom and sees ahead the judgment of all that oppresses and enslaves, and the blessing and peace that must surely come when the Lord takes to Himself His great power and reigns. We feel constrained to echo the seer’s closing prayer, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”.

**#55. Kings of kings, Lords of lords.
And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse (xix.).
pp. 181 - 186**

What event is it that demands an opened heaven? What event is it that must come at the climax of revelation? Surely nothing less than the coming of the Lord in great power and glory! Babylon has by this time fallen. Satan's last outpost has gone down with terrific judgments. The universal dominion of the Beast gives way to the reign of the King of kings. The harlot gives place to the bride, the Lamb's wife. The wicked city passes away and the New Jerusalem is established.

Here at this moment is fulfilled the great bulk of Old Testament prophecy. Practically with one voice the prophets cried to Israel, "Behold! Thy King cometh". Psa. lxxii. was penned in the light of that glorious day when David's greater Son should reign in righteousness and peace. To "see the King in His beauty" summarized the expectancy of every believing heart. At last the Seer reaches that precious, that tremendous moment, when heaven opens, and the heavenly rider comes forth. As He rides forth the seventh trumpet rings out throughout the heavens, and great voices are heard crying out the glad news:--

"THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF
OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST. And He shall reign for the ages of the ages.
Amen.....We give thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast; because Thou
hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned" (Rev. xi. 15-17).

The same voices go on further to say that this coming in glory to reign is associated with the anger of the nations, the time of the judgment of the dead, the time for the reward of the Lord's servants, and the time for the destruction of those who destroy the earth (Rev. xi. 18, 19). These words are an epitome of Rev. xvii.-xx. In Rev. xi. 19 the apostle said:--

"And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the
ark of His covenant."

This "opening" precedes the opening of heaven in chapter xix. God's covenant is about to be fulfilled, and Christ, Who is now at the right hand of the throne of God in the heavens, is "manifest in glory". As though to assure the fainting heart that these things are sure of fulfillment, the rider of the white horse is called *Faithful and True*, and three times does the narrative pause to declare the truthfulness of these sayings.

Rev. xvii. 1 - xix. 9.—The harlot judged. The wife of the Lamb ready.

The angel's assurance.—"*These are the true sayings of God.*"

Rev. xix. 11 - xxi. 5.—“And I saw”:

1. The Apocalypse (xix. 11-16).
2. The Supper (xix. 17, 18).
3. The Beast (xix. 19-21).
4. Satan bound (xx. 1-3).
5. Millennial Reign (xx. 4-6).
6. Great White Throne (xx. 11-15).
7. New heaven and earth (xxi. 1).
8. Holy City (xxi. 2-5).

The assurance from the throne.--“*These words are true and faithful.*”

Rev. xxi. 9 - xxii. 7.—“And he shewed me”:

1. The Bride (xxi. 9).
2. The Holy Jerusalem (xxi. 10-27).
3. The river of water of life (xxii. 1-5).

The angel’s assurance.—“*These sayings are faithful and true.*”

The first of the series of events prefaced with the words, “And I saw”, is the glorious apocalypse of Christ so long anticipated throughout this book:

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse: and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war” (Rev. xix. 11).

Judgment and War.—These two themes are stated as the object of this appearance. “In righteousness doth he judge and make war.” For war the Lord occupies a white horse. For judgment a white throne. In both offices He is Faithful and True. The title, Faithful, turns the mind back to Isaiah.

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the OPPRESSOR (*ariz*, instead of *erez*, ‘the earth’) with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the LAWLESS ONE. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and *faithfulness* the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb” (Isa. xi. 1-9).

Psa. xlv. is also clearly indicated in Rev. xix. There in that Psalm is united together the triumphant rider and the King’s daughter. Space will not permit the citation, but the whole Psalm should be read through. The reference in Rev. xix. 13 to the vesture dipped in blood shows that here in this glorious apocalypse we have the fulfillment of Isa. lxiii. 1-6.

“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like Him that treadeth the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of

the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”

We learned from Rev. i. 10 that the prophetic setting of the book was “The day of the Lord”. Here the character of that day is given, viz., “the day of vengeance”, and its object and issue is “the year of my redeemed”. The word “vengeance” occurs six times in Isaiah, and this sixfold vengeance with its contexts is illuminative of Rev. xix., xx.:--

“For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of the recompences for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. xxxiv. 8).

The context speaks of the Lord’s judgment upon the nations, the passing away of the heavens, the turning of the land into “confusion” and “emptiness”—the same condition (*tohu* and *bohu*) as that of Gen. i. 2. In Isa. xxxv. we have the blessing that flows out to Israel when the wilderness shall “blossom as the rose”, and there we have the next reference to vengeance:--

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you” (Isa. xxxv. 4).

This chapter concludes one great portion of Isaiah’s prophecy, and the glory and the triumphant issue of the revelation of Christ can be felt as one reads the chapter through. The next reference to vengeance has definitely to do with Babylon:--

“Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin, daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans I will take vengeance thou shalt no more be called, The lady of Kingdoms” (Isa. xlvii. 1-5).

Babylon’s fall immediately precedes the coming of the Lord in the Revelation, and here in Isaiah it is especially prominent. Just before the glorious command sounds forth, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isa. lx. 1), we find another parallel with Rev. xix. ;--

“For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance” (Isa. lix. 17).

In Isa. xli. 2, 3 we read:--

“To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes.”

Then comes the last reference, that of Isa. lxiii. with which we commenced. The object of the Lord’s coming is further specified in Rev. xix. 15:--

“And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron; and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”

The quotation here from the second Psalm throws a vivid light upon the scene. Psalm ii. 1, 2 shows the condition of the world immediately before the second advent:--

“The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against HIS CHRIST.”

This brings down the judgment. God’s rightful King ascends the throne and to Him it is given “To rule with a rod of iron”.

“And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. xix. 16).

Three names are said to belong to the Lord in this vision:--

1. He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself.
2. His name is called, The Word of God.
3. He hath a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

The first name, known only to the Lord Himself, is associated with the wearing of the many crowns. In Rev. ii. 17 the overcomer will receive a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. In Phil. ii. 9, 10 the exaltation of Christ is accompanied by the giving of the name which is above every name. It appears idle for us to pretend to a knowledge where Scripture declares that the subject is known only to the Lord. It is possible however that the meaning of the passage is not so much that no one knew in the sense of being acquainted with the fact, but that no one perceived or fathomed the meaning of the name which the Lord received. It is suggestive that in Phil. ii. and in Rev. xix. the statement concerning the granting of a name which is not made known is immediately followed by a name that is well known. In Phil. ii. it is the name “Jesus” that is associated with the name above every name. In Rev. xix. it is the “Word of God” and “King of kings and Lord of lords” that seem to expand and explain that which otherwise could not be known.

The Word of God.—In this title is compressed the revelation of Christ’s place in the purpose of the ages. Manifestation seems to have much in common with it. Speech reveals the unseen thought, and for the great purpose of the ages Christ became the IMAGE of the INVISIBLE GOD. The theme is too great for a mere note like this. The reader is referred to the new series on *Redemption* where we hope this phase of truth will be opened up. For the present we would say that the coming together here of the two names, The Word, and King of kings is to indicate to us that the One Who came forth as the great Firstborn of all creation in order to accomplish the reconciliation, expressed in the term “Fulness” (for which see page 165 of the present Volume), is here seen bringing to pass that phase which is summed up in the words king and kingdom. The glorious Millennial kingdom, followed by the even more glorious reign of the closing age (I Cor. xv. 24, 25), is one of the many factors in bringing about *the end* “that God may be all in all”.

The reference to the winepress shows that Rev. xiv. 8-20 is another compressed anticipation of this glorious apocalypse. The King cometh. The saints shall reign. In His

days there shall be an abundance of peace. He must reign till He hath put all enemies under his feet. Surely whatever our dispensational standing, whatever the hope of our calling, we can with heart and voice take up the Advent song and say:--

“Hosannah to the Son of David:
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord:
Hosannah in the highest” (Matt. xxi. 9).

Right Division. **pp. 84 - 86**

That which we believe to be truth is described by some as “fantastic dispensational error”, and we are told that it arises out of a misunderstanding as to the true meaning of II Tim. ii. 15, which, instead of meaning “rightly divide”, really means “handle honestly, intelligently, and reverently, allowing it to speak for itself”. We will examine the question of the true translation of II Tim. ii. 15 presently, but before doing so we feel so attracted by the idea that to let the Word of God speak for itself is to handle it honestly, intelligently, and reverently, that we at once put the matter to the test. Let us take a few passages.

“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. x. 5, 6).

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. xv. 24).

If we let these Scriptures “speak for themselves”, we shall understand them to teach that the Lord Jesus limited His ministry to Israel during the “Gospels”, and we shall handling the word “honestly, intelligently and reverently”. Those who oppose us describe such an interpretation as a “fantastic dispensational error”, and their idea of letting the Word speak for itself is astounding. Instead of accepting the necessary conclusion of these words, they persist in teaching that Christ came to found *the Church*, which is composed of both Jew and Gentile, and virtually reverse His own repeated statements. We have no fear respecting the verdict of any unbiased judge as to which interpretation is “fantastic” and which “honest”.

Let us try another case. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the EARTH.” We believe that. We believe that the Sermon on the Mount does not speak to or about the Church which is raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies at the right hand of God. Our opponents read with the eye the word “earth”, but their teaching compels them to substitute “heaven”, even though they may not boldly say so. Which is “honest”? Which is “reverent”? Or again: in Eph. iii. the apostle speaks of a mystery which had been hidden since the ages but has now been made known. We believe that is a fact, and that the dispensation of the mystery (iii. 9, R.V.) differs accordingly from all others. But no, say our critics, a mystery does not mean a mystery, hidden does not mean hidden. Such ideas lead to fantastic error! The Gospel of Matthew contains the same teaching as Ephesians, it is all one and the same. That is their idea of handling the word honestly and letting it speak for itself.

Now let us come to the words “rightly divide”. They are the A.V. rendering of the Greek word *orthotomeo*, which is made up of *orthos* = right and *temno* = to cut. *Temno* does not occur in the N.T., but in the LXX it comes about seven times. In Lev. xxv. 3, 4 and Isa. v. 6 the Hebrew word of which *temno* is the Greek rendering is translated “to prune”. Pruning is done with a knife, a pruning hook, a saw, or with scateurs, but in each and every case the branch pruned must be CUT. In II Kings vi. 4 the English is “cut down”. This is speaking of “felling a beam with an axe”. In

Dan. ii. 34 and 45 it is the word that corresponds to the rendering “cut out” in the passage which deals with the vision of the stone which was cut out without hands.

Orthotomeo occurs in the LXX version of Prov. iii. 6:--“In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall *rightly divide* thy paths”. What sense would there be in the rendering “He shall *handle* thy paths *aright*?”

In modern surgical usage *Anatomy* means to cut up, *Tracheotomy* means to make an opening in the windpipe, and so on. It appears to us that if we allow the Word to speak for itself it will tell us to “rightly divide” or “cut” the Word of truth. *That* will be handling it honestly and will enable us to perceive the marvelous unfolding of the purpose of the ages in the various dispensations indicated in Scripture.

Search and See Series.

#1. "I am satisfied with the words of Christ."

pp. 1 - 3

Two Christian brethren were standing, with open Bibles, discussing some theme (apparently of great interest), and as the subject of their discussion may possibly interest you, let us draw a little nearer so that we may get the benefit of their remarks. We will call them for the sake of clearness A and B.

A.--I am satisfied with the words of Christ.

B.--Brother, believe me, we are one in that blessed fact, for He is the truth, His words are spirit and life, He came to reveal the Father, and the heart of every believer still says, "Show us the Father and it *sufficeth* us". We are both satisfied with the words of Christ.

A.--You interrupted me, I was going to say, I am satisfied with the words of Christ and do not need the opinions of Paul or any other man.

B.--By the "words of Christ", then, I understand you to mean the four Gospels, and by the opinions of Paul, I take it that you mean the epistles written by that servant of God. Let me just ask you a question? Am I right in assuming that the words of Christ with which you are satisfied are those of the four Gospels?

A.--Certainly.

B.--I see. You have not therefore any words of Christ written by Himself?

A.--Of course not!

B.--What words of Christ you have therefore were written by other men, and not by Himself?

A.--They were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

B.--Pardon me if I appear too persistent, but supposing I were to take your line and say, "I do not want the opinions of Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, I want the actual words of Christ Himself", what would you say?

A.--I should say that in these four Gospels we have the words of Christ, written by these men as they were guided and inspired by the Spirit of truth. Look at this passage in John xiv. 26:--

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, *and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.*"

Here you see my warrant for believing that, although the record may have been made by Matthew or Luke, yet the record is inspired, and in these Gospels I have the words of Christ which are enough for me.

B.--I am glad that we both agree on this next point, namely, the full inspiration of the four Gospels, but do you not see that if Matthew could be inspired to write the Gospel that bears his name, Peter, John, James, Jude and Paul could equally have been inspired to record the words of Christ spoken since His resurrection?

Your reference to John xiv. 26 was most apt and it reminds me of another statement in chapter xvi. Let us turn to verses 12-14:--

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come.
He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you."

Now notice one or two important features of this passage.

1. There is a contrast here with your passage of John xiv. In John xiv. the subject of inspiration is a question of bringing to remembrance things which Christ had said. In John xvi. the same Spirit shews them things which He hears, which suggests that there will be further revelations than the four Gospels.
2. This is still more clearly taught by the words, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now".
3. If we are to have "All truth" we must have this later witness, which supplements and goes beyond the teaching of the four Gospels.

These words of Christ make some further revelation, such as contained in the epistles, a necessity. Do you not see that by limiting yourself to the four Gospels you have not all the words of Christ that you might have, and therefore cannot truly be satisfied?

A.--This passage in John xvi. does certainly seem to speak of a revelation subsequent and equally inspired to the four Gospels, and I must look into the matter afresh, lest a mistaken zeal for the supremacy of Christ should rob me of that truth which after all He Himself says "Shall glorify Me".

At this point the two friends parted, promising to resume the consideration of the subject at some future time.

If you, dear reader, should be interested to follow the subject further, you will find it in our February number.

#2. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." pp. 17 - 19

No.1 of this series dealt with the statement, "I am satisfied with the words of Christ", and proved, from John xvi. 12-14, that the Lord Himself indicated a fuller revelation after His resurrection, which is found in the epistles. The point therefore of No.1 is that it is not a scriptural attitude to consider the Gospels as sufficient in themselves for the seeker after "all truth".

A.--I have been thinking very much about John xvi. 12-14 and your remarks upon it, but I still feel that the words actually spoken by *Christ Himself* must come to the true believer with greater force than those spoken by fallible men like ourselves, even though inspired for the time.

B.--I honour the desire, dear brother, to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, but I think a little attention to one feature of His ministry will help you to see the subject of the inspiration of both the Gospels and the Epistles in a clearer light. If Christ spoke *His own* words, and taught *His own* doctrine, then we should possibly feel that His words were of greater weight and authority than those of Peter and of Paul in the Epistles.

A.--But did He not speak as one having authority, and not as the Scribes? What do you mean by speaking His own words?

B.--Do not let us misunderstand one another, let us rather "open the book".

A.--I suppose you are going to turn to the Epistles?

B.--No, we will turn once again to the Gospel according to John. First let us notice John xiv. 24:--

" My sayings; and the Word which ye hear is NOT MINE, but the Father's which sent Me."

Here is a distinct statement which should be enough for any who are "satisfied with the words of Christ". Look again, this time at xiii. 49, 50:--

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father Which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

This is added testimony to the same effect. One more verse will suffice us here, viz., John vii. 16:--

"Jesus answered them and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me."

It is clear from these words of our Lord that what He taught and spoke was what He had Himself been taught (viii. 28) and commanded to speak.

A.--Do I understand by this that you deny the Deity of Christ?

B.--By no means. That the Word "was God" this same Gospel declares, and that I believe with all my heart. But the Lord humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant. As the "sent one" He did not speak His own message, but the words of Him that sent Him.

A.--Well, accepting this, I do not see your intention. If every utterance of the Lord's was actually the Word of God, that seems all the more reason why I should abide by them.

B.--Abide by them by all means, but do not forget that the point is that the authority for Christ's teaching is the Father that sent Him. Now let us look at the Epistles. Turn to I Thess. ii. 13:--

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God."

You see by this statement that Paul, Silas and Timothy, acting in their capacity as "sent ones", claimed the self-same authority for their words as did Christ Himself. 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."

In II Pet. i. 20, 21 Peter speaks of the inspiration of Scripture, and in II Pet. iii. 16 he links Paul's epistles with "the other Scriptures". In I Pet. i. 11 Peter, speaking of the Old Testament prophets, says that they spake by "The Spirit of Christ". Paul in Rom. xv., after having spoken, in verse 8, of the Lord's earthly ministry, goes on to say of himself, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (verse 16). In II Tim. i. 8 Paul says to Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner". Does it not therefore appear to you that these facts emerge clearly from these quotations?

- (1). The words of Christ and His Apostles are not to be considered as their own, but as the words of Him that sent them.
- (2). The testimony of the epistles is still considered to be the testimony of Christ, this time as the risen One, and speaking through those who had been chosen and "sent" by Him.
- (3). In each case the authority for the message is that of the "sender"; in the Gospels Christ is the Sent One, in the Epistles the Apostles are the sent ones [the very word apostle (from *apostello*) means a sent one] and Christ still speaks to us, even though in Person He is now at the Right Hand of God.

A.--This is certainly a most important aspect of the subject and one that has never struck me before. It would appear from what you have pointed out that whether it be the words of Christ recorded in the Gospels, or the words of those sent by Him recorded in the Epistles, we are to see that both go back to God Himself, the "Sender", for their authority. This, coupled with the words of John xv. 26, "When the Comforter is come, whom I WILL SEND unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth", and John xvi. 13, 14, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you", certainly makes me feel a need to reconsider my attitude to the Epistles.

B.--Dear brother, if you just regard both Gospels and Epistles as being of equal authority and of equal inspiration, you will have the key to much blessing and light. Remember II Tim. iii. 16.

A.--What is that?

B.--Well, you search and see for yourself, and ponder it well till we meet next time.

#3. "The Right division of the Word of Truth." pp. 33 - 35

In No.1 of this series it was found that the words of Christ in John xvi. 12-14 necessitated a further and fuller revelation.

In No.2 we found that such a revelation is given in the epistles, and that no distinction as to degrees of inspiration can be made between the Gospels and the Epistles, for the Apostles like Christ Himself, spake the Word of God. "A" who had hitherto been satisfied with the four Gospels alone begins to get into difficulties when he considers the teaching of the epistles.

A.--I am afraid I am not clear as to the real results of our conversation on the equal authority and inspiration of both the Gospels and Epistles.

B.--What is your particular trouble?

A.--Well, seeing that I had agreed that the Epistles were of equal authority with the Gospels, I felt that I must obey them all, and practice them all, but this I find to be impossible.

B.--Why?

A.--They do speak alike. For instance, just one or two features at random--there are so many I am bewildered. The Sermon on the Mount says, "The meek shall inherit the earth", yet Eph. i. 3 tells me that I am blessed in "*heavenly places*". Mark xvi. 17 says that "these signs shall follow" the preaching of the gospel, yet I find Paul saddened

because Epaphroditus was sick; why did he not heal him as he did others? Then this made me say, Why have we not all the miraculous gifts which the Church at Corinth had?

Then I find during the period of the Acts of the Apostles that there were *two* baptisms, one in water, and one in spirit, whereas in Eph. iv. 5 I find that "there is *one* baptism". Which one is it? and why only one? Then I used to believe that the church was the Bride, Peter speaks of the redeemed as being as holy nation and a royal priesthood, while Paul in Ephesians and Colossians says the church is the Body.

Then again I used to believe that we ought to keep the Sabbath day, yet I find in Col. ii. 18, "Let no man judge you with regard to the Sabbath day", and in Gal. iv. 10, 11, "Ye observe days, I am afraid for you". Matt. xix. 16-20 (the very words of Christ Himself mark you) teaches that eternal life may be had by keeping the ten commandments, yet Gal. iii. 21 teaches that life cannot come by the law, but only by faith.

B.--What is the solution, do you think? Shall we conclude that the four Gospels are truth and the Epistles untrue?

A.--No, for we have seen that John xvi. 12-14 looks forward to the Epistles (*see* No.1), and that the Epistles are inspired equally with the Gospels (*see* No.2).

B.--The solution then must be found in some other feature. Let us look once more at John xvi. 12-14. It is evident that in the Epistles we must expect something deeper and more advanced than we find in the Gospels, for the Lord said, "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*". It is also evident that whatever the difference may be, it will not take away, but rather add to, the glory of Christ, for concerning that added revelation the Lord said of the Spirit, "*He shall glorify Me*".

A.--But what puzzles me is, how can both Gospels and Epistles be true when they say such opposite things?

B.--The answer is fairly simple. It is a matter of recognizing different dispensations.

A.--What do you mean by dispensations?

B.--Let us find our answer in John's Gospel again. This time turn to chapter i. 17, 18:--

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."

In these verses two dispensations are referred to, the one of law, the other of grace. The one revealing God as Law-giver and King, the other as Father. You yourself have already recognized the difference between these two dispensations, for being a Christian you do not feel called upon to put into practice *all* that Moses taught under the law, even

though you believe the law to be as fully inspired as the Gospels and Epistles. The same principle obtains between the various parts of the New Testament.

It is a fruitful cause of much error and confusion to fail to see that the dispensational dealings of God with Israel during the time of the Lord's earthly ministry differ from His dealings with both Israel and the Gentiles since Christ ascended into heaven.

A.--Do you mean to say that Christ came to Israel, and did not come to set up His Church?

B.--We must not leave our real subject for details, but I will just say that in Matt. xv. 24 the words of Christ Himself will answer you:--

"I am NOT sent BUT unto the lost sheep of the house of ISRAEL."

Let us settle one thing at a time. There are evidently different dispensational dealings revealed in the Scriptures, and when once these differences are duly observed difficulties vanish and truth becomes clear. I leave you with another verse taken from II Timothy. This time it is II Tim. ii. 15:--

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."

#4. Some examples of "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth." pp. 49 - 52

No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and

No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.

No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.

A.--I should be glad if you would give me a little indication of the results of "rightly dividing the Word of truth", for I rather fear it simply means cutting the Bible to pieces with no advantage when it is done.

B.--Let me draw your attention to some instances of a *wrong* division before looking at the other side.

The translators of the A.V. attempted to divide the subject matter, and gave notes at the heading of the chapters. Over Isa. xxix. they say, "God's heavy judgment upon *Jerusalem*", but over chapter xxx. they say "God's mercies towards His *Church*". Or again, over Isa. lix. they write, "The sins of the *Jews*", but over lx., "The glory of the *Church*". When it is a case of judgment the literal meaning is retained, but when it is a

case of blessing "the Church" is intruded. We will not waste time tabulating error however; let us seek the "Word of truth".

We have already seen that *all* Scripture is inspired, but that *all* Scripture does not speak (1) to the same people, (2) at the same time, and (3) with the same message. *All* Scripture is FOR us, but *all* Scripture is not ABOUT us. To discover that part of Scripture which is FOR us, ABOUT us, and TO us we must "rightly divide the Word of truth". The people addressed in the Bible are divided into three companies, "The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God" (I Cor. x. 32). Whenever you open your Bible therefore, seek at once to discover which of these three classes is addressed.

A.--How can I do this? It seems that I should have to conduct a very careful enquiry involving much time and ability. Cannot I take the Bible at its face value to mean just what it says?

B.--If only you would, your difficulties would vanish. I would say to you, "Read the *envelope* before you read the *letter*".

A.--Explain your meaning.

B.--Well, look at the envelope of Isaiah's prophecy (chapter i., verse 1) and tell me whether it is addressed to Jew, Gentile or Church.

A.--(*Turns to the passage*). It says that it is concerning "Judah and Jerusalem".

B.--Well, that answers the question for you there easily enough. Accept it as "meaning just what it says". Now look at the "envelope" of James' epistle.

A.--(*Turning to the epistle*). It is addressed to "The Twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad".

B.--Again you have your answer, and you will find that somewhere in every book of the Bible, there will be these identifying marks, enabling you to "rightly divide" the word off as belonging either to Jew, Gentile or Church of God.

A.--Is there any other important way in which the Word should be "rightly divided".

B.--Yes. *Time* periods enter in very largely. For example, Matt. x. 5, 6 says:--

"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

If this passage is not to be divided at all, as some would affirm, there never should have been a single Gentile saved, or even evangelized. Further, if we do not rightly divide the Word, we shall have Christ contradicting Himself, saying in chapter x. "GO NOT", and in xxviii. "GO YE".

Again, we must keep distinct the various callings that are indicated in the Word. *The Kingdom* must not be confounded with the Church. The Kingdom is yet to come, for the prayer is "Thy Kingdom *come*", and it relates to the earth as under the power and pattern of heaven, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". The Church is an elect company called out from the world during the present time. Christ is never called the "King" of the Church. Then again, the various "gospels" need carefully *dividing*.

A.--Surely you do not mean me to understand that there is more than one gospel?

B.--No, I do not, not in the sense that you mean. There is but one gospel and one way of salvation, nevertheless, there are "gospels" in the Scriptures that are not all alike. For example, "The gospel of the Kingdom" is defined for us in Mark i. 15:--

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel."

The twelve apostles went out and preached this gospel (Matt. x.), yet Peter reveals that he did not know at the time that the Lord Jesus was *to die and rise again* (xvi. 21-23). Surely the "gospel of the grace of God" could not be preached without Christ's death and resurrection being either expressed or acknowledged! In Rev. xiv. 6 we have the "everlasting gospel". Read its terms for yourself. There is no reference to redemption or to Christ, just "Fear God the Creator". This again is no gospel for the present time.

Then again we read in some Scriptures of a "mystery", which had been hidden by God, and revealed at a definite period. (*See* Eph. iii. and Col. i.). We must be careful not to read into earlier Scriptures therefore the truth revealed in later ones. This applies to the epistles of Paul as a whole. While all his epistles are necessary for the Church, we shall find upon examination that his ministry needs rightly dividing, and that not only is it as a whole distinct and independent, but that within itself it divides into two distinct sections.

But I think you have had enough for the time being. Just open your Bible and make a few tests. Consider (1) the envelope, (2) whether Jew, Gentile or Church, (3) whether Past, Present or Future, and (4) whether the dispensation be Law, Grace, Kingdom, Church or Millennial.

- No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and
- No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.
- No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.
- No.4 gives some examples of right division, showing that Scripture is addressed to Jew, Gentile or Church. Among other examples the epistles of Paul are instanced as needing to be rightly divided.

A.--I should like to know a little more fully what you meant by saying that while Paul's epistles as a whole are distinct from the rest of Scripture, yet they themselves need rightly dividing.

B.--I am glad this important matter has arrested your attention and will do all I can to make the position clear.

We must look at the subject first to see that Paul's ministry is something quite distinct from that of any other apostle, and then, having that ministry before us, realize that it is divided into two clear sections. This is not merely interesting--it is vital to the full understanding of God's purpose and our place therein.

First of all, *Paul was not one of the twelve.*

A.--How do you prove that?

B.--In Matt. x. 2-4 the names of the twelve are given, and Paul is not among the number.

A.--No, but I have been given to understand that when Judas fell and left the number, Paul was Divinely chosen to take his place, the appointment of Matthias (Acts i.) being a hasty attempt on the part of the apostles and done erroneously.

B.--There are a good many of the actions of the apostles which certain teachers to-day call "apostolic mistakes", but which are not so called in the Scriptures. Look at the state of affairs at the time of the appointing of Matthias.

1. The risen Christ had spent a large portion of 40 days instructing the Apostles (Acts i. 3).
2. Not only did the Lord *open* the Scriptures, but He also *opened* the Apostles' understanding (Luke xxiv. 45). This settles for ever the question of whether the Apostles "understood" His meaning.
3. The Lord declared that the things written in the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Himself must be fulfilled.
4. Peter whose understanding had been *opened*, and who had been taught the prophetic meaning of the Messianic *Psalms*, stood up after 40 days' instruction and said, "Men and brethren, THIS SCRIPTURE MUST NEEDS BE FULFILLED, which the Holy

Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas which was guide to them that took Jesus it is written in the book of the Psalms his bishopprick let another take" (Acts i. 16, 20). Peter had evidently been taught by the risen Christ the meaning of the Psalms that spoke of His betrayal, and acting upon that teaching he said that it was necessary that another should take the forfeited place of Judas.

A.--Would not the apostle Paul have filled that place?

B.--No, there was one qualification which Paul did not possess.

A.--What was that?

B.--He had never been associated with Christ and the eleven from the beginning.

A.--But was that essential?

B.--Listen to Peter:--

"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us ALL THE TIME that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, BEGINNING from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts i. 21, 22).

This limited the number of possible candidates to two, and as the Lord had done many times during Israel's history, He did it again; He used the lot to convey His choice.

"And the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven" (verse 26).

Then came Pentecost.

Paul in I Cor. xv. 5-8 gives the names of several witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, *viz.*, Cephas, the twelve, five hundred brethren, James, all the apostles, and last of all Paul himself. This enumeration places Paul outside the twelve.

A.--Do you mean then that there is another order of apostleship outside that of the twelve?

B.--Look at Eph. iv. 8-11:--

"When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . .
. . . And He gave some apostles."

The "twelve" were appointed while Christ was on earth, but here is an order of apostles appointed "When He ASCENDED".

A.--What is there distinctive about Paul's apostleship then

B.--Let the apostle himself tell us:--

"I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, I magnify mine office" (Rom. xi. 13).

"He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles" (Gal. ii. 8).

"I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not); a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (I Tim. ii. 7).

"I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (II Tim. i. 11).

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. And therefore, while all Scripture is profitable, yet, before we concern ourselves too much with the sin of Israel, or the great tribulation and other equally important themes, it is incumbent upon us to give due place to the message of the risen Christ, which He has sent to us through Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision."

"I (Paul) a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (Rom. xv. 16).

Remember it is not Paul and Paul's ideas that we want. It is still Christ Who speaks, the difference being that in the Gospels He speaks on earth, while in the Epistles He speaks from heaven. The human instruments of the earthly ministry were Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The human instruments of the heavenly ministry are Peter, Paul, James, John, Jude, and of these Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.

A.--I can certainly appreciate better your strong emphasis upon the claims of Paul, and now I see that in his epistles it is not Paul's opinion I have but still the words of Christ, I feel that I have possibly neglected a most important part of Holy Scripture.

B.--We will not go further just now. Give the epistles of Paul a careful reading, and when we meet again you will be the better able to enter into the question of Paul's two-fold ministry.

#6. The Appointment of Matthias.
pp. 81 - 84

- No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and
- No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.
- No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.
- No.4 gives some examples of right division, showing that Scripture is addressed to Jew, Gentile or Church. Among other examples the epistles of Paul are instanced as needing to be rightly divided.
- No.5 deals with the distinctive ministry of the apostle Paul, and shows that he was not one of "the twelve", but set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles.

A.--When you were speaking of the ministry of the apostle Paul, on the last occasion, I wanted to ask some further questions as to the appointment of Matthias.

B.--I shall be glad if I can help in any way, what is your difficulty?

A.--Well, there are quite a number of great and good men, leaders in their several spheres, who believe that Peter made a mistake in Acts i. as to the appointing of Matthias, and that he should have waited for the call and commission of Paul. In this you differ, and you will pardon me so saying, you have no such authority as those to whom I refer.

B.--As to the personal side it stands as follows. Certain great and good men, leaders in different sects of Christendom (and therefore *practically* charging each other with error on sectarian points) charge other, equally great and good men, leaders in a divinely constituted unity, with intruding reasonings of the flesh into the purposes of God. You will see therefore that we may omit all reference to the character of those for or against, and turn afresh to the Word to "search and see". In Acts i. 15, 16, we read:--

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples and said men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

A.--How are we sure that Peter was using this Psalm aright?

B.--There are two reasons.

1. In John xiii., at the last supper just before Judas betrayed the Lord, Christ said:--

"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled. He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me. Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (verses 18-20).

This clearly proves that Psalm xli. speaks of Judas, and moreover this passage very solemnly declares that the disciples were forewarned, and were shown the awful

responsibility of receiving "whomsoever" the Lord saw fit to send. This solemn utterance was only separated from Acts i. by a few weeks.

2. The second reason is found in Luke xxiv. 44:--

"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and IN THE PSALMS concerning Me."

A.--These are, certainly, weighty arguments in favour of your interpretation.

B.--I have not finished yet. After making this statement concerning Himself, Luke xxiv. 45-48 continues:--

"Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."

You will see that not only did these men have an opened Bible during that wonderful forty days (Acts i. 3), but they had *an opened understanding* also. When Peter said, "This Scripture *must needs* have been fulfilled", he was echoing the words of Luke xxiv. 26 and 46, where "must needs" is translated "ought", and "behoved".

A.--I begin to realize what a great responsibility rests upon those men, who, so many centuries after the event, with so much tradition between themselves and the beginning, have so lightly presumed to be the critics of Peter, James and John.

B.--So you may. Yet there is more. These same correctors of the apostles tell us that Peter limited God to the two men Joseph and Matthias. Now let us see whether this is so. Peter's words are:--

"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us ALL the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts i. 21, 22).

A.--What was Peter's authority for making this stipulation?

B.--The Lord's own words in John xv. 26, 27:--

"But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father He shall bear witness of Me, and ye also shall bear witness of Me, because YE HAVE BEEN WITH ME FROM THE BEGINNING."

This is confirmed by Luke's statement in Luke i. 2.

A.--This stipulation would rule out the apostle Paul then!

B.--Yes, and it testifies against all those who seek to place Paul among the twelve, for his knowledge of Christ did not commence until after the resurrection. Let us briefly indicate one or two further points in favour of Peter's action.

Scripture declares of Matthias, "He was numbered with the eleven" (Acts i. 26). Our "great and good" friends declare he was not. Paul says, in I Cor. xv. 5, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve". So Paul himself believed that Matthias was one of the "twelve". Our friends must therefore set about correcting Paul also. Then, further, when Matthias had been appointed, nothing further is recorded until the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Do these great and good leaders dare to teach that the Spirit of God also needed a little of their correction! for exactly the same words "with the eleven" occur after as before Pentecost.

These inspired men suffered persecution and even death for their testimony, yet never once is there the slightest indication that they had made a mistake. Shall Peter be allowed to strike Ananias and Sapphira dead for "lying to Holy Ghost", and shall Peter himself perpetuate a fraud, remain unrepentant and indifferent to his colossal blunder, and not come forward at the appointment of Saul of Tarsus to make amends? One passage of Scripture sums up the attitude of mind of all those who by reason of their undispensational views are continually finding fault with the apostles and their ministry:-

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"Full well ye reject commandment of God, *that ye may keep* your own traditions making the Word of God *of none effect* through your tradition" (Mark vii. 9-13).

**#7. The two-fold ministry of Paul, and its bearing upon
the revealed purpose of God for the Gentiles.
pp. 97 - 99**

No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and
No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.

No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.

No.4 gives some examples of right division, showing that Scripture is addressed to Jew, Gentile or Church. Among other examples the epistles of Paul are instanced as needing to be rightly divided.

No.5 & 6 deal with the distinctive ministry of the apostle Paul, and shows that he was not one of "the twelve", but set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles.

A.--Will you help me to understand what you mean by the "Two-fold ministry of Paul?"

B.--Yes, most willingly, for the due appreciation of Paul's later ministry is an entrance into great blessing. You are already acquainted with the conversion and commission of Paul as given in Acts ix., and so we will pass on to the critical moment in his ministry as given in Acts xx. 17-38. Paul addresses the elders of the Church at Ephesus in a stranger way:--

"Ye know, from the first day that I come into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews, and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you" (xx. 18-20).

"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (xx. 26, 27).

A.--It sounds very much like a farewell sermon.

B.--That is exactly what it is, for the apostle says:--

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, *shall see my face no more*" (xx. 25).

A.--What had happened to make the apostle so confident about this?

B.--Listen:--

"And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (xx. 22-24).

A.--Does Paul mean that the bonds and afflictions were an essential part of the ministry he desired to finish?

B.--Yes. The passage before us points in that direction, and other passages confirm it. Turn to Acts xxvi. where the apostle makes his statement before Agrippa. After speaking of the appearance of the Lord to him on the road to Damascus Paul says that the Lord answered him:--

"I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness BOTH of these things which thou hast seen, AND of those things in the which I WILL APPEAR UNTO THEE, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, UNTO WHOM NOW I SEND THEE" (xxvi. 15-17).

Here is a two-fold ministry. The one, a testimony of the things which he had seen (*see* xxii. 14, 15), the other, a testimony of those things which the Lord promised He would at some future date reveal to the apostle.

A.--I see this plainly enough, but I fail to see what difference it can make to us.

B.--Well, turn to Acts xxviii. 17-31. There the chief of the Jews came to Paul's lodging and for a whole day the apostle testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, but they would not accept the testimony. "One word" said the apostle is fulfilled in you, that word being Isa. vi. 10, when blindness settled down upon the people of Israel.

All through the Acts Israel are still a people before God. Miracles are everywhere the accompaniment and confirmation of the apostle's witness, but at this point Israel pass off the scene. Miracles cease. "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles" (xxviii. 28). A new dispensation begins, and Paul the prisoner becomes the vessel through whom hitherto unrevealed blessings to the Gentiles are for the first time made known.

A.--How do you prove that?

B.--There are a set of epistles known by some as "The Prison Epistles", because in them the apostle alludes to his bonds or imprisonment.

A.--What are the names of these epistles?

B.--They are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy. There the references to the prison are vitally connected with the apostle's new ministry, as can be seen by turning to Ephesians:--

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles*, if ye have heard of *the dispensation* of the grace of God which is given *to you-ward*, how that by revelation He made known *unto me the mystery* unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable riches of Christ*, and to make all men see what is the dispensation (R.V.) of the mystery, which since the ages hath been hid in God" (Eph. iii. 1-9).

Here is a prisoner, "For you Gentiles". Here is a dispensation, "The grace of God which is given me to you-ward". Here is a mystery, revealed for the first time. For the "mystery of the gospel" the apostle was an ambassador in bonds (Eph. vi. 19, 20). This new dispensation of the mystery was for the Church which is His Body (Col. i. 24-26). This second ministry of the apostle fulfilled his ardent desires expressed in Acts xx. 24:--

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. iv. 7).

#8. The Apostle's Doctrine. pp. 113 - 115

- No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and
- No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.
- No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.
- No.4 gives some examples of right division, showing that Scripture is addressed to Jew, Gentile or Church. Among other examples the epistles of Paul are instanced as needing to be rightly divided.
- No.5 & 6 deal with the distinctive ministry of the apostle Paul, and shows that he was not one of "the twelve", but set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles.
- No.7 shews the two-fold ministry of Paul, and its bearing upon the revealed purpose of God for the Gentiles.

A.--I have been warned by some to avoid both you and your teaching because you do not, as did the early church, "continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts ii. 42).

B.--This is certainly a serious charge, but it strikes me as being somewhat biased, for these very same teachers who are now so zealous for the "apostles' doctrine" did not spare these same apostles over the appointment of Matthias.

A.--That is so, but possibly this is the exception that proves the rule.

B.--Let us "search and see". After 40 days' instruction from the risen Christ, with special emphasis upon the teaching of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms concerning the Lord Himself, and moreover with the inspired statement that these same apostles UNDERSTOOD these same Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 45), the "apostles' doctrine" is expressed in the question which was the outcome of such teaching and such understanding:--

"When they therefore were come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6).

This restoration of the kingdom to Israel we accept as an integral part of the "apostles' doctrine", those who have the temerity to warn you as to *our* attitude, have also the audacity to teach that this question, in spite of its context, is the result of Jewish prejudice, and that the apostles should, instead, have been found asking about the church!

A.--But may it not be that after the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost the scales would fall from their eyes?

B.--Yes, it may, but the question for us is, Did they alter their doctrine, and announce teaching concerning the church?

A.--Yes, I believe they did, for it is universally accepted that *the church began at Pentecost*.

B.--I will not quarrel with your word "universally", but would rather direct you to the attitude of Paul when opposed by sheer numbers (II Tim. i. 12-15). As to the change of doctrine which takes place in Acts ii., that I believe is a tradition foisted upon an undiscerning people. Let us "search and see".

In Acts ii. Peter declares that "Pentecost" is the fulfillment of that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and he has no reason, by any supposed change of doctrine, to hesitate in quoting the words:--

"I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come" (Acts ii. 19, 20).

A.--Perhaps Peter felt that he ought not to break off in the middle of a quotation.

B.--Not so. The same Spirit who had just endued Peter anointed also the Lord, and at the opening of His ministry He *did* stop half-way through a quotation because of dispensational reasons. See Isa. lxi. 1-4, and note Luke iv. 18-20. Peter expected the restoration of the kingdom, and Joel was rightly interpreted. The kingdom is connected with the great and notable day of the Lord, but the church is not. Here again is another item of the apostles' doctrine which I believe, but which your friends do not.

Yet further, Peter declares the resurrection of Christ to be with the object that He should sit upon the throne of His father David (Acts ii. 30-33), whereas tradition would once more substitute the church.

A.--This one feature however is not all that the apostles taught.

B.--No, but it is the foundation of all that follows. For example, Is it "church truth" to teach baptism for the remission of sins? Yet this is a part of the apostles' doctrine. Your friends, who are so zealous for the truth, do they possess the Holy Spirit as did these believers in Acts ii.? Do they, further, sell their possessions and have all things common? Would they, if it were still possible, continue stedfastly not only in the apostles' doctrine, but also in the temple (Acts ii. 46)? even though the epistle to the Hebrews has since been given?

Tell me wherein do these friends of yours agree with the doctrine of the apostles? Is it too harsh to say that they hold a creed of what they *imagine* the apostles taught, or what they think they *ought* to have taught. Dear friend, "prove all things", "search and see", say in the language of the Psalmist

"I have stuck unto Thy testimonies."
"The fear of man bringeth a snare."

#9. Pentecost and the Gentiles. **pp. 129 - 131**

- No.1 of this series shows that John xvi. 12-14 indicates the epistles, and
No.2 proves that both gospels and epistles are equally inspired.
No.3 finds "A" bewildered by the many apparent differences which he has discovered by reading the gospels and the epistles. The solution is found in "rightly dividing" the Word of truth.
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No.7 shews the two-fold ministry of Paul, and its bearing upon the revealed purpose of God for the Gentiles.
No.8 proves that the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was an integral part of the "apostles' doctrine".

A.--I believe that it might be true to say that, whilst outwardly the church of the one body did not begin at Pentecost, potentially it did.

B.--To give a concrete illustration, you would say that the fact that there were no Gentiles in the assembly on the day of Pentecost was more by accident than of purpose.

A.--I can hardly say that, for there were multitudes of Gentiles addressed by the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

B.--Is that so? I was under the impression that none but Israelites were spoken to.

A.--You have many times told me to "search and see", so I suggest you take a dose of your own prescription.

B.--Most readily. I have nothing to lose but error, and nothing to gain but truth by so doing. Where do you propose we start.

A.--At Acts ii. 5-11, for there we read:--

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven and they were all amazed and marvelled, saying how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, etc."

Surely Parthians, dwellers in Egypt, strangers of Rome, indicate Gentiles!

B.--Not so fast. In verse 5, which you read, we have stated that there were dwelling in Jerusalem JEWS, devout men, from every nation under heaven. Therefore the long geographical list that follows gives the country of origin of these Jews, who had come up to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost according to the law. "Strangers of Rome", is literally "sojourning Romans", and they were all either "Jews or proselytes". Further, do you notice how the apostle Peter addresses these so-called "Gentiles" of yours?

"Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem" (verse 14).

"Ye men of Israel ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"
(verses 22 and 23).

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David" (verse 29).

"Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus,
Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (verse 36).

These were the dispersion, Israelites who had been born in foreign lands, many of them Roman citizens as was Saul of Tarsus, some of them proselytes, but none of them Gentiles.

A.--Well supposing that is so, does it follow that the saints gathered at Pentecost would not have had the greatest joy in receiving a believing Gentile into their company?

B.--Such is the tradition, but Acts x. will give us the truth.

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (verses 1 and 2).

Look at the man's credentials. He was devout, he feared God, his household did the same, he gave alms, he prayed to God continually. Now tell me, would that man have been received by the assembly on the day of Pentecost?

A.--Most assuredly he would.

B.--Well, how do you account for Peter's attitude toward him?

"He said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing (note the place of the law of Moses) for a man that is a Jew (Peter's own definition of himself) to keep company or come unto one of another nation (yet in the church there is neither Jew nor Gentile), but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts x. 28).

By his own confession Peter would not have hesitated to have classed Cornelius the devout, with the swine and the creeping things which he saw in the net. IS THAT THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT!!

A.--What do you intend me to understand them, that Peter had been wrong all along?

B.--By no means. *Peter was right all along.* He had no idea such as that "the church began at Pentecost", and he therefore prosecuted the commission given to him to urge his own people Israel to repentance. The thought of such an association with a Gentile as is implied in the idea of the church was totally foreign to the "apostles' doctrine and fellowship". It is your friends who have departed from the apostles' doctrine, and have made Scripture void by their traditions.

A.--Why then should Peter have made the change in Acts x.?

B.--Because in Acts ix. the apostle Paul had been called and appointed as the messenger of the risen Christ to the Gentiles, thereby introducing a change of dispensation. This was followed by the warning vision to Peter and by the confession:--

"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18),

a pointless remark if the church began at Pentecost.

The Seed of God. **pp. 52 - 55**

That one of the phases of the great conflict of the ages is intimately connected with the attempt on the part of Satan to contaminate the seed of the woman, has been shown by abler expositors than ourselves. The subject forms too important a link in the chain, however, for us to pass it by without individual study. We do not know who was Cain's wife, and rather than bar the way for fuller understanding by hazarding guesses that range from his "own sister" to the "pre-Adamites", we prefer to leave it as the Scriptures do. That Abel was the seed of the woman Eve makes clear on the birth of Seth:--

"For God, said she, hath appointed me, *another seed* instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. v. 25).

Of Noah it is written, "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations", or uncontaminated by the generations through which he had come. Whether we interpret the "sons of God" of this chapter (Gen. vi.) of angels, or of the descendants of Seth (and both views have their supporters), the issue is clear, that it was an attempt on the part of the evil one to corrupt the seed of the woman.

There are two words used of Noah in Gen. vi. 9, both translated "generations". The original of the first is the one that is used to subdivide the book of Genesis, "The book of the generation of Adam" (Gen. v. 1). The second means "his contemporaries". The word "perfect" carries with it the thought of being without blemish, and the idea includes the vital fact that with the exception of Noah "All flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth". The seed of the woman was carried through the waters of the flood in the person of Noah.

The prohibitions of the law of Moses, as also the command of Abraham concerning intermarriage with the Canaanites, shows the real concern that God had in keeping the line pure that led down through Shem to Christ. Passing over for the time the O.T., let us pause for a moment at Malachi. How many of us could say what is the great concern of Mal. ii.? It is largely taken up with the faithlessness of the Priests in regard to marriage. They said, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" and thereby revealed their lack of discrimination, for God created Cain, but he was of that wicked one nevertheless. God created the Jews who listened to Christ, but they were of their father the Devil nevertheless. The prophet answers the priests with the words:--

"Why do we deal treacherously, every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal. ii. 10).

The words "to deal treacherously" refer to faithlessness to the marriage bond. (See ii. 15, also Jer. iii. 20; Exod. xxi. 8). The faithlessness of JUDAH imperiled the SEED, for of that tribe Messiah was to come:--

“Judah hath dealt faithlessly, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which He loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god” (Mal. ii. 11).

The man that did this, whether he be master or scholar, should be treated as a Canaanite:--

“The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this out of the tabernacles of Jacob” (ii. 12).

Their offerings were not acceptable:--

“The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant” (ii. 14).

Verse 15 is variously translated and interpreted. The A.V. reads:--

“And did not He make one? Yet had He the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That He might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.”

The margin reads for “residue”, *excellency*, and for “a godly seed”, *a seed of God*. The R.V. scarcely differs from the A.V. in the text, but in the margin the following is found, “And not one hath done so who had a residue of the spirit. Or what? is there one that seeketh a godly seed?” This seems to give a truer rendering. To act treacherously in this way was not possible while one retained a residue of the spirit. So profane had the priesthood become that the prophet asks, “Is there one that seeketh a seed of God?” The words seem to echo those of Gen. vi. 3, “My spirit shall not always rule (or abide) in man, for that he *also is flesh*”.

Marriage ceases with this life. In the resurrection there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. Man lost the true purpose of God, and ceased to seek a godly seed. However, blessed be God, in the fulness of time Christ was born, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”. Of Him the angel could say “That holy thing that shall be born of thee”. Christ was pre-eminently the Seed of the woman, and the conception of Scriptural redemption limits that redemption to His own kin—in other words, to those others who are also the seed of the woman. The world to-day is peopled by those who are the seed of God and the seed of the wicked one. Both are sinful and under the dominion of sin and death. The works of the Devil however are to be destroyed (I John iii.). Satan himself is to be destroyed (Heb. ii.). The children of the wicked one are to be gathered in the time of harvest—like bundles of weeds to be burned. If their names are not in the book of life, they must be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. The principle that seems to underlie the teaching of the Scriptures on this subject is expressed in the following two statements:--

Rom. xi. 26. “So ALL ISRAEL shall be saved.”

Rom. ix. 6-8. “They are not ALL ISRAEL, which are of Israel, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That

is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

It is easy to say, “All Israel shall be saved” and intend by that expression every physical descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This would be wider than truth however. Some physical descendants of Abraham are Ishmaelites. The same is true concerning the parallel term “All in Adam”. Physical descent would indicate Cain and the Canaanites, what God means by All in Adam must be ruled by His own definition in Rom. ix. 6-8, and by the fact which Scripture reveals of the two seeds. When the seed of the wicked one is gathered out of the Kingdom (not to be saved, not to be garnered, not to be changed, but to be burned up as things that offend):--

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of THEIR FATHER. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. xiii. 43).

The Two Seeds. **pp. 13 - 16**

In a previous paper (Volume XII, page 172) under the heading of NO MORE CANAANITE we received the teaching of Scripture concerning this people, but apart from a slight comparison with the heavenly destiny of the church of the mystery, we refrained from drawing deductions. We desire now to take our study a little further, and will commence with a statement made by the Lord as recorded in Matt. xiii. 38, 39:--

“The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are *the children of the wicked one*; the enemy that sowed them is the devil.”

Believing as we do that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God”, we do not admit the idea of degrees of inspiration, but we believe that those whose understanding of inspiration allows of degrees will agree that the words spoken by Christ were true in the fullest sense. In this kingdom parable wheat and tares (the Eastern *dewan*, a black, bitter and poisonous grain) growing together represent two classes. The tares are called “sons of the wicked one”. Be it noticed that the seed sown is not said to be “doctrines” but “sons”. Whilst remembering that this parable is limited to the kingdom of the heavens, we feel that the statements here raise a legitimate question, viz., *Are there two seeds in the world?* The answer to this question must of necessity have a bearing upon the purpose of the ages and the goal of God and must not be the result of hasty conclusions.

The first mention of two seeds is found in Gen. iii. 15. Speaking to the Serpent God said:--

“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed, it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Some reader may object to this reference by reason of its Messianic character. We must therefore show that it strictly belongs to our subject. Opening Gough's *The N.T. Quotations* at Gen. iii. we are struck by the fact that no direct quotation is made of verse 15. When Christ was born in Bethlehem, Isa. vii. 14 is quoted at length, but no reference is made to Gen. iii. This may be partly explained by the fact that redemptive purposes were unfolded in the N.T. in an ever-growing scope. First the redemption of Israel by their Saviour King, then the inclusion of the Gentiles by the Son of Abraham, and not until later the wider scope under Christ as the Last Adam, and finally under Him as First-born of all creation. This partly explains the lack of quotation, but there is another reason and an important one. Rom. xvi. 20 makes a reference to Gen. iii. 15, and there the application is not to Christ, but to His people:--

“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

There is no doubt that Paul knew that the “Serpent” of Gen. iii. was “Satan”, and further, that the “Seed” that was to bruise the Serpent's head included the believer. Apart from inspiration (which to us is final) Paul, as a believer, was not the man to take a prophecy which referred exclusively to Christ, and apply it to His people. We believe

that our other studies on the *Kinsman Redeemer* will come to our aid here. Redemption includes the destruction of the enemy, and Christ took upon Himself flesh and blood, becoming in due time THE seed of the woman, that as Kinsman-Redeemer He might redeem the seed of the woman that had become involved in sin and death. Let us suspend judgment while we gather further evidence. Gen. iv. 1 says:--

“And Adam knew his wife; and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.”

The story of Cain and Abel is the record of the two seeds, true of the two brothers as individuals and yet more true of the destiny of the two seeds which at this moment of time began to divide the earth. But some say, surely Gen. iv. 1 is written in order that we may see that Cain was a true child of Adam and Eve! It would appear so, yet we must allow equal weight to the inspired words of I John iii. 12 which say that “Cain was OF THAT WICKED ONE”. That this is a case in point the earlier part of the chapter proves. Christ was manifested for a dual purpose:--

1. To take away our sins (iii. 5).
2. To destroy the works of the devil (iii. 8).

There is another manifestation, and that is the manifestation of the two seeds.

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (I John iii. 10).

By all the rules of true interpretation, these parallel statements must stand or fall together. The child of God is “begotten of God” (verse 9), and God’s “seed” remains in him. Parity of reasoning then demands that the child of the devil is begotten of the devil, and his seed also remains. The origin of sin is most definitely attributed to Satan:--

“He who is a doer of sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning” (I John iii. 8).

Is the expression “begotten of the devil” too strong? John the Baptist could say to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to his baptism, “O generation of Vipers”! The word “generation” is cognate with “born” and “begotten”. In John viii. 37 the Lord said to the Jews, “I know that ye are Abraham’s seed”, and we might say, therefore they could not be the seed of the Serpent, but the Lord stated that the fact that they sought to kill Him evidence two things:--

1. The Lord’s Word had no place in them (verse 37).
2. They were doing what they had seen with their FATHER (verse 38).

But, protested these Jews, “Abraham is our father”! (verse 39). The Lord replied:--

“Ye are of your FATHER THE DEVIL, and the lusts of your father you are willing to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it” (verse 44).

A further reference to the two seeds and their attitude towards the Word of God is contained in verse 47:--

“He that is of God (*ek tou Theou*) heareth the words of God; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not *ek tou Theou*.”

Once more we must ask the reader to allow us to pursue the theme still further before any conclusion is reached. What we have seen makes it clear that there are two seeds in the earth. One “of God”, the other “of the Devil” and just as physical descent from Abraham did not prevent some Jews being nevertheless “of their father, the Devil”, so Cain’s physical descent from Adam and Eve did not alter the fact that he was “of that wicked one”.