

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,

We thank the Lord God that we achieved another two years' witness to the riches of His Word by means of *The Berean Expositor*. Since the completion of the previous volume, XLVII in 1974, we are conscious of a steady decline in the acceptance of the Scriptures as the fully inspired Word of God by the general public and also by a large section of organized religious bodies. For such people to accept only part of the record God has placed in our hands, is to undermine the basis of salvation, and to deny to many the wonderful news of the calling of the Mystery, that crowning message of the Apostle Paul to us Gentiles.

May this volume continue to awake interest in the Book of Life and assist the reader to surmount the difficulties of translations and appreciate to the full the meaning behind the words and paragraphs that the Holy Spirit has enshrined in God's Word.

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Antonyms, or Clarity by Contrasts

No.7. A Study in I Thessalonians. The Word of God, and of man. pp. 16 - 20

When we pass from the epistle to the Galatians to the first epistle to the Thessalonians, we pass from an atmosphere of conflict to one of comparative calm. We shall therefore expect to find a great difference in the method adopted by the Apostle. We should not expect such a challenging opening to Thessalonians as we found in Galatians, for the Thessalonians had not challenged either the validity of Paul's apostleship or of his gospel. Paul's antonyms will be in harmony with the purpose they are to subserve, and in the calmer atmosphere of this model church, his contrasts will be run in a gentler mode. We have listed eleven however, with which we must be acquainted if we would gain that 'clarity' which 'contrast' gives, although we shall not find these contrasts ramifying through the epistle as we did those found in Galatians.

Let us first of all set out the contrasts which Paul has employed in this epistle, and then examine them a little more in detail in order to appreciate their force and application. We discover upon investigation that these contrasts fall into three groups:

- (1) The Gospel. Not "Word" only but "power" (i. 5; ii. 13).
- (2) The Apostle. Not pleasing men, but God (ii. 4).
Not burdensome but gentle (ii. 5-7).
In presence not in heart (ii. 17).
Paul and Satan (ii. 18).
Comfort and affliction (iii. 7).
- (3) The Coming of the Lord.
The dead and the living (iv. 16, 17).
Peace and destruction (v. 3).
Darkness and light (v. 4, 5).
Wrath and salvation (v. 9).
Watchful and drowsy (v. 10).

Let us confine our attention to the contrast made by the Apostle in connection with the Gospel; and before we do, let us observe that in chapter i. of this epistle, by an easy transition, he passes from 'Gospel' (i. 5), to 'what manner of men' and 'what manner of entering in' he and his fellow servants had, and so to the coming of the Lord 'to wait for His Son from heaven', as though he anticipated in the opening chapter the line of argument he was to develop in the remainder of the epistle.

Once again, as in Galatians, we cannot attempt an exposition of these passages, for to do so without the context of the epistle as a whole is not and never will be our method.

We must be satisfied for the present with some fairly obvious items of fact and interest, which however are by no means unimportant because found lying near the surface. For example, we find that the word ‘gospel’ *euaggelion*, comes six times in the epistle, and the word ‘*euaggelizo*’ “to preach the gospel”, comes but once, making seven occurrences in all. The gospel if it is to be made known, must be made known through the instrumentality of ‘words’. Without ‘words’ neither the apostles, nor we their more humble followers, could either ‘preach’ or ‘teach’, and so, while realizing, alas, the mockery and hollowness of ‘mere words’, we must also appreciate more than ever the importance of this channel of communication. We discover that *logos* occurs nine times in Thessalonians, and observing that in I Thess. ii. 13 the three occurrences are to be considered as practically one, ‘the Word of God, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God’, we find another sevenfold distribution of terms.

***Logos* “Word” in I Thessalonians.**

- A | i. 5. Our gospel came not in word only.
- B | a | i. 6. The word with affliction.
- b | i. 8. The WORD OF THE LORD “from you”.
- C | ii. 5. Not flattering words.
- A | ii. 13. Not as the word of man.
- B | b | iv. 15. The WORD OF THE LORD “unto you”.
- a | iv. 18. The word and comfort.

This presentation speaks for itself. The reader will notice particularly the two references to “The Word of the Lord” and should he meet the unwarranted assertion that the fact that the passage dealing with the Coming of the Lord in chapter iv. is introduced by the formula “The Word of the Lord” and so ‘proves’ that I Thess. iv. presents a secret and hitherto unrevealed aspect of the Second Coming, he will know just how much truth such a statement contains. That which ‘proves’ too much ‘proves’ nothing.

The contrast in I Thess. i. 5 is between “Word only” on the one hand, and “power, Holy Ghost and much assurance” on the other. The contrast in I Thess. ii. 13 is between ‘the word of men’ and ‘the Word of God’ which effectually worketh in them that believe. “Power, Holy Ghost, and much assurance” and ‘effectual working’ are but two ways of referring to the same thing. The word translated ‘effectual working’ is *energeo*, ‘to work in’, and from which comes our English word energy. The A.V. translators on eight occasions, felt impelled to use the word ‘effectual’ in addition to ‘working’, indeed in one reference, namely II Cor. i. 6, the word ‘work’ is omitted and we read ‘which is effectual’ pure and simple.

There is some justification for the addition, for power can conceivably ‘work’ without that work being ‘effectual’. The word of men ‘works’, but whether it always works ‘effectually’ is another matter. Paul gives us a threefold evidence of the effectual character of the Word of God:

(1) Power. This is ‘the work of faith with power’ that is found in II Thess. i. 11. When the church of the Thessalonians was founded, the word preached was ‘with the

demonstration of the Spirit and of power' which the Apostle contrasts as here with "enticing words of man's wisdom" (I Cor. ii. 4). This association of 'power' with 'the Spirit' is twofold. It refers to that which was demonstrated or displayed' and so referred to accompanying miraculous gifts. It also referred to the fact that the 'Word of God' was "In the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (I Cor. ii. 13). Even so, when writing the second epistle to the Thessalonians, and speaking of the travesty of truth that will usher in the man of sin, this travesty is said to be 'after the working (*energy*) of Satan with all *power* and signs and lying wonders' (II Thess. ii. 9).

(2) In *pneuma hagion* (holy spirit). An examination of the usage of these two words would take more space than we can afford. The matter however resolves itself into the following features. When the article is used with both *pneuma* and *hagion* it is generally safe to conclude that the Holy Spirit, the Giver is intended. Where *pneuma hagion* stands alone without the article, it indicates the gift, never the Giver. These 'gifts' may be miraculous gifts, as detailed in I Cor. xii., or the new nature as opposed to the flesh (Rom. viii. 4, 9). In the Acts period when the epistles to the Thessalonians were written, the gift of the new nature 'spirit' was accompanied by supernatural gifts, miracles, tongues, etc., and they would receive this added confirmation. This gift of 'holy spirit' is mentioned again in verse 6:

"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, *with joy of holy spirit*" (I Thess. i. 6).

This distinguishing mark of the believer is mentioned once more in this epistle, this time with reference to the Giver:

"He therefore that despiseth not man, but God, *Who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit*" (I Thess. iv. 8).

The third item in this threefold evidence of the reality of the Thessalonian conversion is given as 'much assurance'.

(3) Much assurance. *Plerophoria*.

This word is made up of *pleres* 'full', and *phero* 'to carry'. Here are the various ways in which *plerophoria*, and *plerophoreo* are used.

Plerophoria.

"The full assurance of understanding" (Col. ii. 2).
"In much assurance" (I Thess. i. 5).
"The full assurance of hope" (Heb. vi. 11).
"In full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22).

Plerophoreo.

"Those things *which are most surely believed* among us" (Luke i. 1).
"*Being fully persuaded*" (Rom. iv. 21).
"Let every man *be fully persuaded*" (Rom. xiv. 5).
"*Make full proof* of thy ministry" (II Tim. iv. 5).
"The preaching *might be fully known*" (II Tim. iv. 17).

“To be carried along”, in the Greek sense of the word is very different from the English expression ‘to be carried away’. Here faith, hope and understanding play their part, and in these the Thessalonians found their assurance. Here then in I Thess. i. 5 and ii. 13, we have the antonyms of the Word, not word ‘only’ and not just as the ‘word of men’.

The next set of contrasts deals with the characters of Paul and his helpers, ‘what manner of men’ they were (I Thess. i. 5). These we must consider together in our next article.

**No.8. A Study in I Thessalonians.
A Fivefold Picture of “What manner of persons”
the Apostles and his helpers were.
pp. 36 - 40**

The antonyms of I Thessalonians fall into three groups: (1) The Gospel. (2) The Apostle. (3) The Coming of the Lord.

We have considered the contrasts that are given in I Thess. i. 5 and ii. 13 regarding the gospel, and we now turn our attention to the messengers, the Apostle Paul and his helpers. This sequence is in line with I Thess. i. 5, which starting with the gospel, ends with ‘what manner of men’ the preachers of that gospel were. There are five contrasted terms used by the Apostle to enforce what ‘manner of men’ they were, and we will endeavour to understand them as a whole in this article.

(1) *Not pleasing men but God* (I Thess. ii. 4).

The gospel is still in view:

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts” (I Thess. ii. 4).

The next occurrence of *aresko* ‘to please’ is enlightening and somewhat humbling:

“They have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men” (ii. 15).

Here, instead of the first statement ‘please God’ being contrasted with ‘pleasing men’ it is echoed by the parallel term ‘contrary to all men’.

It is easy to work by a rule of thumb, and by an uncompromising rigidity to produce the *effect* of consistency and loyalty. It requires abundant grace to sacrifice *apparent* consistency to the higher claims of principle. Had the Apostle been of a lower order, he would have feared to circumcise Timothy (Acts xvi.) after his uncompromising stand (Acts xv.; Gal. ii.) and he was, most likely, the subject of a good deal of criticism as a

consequence. It is easy for the religious flesh to apparently ‘do all to the glory of God’. It is certainly easy for the weakling in faith to ‘give none offence’ or to be ‘all things to all men’, but to so act that the glory of God is not compromised *while* we give none offence, or that we do not offend either Jew or Greek *while* we yield not for an hour for the glory of God, demands something more than the most religious of flesh can ever attain. We shall profit much if we can appreciate and exemplify the underlying principle of *both* I Thess. ii. 4 *and* I Thess. ii. 15. The theme ‘pleasing God’ is one that could well occupy our fullest attention for many a page, but we have four more contrasted themes to consider, and so we pass on to:

(2) *Not burdensome but gentle* (ii. 5-7).

The full passage reads as follows:

“For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children” (ii. 5-7).

When the Apostle claimed that he pleased God and not man, he added that this God he pleased ‘trieth our hearts’. Now when he repudiates ‘flattery’ he adds ‘as ye know’; and ‘covetousness’, ‘God is witness’. It is important that we observe the correct dividing line in this passage, otherwise, if we read straight on without pause, we can make it appear that ‘flattery’ and ‘covetousness’ were a legitimate part of an apostle’s rights, which would be both unscriptural and immoral. The passage is divided as follows:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| (a) Not flattery. You know. | \ | |
| Not covetousness. God is witness | } | What they were not. |
| Not glory of you or others. | / | |
| (b) When we might have burdensome | \ | What they might have been. |
| as apostles of Christ. | / | |
| (c) But were gentle among you | \ | What they were. |
| as a nurse. | / | |

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul had said:

“I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself” (II Cor. xi. 8, 9).

“Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, (to quote the opinion of some evil minded and little-souled person) being crafty, I caught you with guile” (II Cor. xii. 14-16).

This however was more than the Apostle could tolerate, so immediately after he had apparently resigned himself to misunderstanding and false implication, he burst forth:

“Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you?” (II Cor. xii. 17-18).

Paul had made it clear elsewhere, that as an apostle he had rights, but these he had waived for Christ’s sake. In contrast with this legitimate burdensomeness he had taken their burden upon himself. He had been like a nursing mother, cherishing her own children. Instead of being burdensome, he reminded the Thessalonians saying:

“For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God” (I Thess. ii. 9).

Again we must resist the temptation to explore more fully this question of the Apostle’s legitimate burden, and of the contrasted gentleness that he manifested, and pass on to:

(3) *In presence not in heart* (ii. 17).

“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire” (ii. 17).

It could never be said of the Apostle Paul, that with him to be ‘out of sight’ was to be ‘out of mind’. His epistles abound with an intense personal remembrance and desire concerning all those whose salvation and growth, ministry and endurance, were in any measure a part of his care, extending even to agonizing over those who had not seen his face in the flesh (Col. ii. 1).

To appreciate the intensity of the Apostle’s antonym ‘in presence, not in heart’ we should acquaint ourselves with the many passages found in the epistles of affectionate prayerful remembrance, keen interest and deep longing over all with whom his ministry had brought him in contact. This however is quite outside the scope of the present series.

(4) *Paul and Satan* (ii. 18).

This antonym may appear at first sight somewhat far-fetched, but in one way and another, Satan is mentioned in Paul’s fourteen epistles no less than nine times. He protested that his absence from the Thessalonians was not because of any desire of his own.

“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us” (ii. 18).

While the Apostle makes no reference to Satan in the epistle to the Romans, the ‘hindrance’ he speaks of probably came from the same source.

“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, but was let hitherto” (Rom. i. 13).

“For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you” (Rom. xv. 22).

If Paul, with all the resources of grace at his disposal could be ‘much’ hindered, and prevented ‘once and again’ from fulfilling his heart’s desires in these matters, we should take heart when we too, in our smaller degree, are at times similarly baffled.

(5) *Comfort in Affliction* (iii. 7).

“Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all your affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord” (iii. 7, 8).

It would be no great or strange matter if any one should be comforted in their affliction by the kindness, the sympathy, the succour of others, but the Apostle’s comfort was quite disinterested. It was because of their faith, and he reveals the motive behind his intense desire to see the faces of these Thessalonian saints (I Thess. ii. 17) and why Satan so purposely hindered (I Thess. ii. 18, see also Rom. i. 12 ‘mutual faith’).

Here then is a fivefold picture, intensified by contrasts, setting before us in the intense language of heart and feeling what manner of persons the Apostle and his fellow labourers were, to whose fruitful and unstinted service the early church together with ourselves are so overwhelmingly in debt.

**No.9. A Study in I Thessalonians.
Contrasts that minister Comfort.
pp. 54 - 58**

The three groups of antonyms that are before us in I Thessalonians deal with three related themes:

- (1) The character of the Word spoken.
- (2) The character of the speakers.
- (3) The Message itself.

We remember that the epistle is written to believers, and therefore, we do not expect to read of the way of salvation so much as to learn something of things which accompany salvation. Consequently the Apostle stresses not so much ‘faith’ but ‘the work of faith’, not so much ‘hope’ but the ‘patience of hope’, and it is hope and its patience, together with other essential characteristics that meet us in the third and last series of contrasts.

(1) *The dead and the living* (iv. 16, 17).

The return of the Lord, during the early ministry of the Acts of the Apostles was not conceived as a far off event that would take place at long last, but a fulfillment of the pledge:

“A little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father” (John xvi. 16).

The scoffers found in Peter’s testimony concerning the imminence of the Lord’s return, a butt for their scorn, saying:

“Where is the promise of His coming?” (II Pet. iii. 4).

The Thessalonian Church had been commended by the Apostle for their ‘patience of hope’. Their conversion, service and hope had been summed up in the first chapter as:

“Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven” (I Thess. i. 9, 10).

The problem that confronted these believers, and concerning which the Apostle wrote in the fourth chapter was not so much the fact of the Lord’s return, but what would be the fate of those who fell asleep in death before that hope was realized.

The section does not open with the words:

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning the nature of the Second Coming, whether it will be before or after the tribulation, or whether it will be secret or open.”

The concern of the Thessalonians is indicated by what Paul actually said:

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, *concerning them which are asleep*” (I Thess. iv. 13).

And even so, if we stop here, we shall still be ‘ignorant’ of the one thing Paul sought to make known. The Thessalonians were evidently NOT in need of teaching concerning the state of the dead. In this chapter Paul refers to such, as those that are ‘asleep’, as those that ‘sleep in Jesus’ and ‘the dead in Christ’ (I Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15, 16). These erstwhile idolators were apparently better instructed than many a child of God today. No, it was neither the character of the Lord’s return nor the Scriptural doctrine of death that was uppermost in the mind of the Church and the Apostle, it was something more specific and personal:

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, *that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope*” (I Thess. iv. 13).

“That ye sorrow not”, opens the section. “Comfort one another with these words” closes it. Yet I Thess. iv. is usually taken as the key passage which teaches a secret rapture and a new phase of the Second Coming; an idea quite foreign to the Apostle’s mind or the Thessalonian necessity.

So the teaching proceed:

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that *we which are alive and remain* shall not prevent them which are asleep the dead in Christ shall rise first: *then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (I Thess. iv. 15-18).

It will be helpful if we pass over the intervening contrasts, (2), (3), and (4) and deal with the fifth, for by so doing we shall follow the line of argument used by the Apostle and demonstrate the essential difference that is made between those that ‘sleep in Jesus’ (I Thess. iv. 14), and ‘those that sleep in the night’ (I Thess. v. 7).

(5) *Watchful or Drowsy* (v. 10).

The reader will perceive that we have altered the wording from that of the A.V. We must now prove the truthfulness of this correction. There are two distinct words used in I Thessalonians for 'sleep'. In I Thess. iv. 13, 14 and 15 the word 'sleep' is *koimaomai*. This word means 'to fall asleep' particularly in death. Our English word cemetery is from the Greek *koimeterion* 'a dormitory'. The heathen poets used 'sleep' as a symbol of death, but they generally added the words 'perpetual', 'eternal' or the like, as they had 'no hope'. Thus:

"But we, or great or wise, or brave,
Once dead, and silent in the grave
Senseless remain; one rest we keep
One long, eternal, unawaken'd sleep" (Moschus Idyll).

Homer says of a slain hero:

"He slept a *brazen sleep*",

and Virgil speaks of 'an *iron sleep*' and eyes closing in '*everlasting night*'. This word already fixed in its meaning, was used in the N.T., in the Gospels, Acts and Epistles, the only, but glorious, difference being that, while the idea of 'sleep' is retained unaltered, the blessed hope of resurrection introduces the new conception of an awaking from that sleep.

When we turn to I Thess. v. another word is used for 'sleep', *katheudo*, a word never used for those who 'sleep in Jesus'. It differs from *koimaomai* in that this word means 'to fall asleep', whereas *katheudo* means 'to compose oneself to sleep', and so means 'to drowse' or 'be drowsy'. *Katheudo* is used in I Thess. v. 6, 7, 10. The alternative to *koimaomai*, the sleep of death, is 'to awake' (John xi. 11), but the alternative to *katheudo* is not so much 'to awake' but 'to be wide-awake', 'to watch', or if the play on words will help, the alternative to "drowse" is to "rouse". *Gregoreo*, which is used in I Thess. v. 6, 10 comes in the exhortation 'Watch therefore', that follows the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. These two sections I Thess. iv. 13-18 & I Thess. v. 1-11, are thrown into a correspondence thus:

- A | iv. 13. Concerning those that have fallen asleep.
- B | iv. 14-16. The sleeping saint.
The living saint.
- C | iv. 17. "Together with" *hama sun*.
- D | iv. 18. Comfort one another.
- A | v. 1-4. Concerning the times and seasons.
- B | v. 5-10. The sleeping saint.
The watchful saint.
- C | v. 10. "Together with" *hama sun*.
- D | v. 11. Comfort one another.

The Apostle makes it clear that the child of God differs from the children of night, and that 'sleepiness' belongs to the unsaved and 'watchfulness' pertains to the redeemed and, in other places and in other contexts, he has spoken of 'the terror' of the Lord, the

possibility of losing all and of being saved 'so as by fire'. While this remains true, it was not the intention of the Apostle to introduce the difference between 'hope' and 'prize' here. He wanted to administer 'comfort' and so, while realizing that to be 'sleepy' is a grievous fault for a believer, he passes on to the conclusion, *that even so*:

"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we are watchful or drowsy, we should live together with Him (although drowsy ones were not likely to 'reign' together with Him, which however is another matter altogether). Wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another (here the addition of the word 'edify' suggests that the supplementary 'warning and teaching' that drowsiness and watchfulness demand, is not quite lost sight of) even as also ye do" (I Thess. v. 9-11).

The intervening contrasts that have been passed over in this article must be considered together in our next one. Meanwhile let us be grateful for the glorious care of our God, in thus ministering to the comfort of His children, and of using the opportunity for giving certain great principles which apply to the dispensation of the Mystery as well as that which obtained during the period of the Acts.

**No.10. A Study in I Thessalonians.
Aspects of the Day of the Lord.
pp. 73 - 79**

In our last paper we dealt with the first and last of the five contrasts that relate to the Second Coming, these two sets having specific bearing upon 'comfort', enabling us to see the difference between that involuntary fall on sleep, which is death, and drowsiness, for which a believer will be held responsible. The three remaining antonyms deal with:

- (2) The false peace brought in under the reign of the Beast.
- (3) The essential difference between Darkness and Light.
- (4) The blessed fact that the redeemed have not been chosen to Wrath, but unto Salvation.

Peace and Safety v. sudden destruction (v. 3).

Darkness v. Light (v. 4, 5).

Wrath v. Salvation (v. 9).

The first pair indicates the condition that obtains at the time of the end. War and rumours of war will at length give place to "Peace and Safety". In themselves 'peace and safety' are commendable; it is the motive that matters however. "Peace" that ignores the claim of God or the Person and work of Christ, and 'safety' that is the product of anything other than the redemptive work of the Son of God, is the masterstroke of Satan, and by these watchwords a sin-stained war-weary world will be induced to put their trust in the shadow of a bramble (Judges ix. 15).

“When they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them”
(I Thess. v. 3).

The word translated ‘safety’ here, is *asphaleia*, which is derived from *sphallo*, to trip up, make to fall, and is used in classical Greek of the reeling and staggering of a drunken man. This ‘safety’ then is an illusion, for those who raise this cry are actually children of the night, and are drunken in the night. They only can really use the rallying call ‘peace and safety’ who wear the helmet, the hope of salvation. The times in which we live are compelling those in authority to seek some solution to save the world from chaos and ruin, and the Man of Sin will be the solution offered by the Devil and accepted by his dupes. “When”, “then”. How shortlived the peace! How transient the ‘safety’, for when they thus speak, ‘sudden destruction’ ‘stands over’ them. *Ephistemi* is translated ‘come upon’ (Luke xxi. 34), ‘be instant’ (II Tim. iv. 2), ‘at hand’ (II Tim. iv. 6), ‘it impends’. The word translated ‘sudden’ is *aiphnidios*, and is derived from *aiphnes* ‘unexpected’. This in its turn is derived from *a* negative and *phaino* to appear, and so unawares, unforeseen, quicker than sight. *Aphno* the adverb is found in Acts ii. 2; xvi. 26 and xviii. 6. The Apostle had said to the Thessalonians:

“Ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (I Thess. v. 1, 2).

This knowledge may have been the result of Paul’s own personal instruction, just as their knowledge of other aspects of the Day of the Lord (II Thess. ii. 5). On the other hand, it is possible, that Luke had written and circulated his gospel by this time, and it may be to that gospel that Paul here makes reference. They knew, said Paul ‘perfectly’, a word used by Luke in chapter i. 3. From Luke xii. 35-39 they would have gathered that the Coming of the Lord would be like a thief, and that ‘loins girded’, a ‘light burning’, were but a figurative way of expressing the attitude of watchfulness enjoined in I Thess. v. Again if they had read Luke’s gospel they would have already come across the word translated ‘sudden’ in I Thess. v. 3, for the only other occurrence of *aiphnidios* in the N.T. is in Luke xxi. 34, where we read:

“Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and *drunkenness*, and cares of this life, and so that day *come upon* you *unawares*.”

Here we have ‘*drunkenness*’ and the verb ‘*to come upon*’ as in I Thess. v. 1-3, and in the word ‘unawares’ the only other occurrence of *aiphnidios*. The evil character of the cry ‘peace and safety’ which ends in ‘sudden destruction’ of I Thess. v. 3 is revealed in Luke xxi. 35:

“For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.”
“They shall not escape”, said the Apostle (I Thess. v. 3).
“Watch ye therefore, and *pray always*, that ye may be accounted worthy to *escape* all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke xxi. 36).

The exhortation to ‘watch’ in Luke xxi. is synonymous with the words ‘watch—be sober’ and ‘wake’ of I Thess. v. 6 and 10, while the exhortation “pray always” (Luke xxi. 36), finds its complete echo in ‘Pray without ceasing’ (I Thess. v. 17). Moreover, if the Thessalonians were acquainted with Luke’s gospel they would not fail to

apprehend the alternative ‘worthy to escape’ and ‘they shall not escape’ of the two passages, and later when they received the second epistle, the context of II Thess. i. 5, 11 with all its prayer that ‘God would count you worthy’, and the exhortation ‘to watch’ so that they may ‘be counted worthy’ (Luke xxi. 36) would not escape them. The word translated ‘to count worthy’ in II Thess. i. 5 and Luke xxi. 36 is *kataxiomai*, and this word does not occur elsewhere except in Luke’s writings (Luke xx. 35 and Acts v. 41). While it makes no difference to us today, whether the Thessalonians were in possession of Luke’s gospel, or whether at this time they depended only upon what Paul had told them, it is evident that Paul’s influence on both of Luke’s book is unmistakable.

There is no ground for fear or terror in the mere ‘suddenness’ of an event, the suddenness is only inimical if we are unready. Nothing can be more ‘sudden’ than the ‘twinkling of an eye’, yet the Apostle declares that the change which must take place in every believer before he enters glory will be as sudden as that, but there is no element of fear in such a movement.

The Day of the Lord will come suddenly upon a world that is unready, and to such this suddenness will be as a thief in the night, but for those who know the times and the seasons, and who are ordering their conduct accordingly, this suddenness will be but the exchange of ‘trouble’ for glorious ‘rest’ (II Thess. i. 6, 7). Consequently we find in IThess.v. that the Apostle relates the thief-like aspect of the coming of the Day of the Lord with the drunken unreadiness of those who are of the ‘darkness’. It will come as a thief in the *night* only to those who are of the *night*, but it will be the dawn of hope and joy to those who wait for their Lord as children of the *day*.

Darkness and Light.

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness” (I Thess. v. 4, 5).

Whether the Day of the Lord shall come upon men as a thief in the night, or whether its coming shall be like the rising of the morning sun, depends, not so much upon the Day of the Lord itself, but upon the character of those upon whom it dawns.

“Ye brethren, are *not in darkness*, that that day should overtake you *as a thief*.”

In Matt. xxiv. 43, 44 the question as to whether that day shall ‘overtake as a thief’, is decided by ‘readiness’.

“But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

The Apostle associated darkness and being overtaken as a thief with drunkenness, so Matt. xxiv.

“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of” (Matt. xxiv. 48-50).

When Peter referred to the coming of the Day of the Lord as a thief (II Pet. iii. 10) he had the ‘scoffers’ in view (3, 4), and in contrast with such he says:

“What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” (II Pet. iii. 11).

As Peter refers to the epistles of Paul (II Pet. iii. 15, 16), it is possible that he makes a direct allusion to I Thess. v. 2 when he speaks of the Day of the Lord coming as a thief, and the ‘swift destruction’ of II Pet. ii. 1 is parallel with the ‘sudden destruction’ of I Thess. v. 3. The Day of the Lord is characterized by “destruction” and “wrath” (Isa. xiii. 6, 9), yet the believer need not fear, even though, like the Thessalonian saints, his calling may not exempt him from the tribulation of the last days:

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. v. 9).

Salvation is a covering term, and includes many aspects of the Redeemer’s work. There is the glorious exemption from condemnation which Rom. viii. 1 brings before us, this aspect of truth, however, is not before us in I Thess. v.

“Wrath and Salvation” (I Thess. v. 9).

“Wrath” is a characteristic of the Day of the Lord (Rev. vi. 16, 17; xi. 18; xiv. 10 [indignation]; xvi. 19 and xix. 15). When the Thessalonian church came into being ‘that day’ was imminent, and the Apostle in his summary of their salvation links together their conversion with the Second Coming of Christ, saying:

“And to wait for His Son from heaven, the One delivering us from the wrath which is about to be” (I Thess. i. 10).

The wrath is not the ‘condemnation’ with which Rom. viii. 1 deals, but a ‘wrath’ from which the Thessalonians confidently expected to be delivered at the Lord’s return to the earth. Wrath is used in I Thess. ii. 16 of the judgment that fell upon the Jew and his stubborn resistance of the gospel. In like manner ‘salvation’ is used in both epistles to the Thessalonians with reference to the future; their salvation from sin is not in view, they being already ‘saved’ in that blessed sense. Consequently in I Thess. v. 8 Paul speaks of ‘the hope of salvation’ associating it with the Coming of the Lord and deliverance when the Day of the Lord comes as a day of wrath upon the world. In II Thessalonians salvation occurs but once and in a similar context. Chapter ii. commences with a reference to the Day of the Lord, and speaks of the dreadful days of the Man of Sin, and the fearful judgment that is to fall upon those ‘who believe not the truth’. This however leads to the great contrastive ‘salvation’ of the believer:

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth” (II Thess. ii. 13).

Thus the three contrasts we have considered, together with the pair that occupied us in our last article, deal with the Second Coming of the Lord and the characteristics of that advent. They may impress their message the more if in conclusion we show their relationship as follows:

- A | I Thess. iv. 14-17. The dead (asleep) and the living. “Comfort.”
- B | I Thess. v. 3. Peace and Safety in contrast with Destruction.
- C | I Thess. v. 4, 5. Darkness and Light.
- B | I Thess. v. 9. Wrath (“destruction” above) in contrast with Salvation (“Peace and Safety” above).
- A | I Thess. v. 10. Sleepy or Watchful. “Comfort.”

No.11. Examples in I Corinthians.
Foolishness v. Wisdom.
Weakness v. Strength.
pp. 92 - 95

There are sixteen chapters in this epistle, and there are also sixteen easily discerned antonyms, not necessarily one in each chapter, but nevertheless fairly evenly distributed throughout the teaching and discussion of the varied subjects. The introduction occupies chapter i. 1-9 which does not make any demands upon us here. The first great section, I Cor. i. 10 - iv. 16 contains seven clear antonyms, which we must now examine:

- (1) Foolishness v. Wisdom (i. 25).
- (2) Weakness v. Strength (i. 25).
- (3) Man’s words v. Words of the Holy Ghost (ii. 13).
- (4) Natural v. Spiritual (ii. 14, 15).
- (5) Milk v. Meat (iii. 2).
- (6) Foundation v. Superstructure (iii. 10).
- (7) Man’s judgment v. the Lord’s judgment (iv. 3-5).

Upon examination, it will be found that these seven antonyms arise out of a common theme, the divisions that had occurred at Corinth in which the names of Paul, Apollos and Cephas had been misused and turned into unwilling leaders of party strife.

With this, the section opens:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ no divisions there are contentions I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (I Cor. i. 10-12).

With this, the section closes:

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (I Cor. iv. 6).

While the actual names of the apostles do not occur in chapter ii., the purpose before the apostles expressed in verse 5: “that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” is very evident. Paul is still turning their minds away from Paul, Apollos and Cephas as such. The subject is resumed in chapter iii., for after charging them with being babes and unspiritual and with being carnal, he advances as proof of their party spirit:

“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?”
(iii. 4).

Out of this arises the theme of the foundation and the superstructure as a consideration of I Cor. iii. 5-9 will show. This party spirit is again in mind when the Apostle contrasts man’s judgment with the judgment of the Lord (I Cor. iv. 1-6).

In order to show the evil of their attitude, the Apostle startles the Corinthians by daring to speak of God’s “foolishness”, and by decrying human wisdom. The Corinthians, being Greeks, sought after ‘wisdom’ (I Cor. i. 22), and to the Greek the preaching of the cross was ‘foolishness’ (I Cor. i. 23). Nevertheless, “unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (I Cor. i. 24), even as the preaching of the cross is to them that perish ‘foolishness’, but unto us which are ‘saved’ it is the power of God (I Cor. i. 18). No other epistle or set of epistles can compare with those to the Corinthians in the use of the words ‘wisdom’ and ‘wise’. *Sophia* ‘wisdom’ is used in I and II Corinthians eighteen times, and in all the remaining epistle of Paul but ten times. *Sophos* is found in I Corinthians eleven times, and in the rest of Paul’s epistles but twice! Paul, writing to the Corinthians, was touching upon a subject as dear to their national pride as was the Law and its observance to the Jew. It is unfortunate that the two expressions “Jew and Greek” and “Jew and Gentile” should be confused or treated as being synonymous. Every Greek was certainly a Gentile, but every Gentile was not a Greek, and the Greek drew a most decided line between himself and the ‘barbarian’. We must therefore remember that just as the Jew stood for signs, for law, for ceremonial, so the Greek stood for wisdom and for physical beauty and fitness. In both cases the end was an occasion for ‘boasting’ (*kauchomai*, *kauchema*, *kauchesis*). “Where is boasting?” asked Paul at the close of Rom. iii. “That no flesh should glory in His presence” is the conclusion of I Cor. i. 29. Circumcision had degenerated into an occasion to boast in the flesh (Gal. vi. 13) whereas the true circumcision were those who ‘boasted’ in Christ Jesus and had no confidence in the flesh (Phil. iii. 3). And so, by a bold figure, the Apostle attacked the centre of the Corinthians’ pride, namely “Wisdom”:

“Not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect”
(I Cor. i. 17).

“Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?” (I Cor. i. 20).

“In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God” (I Cor. i. 21).

If the ‘wisdom of this world’ is of no avail in the things of God, if the very wisdom of this world has become foolish and, conversely, if the preaching of the cross is to them that perish ‘foolishness’ (I Cor. i. 18, 21), then God will accept the estimate of the world and, by the very ‘foolishness’ of preaching, He will save them that believe. It is here that Paul introduced his double antonym, saying:

“Because the *foolishness* of God is wiser than men; and the *weakness* of God is stronger than men” (I Cor. i. 25).

The Corinthians had to learn, as we must learn too:

“But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Cor. i. 30, 31).

The same interplay of figure brings chapter iii. to the same conclusion:

“If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (I Cor. iii. 18-23).

The word ‘foolish’ or ‘foolishness’, *moros*, *moria*, *moraino*, means something ‘insipid’ and is translated of salt that ‘lost its savour’ (Matt. v. 13). The word ‘weakness’ is *asthenes*, which like ‘foolishness’ was a reproach in the eyes of the Greek. I was with you in ‘weakness’ said the Apostle (I Cor. ii. 3); ‘his bodily presence is weak’ commented the Corinthians, ‘and his speech contemptible’ (II Cor. x. 10). Yet said the Apostle, I learned that His strength is ‘made perfect in weakness’ (II Cor. xii. 9), and of the Saviour Himself he wrote:

“He was crucified through weakness” (II Cor. xiii. 4).

All this was but to bring pride in human attainment down to the ground that all boasting should be in the Lord. If the very ‘weakness’ of God is ‘stronger’ (*ischuros*) than man, what shall we say of the ‘mighty’ (*ischus*) power that triumphs in resurrection? The gospel is not foolishness, the cross is not folly, God is not weak. The intensity of the Apostle’s language but emphasizes the utter folly of human wisdom, and the innate weakness of all human strength, to the end that we should not trust in ourselves but in God that quickeneth the dead. We shall catch the strains of this interplay of foolishness and weakness in the remaining portion of I Corinthians and in II Corinthians as well. Whether we be Jews, Greeks or Barbarians, whatever trust we may have put in the flesh, must all be relinquished in the presence of the cross of Christ.

“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. vi 14),

is the conclusion of the Apostle, not only when writing to the Galatians but when summing up the attitude of himself and all of like precious faith.

No.12. Examples in I Corinthians.
Man's words v. the words of the Holy Ghost (ii. 13).
pp. 116 - 120

We have looked at the first pair of antonyms used in I Cor. i., the 'foolishness' and the 'weakness' of God, as compared and contrasted with the 'wisdom' and 'strength' of man. We now consider a group that arises naturally out of the first pair and which carries the teaching a stage further along the path which the Apostle pursues in this opening section of I Corinthians, a path that leads ultimately to the judgment seat of Christ, and the trial of every man's work (I Cor. iii. 14).

The group of antonyms now before us consists of three contrasted subjects:

- (3) Man's words v. Words of the Holy Ghost (ii. 13).
- (4) Natural v. Spiritual (ii. 14, 15).
- (5) Milk v. Meat (iii. 2).

These three antonyms are used to illustrate and enforce the lesson of the opening chapter, with particular reference to 'the Word'. This subject is by no means in the background of chapter i., but in our comment we did not refer to it, as the subject is developed in the chapter before us. Turning back therefore to I Cor. i., we observe that the Apostle says:

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to *preach* the gospel: not with wisdom of words (*logos*) For the preaching (*logos*) of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Cor. i. 17-18).

"It pleased God by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe We *preach* Christ crucified unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. i. 21, 23).

It is very evident from these references that the contrast between "man's words" and the "word of the Holy Ghost" is but an expansion of this 'word' and 'preaching' which those that perish counted 'foolishness'. It becomes more evident that those who perish will be the 'natural' men, and those who are saved the 'spiritual' of I Cor. ii. 14, 15. The third of these antonyms, namely "milk v. meat", reveals that not only must we divide the 'saved' and the 'lost' into two groups, 'spiritual' and 'natural', but that something parallel is discoverable between two groups of the saved themselves, for the 'babes' who can only take 'milk' are considered as 'carnal' not 'spiritual' (I Cor. iii. 1) and they 'walk as men' (I Cor. iii. 3). In one sense the whole controversy of I Cor. i.-iv. turns on the fatal attraction that the things of 'man' had over the Corinthians.

"The foolishness of God is wiser than *men*; and the weakness of God is stronger than *men*" (I Cor. i. 25).

"Not with enticing words of *man's* wisdom" (ii. 4).

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of *men*, but in the power of God" (ii. 5).

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear hear, neither have entered into the heart of *man*, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit” (ii. 9-10).

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which *man’s* wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (ii. 13).

“The natural *man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (ii. 14).

“Are ye not carnal, and walk as *men*?” (iii. 3).

“Therefore let no man glory in *men*” (iii. 21).

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of *man’s* judgment” (iv. 3).

Here we have man, his wisdom, his words, his walk and his judgment in direct contrast with God, and it is this antipathy which forms the core of I Cor. i.-iv., and around which the whole doctrine and exhortation revolve. The first of these antonyms which we are to consider is that of I Cor. ii. 13, “Man’s words *v.* The words of the Holy Ghost”. The detailed structure of I Cor. ii. must await exposition of the passage when the whole epistle comes before us in due course. Its main subdivisions however and the place in the structure of verse 13 can be seen by the following skeleton structure:

I Corinthians ii.

A1 | 1-5. Speech and Wisdom.

Not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.

A2 | 6-12. Speech and Wisdom.

Not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world
that come to naught.

A3 | 7-16. Speech and Wisdom.

Not in the words that man’s wisdom teacheth.

Man’s words are evidently taught by man’s wisdom (I Cor. ii. 13) and if human wisdom is utterly unable to comprehend the Mystery and the testimony of God, then of necessity to adopt human argument and to use human phraseology will but increase the darkness. Here then comes the necessity for inspired Scripture and for words ‘which the Holy Ghost teacheth’, words that are definitely selected by heavenly wisdom as the fit vehicle for divine truth.

In the course of conversation, of preaching, or of exposition we are obliged at times to expand as we expound, to use phraseology that is our poor attempt to illuminate the sacred text. We have warrant for this in the example of the Apostle, who we find ‘reasoning’, ‘opening’ and ‘alleging’ as he dealt with the testimony of Scripture. In the course of our witness, we have been compelled to adopt or invent certain phrases, such as ‘Dispensational Truth’ which we use to indicate that peculiar manner of dealing with men at any particular period as distinct from ‘Doctrinal Truth’ such as ‘sin’, ‘death’, or ‘redemption’ which underlies the whole fabric of revelation. In the same way we have adopted the phrase ‘earthly Kingdom Truth’ in order to enforce the necessary distinction between the kingdom associated with Israel and the sphere and calling of the church which is the Body of Christ. Yet these phrases, convenient as they are, must not be used

as a substitute for the language of inspiration, for the church itself is a part of the kingdom in its wider aspect, and all truth is necessarily dispensational truth, even to the matter of 'the simple gospel'. Consequently, we must never incorporate into our 'creed' or into the foundation of our faith, human attempts to comprehend that which is not fully explained in the Book, all such attempts will lead us into the dark and must be avoided. The reader of *The Berean Expositor* will be aware that certain phrases found in the creeds of the church are never used in these pages, not because such phrases are necessarily wrong, but they may be, or they may be addition, subtraction or substitution, lead away from the faith, and consequently are avoided. How are we to understand the expression:

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual?"

The R.V. retains the A.V. reading, but places in the margin "Or, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men", which shows that, while there is much to be said for a revision of the A.V., much also can be said in its favour. Rotherham translates the passage:

"By spiritual words, spiritual things explaining."

Weymouth renders the passage:

"Adapting, as we do, spiritual words to spiritual truths",

with a footnote 'truths' or 'men'. Moffatt reads:

"We interpret what is spiritual in spiritual language."

The possibility that the word *pneumatikos* may mean 'spiritual persons' rather than 'spiritual things' is because the masculine and the neuter plural dative both end in *ois*, consequently an appeal to grammar will not lead to a decision. The context must decide. Then the meaning of *sugkrino* must be ascertained, and here again the context influences the shade of meaning which must be attached to any particular word, and consequently an examination of its usage is demanded before we come to a conclusion. So far as *sugkrino* is concerned, there are only three occurrences of the verb in the entire N.T. and these are all found in Paul's epistles to the Corinthians. It is a word with which the Greeks would be familiar, occurring as it does in several philosophical writings, and generally with the meaning of 'combine' or 'compare'. Let us therefore allow Paul to be his own interpreter.

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or *compare* ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and *comparing* themselves among themselves, are not wise" (II Cor. x. 12).

No other word than 'compare' is possible here, and there is completely unanimity among the translators cited above. The usage of the word in the LXX of the O.T. is limited, either to the interpretation of a dream or the correspondence of practice with the rites and ceremonies of the law. The 'interpretation' of a dream is but the 'comparison' of the imagery of the vision with the facts which this imagery is intended to represent. We therefore accept the A.V. and the R.V. text and read 'compare', and not 'explain' as some have suggested. If we adopt the word 'compare', then we cannot readily adopt the

alternative ‘spiritual men’, for there is no sense in saying: “comparing spiritual things with spiritual men”. We can only say, “explaining spiritual things to spiritual men”.

The two subjects of the sentence are (1) *the things revealed* and (2) *the words used in speaking them*, and to these the two adjectives naturally refer. Alford’s rather cumbrous rendering has the merit of adhering closely to the original, and his comment is justified:

“ ‘Putting together spirituals with spirituals’ i.e. attaching spiritual *words* to spiritual *things*, which we should not do, if we used words of worldly wisdom to expound spiritual things” (*Alford in loco*).

Perhaps the translation of Bishop Shuttlew brings the Apostle’s thought nearest to us, when he translates ‘expounding spiritual things in spiritual language’.

We must leave the other two antonyms of this group for a consideration in another article, as the space available does not permit a fuller examination of these vital themes.

No.13. Examples in I Corinthians.
Natural v. Spiritual (ii. 14, 15).
Milk v. Meat (iii. 2).
pp. 127 - 130

The fact that ‘spiritual things’ need ‘spiritual words’ for their conveyance demands a ‘spiritual hearer’, otherwise the language and the theme must appear ‘foolishness’. Man is not ‘spiritual’ by birth, he is ‘natural’ or, as the word really is, ‘soulical’, although such a word has not been endorsed as good English:

“But the natural men receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. ii. 14).

The word “natural” is the translation of *psuchikos*, which is derived from *psuche* “the soul”, a word which is a true synonym for the Hebrew *nephesh*, which it translates, as for example in Acts ii. 27 with Psa. xvi. 10 and particularly I Cor. xv. 45 with Gen. ii. 7. Paul uses the word in its specific sense when writing to the Corinthians in the first epistle, possibly because of the need he felt they had of realizing the close association of the ‘soul’, the ‘natural’ man and ‘Adam’. Let us quote the only reference to *psuche* in Corinthians in its context. It will be found that if we quote the context of I Cor. xv. 45, we shall include all the other occurrences of *psuchikos* that are found in Corinthians, and indeed that are found in any of Paul’s epistles, and it will be seen that the ‘natural’ man is the man who is like Adam at his creation, and differing widely from that man who, being in Christ, is a new creation (II Cor. v. 17).

Speaking of the contrasts that are found between the present body of the believer and the resurrection body, the Apostle uses a series of opposing terms:

The term 'full age' is the translation of the Greek *teleios* which word is found in ICor.ii.6, where the translation is 'perfect'. This usage of the word 'perfect' establishes a further link between I Corinthians & Hebrews. It is a misunderstanding of ICor.ii.2 that derives from the Apostle's determination to know nothing 'save Jesus Christ and Him crucified', a standard for all evangelical preaching. In the first place Paul was not preaching the gospel to the unsaved, he was addressing saints. He was not laying down a rule for the preacher nor for himself, for we have only to read on to verse 6 and we shall find that he did know much more among those that were perfect or of full age. If we quote we should quote accurately and in full, and include Paul's reference to a visit he had paid to Corinth and that it was only because of their carnal divisions and unspirituality he said:

"I determined not to know anything AMONG YOU, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

If we continue our reading until we come to chapter xv. we shall find that without the resurrection the death of Christ avails us nothing. Paul did, therefore, have more to preach and teach.

Paul's attitude was regulated by the inability of the Corinthians 'to bear' further truth. We shall find when we come to chapter iv. that he knew that the Corinthians had been disappointed. They had expected 'mysteries' but as a steward his first duty was faithfulness and, as they were still 'babes', he had fed them with 'milk'. Two more antonyms await us before this great section is covered, but these we leave for another article.

No.14. Examples in I Corinthians.
Foundation v. Building (iii. 10 - 15).
Man's judgment v. The Lord's judgment (iv. 1 - 6).
pp. 146 - 151

In our last study, we observed the way in which the Apostle's thought traveled, noticing first the difference between words taught by man's wisdom, and the words taught by the Holy Ghost; and then the difference between the natural man, to whom the words of the Holy Ghost seem foolishness, and the spiritual man who is able to discern and appreciate the words of heavenly wisdom. The Apostle proceeded to apply this lesson to the Corinthians, who, though believers and saved, were acting not as spiritual, but as carnal, and so had to be fed with milk as babes, and not with meat as perfect or adults.

Two further antonyms complete our examination of the opening section of I Corinthians:

- (6) Foundation v. Superstructure (iii. 10-15).
- (7) Man's judgment v. the Lord's judgment (iv. 1-6).

There is a single thread running through this section which unites the different phases of Paul's argument, and which saves the reader when he sees it from importing extraneous matter into the Apostle's theme; it is the reference to the divisions which had developed in Corinth around the names of Paul, Apollos and Cephas. These references are I Cor. i. 12; iii. 4, 5, 6, 22; and iv. 6. Out of the first of these references, the argument of I Cor. i. 13-31 develops, which is further expanded in chapter ii. In chapter iii. the Apostle reverts to the abuse of the names of the apostles and teachers, saying:

“For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor. iii. 4, 5).

“From this statement a chain of argument links the contrasting babes and full grown with the antonym of the foundation and the building. The argument is that Paul and Apollos are but ministers, and all such ministry is ‘as the Lord gave to every man’. Consequently, to magnify the minister is to forget the Lord Whose grace alone makes all and any ministry profitable. In order to enforce this thought, the Apostle speaks of his own ministry and that of Apollos in terms of husbandry:

- (2) I have planted.
- (3) Apollos watered.
- (4) But God gave the increase (or growth).

The Apostle said, in effect, see how foolish this party spirit really is. Transfer your argument to the field worker. Consider, of what use is the planter without his planting receiving subsequent care? Or, of what use is watering if there has been no preceding planting? Don't you see, the work of both is inter-dependent? Above and beyond this however is a more serious omission. Suppose one plants most carefully, and another waters most assiduously, of what avail will all this labour be apart from God, Who giveth the increase? Behind all the labour of man in the field, stands the miracle of life and growth:

“So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase” (I Cor. iii. 7).

On the other hand, continued the Apostle, when once you have these things in their true perspective, then you can return to the individual minister, for God is not unjust or unmindful, for:

“He that planteth and he that watereth are one” (I Cor. iii. 8).

Even so, there is no confusion of service, recognition, or reward in the eyes of the Lord:

“ and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour” (iii. 8).

It is a blessed truth that all true ministry is co-operation with God Who alone gives the growth. This is expressed in the A.V. of I Cor. iii. 9:

“For we are labourers together with God.”

The workers, and the work are all ‘of God’, consequently, how foolish must be that partisan spirit that boasts in man! The transition from planting and watering to building, leads on to the antonym of the foundation and the building. The foundation once laid is Christ. This the Apostle as a wise master builder had laid once and for all. There could be no thought of any other. All subsequent building was the erection of the servants of God, whose individual work might differ as much as a temple or palace built of gold, silver and costly stones differs from a hovel built of wood and stubble. Salvation is nowhere in view, it is ‘work’ that is to be manifested and of what ‘sort’ it is (verse 13); it is the ‘work’ that will either ‘abide’ or be ‘burned’ (verses 14,15); it is service that will either receive a ‘reward’ or involve the worker in ‘loss’.

“But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire” (iii. 15).

In this connection we remind ourselves of Kipling’s words:

“If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools”,

Although we would substitute a less opprobrious title than ‘knaves’ for those with whom we fundamentally differ in this connection. We speak of the essential difference between the ‘hope’ and the ‘prize’, ‘living’ and ‘reigning’, ‘gift’ and ‘reward’, ‘salvation’ and ‘service’, which is so evidently in mind in I Cor. iii. When we read an article which distorts Phil. iii., with its running for ‘the prize of the high calling’, into an endeavour to attain to membership of the church of the Mystery, a sphere of blessing from which every atom of effort is excluded and only grace and gift are operative, we are tempted to reply perhaps with over vigorous language, but by grace, we have found it more in line with our calling:

“To watch the things you gave your life to broken
And stoop and build them up again with worn out tools.”

And so, we commend the teaching of the Apostle here in I Cor. iii. to all who confuse ‘foundation’ with ‘superstructure’, and fail to distinguish the fundamental grace of Ephesians with its ‘boldness of access’, from the exhortation of Philippians, with its ‘fear and trembling’. At the close of this third chapter the Apostle reverts to the divisions at Corinth saying:

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (I Cor. iii. 21-23).

With the opening of I Cor. iv., the Apostle applies the teaching of the builder to himself and Apollos:

“And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (I Cor. iv. 6).

Paul and Apollos were ‘stewards of the mysteries of God’. The Revised Version text of I Cor. ii. 1 reads *musterion* ‘mystery’ in place of *marturion* ‘testimony’, and it is possible that Paul disappointed the Corinthians by his determination to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, a resolution which would lead many to criticize his method, matter and motive. To this he now returns. Stewards of the mysteries (secrets) of God must be ‘found faithful’, all else is subsidiary. The fact that his life’s work would be submitted to the test of ‘that day’ rendered the puny criticisms of man in this day, of little or no account. The word translated ‘judgment’ in I Cor. iv. 3 is literally ‘day’ and is evidently used in opposition to the ‘day’ of I Cor. iii. 13 which should ‘declare’ and ‘reveal’ the nature of all service.

“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged (*examined*) of you, or of man’s judgment (*day*): yea, I judge (*examine*) not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth (*examineth*) me is the Lord. Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God” (I Cor. iv. 3-5, R.V.).

Here is the great distinction between “man’s day” and “that day”. To be over careful regarding the former, is to degenerate into a man-pleaser, a time-server, a popular yet unfaithful steward. To study to show one’s self approved unto God, to be unashamed at desertion, adverse criticism and denunciation, to know Whom we have believed, to leave all unto ‘that day’ is to follow in the victorious footsteps of the despised Apostle.

The expression ‘I know nothing by myself’ (I Cor. iv. 4) is somewhat ambiguous. “By” can have the meaning ‘concerning’ in vulgar use, as ‘I have done my duty by him’, and this usage was common at the time of the A.V. translation. For example “He that setteth not by himself” (Psa. xv. 4 Prayer Book) for “He that is not wise in his own conceits”. Alford complained that this meaning of ‘by’ does not occur in our ordinary dictionaries. This defect is made good in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which has, as one subdivision:

“About, concerning, with respect to, in regard to, as concerns” and signifies by the letter OE, that this is an Old English usage.

To make the Apostle’s meaning intelligible today, we must adopt the R.V. and read “I know nothing against myself”. The verb ‘to know’ used here, gives us the word *suneidesis* ‘conscience’, and occurs in Paul’s epistles twenty-six times, and is used by Paul in Acts xxiii. 1 and xxiv. 16. Paul was not ‘conscious’ of any delinquency, but this did not form any ground of self-justification. What he looked upon with friendly eyes, the Lord might judge in that day as unfaithful service. This being so, the Apostle left the whole question of judging to the Lord, and to that day. Consequently, if that were his attitude, it is not likely that he would be perturbed by the judgment of the Corinthians. All this, however, was not uttered in pride, but in humility, so that the Corinthians in the matter of their preference for Paul or Apollos should not be:

“puffed up *for one* against *another*.”

“For” continued the Apostle, “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”

So ends our survey of the first seven antonyms of I Corinthians. The lessons embodied therein are of peculiar value to all who would serve the Lord acceptably. May these lessons by contrast not be lost upon any of us, writer and reader alike.

Archaic and Obsolete Words of the Authorized Version.

No.5. pp. 174 - 180

BASE. This word as an adjective does not mean worthless or wicked, but of low rank, lowly, humble. “The basest of men” (Dan. iv. 17) does not mean men of bad character but the “lowliest of men”. In II Cor. x. 1 Paul refers to himself as “who in presence am *base* among you”, i.e. humble among you. Likewise Ezek. xxix. 15, “the basest of kingdoms” means “the most lowly of the kingdoms”.

BESTEAD originally meant placed or situated, and then came to be used only in cases of difficulty or hostility. In Isa. viii. 21 we read, “And they shall pass through it hardly *bestead* and hungry”. This means ‘hard-pressed and hungry’. Shakespeare uses it in this sense.

BEWRAY means to reveal or disclose, almost the same as ‘betray’, except it did not have the thought of treachery or disloyalty behind it. Of Peter after his denial of the Lord it was said ‘thy speech bewrayeth thee’, that is, your pronunciation reveals your identity or your origin.

BOLLED. In Exod. ix. 31 we are told that through the Lord’s judgments on Pharaoh and Egypt, the flax and barely were ruined, “for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was *bolled*”. The Hebrew word means *bud*, so the A.S.V. translates ‘the flax was in bloom’ and the R.S.V. ‘the flax was in bud’.

BOOTIES is the plural, now obsolete, of booty and occurs once in the A.V. namely Hab. ii. 7 “shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for *booties* unto them?”. Now we should use ‘booty’ always in the singular and this is followed by modern translations.

BRAVERY. This word has nothing to do with being brave but with women’s *finery*. Its occurrence in Isa. iii. 18-23 makes this clear. “In that day the Lord will take away the *bravery* of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon.” *Cauls* comes from the old French *cale* and means *cap* or *headgear*. *Tire* has no connection with fatigue, but is a shortened form of *attire*, another word for headgear or an ornament worn on the head.

BRUIT. This means a report spread abroad, a rumour or tidings. “All they that hear the *bruit* of thee shall clap the hands over thee” (Nahum iii. 19), that is the news spread around concerning the Divine judgment on the king of Assyria. Jeremiah says concerning Judah, “Behold, the noise of the *bruit* is come”, that is the rumour of the coming devastation of Judah.

BUNCH. This has nothing to do with a collection of anything as it is used today. It is an obsolete term for a *hump* on a camel’s back or of a deformed person. “They will carry their treasures upon the *bunches* of camels” (Isa. xxx. 6), means they will carry their treasures on the camels’ humps or backs. In Shakespeare’s *King Richard III* the humpbacked Richard is called ‘that poisonous *bunch-backed* toad’ (Acts 1, Scene 3).

BY AND BY. This is another instance where a phrase has completely changed its meaning in England since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At that time it meant *immediately*, as also did the words ‘anon’ and ‘presently’. These words gradually lost this sense and came to mean ‘after a while’, or at some indefinite time in the future.

In the account of John the Baptist’s beheading recorded in Mark’s Gospel, it is odd to read of Salome’s haste in coming before the King and in contrast her apparently leisurely request that John’s head be given her ‘by and by’ (vi. 25, 27). But the word she used meant ‘immediately’, ‘instantly’. She was not prepared to wait.

In the parable of the sower (Matt. xiii. 21) the Lord says of the stony ground hearer ‘for when tribulation or persecution ariseth *by and by* he is offended’. The A.V. archaism here suggests ‘at some time later on’ he is offended. But the Lord said “*immediately* he is offended”; which is very different and as the phrase is used today it completely misses the sense.

Another important reference is Luke xxi. 8, 9 where the Lord Jesus is dealing with the solemn times leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem (70A.D.), and then later in the chapter in connection with His Second Advent He said:

“But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified; for these things must first come to pass; *but the end is not by and by*”,

in which case, in modern English, it would mean the fulfillment will not be later on, but at once. But this is the opposite of what the Lord was teaching. What He actually said was “the end will *not* be at once, or immediately” which only shows the care that must be exercised when using the A.V. by itself.

BY COURSE. In I Cor. xiv. 27, the A.V. reads:

“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that *by course*.”

The last two words rendered in modern English mean ‘in turns’. Paul did not use the word ‘unknown’ and this is an addition of the translators. The sense is, “If any speak in tongue (or dialect), let there be only two or at the most three, and each *in turn* (not at once), and let one interpret”.

CARE, CAREFUL, CAREFULNESS. These words can easily be misunderstood, for today they mean the opposite of being careless or indifferent. They have lost the meaning of anxiety or worry which they had originally and which is obvious in the Greek original. The Lord gently reproved Martha for being ‘careful about many things’ (Luke x. 41) which is certainly not a fault in its modern usage. What He actually said was, “Martha, you are *worried* and troubled about many things”.

In Phil. iv. 6 the Apostle Paul gives the injunction, “Be careful for nothing” (A.V.), but this would be terrible advice if these words were used in their modern meaning. “Have no anxiety about anything” the Apostle actually wrote. It was freedom from the stress of worry and tension he was concerned about which is also evident in ICor.vii.32, “I would have you without carefulness”, or in up-to-date English, “I want you to be free from worry”. Imagine believers being advised in the sacred Scriptures, not to be careful!

CARRIAGE. “After those days we took up our *carriages* and went up to Jerusalem” (Acts xxi. 15). What does Luke mean by this, for it was a well-known fact that, rather than a road, there was little more than a mountain track between Caesarea and Jerusalem? What sort of carriages could traverse such a track? Some who disbelieve Scripture have made merry over this, but they are ignorant of the fact that in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries the English word ‘carriage’ referred to *baggage* and not the vehicle that carries it. The Great Bible and the Bishop’s Bible (contemporary with the A.V.) render the phrase ‘took up our burdens’, but Tyndale is even nearer to the original, “After those days we made ourselves ready and went up to Jerusalem”.

In I Sam. xvii. 22 we read “David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage” has no reference to any vehicle but means “David left the things in charge of the keeper of the baggage”. The A.V. of Isa. x. 28, “laid up his carriages” means “stores his baggage”.

CASTAWAY. The Greek work behind this A.V. translation is *adokimos* referring to metals or coins that fail to meet the test. It has no reference whatsoever to shipwrecked people. The word is the opposite of *dokimos*, translated “*approved* unto God” in II Tim. ii. 15. In I Cor. ix. 27 the Apostle is stating the possibility that, after proclaiming the truth to others, he might himself fail to finish the race through unfaithfulness or other reasons, and so receive the Lord’s *disapproval* and loss of reward. He is not saying that there was the possibility of his losing his salvation which has its source in God’s infinite grace (not works or attainment) and grace characterizes this salvation right to the end. Salvation basically is the free gift of God in Christ which He

never takes away for the ‘gifts and calling of God are without repentance’ (i.e. change of mind on His part, Rom. xi. 29).

CAST DOWN. These words appear in Daniel’s description of the overwhelming vision that he records in the seventh chapter, “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit” (vii. 9). But in what sense could these thrones which were intimately connected with God, be cast down or overthrown? In which case, how could they be sat on? The contemporary translations of Coverdale, Matthew and the Great Bible render it “until the seates *were prepared*” and the Geneva and the Bishop’s Bible had “till the thrones *were set up*”. The Septuagint and Vulgate have words which mean “*were placed*” and undoubtedly this is the correct meaning and fits the context, which the A.V. translation does not.

CHAMPAIGN. This word occurs in Deut. xi. 30 “. . . . in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the Champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh”. It was an old French word meaning “open, level country or plain” and this is its meaning in Deuteronomy.

CHAPMEN. The A.V. uses this word in II Chron. ix. 13, 14:

“. . . . the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents (666) of gold, beside that which *chapmen* and merchants brought”

Chapmen were traders who traveled about selling goods. Even in 1611 the word had begun to lose its primary significance of ‘merchant’ and came to be used of itinerant hawkers and peddlars, and was looked on with disdain, as is expressed in Shakespeare’s lines from *Troilus and Cressida*:

“Fair Diomed, you do as *chapmen* do,
Disguise the thing that you desire to buy” (Act 2, scene 1),

and in another context he speaks of the “base sale of chapmen’s tongues”. “Traders” is the meaning in II Chron. ix. 14.

CHARGEABLE. This word in 1611 meant ‘burdensome’ and refers to persons rather than commodities. In Neh. v. 15 we read of governors ‘who were *chargeable* unto the people’, that is, they laid heavy burdens on the people. The Apostle Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he worked night and day so that he ‘might not be *chargeable*’ to them (I Thess. ii. 9; II Thess. iii. 8). “I was *chargeable* to no man” (II Cor. xi. 9) means I did not burden anyone.

CIEL, CIELING (I Kings vi. 15). These words are obsolete spelling of CEIL and CEILING, and mean walls lined with wood paneling. In II Chron. iii. 5 it states that

Solomon's "greater house was *cieled* with fir tree" which means overlaid with this wood. The Lord complains through Haggai the prophet "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your *cieled* houses and this house (the Temple) lie waste?" The Israelites had luxuriously decorated their own homes and showed little interest in the Lord's house which lay in ruins (Hag. i. 4).

COME BY. In the storm and shipwreck so vividly described in Acts xxvii. 16 we read, "we have much work to *come by* the boat". This is old English meaning it was hard to *control* the boat and so secure it.

COMFORT. This comes from the Latin *comferto*, meaning to strengthen, and this often is its meaning in Scripture in addition to soothing or consoling. It is interesting to note examples from Wyclif's translation which preceded the A.V., "he comforteth hym with nailes" (Isa. xli. 7) sounding peculiar to us today. Also "he comforteth the lockis of thi gatis" (Psa. cxlvii. 13). In each case our modern equivalent would be 'strengthen'.

In the N.T. the word occurs many times meaning 'encourage or strengthen' in addition to consoling and this should be borne in mind in the contexts where it occurs.

COMFORTLESS. John xiv. 18 reads, "I will not leave you *comfortless*" where the Greek means 'left as orphans' and the thought behind this precious promise is that, though the Lord was to leave them shortly, they would not be bereft or destitute.

COMMUNICATE. Basically this means 'to share' rather than to pass on a message. It refers to practical fellowship and generous acts. "To do good and to *communicate* forget not" (Heb. xiii. 16), that is practical sharing among believers. Paul commended the Philippian church because they *communicated* with his affliction when he was imprisoned (Phil. iv. 14). This does not mean that they sent letters to him, but rather practical gifts to help him, as the context makes perfectly clear. "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. xv. 33). This means something deeper than bad language or writings and embraces *all* social influences in which conversation plays only a part. It means moral character as a whole and what Paul meant was 'bad company ruins good morals'.

COMPREHEND. This word comes from a Latin verb that means to seize or grasp and in the sixteenth century was used in both the physical and intellectual senses, whereas today it is only used in the latter sense. In John i. 5 we read "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness *comprehended* it not". This does not mean "the darkness did not understand it", but rather the darkness did not grasp and extinguish the light, in other words, did not overcome it. In Christ was "the light of men, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it". This is a triumphant assertion that fits in with the glorious revelation of the opening words of John's Gospel. Other translations

back this up. “Did not master it” (Moffatt); “Has never put it out” (Goodspeed); “Has never overpowered it” (Weymouth); “Did not conquer it” (Rien).

No.6. pp. 196 - 200

CONDESCEND. This word is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “to stoop from one’s position of dignity or pride”. This is its modern meaning, but not that of its one occurrence in our A.V. namely Rom. xii. 16 “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate”. Today the word nearly always has a snobbish meaning, but in Romans there is none of this. The sense is “Do not be proud, but *associate with* the lowly or humble”. The last word here is used by the Saviour concerning Himself—“I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. xi. 29) and He was the One Who ‘humbled Himself’ (Phil.ii.8) and as a noun the word appears as ‘humility’ (Acts xx. 19) or ‘lowliness’ (Eph. iv. 2). These are the types of people with whom we should associate.

CONFECTION, CONFECTIONARY. Today these words are confined to sweetmeats and sugar foods. In the days of the A.V. they referred to *spices* and *perfumes*, and this can be seen in Exod. xxx. 35, where God’s instruction to Moses concerning the holy incense was “thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary”. Confectionary is used in I Sam. viii. 13 where Samuel warned the Israelites that if they insisted on a king “he will take your daughters to be *confectionaries*, and to be cooks and to be bakers”. Here “confectionaries” means “perfumers”.

CONVENIENT. This word originally had the meaning of proper, becoming, right. It has lost these meanings and is now applied to what is suitable to one’s self. In Eph. v. 4 unclean talking is not *convenient* (A.V.) which today should be translated ‘proper’ or ‘right’. In Philemon 8 “to enjoin thee that which is convenient” means ‘to command thee to do what is required’. In Rom. i. 28 “to do those things which are not convenient” signifies “to act improperly”.

CONVERSATION. In 1611 this always referred to conduct or manner of life, never just to talking. The “vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers” (I Pet. i. 18) was not their words, but their actions, in fact their whole lives. In IPet.iii.1,2, the Apostle exhorts Christian wives to be in subjection to their husbands, so that, if they were not saved, they might be won by the conversation of the wives. But he did not mean that wives could *talk* their husbands into receiving the truth, rather he exhorted that their whole manner of life might be a testimony to them. Every time the reader of the A.V. comes across the word ‘conversation’, he should be careful to read it as ‘conduct’.

Once, the A.V. translates another Greek word (*politeuma*) as conversation (Phil.iii.20), “our conversation is in heaven” which, needless to say, does not mean ‘our talking is in heaven’, but “our citizenship exists in heaven”.

CONVINCE. This word occurs in the A.V. in an obsolete sense. Its modern meaning is *convict*. “Which of you *convinceth* Me of sin” (John viii. 46) should now read “*convicteth* Me of sin”. In I Cor. xiv. 24 the phrase ‘convinced of all’ means “convicted by all”. In James ii. 9 our A.V. reads “If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are *convinced* of the law as transgressors”. “*Convicted* by the law” is what is meant. “To *convince* all that are ungodly” (Jude 15) should now read “to *convict* all the ungodly”.

COUNTERVAIL. This is another word that has become obsolete. “. . . . The enemy could not countervail the king’s damage” is meaningless in modern English. The word used has the sense of ‘compensating’ or ‘making up for’. The Bible in Basic English renders it “for our trouble is little in comparison with the king’s loss”.

COUNTRY. John xi. 54 reads in the A.V. “Jesus went into *a* country near to the wilderness” which gives the impression that the Lord went into another land and nation, but this is not so. The inspired Greek has *the* country, meaning “countryside”. The Rheims Version of 1582 correctly renders this as “*the* country” and John Wesley corrected the A.V. in 1755 on this point and has been followed by modern translators generally.

COUSIN. This word as used in the A.V. means any relative and the modern word would be ‘kinsfolk’. This should be noted in Luke i. 36 and 58.

CUNNING is used in both good and bad senses in the A.V. whereas today it is only used in a bad sense. In a good sense it meant one who was skilful. Esau was a “cunning (skilful) hunter” (Gen. xxv. 27). Saul’s servants, in order to sooth him, sought for “a cunning player on the harp” (I Sam. xvi. 16) i.e. a skilful player. In I Kings vii. 14 we are told that Hiram was “filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass”, that is, a skilful worker in metal, and in preparation for the Tabernacle we read of ‘cunning men’ and ‘cunning workmen’ and ‘cunning work’.

CURIOUS. The old English meant ‘made with care’ not ‘peculiar’. Exod. xxviii. 8 rendered in the A.V. “and the curious girdle of the ephod” means “a skillfully woven band”. Bezaleel devised ‘curious works’ (Exod. xxxv. 32), that is, ‘artistic designs’. Psa. cxxxix. 15 is an interesting reference to the unborn child “. . . . made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth”. The formation of different members

of the body before birth is likened to embroidery or the arranging of the threads and colours in a beautiful piece of tapestry.

DAYSPRING. This word means daybreak or dawn and should be understood as this in such passages as Job xxxviii. 12 and Luke i. 78.

DELICACY and DELICIOUSLY. Rev. xviii. 3, 7, 9 does not refer to the plentiful supply of dainties in Babylon but is used in the sense of sensual luxury and voluptuousness. The kings of the earth who 'lived deliciously with her' indulged in lust and sensual pleasures. Tyndale renders it 'lived wantonly with her'.

DESCRY. This word means to discover, or perceive, investigate or spy out. Judg.i.23 states that "the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel" which means that the house of Joseph sent to spy out Bethel.

DIVERS and DIVERSE. These were originally the spelling of the same word. In 1611 'divers' meant various, several, more than one (without stating how many). The word occurs 36 times in the A.V. but is completely obsolete today. "Divers of Asher" (II Chron. xxx. 11) means "a few men of Asher". In Mark viii. 3 we read that the Lord Jesus had compassion on the multitude "for divers of them came from afar", which means, in modern English, "Some of them had come a long way". The prohibition of sowing a vineyard "with divers seeds" (Deut. xxii. 9) means sowing with two or more different kinds of seeds. "Divers diseases" (Matt. iv. 24) means "various illnesses", "divers trials", "various test".

DOCTOR. This word originally meant nothing more than teacher. In Luke ii. 46 we have the occasion of the Lord Jesus visiting the Temple as a boy and "sitting in the midst of the doctors". These were not medical men but teachers of the law as in Luke v. 17. "Doctrine" likewise means "teaching", and in the A.V. the act of teaching as well.

DUKE. This word, in the A.V., is used for the Chief of Edom. It has no thought of a hereditary title of nobility as used in Great Britain. The word just means a leader, coming from the Latin *dux* (leader). Wyclif translates Matt. ii. 6 "for of thee a *duke* shall go out that shall govern my people Israel", referring to the Lord Jesus, but he was translating from the Latin. Tyndale used the word "captayne" and the A.V. the word "governor".

EAR and PLOW. Both these words are old verbs which have the same meaning, to prepare the soil for sowing by turning it over in furrows. The word 'ear' is used by the

A.V. in Gen. xlv. 6, Exod. xxxiv. 21, Deut. xxi. 4 and I Sam. viii. 12 and in other places, meaning ploughing the ground. It is quite obsolete today.

ENSUE. This word was used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the sense of pursue. So in I Pet. iii. 11 “seek peace, and ensue it” means “seek peace and pursue it”.

EQUAL. In these centuries ‘equal’ had the moral meaning of what is fair, just and right as well as stating size or quantity. Ezekiel makes the protest in the name of the Lord: “Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; is not My way equal? Are not your ways unequal?”. In modern English we should say “Is not My way just or right? Are not your ways wrong?”. In Col. iv. 1, “give to your servants that which is just and equal” means, “treat your slaves justly and fairly”.

ESCHEW. This obsolete word means to avoid wrong doing or escape a danger or inconvenience. Job is described as “one that feared God and eschewed evil” (Job i. 1). Peter says, in his first epistle, let those who would see good days “eschew evil and do good” (iii. 11), which means, of course, turn away from evil and do what is good and right.

No.7. pp. 215 - 220

EXPECT, EXPECTATION. The word ‘expect’ occurs in the obsolete sense of ‘wait’ in Heb. x. 13: “From henceforth *expecting* till His enemies be made His footstool”. The word expectation as used in the A.V. means ‘hope’. In Psa. ix. 18, “the *expectation* of the poor” means “the *hope* of the poor”. In Psa. lxii. 5 the writer says, “My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my *expectation* is from Him”. In modern English it would read “for my *hope* is from Him”. Prov. xxiv. 14 says, “Thy *expectation* shall not be cut off” meaning “Your *hope* will not be cut off”. Jer. xxix. 11 “to give you an *expected end*” is “to give you a future and a *hope*”.

FAIN. This obsolete word as a noun, adjective or verb means ‘glad’, coming from the Old Saxon *fagan*, ‘glad’. The word occurs in the parable of the Prodigal Son, “he would *fain* have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat”. In modern English this reads, “he would *gladly* have fed on the pods that the swine ate” (Luke xv. 16 R.S.V.). Coverdale, in the Prayer Book version of the Psalms renders Psa. lxxi. 23 “my lips will be *fain* when I sing unto Thee”.

FAMILIAR SPIRIT. Those who ‘have familiar spirits’ are often referred to in the O.T. and these are evil powers under the control of Satan, and those who deal with them are called ‘wizards’. These were nothing more than spiritist mediums who claimed to be in communication with the spirit powers and such spirits to be responsive as a servant (*famulus*) to their call. Under the law in the Old Testament such were to be put to death (Lev. xx. 27). Such stringent rules were to prevent contact with the evil spirit world. It is significant that spiritism is increasing today under various guises and the Lord’s people need to be warned to avoid any contact with this evil that Satan so easily uses to enslave the minds of people with his lie and deceit.

FEEBLE MINDED. In Elizabethan days this word did not mean mentally deficient but ‘discouraged’. So in I Thess. v. 14 “comfort the *feeble minded*” in modern English should be rendered ‘encourage the *faint hearted*’.

FETCH ABOUT. This is an obsolete expression occurring in II Sam. xiv. 20 “to *fetch about* this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing” and today such a sentence is unintelligible. “Fetch about” means to contrive, devise or change, and the R.V. greatly improves things by rendering “to *change* the face of the matter”.

FETCH A COMPASS. This is another obsolete phrase and sounds strange today. Needless to say it has nothing to do with a compass in the modern sense, but means take a roundabout course, or make a circuit. It occurs five times in the A.V., one of these being in the N.T. After Paul’s shipwreck, Luke tells us he (Paul), his guards and companions sailed from Syracuse. “From thence we *fetch* a compass, and came to Rhegium” which means “from there we *made a circuit* and arrived at Rhegium”. In II Sam. v. 23 the phrase means “to go round to their rear”.

FLUX. This is an old English word for dysentery and it was this illness (a ‘bloody flux’) that affected the father of Publius (Acts xxviii. 8).

FOOTMEN. These are not servants, but men who are in military service—foot soldiers (II Kings xiii. 7).

FORETELL. This word in the A.V. means more than predict. It is used in the A.V. to tell or warn someone beforehand and in II Cor. xiii. 2 this is its sense. “I *foretell* you” means “I *warn* you”.

FRANKLY. Luke vii. 42 is its one occurrence in our English Bible “he *frankly* forgave them both”. It is not used in the modern sense of openly or candidly but freely or

generously; though why the A.V. uses the word at all is not clear, as there is no word in the original Greek for it.

FRAY. This is a shortened form of the verb “affray” which in 1611 meant frighten or to make afraid. The word ‘afraid’ is just the modern form of the past participle “affrayed”. In Deut. xxviii. 26 comes the warning—“thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall *fray* them away” that is, “*frighten* them away”. Likewise Jer. vii. 33. In the vision of Zechariah, four carpenters came to *fray* or terrify the four horns which had scattered Judah (Zechariah i. 18-21).

FRET. This word occurs four times in the A.V. in the obsolete sense of eat into, gnaw, decay. A *fretting* leprosy is referred to in Lev. xiii. 51, 52; xiv. 44 and “it is *fret* inward” in xiii. 55, that is leprous decay of the flesh. These are Tyndale’s terms which were accepted by the A.V. translators.

FROWARD—NESS. This obsolete word is cognate with ‘from-ward’, like the phrase “to and fro” for “to and from”. It is the opposite of ‘toward’. It had the meaning of contrary, perverse, crooked or devious and 17 of the 24 occurrences are to be found in Proverbs.

GENDER. When used as a verb this word refers to the breeding of cattle (Lev. xix. 19; Job xxi. 10). The well-known phrase in Gal. iv. 24 “Mount Sinai, which *gendereth to bondage*” means “which bears children for slavery”, and in II Tim. ii. 23 we are warned against foolish questions which “*gender* strifes” or breed quarrels.

GHOST. Except in connection with the Holy Spirit, this old word only occurs in the phrases, ‘give up the ghost’ (16 times) and ‘yield up the ghost’ (3 times). Both phrases mean the same thing and represent a single Hebrew or Greek word meaning ‘to die’. The word ‘ghost’ in 1611 did not mean an apparition, but the spirit or immaterial part of a person as distinct from his body and ‘ghostly’ meant spiritual. The literature of this period is full of references to church ministers being called ghostly advisers, ghostly instructors, ghostly fathers, etc. Ghostly counsel was spiritual counsel. The word is now quite obsolete in this sense. The Holy Ghost should now be rendered the Holy Spirit.

When a ghost in the modern sense is used in the N.T. the Greek has the word *phantasma* not *pneuma*, spirit. When they saw the Lord Jesus walking on the water, the disciples said, “it is spirit” (Mark vi. 49) according to the A.V. But the word is *phantasma* not *pneuma* and should be rendered, as in the modern versions, “it is a ghost”.

GOVERNOR. In James iii. 4 this is used in the obsolete sense of a pilot of a ship. Paul, in Gal. iv. 1, 2 writes ‘the heir as long as he is a child is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father’. “Tutors and Governors” is better translated ‘guardians and trustees’. We have ‘the governor of the feast’ in connection with the marriage at Cana. He was the same as ‘the ruler of the feast’ (John ii. 8, 9) which is equivalent today of the head waiter or steward whose duty was to manage all the details and procedures of the wedding breakfast.

GRUDGE. This word originally meant to murmur, grumble or complain from an earlier variant ‘grutch’ which corresponds to the modern colloquial ‘grouse’. In James v. 9 the A.V. reads “*Grudge* not one against another”, meaning “do not *grumble* against one another”. In Psa. lix. 6, 7, 14, 15 the Psalmist compares his enemies to dogs and says, “let them wander up and down for meat and *grudge* if they be not satisfied”. This does not make sense today. The R.S.V. gives the meaning more clearly: “they roam about for food and *growl* if they do not get their fill”.

HABERGEON. This means a coat of mail. In the Authorized Version this word is used for three Hebrew words, but it only properly applies to one, *shiryon*, which occurs in II Chron. xxvi. 14 and Neh. iv. 16.

HAP means chance or fortune either good or bad. The good meanings cluster round the related words happy, happily, happiness. The neutral ones are linked with such words as happen, happening, haply, perhaps. In Ruth ii. 3 the A.V. renders the sentence “her *hap* was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz”. Put in modern English, this would be “she *happened* to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz”. “Haply” means perchance or perhaps.

HARDLY in 1611 meant ‘with difficulty’. “How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God” (Mark x. 23) is equivalent to “how *hard or difficult* it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God”.

In Isa. viii. 21 the words ‘hardly bestead’ mean ‘greatly distressed’. The phrase is quite obsolete today.

HEADY. This word means precipitate, headstrong, rash and occurs in the list of vices of the last days listed in II Tim. iii. 1-5. The Greek adjective mean reckless, rushing headlong, and is used in Acts xix. 36 where the town clerk urged the citizens of Ephesus ‘to be quiet and do nothing rash’.

HEAVE OFFERING. The Hebrew word is *ternmah* which the A.V. renders oblation 18 times, offering 28 times, heave offering 24 times. The term heave offering is

misleading for it implies the rite of elevation which is doubtful and the word 'heave' suggests strenuous effort, lifting or throwing something very heavy. The word 'heave' is best omitted. Numb. xviii. 32 reads in the A.V. "ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it". This is unintelligible today. The sentence means "ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have offered the best of it".

HEAVINESS appears 14 times in the A.V. but never in the sense of physical weight. It always has a psychological meaning denoting a state of mind. It is a pity that the A.V. uses 'heaviness' to represent 7 different Hebrew words and 3 different Greek words, each of which has its own shade of meaning and this has therefore been lost in our old English Version. Some of these anxiety, sorrow, fasting, despair, have to suffer, painful. Proverbs xii. 25 reads, "*Heaviness* in the heart of man maketh it stoop", which is better render "*Anxiety* in a man's heart weighs him down".

HEAVY. Some usages of this word by the A.V. are not very happy. Ahab's vexation over Naboth's refusal to let him have his vineyard is described by the A.V. as being 'heavy and displeased' (I Kings xxi. 4). In the garden of Gethsemane the Lord Jesus "began to be very heavy" (Mark xiv. 33), but the Lord's attitude was the very opposite of Ahab's. When his greed was thwarted, Ahab became 'vexed' or 'resentful', whereas in connection with our Saviour, "He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, He said to them" (N.I.V.). The translation 'heavy' in both these cases is misleading and inaccurate.

HIGH, HIGH-MINDED. The word 'high' is used in the sense of 'haughty' in Psalms xvii. 27; ci. 5. In Isa. x. 12 we have the king of Assyria and 'the glory of his high looks' which means his haughty pride. "High-minded" is now always used in a good sense. We speak of those who have 'high principles'. In the 16th century the word was more often used in a bad sense, so in Rom. xi. 20 and xii. 16 "high-minded" meant haughty or proud. In II Tim. iii. 4, "high-minded" occurs in a long list of evil dispositions of the last days. The Greek word means 'swollen with conceit'.

No.8. p. 240

HOLPEN. This word is the old past participle of 'help'. From the 14th to the 17th century it was also spelled 'holpe' or 'holp' and these were gradually displaced by 'helped'. The A.V. uses both 'holpen' and 'helped' in about equal numbers. In Mary's Magnificat we have the rendering "He hath holpen His servant Israel" in which the Book of Common Prayer had influenced the A.V. translators. In Tyndale's first translation he used 'holpen' (1525) in Luke i. 54, but he rejected it in his final edition (1534) and used 'helped'. No English version previous to the A.V. used 'holpen'. The Great Bible and the Bishop's Bible had 'helped' in this context. We should remember that Tyndale's Version greatly influenced the translators of our A.V. as did the Prayer Book.

HONEST occurs seven times in the N.T. not as the opposite to deceit, but in the sense of honourable, noble, worthy of honour. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles", means, "maintain honourable conduct among the Gentiles" and this is its meaning in II Cor. viii. 21; xiii. 7; Phil. iv. 8 and Rom. xii. 17.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

No.11. xii. 1 - 10.

pp. 6 - 10

We continue with our consideration of Paul's vindication of his ministry with respect to his opponents in the Corinthian church. He has already shown that this ministry was more than equal to that of his critics both in faithfulness and personal suffering and endurance.

In chapter xii. he passes on to visions and revelations of the Lord. This suggests that his enemies were also claiming to have such visions and revelations, but here again his experience far outweighed theirs. He is so averse to personal boasting and the exaltation of self that he begins to speak of himself impersonally:

“I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up even to the third heaven” (II Cor. xii. 2, R.V.).

The A.V. “I *knew* a man” is incorrect here and also in verse 3. This gives the impression that the man referred to was no longer known to Paul!

We have already noted that the book of the Acts records a number of appearances of the Lord Jesus to the Apostle, but the one he is dealing with here cannot be equated with any of these, unless we add our own thoughts and ideas to Luke's narrative, and this we refuse to do. Nor must we make the mistake of identifying these ‘fourteen years’ with the fourteen years of Gal. ii. 1. If we go back from the probable date of the epistle we arrive at the time when Paul was sent to Tarsus and then fetched by Barnabas from Tarsus to Antioch (Acts ix. 30; xi. 25). About this time he was caught away to the third heaven. The Greek verb is found in Acts viii. 39 where it is stated that “the Spirit of the Lord *caught away* Philip” who was found later on at Azotus. It is also used in I Thess. iv. 17 which describes the Lord's *parousia*, His arrival on the earth, to set up the earthly Kingdom. Those believers who are alive and remain shall be *caught up* to meet the Lord in the air and then return with Him in His triumphal procession to the earth in power and great glory attended by the angels of heaven.

The expressions ‘the third heaven’ occurs only here in the N.T., but one must not forget the phrase ‘all heavens’ in Eph. iv. 10 in connection with the Lord's ascension. While we sometimes read of *heaven* in the singular in the Bible, describing the whole heavenly sphere, yet this is obviously subdivided into sections, otherwise Eph. iv. 10 and II Cor. xii. 2 are meaningless. We cannot tell how many sections there are, for this is not revealed*, but there must be at least three or more. Peter, in his second epistles refers to (1) the heavens that were of old [II Pet. iii. 5], (2) the heavens and the earth that are now [verse 7] and (3) a new heaven and a new earth yet to be created wherein dwelleth righteousness [verse 13].

{* - It is interesting to know that in Jewish writing about the time of Christ, *seven* heavens were enumerated. cf. *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, “The Testament of Levi”, chapter 3.}

So there are three heavens *in time* as well as at least three departments of heaven itself. The Apostle John, in the Revelation, links this new creation with Paradise (Rev. ii. 7), so it would appear that both Paul and John were given a preview, as it were, of this wonderful new heaven and earth where at last is absolute perfection and untold glory and joy. The word 'paradise', a Persian word meaning 'park', is used in the LXX of the garden of Eden and in the Revelation of the new earth. We should note that in both cases it is linked with *the earth* and not with heaven.

The rapturous experience that Paul had was beyond expression in human words. He did not know whether it was 'in the body' or 'out of the body' (verse 2). He says nothing about what he *saw*. What he *heard* he describes as 'unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter'. The Scriptures say little about resurrection life after death. Suffice it to say that it is so wonderful that there are no human means of adequately describing it. But its superlative and eternal wonders are real, and faith is willing to wait until the day of glory when all the shadows and limitations will have gone and we shall know and enjoy fully the pleasures that are at God's right hand for evermore (Psa.xvi.11).

Such an extended revelation might have puffed up the pride of any man and even the Apostle was not immune from this, for he states:

"And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated" (xii. 7, R.S.V.).

Our heavenly Father, in His love and wisdom, knows how to balance us up so that we can remain in the centre of His will and be usable by Him. Some Pentecostals assert that all bodily ailments are foreign to the will of the Lord for the believer. The Lord's death, they claim, was to save us from bodily illness as well as from our sins.

However, this is completely disproved by Paul's experience here. Three times he prayed and asked the Lord to remove the 'thorn'. Doubtless he thought he could do better work for the Lord if he was relieved of this burden. But the Lord's answer was 'No'. He said to the Apostle 'My grace is sufficient for you and My power is made perfect in weakness'. There was a lesson that Paul had to learn through the experience of 'the thorn', so the Lord did not remove it.

We should be wise too, if, instead of asking for our 'thorns' to be removed, we prayed that we might learn whatever lesson the Lord wants to teach us in the experience we are undergoing. Let us not make the mistake of keeping grace to the gospel of salvation. Grace, as well as saving, strengthens, guides and enables us to become 'more than conquerors through Him Who loved us' (Rom. viii. 37). In fact, grace follows us all through our earthly pilgrimage and service, and will be with us till the day of glory dawns, and there is not a moment we can dispense with it.

Just what was Paul's thorn in the flesh? Many have been the opinions of believers on this point. Professor F. F. Bruce summarizes some of them:

“Pain in the ear or head (Tertullian). Such troublesome characters as Hymenaeus and Alexander (Chrysostom), epilepsy (M. Krenkel, J. Klausner), ophthalmia (J. T. Brain), convulsive attacks (M. Dibelius), sufferings caused by constant persecutions (J. Murick), attacks of depression after periods of exaltation (H. Clavier), the agony caused by the unbelief of his Jewish brethren (P. H. Menoud), malaria (W. M. Ramsay, E. B. Allo), or by the memory of his persecution of the church (A. Osiander, A Schlatter).”

The very variety of ideas shows that certainty is unattainable. The Greek *skolops* means ‘thorn’ or ‘splinter’ rather than ‘stake’ (R.V. margin). This is confirmed by the LXX (compare Numb. xxxiii. 55; Ezek. xxviii. 24; Hosea ii. 6). The examples of this word in the papyri strongly confirm this rendering. The dative case (*te sarki*) could be either locative ‘in the flesh’, or a ‘*dativus incommodi*’, ‘for the inconvenience of the flesh’. If the latter, then we have to understand the word ‘flesh’ in the peculiar sense of the sinful old nature. This was the interpretation of the Reformers and some of the early Fathers who regarded the word in a spiritual way, sent by the Lord ‘for the flesh’, i.e., to quell any possible pride or arrogance that might have arisen in the Apostle after such an exalted experience.

However, we believe that the plain, literal meaning of the Bible, wherever it makes good sense and is in accord with the general teaching of Scripture, is always to be preferred to ‘spiritualizing’. That Paul suffered severe physical trials, II Corinthians has already made clear in chapter vii. In Gal. iv. 13-15 the Apostle referred to a physical ailment evidently connected with his eyes, for he bears witness to the fact that the Galatian believers would have given him their own eyes if they could have done so. It would appear that he suffered from a chronic and ugly discharge from his eyes. The word ‘reject’ in verse 14 is literally ‘splitting out’ something offensive. In spite of this affliction which sometimes made him look revolting, these believers loved him so much that they could completely overlook this. And after his vision of the glory of the risen Saviour at his conversion which he described as “above the brightness of the sun” (Acts xxvi. 13), and which rendered him blind for three days (Acts ix. 9), we can well believe that his eyes were left permanently weak. Satan could have aggravated this condition, for the Word of God reveals that with the Lord’s permission, he can affect the body. Job was an O.T. example, and the bent woman in Luke xiii. 16 (described as ‘whom Satan hath bound’) is another.

However, the Lord’s grace is all-sufficient at all times and for every experience; as He said, “My power is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. xii. 9). Thus, when the effectiveness of Paul’s preaching was so evident, then the transcendent power was manifestly the Lord’s and not his own. This was a witness in itself. “Most gladly therefore”, he said, “will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (verse 9). This is not the statement of a fanatic who rejoices in pain, but rather of one who is being protected by the overshadowing and almighty power of Christ. The phrase ‘may rest upon me’, means literally ‘may pitch His tent upon me’, a beautiful thought.

Thus he was able to endure the ‘thorn’ and the sufferings it cause, *for Christ’s sake*. No one in his senses can take pleasure in suffering which is brought on either by

inflicting upon himself or is the consequence on his own folly, but the believer, *for the Lord's sake*, can even welcome it, for then he can be strong, not in himself, but in the Lord and the power of His might (Eph. vi. 10).

A new section now starts in the Corinthian epistle which deals with the signs of a true apostle. Paul has now finished what he termed his foolish boasting which was forced upon him by his enemies at Corinth. May we all learn the lesson of the 'thorn that remains', and the glorious overshadowing power of the Saviour which can be our continual experience.

**No.12. xii. 11 - xiii. 14.
pp. 21 - 26**

Chapter xii. 11 commences a new section in this epistle. Paul has finished his 'foolish boasting'. As we have seen, it would not have been necessary for him to have started it had not his opposers at Corinth forced him to do so by reason of their exalting themselves and belittling him as the apostle of Christ. He could say 'in nothing was I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I am nothing' (verse 11). The Corinthians had had the miraculous signs of a true apostle manifested before their eyes when Paul evangelized their city:

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and mighty works" (II Cor. xii. 12, R.V.).

Just as Christ's earthly ministry to Israel had been confirmed by evidential miracles ('miracles, wonders and signs' Acts ii. 22) as also was the witness of the Jerusalem apostles (Acts ii. 43), so had the ministry of Paul been so attested by God. There could be no doubt then of his apostleship. None of the false apostles at Corinth could claim such Divine credentials. Why did some of them then doubt him? They had enjoyed all the blessings that other churches had received through his ministry. Why should they then think they had received inferior treatment (xii. 13)? He had refused to be burdensome to them and for this 'wrong' he ironically begs their pardon.

Paul now refers to a third visit in verse 14. The second visit to them was the 'painful' one referred to in ii. 1. This third visit would also prove painful if the situation warranted it (see xiii. 1, 2), though the Apostle doubtless fervently hoped that they would mend their ways and make such apostolic discipline unnecessary.

Once more he makes known his motives to them. He does not want to be a burden, nor does he want their property, but it is *themselves* he is anxious to win. They are his spiritual children and as such it was right for him as their spiritual father to make provision for them, not the reverse (verse 14). He is prepared to go to the limit in spending himself for their spiritual profit and his love for them was unbounded. If only theirs for him had been likewise! (verse 15).

He continues:

“But be it so, I did not myself burden you, but, being crafty, I caught you with guile”
(xii. 16, R.V.).

The latter part of the verse must not be misunderstood. The Apostle had stated in chapter iv. 2 that he had renounced craftiness (*panourgia*), so he certainly was not being crafty (*panourgos*) in his dealings with the Corinthian church. Rather he is quoting what some at Corinth were saying about him. The R.S.V. makes this clear by supplying the words ‘you say’.

He challenges them to say if he had taken advantage of them in financial or other matters through any of his messengers:

“Did Titus take any advantage of you?”

The question is expressed so as to require the answer “No”, for it is introduced by the negative *me*. Paul had urged Titus to visit them in connection with their money gift for the poor saints at Jerusalem (cp. viii. 6 and 17). Only one brother is mentioned here accompanying him, whereas two are mentioned in chapter viii. 18. One is probably omitted here because he was not Paul’s representative, but sent as a delegate from one of the other churches who were contributing. Titus’ companions are called ‘messengers of the churches’ in viii. 23.

Paul now further challenges them:

“Ye think all this time that we are excusing ourselves unto you. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. But all things, beloved, are for your edifying” (xii. 19, R.V.).

This could be read as a question “Have you been thinking?” The Apostle was not concerned about his own reputation. As one sent by Christ he knew what constituted his ministry and this was principally the building up of believers everywhere. What he desired above all things was their spiritual growth and maturity.

The last thing he wanted was to find them in the same state as when he made the ‘painful’ visit. This would not only be painful to them, but to him also. He would certainly feel humbled if he continued to find some of them indulging in the sins listed in verse 20. He would then ‘mourn for many who had sinned and not repented’ (verse 21) for this would probably mean excommunication.

Once again, in the first verse of chapter xiii., he refers to his proposed third visit and also to Deut. xix. 15 (and compare xvii. 6 and Numb. xxxv. 30), where accusation must be backed up by more than one witness to avoid a false charge. Again he warns them that he will be forced to deal ruthlessly with those who ignored him and continued in their evil ways, just as he did on his second visit (verse 2), and this statement shows us that this upsetting visit actually took place although we only have allusions to it.

Some had evidently said that his reluctance to use his apostolic power in judgment meant that in reality he was no apostle:

“Since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me, He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you. For He was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God” (xiii. 3 & 4, R.S.V.).

To all such he asserts that the power of Christ would be a reality amongst them and he would be a vehicle of that power. By worldly standards the Lord was ‘crucified in weakness’, but Christ crucified in reality was the power of God (I Cor. i. 18) and this power would be manifested in no uncertain way in their midst.

Did they demand proof of his apostleship? Let them examine themselves first and test the genuineness of their own faith:

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (xiii. 5, R.S.V.).

The Apostle expresses the hope that the Corinthians will realize that he is no ‘counterfeit’ (*adokimos*, reprobate) apostle. Also that they may not do wrong, rather the reverse (verses 6 and 7). He would gladly appear to be weak in their eyes, as long as they are strong, not in themselves, but in Christ and the power He alone can impart:

“This we also pray for, even your perfecting” (xiii. 9, R.V.).

The word translated ‘perfecting’ here is *katartisis*, which is cognate with *katartizesthe*, ‘be perfected’ in verse 11. This is not the usual word which means maturity as ‘let us go on to maturity (perfection)’ of Heb. vi. 1. *Katartizo* is twice rendered *mending* their nets in Matt. iv. 21 and Mark i. 19. It occurs in Gal. vi. 1 where a believer who is overtaken in a fault is *restored*. The word means ‘restoration to wholeness’, and usually there is the thought of rupture in the background.

At Corinth there was certainly rupture and disunity caused by sin and failing, and Paul is concerned to see this lamentable condition remedied and full unity in walk and witness restored. If this was done there would be no need for him to have to deal severely with offenders when he visited them:

“For this cause I write these things while absent, that I may not when present deal sharply, according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down” (xiii. 10, R.V.).

Thus he feels it essential to repeat himself (see x. 8) and warn them again, doubtless hoping that this would be effective, so avoiding another painful confrontation such as had occurred on his second visit. Paul was always desirous of constructive building up. It is a rewarding study to note the contexts which deal with ‘edification’ which is at the root of all profitable ministry and teaching. It is so easy to tear down and criticize, but it takes a real knowledge of the Word of God together with patience and wisdom to build up believers in the Truth.

We now come to the final exhortation, greetings and benediction in xiii. 11-14:

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Mend your ways, heed my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (xiii. 11-14, R.S.V.).

“Be comforted” (verse 11 R.V.). *Parakaleo* can mean ‘be exhorted’ or ‘be comforted’, but in view of the context ‘exhort’ is better. It could be taken as the middle voice rather than the passive and then it could be rendered ‘exhort one another’. The title the ‘God of love and peace’ is not found elsewhere in the N.T. It is possible that, in view of the fact that the Corinthian failure was due to lack of practical love to the Lord and to one another, that love is linked with peace here.

As in I Cor. xvi. 20, they are advised to greet one another with a holy kiss. This was the recognized form of salutation in those days, very much like shaking hands is today. We are not sure who the saints were who joined with Paul in salutation, as we cannot say with certainty where the Apostle was when he dispatched this letter. In all probability they belonged to one of the Macedonian churches.

Paul, as his custom was, now writes the benediction with its reference to grace, that wonderful gift that was at the heart of all his faithful ministry and witness. He uses a Trinitarian formula, a threefold expression of the Godhead. While the word ‘trinity’ is not used in the holy Scriptures, yet the *fact* of it certainly is, whatever those who deny the Lord’s deity may say.

And so we come to the end of one of the most personal of Paul’s letters, revealing his personality possibly more than any other.

What was the effect of this epistle on the Corinthian church? The answer is we do not know, for Scripture does not give us any indication as to the result. However, forty years later, we have information about the church at Corinth in the letter addressed to it from the Roman church, traditionally known as the first epistle of Clement (of Rome). In it we find that division and anarchy are still in evidence and there is little indication that this church had made much progress towards spiritual maturity. This reminds us of the fact that the apostolic age was not ideal in unity and purity of doctrine and practice as is sometimes asserted. In our booklet, *The Early Centuries and the Truth* we have sought to show that few really gripped the truth given through the Apostle in his day and the succeeding generations.

If we today are rejoicing in any knowledge of the ‘unsearchable riches of Christ’ made known through Paul, how thankful we should be and how diligently we should be seeking to make this known to others while the day of grace lasts!

The Love of the Truth

No.1. pp. 58 - 60

This subject with all its ramifications is as vast as the Truth itself, and no article or series of articles could do it justice. It is, nonetheless, a very important subject and deserving of our attention.

In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter ii. 9-13, we read of the *parousia* of the man of sin, or better, the lawless one:

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they *received not the love of the truth*, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they might be damned (or judged) who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*.”

Here, as in similar passages, there is the contrast between the love of the Truth, and the love of a lie. It is important to note that these folk upon whom comes the judgment of believing a lie because they '*received not the love of the truth*'. It is not primarily a question of receiving *truth*, but the *desire* to know it. It is evidently equally possible to receive the love of a lie. We find those who 'loveth and maketh a lie' classed with "dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters" in Rev. xxii. 15. It is the intent of the heart which distinguishes the one from the other.

But, bad as all this is, the position becomes the more sinister when we discover that failure to receive the love of the truth results in the condemnation to 'believe *the lie*'. There are, apart from this reference in this epistle to the Thessalonians, three other Scriptures which speak of *the lie*.

The first of these is found in John's Gospel:

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” (John viii. 44).

When he speaks *the lie*, he speaks from (or 'out of') his own, and this because he *stood not in the truth*. Because he stood not in the truth, he is a *manslayer* from the beginning. So soon as the human race began he was ready with his death-dealing lie, and this because of his previous apostasy from the truth (*apostasis* has the root thought of 'standing from').

To discover *the* lie we need to turn back to the beginning of mankind, to the temptation in Eden. There we find the lie is threefold:

“. . . . the serpent said unto the woman, ‘Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’ And the woman said unto the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die’. And the serpent said unto the woman, ‘Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’” (Gen. iii. 1-5).

Without considering the distortions of the woman’s reply, except to note that to *listen* to the lie is already to have received the love of it, and to be influenced by it, let us note the serpent’s words. In verse 1 it would be better to render the words: “Can it be that God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?”. Surely God is not so hard-hearted as that! In our day we are more familiar with the same ploy in such terms as “God is a God of love!”, or “Jesus is a *kind* God”. But notice the facts in the previous chapter (ii. 16, 17):

“And the Lord God *commanded* the man saying, ‘Of *every* tree of the garden thou mayest *freely* eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest *thereof* thou *shalt surely die*.’”

Not only did the serpent seek to distort the character of God, to distort the Word of God, but he also sought to distort man’s estimate of himself: “Ye shall be as God”.

The Lie consists of a threefold denial of the Truth: the truth about God, the truth of what God has said, and the truth concerning man. For practical purposes *the* lie is that man ‘is as God’: *man* forms his own opinion of the character of God; *man* judges the Word of God; *man* thinks of himself as answerable only to himself.

In the next study we shall see the outworking of this as outlined by Paul in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans—“they received not the love of the truth”.

No.2. The Lie in Rom. i. pp. 79, 80

The second of the references to *the* lie to which we make reference is Rom. i. 25:

“Who changed the truth of God into a (the) lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever.”

“Since they changed the truth of God for the lie.” The result of this exchange is, that those who make this exchange now worship and serve the creature or created thing rather than the Creator. *The* creature seems to specify one created thing as being the object of fallen man’s worship, and the suggestion of the serpent in Eden points to man himself: “ye shall be as Elohim (God as Creator)” (Gen. iii. 5). From that point on, until the climax is reached in the worship of the Man of Sin, man has put himself first in all his thoughts and schemes. Sometimes this has been distorted by the fact that man has made himself gods in the likeness of “birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things” (Rom. i. 23), but such gods were ‘man-like’ in their conduct, desires and the forms of worship employed. As has been said “God made man in His own image, and ever since man has made God in *his* own image”.

But the thought of creature-worship is not yet exhausted. For in worshipping man, and creating man-like gods, man has followed the injunction of Satan to be ‘like God’. So that in worshipping himself and gods made in his own image, man has in reality been worshipping Satan, and in submitting to Satan has based his whole way of life upon the lie.

They ‘worshipped and served the creature *more than* the Creator’. While the A.V. is correct in its thought here, the word for ‘more than’ (*para*) is rather illuminating. It signifies ‘alongside, leaving on one side’. It is not only those who ‘worship and serve the creature *more than* the Creator’; but also those who do so *alongside* the Creator. God’s demands are total, and to seek to worship the creature (in whatever form) is in fact to leave God on one side. This is made clear in the first two Commandments:

“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me (before My face). Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Exod. xx. 2-5).

“Thou shalt have no other gods before My face.” The expression ‘before My face’ or before the Lord elsewhere has the significance of being in rebellion. Gen. x. 9 speaking of Nimrod says:

“He was a mighty hunter *before the Lord*: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter *before the Lord*.”

The Companion Bible note at this point is “before = in defiance of” and refers to Genesis vi. 11 “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence”. So to have any other ‘god’ instead of, or alongside the Creator is to be ‘in defiance of’ the true God, and assuredly leads to ‘corruption’ and ‘violence’ as a reading of Rom. i. makes clear. The same chapter of Romans also makes clear the awful result of persistence in this defiance: “God gave them up”.

No.3. The Lie in Rom. i. (continued). pp. 87 - 91

In our last study we saw that the lie does not necessarily involve the outright rejection of God as Creator, but does involve the worship of something from the created order *alongside* God. This is rebellion, and leads inevitably on to ‘corruption’ and ‘violence’, as a result of which ‘God gave them up’.

They ‘changed the truth of God into the lie’, but those who did so, and do so, first ‘hold the truth in unrighteousness’ (Rom. i. 18). The word for ‘hold’ (*katecho*) may have the significance of ‘hold fast’ (e.g. I Cor. xv. 2 where it is translated ‘keep in memory’), or to ‘hold down’, ‘suppress’, ‘restrain’. With the thought of ‘restrain’ in mind, it is particularly significant that after having spoken of some who ‘received not the love of the truth’, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul then continues (iii. 1) to ask for prayer that ‘the word of the Lord may have *free course*, and be glorified’. In such a situation as that envisaged in the second chapter nothing must be allowed to *restrain* the ‘word of the Lord’. And in the days in which we live we need to have particular care to see that nothing is permitted to restrain the truth, for there are many areas in which the Word of the Lord is both restrained, and suppressed. Further, as we recognize this restraint and suppression the increase in violence and corruption in society today should come as no surprise to us.

In the time of which Paul wrote in the first chapter of the Roman epistle, the restraint upon the suppression of ‘the truth of God’ resulted, as the A.V. puts it, in that truth being ‘changed into a lie’. But can the truth ever be changed into a lie, or even the lie? The word for ‘change’ in verse 25 is a strong one meaning, perhaps, to *exchange*, or thoroughly to change. It is seldom, in the strategy of Satan that there is an outright *exchange* of the truth for his lie: he is far more subtle than that. Chapter iii. of Genesis shows how he normally works with the truth, thoroughly changing, or perverting the truth into his lie. He takes the truth, placing it in the context of his lie and altering its meaning. It seems that it would be better to translate the phrase: “changed the truth *in* the lie”.

It may well have been, as some suggest, that in the O.T. record of Baal worship, the worshippers had been persuaded (as some would have us believe today) “we all worship the same God. It’s only the name which is different”. With the result that the children of Israel not only countenanced Baal worship in others, but adopted it themselves. We have

heard so-called Christian missionaries make a similar claim, suggesting that Christians should be willing to learn from other religions. Scriptures makes it plain that ‘there is none other Name’ and the Lord has stated clearly “My glory will I not give to another”. Satan’s perversion of the truth is often so persuasive, reasonable and logical. It is difficult to understand how professing Christians, if they have ‘received the love of the truth’, can make such claims, or accept them.

Those referred to in Rom. i. clearly had not received the love of the truth. Notice the progression (i. 18) men who restrain or suppress the truth, become (i. 23) those who change the glory of the uncorruptible God, and finally (i. 25) change the truth of God in the lie. But notice also the progression of retribution, (i. 24) God gave them up to uncleanness, (i. 26, 27) God gave them up to unnatural lusts, (i. 28) God gave them up (gave them over A.V.) to a reprobate mind: a worthless, base mind, one which will not pass the test. It is the mind described in verse 32:

“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, *not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*”

This is the ultimate in corruption, the ultimate in the perversion of both conscience and mind. The word for mind (Rom. i. 28) is *nous*, a word which we use to signify common-sense, intelligence. The perverted, reprobate mind is devoid of common-sense and intelligence, intent on self-destruction and the destruction of others under the guise of being ‘liberal’ and ‘liberated’. It is the mind which rejects the divine order in creation, speaks of the ‘equality of the sexes’ (cf. i. 26, 27), excuses or even applauds gross perversions condemned in Scripture, and seeks to corrupt the innocent.

Verse 30 in the A.V. describes such as ‘haters of God’, and clearly in view of verse 32 they are such. But the word used (*theostuges*) really mean ‘hateful to God’, and then “Godforsaken”. These are not innocents deluded by misrepresentation, they are those who step by step have taken a path in deliberate defiance of what they know of God. “Who *knowing* the judgment of God” (i. 32): the word is *epignontes*, *acknowledging*, or perhaps ‘having full knowledge’ of the just sentence of God, nevertheless they deliberately continue in their perversity and corruption, and as if that were not bad enough ‘have pleasure in’ or ‘approve of’, ‘sympathize with’ them that do them. This would almost seem to be a stage further than the position outlined in verses 19-21:

“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in (or among) them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew (came to know) God, they glorified Him not as God.”

But here (i. 32) are some who *acknowledge*, or have *full knowledge* of God’s just sentence. How deserving are such, then, of the *hatred* of God, how deserving to be God forsaken. And of such the Apostle has already said three times “God gave them up”: as we might say “God washed His hands of them”.

The Lie in Ephesians.

The third occurrence of 'the lie' comes in Eph. iv. 25,

“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.”

Putting away, ridding yourselves of the lie, speak each one truth. There is a similar thought in verse 22: “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”. That ye get rid of the old man, because the old nature is corrupt according to the desires of *the deceit*. Again in verse 14 we read:

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, *whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*”

The latter phrase could be translated: with a view to the wile of *the error*. The lie, the deceit, the error: if the believer would be mature in Christ he must be rid of all that concerns the error: ‘But speaking the truth in love may grow up (mature) into Him in all things’. Strictly here it is not ‘speaking the truth’, but, to coin a word, ‘truthing’: being the truth. The inference is that the truth should be so much to the believer that he is in his daily walk the embodiment of the truth. So with the things of the deceit. The believer should be rid of the deceit through ‘the truth in Jesus’ (iv. 21). Equally he needs to be rid of the things of the lie, speaking truth. The old man, the old Adamic nature results from the lie, the error and the deceit, whilst the new man results from the truth.

It is a solemn thought that as there is still in the believer the old nature to be rendered ineffective (Rom. vi. 6, where ‘destroyed’ is rather to drastic), so there is also something of the love of the lie and of the error and of the deceit to be got rid of. The antidote is the truth, and the truth alone. It is a matter of experience that when we are confronted with an aspect of the truth which, for one reason or another, we are not prepared to accept and act upon, there is no further spiritual growth until that truth is received.

First and foremost we need to receive the love of the truth. “Love” is the same word (*agape*) which is used of God’s love: our attitude to the truth should be the attitude to the truth God has, to be as concerned for the truth as God is concerned for it. This may lead into costly paths, but the alternative is to take the first steps on a path of which we have been thinking earlier in this article, a path trod by those ‘who knowing the judgment of God’ nevertheless persist in going their own way, which is the way of the lie. That there were those in the early days who were at least associated with the believers is clear from Titus i. 16, “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good word reprobate”.

The love of the truth: fundamentally this must mean the love of the Lord Himself, Who is The Truth. If we have begun to understand the meaning of Phil. ii. 5-11, how can we not love Him? And if we love Him how can we not love the truth whereby we come to know Him better and love Him more?

No.4. The Lie in II Thess. ii. pp. 112 - 116

The second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians briefly speaks of the time when the Lie will come into its own as never before. Bad as the situation outlined in Rom. i. may seem, it will be outmatched by that referred to by Paul here. Satan's Lie, which made its first appearance in Eden (Gen. iii.) will come to fruition.

Had Israel fulfilled the conditions presented to them, the days of which Paul speaks in this epistle could have approached in a comparatively short time. But Israel finally rejected the offer of their King and the earthly kingdom, and in turn were themselves laid aside by God. It is important to be clear that Paul writes to those who are believers: many today assume the epistles were written to all men, and in so doing encourage the growth of the Lie. But it is clear to whom he is writing: "unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 1), "We are bound to thank God always for you because that your *faith groweth exceedingly*" (i. 3). When, then, he begins chapter ii. with a warning, it is a warning to *believers*. It is a warning believers today would do well to heed as the situation of which he warns once more draws near, this time to find fulfillment.

He warns first of the danger of being 'shaken in mind, or *frightened* (the word has the root meaning of 'cry aloud, shriek', hence 'frighten'), neither by *spirit*, nor by word, nor by letter as from us' (ii. 2). So he continues in verse 3 "Let no man deceive you by any means". The word he uses for 'deceive' means 'to deceive thoroughly, seduce', and in the phrase he employs a double negative by way of emphasis. Paul wants his readers to understand very clearly the reality of the danger that they, believers though they were, could be deceived. Just what he means when he warns against being deceived 'by spirit', or better 'by spiritual', may be difficult to decide; but it would seem likely to link up with the lying power, signs and wonders of verse 9. It may well be that Paul had in mind a 'spiritual' communication which purported to come from him from a spirit (rather than spiritual) source, a warning many today might heed to their spiritual well-being.

The reason he gives for this warning is 'for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first'. The word for 'falling away' is *apostasia*, apostasy, with the strong inference that the spiritual or spirit communication would be one resulting from the apostasy. Here was (and is) the danger: a brother respected for his godliness hitherto has now been carried away from the purity of the faith, influenced by the Lie. How easy then for the unthinking to continue to follow his teaching. Let *no* one deceive you by *any means at all*, says the Apostle.

This apostasy will pave the way for the revelation of the Man of Sin in whom Satan's original Lie finds its fulfillment. He sets himself an adversary to God, exalting himself

above all that is called God, sitting in the Temple of God, pointing himself out as God to be worshipped (verse 4)—man deified.

Paul then continues (verse 9) to speak of ‘the lawless one’, ‘whose coming is after the working of Satan’. This one’s coming will be energized by Satan in every lying power and sign and wonder, with every form of deceit. Here is the danger; for to deceive, this power, these signs and wonders, must purport and appear to be genuine. There would be little purpose in warning believers of miraculous occurrences which were obviously of the Lie. Paul warned the Corinthians of some:

“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And *no marvel*; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. xi. 13-15).

Yet whilst appearing as ministers of righteousness, their works are with every form of deceit.

“And with all deceit of unrighteousness *for* them that are perishing” (II Thess. ii. 10 R.V.). This ‘because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved’, where ‘because’ is the translation of a Greek term having the force of ‘in return for which’. That is to say an *exchange* took place: they exchanged the love of the truth for every form of deceit. This must surely remind us of a Scripture we have already considered in this study: “who changed the truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. i. 25). This is precisely what those of whom Paul speaks will do. Having failed to receive the love of the truth, they will accept the Man of Sin in his claims to which Paul makes reference in verse 4.

Because of this, “God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe (the) lie” (verse 11). But let us be quite clear; it is not God Who deludes them. He merely confirms them in the condition they have chosen. It is of a piece with the Lord hardening Pharaoh’s heart, etc. A helpful illustration is found concerning leprosy in Lev. xiii. The leper goes to show himself to the priest who (verse 3) “shall *pronounce* him unclean”. *The Companion Bible* points out that the Hebrew signifies “*shall make* him unclean”. Clearly the man was a leper, and therefore according to the Law unclean, but his condition and his uncleanness had not been officially confirmed until the priest ‘made him unclean’. The point is reached with those who receive not the love of the truth where they have gone too far ever to change and God, as it were, officially pronounces them ‘deluded’; sending a ‘working of error’ (strong delusion, A.V.) to the end that they should believe the Lie. Perhaps the significance of the latter statement becomes clearer if we translate it ‘to the end that they should *trust* the Lie’. It is the verb *pisteuo*, to have faith, trust, to rely on: they rely on the Lie.

Paul is not particularly concerned to teach his readers details of the Second Coming in this passage. He makes it quite clear that he has already given them sufficient teaching on this subject:

“Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?” (verse 5).

His object, as we have already pointed out, is to warn his believing readers against the possibility of deception. Having outlined what will be involved in the revelation and parousia of the Man of Sin, and the consequences which will result to those who received not the love of the truth, he continues:

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through *sanctification* of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*” (verse 13).

The believer was chosen, and is chosen, to salvation through *reliance* on the truth. How can those whose reliance is on the truth be partakers in any way with those whose reliance is in the Lie? Indeed they have been chosen through *separation* of the Spirit and reliance on the truth. “Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder” says the marriage service. Yet how frequently do we find a lack of separation in those who claim to rely on the truth, to have received the love of the truth! Separation and the truth must go together. Perhaps it is not without significance that Paul here puts ‘separation of the Spirit’ before ‘belief of the truth’.

Time and again in Scripture this point is emphasized. John goes so far as to say it is wrong to greet one who does not bring ‘this doctrine’ of Christ (II John 10). Literally it is “Do not say ‘rejoice’.”; do not encourage him, having refused him entrance into your house. How easy it is nowadays to say to such a person, “Well, I don’t agree with you, I can’t have fellowship with you, but you are entitled to your beliefs, God bless you”. John continues in the next verse, “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”. For this reason Paul is so concerned that his Thessalonian friends should be warned of the possibility of deceit.

Paul writing to Timothy makes a similar point:

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: *from such turn away*” (II Tim. iii. 5).

This, like the letter to the Thessalonians, is in the context of ‘the last days’ (verse 1). Paul returns to the theme again some verses later (II Tim. iv. 1-5). Again it is in the same context: the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (verse 1). Here Paul outlines countermeasures to be taken by the man of God. He is to “preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (verse 2). This because there will be those who ‘will not endure sound doctrine’ but will multiply teachers of the Lie, and will turn from the truth accepting myths (verses 3, 4). But *you* live soberly fully accomplish your ministry (verse 5).

The truth is precious, therefore it is demanding.

No.5. The Lie, and the antidote. pp. 131 - 135

We have noted the connection of the Lie with the ‘last days’, and now we wish to think of the development of this falsehood in that closing period of time, with particular reference to the church which is Christ’s Body.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul says:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Tim. iv. 1).

“Depart” is the Greek word *aphistemi*, to apostatize or, literally, to stand from, hence to put away, remove, separate, with the additional thought of hindering and frustrating. It is sometimes thought that the apostasy is to be found in the world, but those who are in the world are ‘without Christ without God’ (Eph. ii. 12): how can those in such a condition put away, or remove from the faith? It is, alas, ‘believers’ the Apostle has in mind. It is to be noted that the ‘departure’ from the faith is connected with ‘seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons’. This suggests a pseudo spirituality—a spirituality which derives from the Lie. How careful should the believer be when confronted with some unusual or new manifestation of spirituality! It is not only those who ‘profess and call themselves Christians’ who need to be ‘led into the way of truth’ who are at risk, there is danger for even the genuine believer in these ‘perilous times’. Even to Timothy, Paul was constrained to say ‘from such turn away’ (II Tim. iii. 5), “refuse profane and old wives’ fables” (I Tim. iv. 7), “continue *thou* in the things which thou hast learned” (II Tim. iii. 14).

Paul also warns Timothy:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim. iv. 3, 4).

It is a sad thing that there are many who only want ‘the simple gospel’, who look for ‘experience’, for ‘feelings’ and excitement rather than ‘sound doctrine’, of which they are inclined to say ‘it is too deep for me’.

“The time will come when they will follow their own fancy and gather a crowd of teachers to tickle their ears” (N.E.B.). The criterion of a ‘good preacher’ today so often is not his faithfulness to the Word of God, but whether what he says is an ‘entertainment’. The result of these ‘fancies’ is that:

“They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (II Tim. iv. 4).

The word 'fable' occurs only five times in the whole of the N.T., four of them being in the Pastoral Epistles. Three of these are warnings to 'refuse' or not to 'heed' these fables, which are described as 'ministering questions' (I Tim. i. 4), "profane and old wives' (perhaps 'silly' or 'trifling') fables" (I Tim. iv. 7), and classified as 'Jewish' coupled with 'commandments of men' are said to 'turn from the truth' (Titus i. 14). 'Silly' they may be, but they are not to be treated lightly: the consequences of trifling with them are far too serious! It is easy to pour scorn upon the views held by some, but the fact that they are *held*, and in consequence the truth is being rejected, should remind us of the serious character of even the 'silliest' fable. To some it may seem of small import that there are those who believe in 'the immortality of the soul', the important thing being that they trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Yet here is a fable which 'ministers questions, rather than godly edifying', a fable which 'turns from the truth' in that it is part of Satan's original lie: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. iii. 4), in direct contradiction of God's clear statement "Ye shall surely die" (Gen. ii. 17).

Against such background of the Lie, aspects of which may from time to time appear rather trifling, Timothy is exhorted 'Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine' (I Tim. iv. 16), "Hold fast the form of sound words" (II Tim. i. 13), rightly to divide the word of truth (II Tim. ii. 15), "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (II Tim. iii. 14), and in II Tim. iv. 2:

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

The emphasis is clear: 'doctrine', 'the form of sound words', 'the word of truth', 'the things which thou hast learned', 'the word'. Similarly Titus is told to 'speak *thou* the things which become sound doctrine'. In terms of our subject all these injunctions could be summed up 'love the truth'.

Timothy is bidden 'preach the word; be instant in season, out of season'. *Proclaim* the word: be a herald of the word, give public notice of it. Timothy was not to hide his light under a bushel! He was to make it known publicly. He was to be *instant*, the Greek word is *ephistemi*: stand upon, stand by. This in contrast to those who depart (*aphistemi*) from the faith (I Tim. iv. 1). The New English Bible (N.E.B.) translates:

"proclaim the message, *press it home* on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient."

Moffatt renders it:

"preach the word; *keep at it* in season and out of season."

There were those who did, and those who would 'stand apart from' the faith and the Word; but these were of those who 'received not the love of the truth'. Those who receive the love of the truth will take their stand upon the Word, and stand by it at all times regardless of personal convenience.

The faithful proclamation of the Word is with purpose:

“reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.”

This is to be done ‘in season, out of season’. Of the two words ‘reprove’ and ‘rebuke’ the *Companion Bible’s* note includes this: “The difference between these two Greek words is that the former means to bring to conviction, while the latter can be used of unjust or ineffectual rebuke”. The object of the faithful proclamation of the Word is to convict and so convince, but the ineffectual preaching is no cause to refrain, but rather calls for exhortation: an appeal to the hearer by way of exhortation, encouragement or comfort. There may be no quick result. Patience and longsuffering will be necessary. Appeal must always be through doctrine, or teaching. The exhortation of verse 2 begins with the Word and concludes with teaching. The proclamation of the Word of God has no place in it for the studied appeal to the emotions: the appeal is always the teaching of Scripture. Then, it may be, there will be a response by the emotions: but the intent has been the proclamation of the Word, not the deliberate stirring of the emotions.

“But watch *thou* in all things” (verse 5). The word translated ‘watch’ occurs six times altogether, and apart from this instance is always rendered ‘sober’. The N.E.B. puts it: “But you yourself must keep calm and sane at all times”. The N.I.V. has it: “But you, keep your head in all situations”. Stability is needed in those seeking to combat the Lie, undue emotionalism has its place with deceitfulness. But the one who faithfully stands by the Word must be prepared to ‘endure afflictions’, suffer misfortune, bear hardship patiently whether these things come by way of force of circumstances, or by the evil intent of others.

Timothy is also exhorted to ‘do the work of an evangelist’. It would seem possible that Timothy’s main task was that of teaching:

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt (able) to *teach*, patient, in meekness *instructing* (training) those that oppose themselves” (II Tim. ii. 24, 25).

None the less he was not to neglect the opportunities of telling the good news. Indeed, he was to ‘discharge all the duties of your ministry’ (N.I.V.).

In the face of world events, and of developments in the church, in the broad sense of the word, there can be little doubt that, if we are not yet in ‘the latter days’ we must be very near to them indeed. Very many of the indications of those days are in evidence, and we who profess to have received the love of the truth may learn much from the instructions given by Paul to Timothy. Truth, the Word, doctrine or teaching figure large. He is to guard the good deposit: “that which is committed to thy trust” (I Tim. vi. 20), “that good thing which was committed unto thee” (II Tim. i. 14). In proclaiming the Word he is to ‘stand by or upon’ it, he is to be ‘sober’ in everything. He is to continue, stay, in the things he has learned and of which he has been assured, recognizing that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and therefore is profitable for all that the man of God needs to be fitted and equipped for God’s purpose for him. In all this he is to be diligent to gain God’s approval, having no shame as he rightly divides the Word of truth.

In the perilous times in which we live, may we all be alive to the dangers, and receiving the love of the truth, uphold it 'in season, and out of season'.

No.6. The Spirit of the Truth. pp. 151 - 155

The expression 'the Spirit of truth' (literally: the Spirit of the truth), occurs four times in the N.T., all of them in John's writings. Three are in the Gospel of John, and the fourth in his first epistle. In the latter reference (I John iv. 6) is contrasted "the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error": ". of the truth of the error". In Eph. ii. 2 the identity of "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" is revealed as 'the prince of the power of the air'. Later in the same epistle reference is made to 'the wile of the error' (Eph. iv. 14, where the last phrase would better be rendered 'with a view to the wile of the error'), and the wile of the error is shown in chapter vi. 11 to be 'the wiles of the devil'. Thus far in our studies on this subject we have been concerned with the activities of 'the prince of the power of the air', 'the spirit of error' and the author of the Lie. In this article we wish to consider the Spirit of the Truth.

Turning to the first reference to the Spirit of the truth in John's Gospel (xiv. 16, 17), we read:

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

The Spirit of the Truth is revealed as 'another Comforter'. The word 'other' (*allos*) has the significance of "another of the same kind (denoting *numerical* distinction). The second of two where there may be more" (Appendix 124, *Companion Bible*). It is clear this 'other' Comforter is identified with a 'former' Comforter, inasmuch as 'ye know Him; for He dwelleth *with* you'. "With" (Gk. *para*) signifying 'beside'. The 'other' Comforter is none other than the Lord Himself.

The world is not able to receive the 'other' Comforter because it has not received Christ. We might paraphrase part of verse 17 in this way: "the world is not able to comprehend Him, because it does not see ('seeth' assumes actual presence) Him, neither comes to know Him". The apostles had received Christ, and would therefore be able to receive His Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth, when He came. After Pentecost the converse was true:

"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9).

The apostles having loved Christ were able to receive His Spirit; now no man can love Christ without having received His Spirit, and Christ is the Truth (John xiv. 6). To

claim to trust in Christ, to love Him, is to claim to have received His Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth. Thus every believer claims to have received the love of the Truth. The condemnation of II Thess. ii. 10-12 is not for believers.

Nevertheless Paul is at pains to protect the Thessalonian believers from deception (II Thess. ii. 1-3), as we have already seen. There are also similar warnings to believers of the present dispensation as has been pointed out in earlier studies. Although not yet having reached its peak, the Lie abounds today as perhaps never before in history. How much we need to heed the warnings of Scripture! How much we need the help and protection God has provided for us.

The Spirit of the Truth is the *Comforter*. The N.I.V. translates it as “Counsellor”. In I John ii. 1 it is rendered ‘advocate’—“we have an Advocate with the Father”. It seems there has been some difficulty in supplying an English equivalent which will fully convey the meaning of the original. It has been said that an early translator coined the word Comforter from the Latin ‘con’ and ‘forte’, meaning ‘with strength’, but the thought of the Holy Spirit as the Strengthener seems to fall short of the full meaning. It is generally agreed that the Greek *parakletos* literally means ‘one called alongside to help’, an advocate; but in our understanding of ‘advocate’ nothing more than an intercessor or mediator is signified. The Comforter was to be ‘another Christ’ to the disciples, and only the four Gospels are a sufficient commentary on His relationship with them. He had been to them Counsellor, Strengthener, Encourager, Reprover, Guide, Teacher, and much else besides Mediator. Such an One is the Spirit of Truth to the believer. He encourages us as when He ‘bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God’ (Rom. viii. 16), He helps when ‘we know not what we should pray for as we ought’, then ‘the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us’ (Rom. viii. 26).

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” said the Lord (John xiv. 18). “I will not leave you orphans”, literally: the disciples would not be left *bereft* of all He had been to them. This is underlined by the remaining two references to the Spirit of the Truth in John’s Gospel:

“When the Comforter is come even the Spirit of truth *He shall testify of Me*” (xv. 26).

“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” (xvi. 13, 14).

The complete ministry of Christ as ‘Comforter’ would be undertaken by the Spirit of the Truth: He would completely ‘mediate’ the presence of Christ to the believer.

Against a background of hatred, rejection and persecution by the world (John xv. 18-21), when the faith of the disciples might be shaken, “That One shall bear witness concerning Me” (xv. 26). Because ‘sorrow hath filled your heart’ on learning that their Lord was returning to the Father, He would guide them into all the truth they would need, would make known to them the coming things, and, above all, would glorify their Lord. “Sorrow” (xvi. 6), is probably not strong enough: the root thought is of *pain*:

their hearts were filled with pain, with anguish at the thought that their Lord was leaving them. But it was ‘expedient’, *profitable* to them that He should go away, for then He would send the Comforter to them, and He would abide with them for ever (xiv. 16).

Although the circumstances are different, yet we need the same ministrations of the Spirit of the Truth. As the darkness gathers, and the love of many grows cold, we too would be ‘bereft’ without His ministry, but through His presence in our hearts the Lord Himself is with us. We may not yet have reached the stage of active hatred and persecution by the world for His Name’s sake, the very indifference of those around us tends to blunt our keenness and contributes to indifference in our own hearts, but the Holy Spirit bears witness to us concerning Christ. Often our hearts are grieved, or they should be, by the indifference to the truth even among believers, then the Spirit of truth leads on into the fullness of truth. Perhaps there are times when we need to be reminded that the darkness and indifference all around are but a part of the coming things, that the dawn cannot come until the night has reached its darkest point. When so many ‘glory in the flesh’ it is good that the Spirit of the Truth should glorify our Lord to us: when the pressures of life tend to fasten our attention on ‘things on the earth’ we need the Spirit’s aid to ‘set our affections on things above’.

The work of the Holy Spirit is essential, and never more so than at the present time. Here the believer needs to heed the warning to ‘let no man deceive you’, for there are many today who emphasize, and over-emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit: they glory in the Holy Spirit, they glory in what they claim are His gifts to them. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Truth glories in, and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. “He shall not speak of Himself” (John xvi. 13). The mark of the Spirit filled believer is that he glorifies the Lord.

The final reference to the Spirit of truth comes in John’s first epistle:

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (I John iv. 6).

Those who ‘are of God’ listen to those who are of God: they have fellowship one with another. They have in common the desire to glorify their Lord, to learn more of Him from their fellow-believers. The spirit of the error, however, has no place for those who are concerned with the truth, and is in fact the ‘spirit of antichrist’. It may be that the reason for trying the spirits is today different from that which John had in mind in the fourth chapter of this first epistle, but the spirit of antichrist is as active in the world today as it ever was, and there are as many ‘false prophets’ (iv. 1). Trusting to the guidance of the Spirit of the Truth, we must search the Scriptures constantly.

Against the background of docetism: an early heresy which denied the reality of Christ’s sufferings on the cross, claiming that He only *seemed* to suffer, John says:

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (iv. 2).

Polycarp paraphrases this: “Everyone that doth not confess that Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh is Antichrist; and whoso doth not confess the mystery of the cross is of the devil”. Here is the basis of all truth: that God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son. “God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. v. 8). There are many today who, having not received the love of the Truth, deny this fact.

No.7. The Glory of Christ. **pp. 166 - 170**

Christ is the Truth. Those who have received the love of the Truth desire to know Him, and to know Him more and more. Something of the importance of this knowledge can be gained from Paul’s statement in Phil. iii.:

“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ that I may know Him” (7-10).

That I may *know* Christ: the word is *ginosko*, to obtain knowledge. Yet surely, there is no one who had a greater knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ than Paul. How is it, that this man, with the tremendous knowledge of Christ he obviously had, desired to obtain further knowledge of Him? It is possible Paul had actually seen, even met and spoken to the Lord during His ministry on earth: there are some who take the Apostle’s words ‘though we have known Christ after the flesh’ (II Cor. v. 16) to mean nothing less. But over and above such a possibility, he had met the risen Lord on the Damascus road, he had been given visions and revelations. If Paul’s knowledge of the Lord was not complete, whose can be? The answer can only be that the knowledge of Christ is infinite: with all that is implied in such a statement.

Who was, and is this One who claimed to be the Truth? Was He merely a good man, very good man, Who ‘lived before His time’? There are many who would so say. Was He the “Firstborn of all creation” in the sense some would have us believe, i.e., He was created by God by Whom creation was effected: the first *created* being? Was He of some indeterminant nature neither really God, nor really man: *a* god? Or was He indeed God incarnate, God with us?

This is a subject which has many times been dealt with, both more capably and more fully than we can hope to do. Yet it is a subject of the very greatest importance, and we make no excuse for our own contribution.

There are one or two preliminary remarks we believe to be necessary. In considering the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His relationship with the Father, we are dealing with the self-revelation of the Almighty God and with His nature. He is infinite: we are

finite, and our minds simply are not capable of understanding an infinite subject. We can only hope to see ‘pointers’ which will enable us to realize that while we may not understand, the subject is not irrational. It is a matter of interest that in all the discussions concerning the deity and nature of Christ, in all the writings we have seen, no one has dared to say ‘you make too much of Christ’, for if Christ *is* less than fully God in the last analysis the claim that He is God *is* to make too much of Him. But is it possible to make too much of Him Whom the Holy Spirit’s main task is to glorify?

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John i. 1). No one seriously disputes that the Word is the Lord Jesus Christ, this is quite clear from what follows. Yet many dispute the statement “the Word was God”. Dr. Moffatt mistranslates it “the Logos was divine” (as he similarly mistranslates ITim.iii.16 rendering ‘great is the mystery of godliness’ as ‘profound is the divine truth of our religion’): but then he did not believe in the deity of Christ. Others ‘with an axe to grind’ put it ‘the Word was a god’. Yet little knowledge of Greek is required to realize this is not correct. This ‘translation’ turns on the fact that in the phrase under consideration the definite article (the) does not appear before ‘God’. But the subject of the whole verse is the *Word*, not primarily God, and the word ‘God’ in the latter phrase occurs in a position which places emphasis upon it: the Word was *God*. But there are similar constructions in the same chapter which no one would consider translating in the same way. The result would be nonsense. John i. 6, there was a man sent from *a* god; verse 12, power to become sons of *a* god; verse 14, as of the only begotten of *a* father. The statement is plainly and clearly “the Word was God”.

“And the Word was *with* God”: ‘with’ is the preposition *pros*, of which *The Companion Bible* says it implies ‘personal presence and relation’. That is to say, if we are to accept that the Word was *a* god, then a god was personally present with God. Yet in Deut. xxxii. 39 Jehovah clearly states ‘and there is no god with Me’. If the Word is *a* god, then He obviously was never with God, or Jehovah is lying.

There are many scriptures which identify Jehovah with the Lord Jesus Christ, Isa. xlviii. 11, 12 (see also xli. 4; xlii. 8; xlv. 6) states:

“ I will not give My glory unto another *I am the first, I also am the last.*”

Compare this with Rev. i. 8, 17:

“I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the ending*, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

“ *I am the first and the last.*”

The speaker is ‘one like unto the Son of man’, a Being, from John’s description, glorious almost beyond words. He claims to be ‘the Almighty’ and ‘the first and the last’.

Similarly in Rev. xxii. 13 (where the speaker identifies Himself, verse 16 “I Jesus”):

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, *the first and the last.*”

Again in Isa. xlv. 21, 23:

“. . . . Have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”

Compare this with Phil. ii. 10, 11:

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

If there is any difference, greater glory appears to be given to Jesus Christ than to Jehovah! But “My glory I will not give unto another”.

Both Jehovah and Christ are identified as Creator. Isaiah records:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it; I am the Lord; and there is none else” (xlv. 18).

Jehovah claims to have created: I the Lord and none else. Yet John i. 3 says of the Word:

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made.”

Jehovah exclusively created: the Word, Who is none other than Jesus Christ, exclusively created. Either the two are one, or the Bible is completely unreliable and false. Similarly Paul writes:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Col. i. 15-17, R.V.).

Even though it is beyond our understanding, somehow the Word must be “God Himself”, somehow ‘the image of the invisible God’ must be ‘God Himself’.

Salvation and redemption also are both attributed to Jehovah and to Christ:

“I, even I, am the Lord (Jehovah); and beside Me there is no saviour” (Isa. xliii. 11).

“Yet I am the Lord (Jehovah) thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me: for there is no saviour beside Me” (Hosea xiii. 4).

Ample evidence is to be found in the N.T. to support this identification. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul refers only to ‘God our Saviour’ (I Tim. i. 1; ii. 3), and to the ‘living God, Who is the Saviour of all men’ (iv. 10): in the second epistle to Timothy it is ‘our Saviour Jesus Christ’ (i. 10). Most significant are the references to “Saviour” in Titus:

“God our Saviour (or, our Saviour God)” i. 3.

“the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour” i. 4.
“God our Saviour” ii. 10.
“the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” ii. 13.
“God our Saviour” iii. 4.
“Jesus Christ our Saviour” iii. 6.

It will be noticed that the concept of God as Saviour alternates with that of Jesus Christ. A better translation of ii. 13, and attested to by J. N. Darby, R.V., R.S.V., Weymouth, N.E.B., and others, is even more significant: “our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ”.

To both Jehovah and Christ is ascribed by Scripture, Creatorship, Almightyness, the ultimate worship of all created beings and Saviourship: each of which is claimed by Jehovah exclusively. These are facts evidently accepted without question by early believers. Only when the appearance of heresy made it necessary was there any attempt at definition. Yet by definition the Infinite is indefinable.

No.8. The Glory of Christ (2). **pp. 186 - 191**

In our last study on this very important subject we saw that Scripture ascribes to both Jehovah and Christ, Creatorship, Almightyness, Saviourship and the ultimate worship of all created beings.

We now turn, briefly, to the testimony of those around the Lord during His earthly ministry. A week after the resurrection, the disciples were gathered together in the Upper Room, together with Thomas, who had indicated his refusal to believe apart from the evident of the wounds. When the Lord stood in the midst and confronted Thomas with both his unbelief and the evidence Thomas had desired, he could only say “My Lord and my God” (John xx. 28). An ‘explanation’ of the significance of this statement by some who deny the deity of Christ is that having said “My Lord” looking at the Lord Jesus, he then turned his eyes heavenward and continued “and my God!” The literal translation of Thomas’ statement is “The Lord of me and the God of me”, and would seem to be conclusive of the intent behind his words.

There were others, far more hostile to the Lord, who had no doubt of the claims He made. At the feast of the dedication, when the Lord Jesus was walking in the Temple in Solomon’s porch, the Jews came to Him and asked:

“How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly” (John x. 24).

Following His reply to them we read:

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (verse 31).

Their reply to His question as to why they wished to stone Him was:

“For a good work we stone Thee not; *but for blasphemy*; and because that Thou, being a man, *makest Thyself God*” (verse 33).

The Jews did not understand His claim to mean ‘a god’! They were acting in (what they considered to be) obedience to Lev. xxiv. 16:

“And he that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of Jehovah, shall be put to death.”

It is clear from the Ten Commandments that only God Himself can claim to be God, and be ‘guiltless’:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me” (1st Commandment, Exod. xx. 2).

“Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (3rd Commandment, Exod. xx. 7).

In the eyes of the Jews the Lord Jesus Christ had been misusing the name of Jehovah, their God. Hence He must be stoned.

There is a considerable volume of further evidence such as we have been considering. What can be made of the statement in Isa. xliv. 6,

“Thus saith *Jehovah* the King of Israel, and His redeemer *Jehovah* of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God.”

Here it is also noteworthy that Jehovah of Hosts is the *kinsman-redeemer*. Does *God* need a kinsman-redeemer? The context seems to make it clear that the kinsman-redeemer is needed by *Israel*. Here is (if we may so put it) a Jehovah who is kinsman to a human nation. That same One, *with* Jehovah the King, makes the claim (with which we have already dealt) “*I* am the first, and *I* am the last; and beside *Me* there is no God”: not “*We* are the first”, etc.

Again, in Zech. xiv. of the coming of the day of the Jehovah, and in verse 3 we are told:

“Then shall *Jehovah* go forth, and fight against those nations (and verse 4) And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives”.

With these statements compare Rev. xix. 11-16, and Acts i. 11. The Lord Jesus Christ will return to the Mount of Olives, and it will be He Who goes ‘forth to fight against those nations’. The conclusion must be that here, again, Jesus Christ and Jehovah are one and the same.

The use of the word ‘person’ in connection with the definition of the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit has not been helpful, for ‘person’ in modern usage signifies ‘individual’. This, however, was not the significance of the Latin ‘persona’; persona was the mask an actor wore in a play to represent the character he depicted. That

is to say the persona, or mask, was a *representation*. Taking the Latin word in that significance the three persons of the Godhead are three representations of the Godhead. This same Latin word is used in modern psychology for ‘the aspect of the personality that is presented to the outside world’. The persons of the “Trinity” are aspects of the Godhead that are presented to the outside world. In other words the ‘persons’ of the Godhead are *aspects* of the One God by which He has chosen to present Himself and to make Himself known.

This leads on to a further misunderstanding concerning the Father. It is generally assumed that the Father is God in His totality: that while the Father is God, the Son and the Holy Spirit, while equally God, are representations of the Father. But God is infinite: when the full conception of God as Father has been exhausted, there must still be much of God beyond. To put it another way, if God, in all His fullness is no more than Father, then He is a Being with limits, He is not infinite. The Father is an *aspect* of the personality of God, and it is a gracious condescension on His part to be known as “Father”.

If God is God, infinite, infinitely greater than man, man can never get to know God by searching, by his own effort. Zophar rightly said to Job (xi. 7) “Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out *the Almighty unto perfection?*” It follows then that *all* attempts to define the nature of God are doomed to failure: they cannot be ‘unto perfection’. Man can only get to know God, as God is prepared to reveal Himself, and in and on the terms He Himself lays down. The terms which He in His infinite wisdom has laid down for us are those of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Why has He specifically limited His self-revelation to these three aspect? Why should He not also reveal Himself as “God our Mother”? A sermon was once preached on Isa. xlix. 15 to show that this is the case: but Isaiah does not say “God is Mother”; he takes maternal love to illustrate the fact that the Love of God is far greater than that of even a nursing mother. We are told that God is ‘like a shepherd’, and so on. God knows human capacities far, far better than we do: He knows what, and how many ‘aspects of His personality’ we can best deal with, with our very limited capacity for understanding, and has chosen these three aspects as the ones best suited to be the means whereby He makes Himself known to us.

Moreover the Bible is very largely a Hebrew book, meant primarily for the Hebrew mind. The Hebrew mind had little or no capacity for philosophical concepts, and there are few if any such concepts in the Bible: it is all in picture language. Wisdom is depicted in the book of Proverbs as a woman; God’s love as exceeding that of a nursing mother; His care for His People as the care of a shepherd for his own sheep. God has ‘pictured’ Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As we study these aspects of Himself, which He has given to us, we get to know Him more and more, in the way He intends that we should. Even so, this is beyond the full comprehension of the human mind—or there would be no necessity for a study such as this! Nor would there be any difficulty for us in understanding the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The concept of God as ‘Father’ is a condescension on the part of the Almighty. He is infinitely more than Father: if we could fully comprehend all that God as Father means,

we would find still more of God beyond that—and so on, without end. The Father IS God, but beyond is infinitely more: the Son IS God, but beyond is the Father.

Because of the nature of this study we cannot speak of ‘proofs’; but insofar as the word may justly be used, the final ‘proof’ must be the inferred identification of Himself by the Lord Jesus Christ, with Jehovah.

In Exod. iii. 14 “God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM I AM hath sent unto you.”

In John’s Gospel the Lord uses the expression “I AM” on a number of occasions, which associated with Jehovah. John x. 11, 14:

“I am (*ego eimi*, very emphatic) the good shepherd”
“I am (*ego eimi*) the good shepherd, and know My sheep.”

Surely only one can be described as “*the* good shepherd”, yet, emphatically, the Lord Jesus Christ says “I am the good shepherd”. David, in Psa. xxiii., says “The Lord (Jehovah) is my shepherd”. This psalm summarizes the title of Jehovah, and it is difficult not to see in the claim “I am the good shepherd” the claim also to the titles of Jehovah.

We refer to only one more of the great *ego eimi* statements of the Lord Jesus Christ, that recorded in John xviii. 3-8, the arrest of the Lord. In response to His question “Whom seek ye?”, those who had come to take Him said “Jesus of Nazareth”. To this He said “I am” (the “he” is not in the original), *ego eimi*. At this ‘they went backward, and fell to the ground’. Similarly in verse 8 the Lord again says “I am (*ego eimi*)”. Some try to explain the reaction of the men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees as simply surprise that the One they had come to arrest should admit to being the One they wanted. Is there really anything in that to call for such an extreme reaction? It seems much more likely that the words were uttered with such authority and majesty that for the moment they were aware of the deity of the One they had come to arrest. Police officers do not normally react to “It’s a fair cop” in such an extreme way.

In our apprehension of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ a great deal depends upon the standpoint from which we approach the subject. If we begin with the babe at Bethlehem, and the man Jesus of Nazareth, then it is impossible for us to begin to understand. How can a man be God? If, on the other hand, we begin with God reaching out to lost mankind, seeking a means of touching them, making Himself known, and redeeming them, the possibility of God becoming man is not so remote. *We* may not be able to understand; but it is not impossible. The lesser cannot assume the characteristics of the greater; but the greater may well in His Wisdom and for His Purpose assume “the likeness of sinful flesh”.

The Miracles in the Gospels.

#1. Introduction & Matt. viii. 1 - 15. pp. 210 - 215

In earlier numbers of *The Berean Expositor* we had a series of articles dealing with THE PARABLES of Matthew, and while they touched upon Scriptures which were familiar to *all* readers, some aspects of their teaching, particularly their dispensational aspect, were set out and proved to be of much help to those beginning their acquaintance with right division of the Word. The present series goes over the ground in more depth.

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

- DUNAMIS.—An act of power. The English dynamo, dynamite and dynamics have power as their dominant note.
SEMEION.—A sign. Used chiefly by John.
TERAS.—A wonder, a prodigy, something which strikes terror. John iv. 48 and Acts ii. 22 are the only references to Christ, the remaining fourteen occurrences are used of false christs, the Apostles, and Moses.
ERGON.—A work. The miracles are spoken of as the *work* of God, good *works*, and *works* which none other man did.
EUDOXIA.—Glorious things (Luke xiii. 17).
PARADOXIA.—Strange things (Luke v. 26).
THAUMASIA.—Wonderful things (Matt. xxi. 15).

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

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

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

The result of these mighty works was that:--

“there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan” (verse 25).

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

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

(*Miracles10*, pp.9-11).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lev. xiv. contains the intensely instructive "law of the leper in the day of his cleansing". Christ's dying and rising again is clearly set forth; the cleansed leper is atoned for by the blood, and re-consecrated by the oil. Here in the leper may be seen Israel's condition before God, "no soundness, but wounds, bruises and putrifying sores". The leper's condition cut him off from worship and service, rendering him quite unfit for any act of ministry in any shape or form; such was Israel—Israel that was destined to be a kingdom of Priests, Israel of whom the Gentile will yet say, "They are the ministers unto our God"; Israel a leper.

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

"Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law that the blessing of Abraham might come on *the Gentiles* through Jesus Christ" (Gal. iii. 13-14).

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

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

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

(*Miracles10*, pp.42-46).

Much more needs to be said on these three important miracles and comment will continue in the next issue.

#2. Matt. viii. 1 - 15 (continued).
pp. 225 - 228

It is remarkable how much teaching lies beneath the words and selection of incidents that the Holy Spirit has guided the writers of the Gospels into recording from our Lord's ministry. Before reading this article it would be profitable to go over again the previous one that displayed the features linking these three miracles.

Great faith can dispense with all means and accessories, and can rely on "the word only". It was faith indeed on the leper's part to say to the Lord, "if thou wilt, thou canst", but it was greater faith for the centurion to dare to decline the personal visit of the Lord and rest confidently in His spoken word. We suggest that he recognized Christ as the Sent One, because of his added explanation. He said more than the A.V. records; not merely did he say, "for I am a man under authority", but he said, "for I ALSO am a man under authority". The fact that he was under authority gave authority to his words; he said to a soldier, "Go, and he goeth", and the authority under which he himself was placed gave, in its turn, all the weight to his commands. So with the Lord, He spoke not His own words, but the Father's; the works He did He declared were not His, but the Father's that sent Him. The whole of John's Gospel rings with the fact that Christ was the Sent One. The healing of the centurion's servant was John v. 24 in tableau,

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

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

"I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. viii. 11, 12).

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

"Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, and his servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (Matt. viii. 13).

The parallel record in Luke vii. 1-10 should be read. *The Companion Bible* considers this a second miracle of healing, suggesting that the Lord had blessed the centurion before (Matt. viii. 12, 13), i.e., before the calling of the twelve in Matt. x. 1, etc. The second healing of the centurion's *bondman* took place *after* the calling of the twelve (Luke vi. 13-16). It must be remembered that Matthew selects his items with a view to the object of his gospel, and nowhere claims that historical order is maintained. Luke, however, does claim that he writes "in order", and we take Luke's record of any incident to be the true historical order of its happening. Many have found a "discrepancy" in the fact that whereas Matt. v.-vii. was evidently spoken on a mountain, Luke vi. 17 says that a body of teaching of exactly the same character was spoken "in the plain". "There",

says the critic, “the narrative is contradictory, one says a mountain, the other a plain”. Others, to avoid the difficulty, say (and with truth), that the Lord could have repeated His teaching again elsewhere. The whole controversy is dispelled by looking at the original, and using simple common sense. First as to the mountain, Matt. v. 1 says:--

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

Luke vi. 12 says:--

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

This passage supplements Matthew’s record. Matthew evidently had no reason to say why the Lord went up the mountain, except that it was because of the multitude. The multitudes which followed Him were from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond Jordan, according to Matthew; they were from all Judea, Jerusalem, the sea, and coast of Tyre and Sidon according to Luke. Both records are true, each gives his own account which does not contradict, but complements the other.

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

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

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

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

(*Miracles10*, pp.42-46).

The Plan of God.

*(Being a series of studies in the Scriptures, made for broadcasting in America.
They have the beginner and even the unbeliever in mind,
and are an attempt to present the Truth of the Scriptures in the simplest possible way.)*

No.61. The Epistle to the Colossians (11). pp. 1 - 5

The Apostle Paul now issues his final instructions. He stresses the importance of intercession, a ministry in itself of great importance as we saw when we studied the parallel section in Ephesians (vi. 18). There is no doubt that prayer along the lines of the Lord's will accomplishes much, and the believer who neglects it does so to his great spiritual loss:

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Col. iv. 2-4, R.V.).

The plural pronouns ‘us’ doubtless include Paul's friends who were free, like Timothy and Epaphras. The idea of a ‘door being opened’ is characteristically Pauline (ICor.xvi.9; IICor.ii.12), a new opportunity being given by the Lord for witness. In Eph. vi. it is to make known the good news concerning the Mystery, the great secret revealed in the earlier chapters. Here it is the secret concerning Christ and His exaltation which has been so stressed in this epistle as the antidote to the error which was circulating at Colossae. Both these secrets are stressed in Eph. iii. and both are necessary to get a balanced view of the prison ministry of the Apostle Paul for us Gentiles. First we must have our eyes opened and our minds enlarged to grasp the greatness of the Lord's exaltation ‘far above all’ in the heavenly places (Eph. i.). Only then can we begin to appreciate what it means to belong to a newly created company of believers taken from Jew and Gentile and linked with Him there (Eph. ii. 6). With such a great stewardship of Truth it is no wonder that the Apostle asks for prayer so that he may make it manifest, for according to Col. i. 27 God wills to reveal the greatness of this secret to His people and in the first place used Paul as a channel so to do (Eph. iii. 3, 8, 9).

The Apostle goes on to exhort believers to walk carefully in view of those ‘without’, that is, those who are non-Christians, for the unbelieving world cares little about Christian doctrine, but carefully notes the words and actions of those who profess to name the name of Christ. We are to be epistles ‘known and read of all men’ (IICor.iii.2), specially to those who do not read the Bible and, as living epistles, we must ‘redeem the time’ (Col. iv. 5), in our witness to those who know not the Saviour. *Kairos* is not the ordinary word for ‘time’, but means a special opportunity which may soon pass. “Buy it up”, says the Apostle, “while it lasts”, and those who are keen for Christ and the stewardship of the ‘good deposit’ which Paul was ministering, will be eager and vigilant to seize every such opportunity for witness that presents itself. The speech of all such

must be gracious and a preservative against evil and error, like salt in food (Col. iv. 6). In other words, the believer who wishes to be faithful and fruitful must not only be opportune as regards time, but also speak appropriately to the person concerned, and here heavenly wisdom will be needed as to the best way to handle each one that comes our way, for everyone is individual in his needs.

Paul now refers to his associates and messengers and brings forward Tychicus who was the bearer of the letter to the Ephesians as well, and also possibly one to Laodicea (Eph. vi. 21). He is mentioned twice in the Pastoral Epistles (II Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12) and is designated by the Apostle as a faithful friend and helper who would declare his circumstances to them. Onesimus, the runaway slave, who in the providence of God had come into contact with Paul at Rome and become a believer, is the subject of the letter to Philemon. Though once an unbelieving slave, he is now 'one of you' and, from a spiritual stand-point, on an equal footing with the other members of the Colossian church. Tychicus and Onesimus would be able to give them an up-to-date account of the Apostle and the circumstances surrounding him as the 'prisoner of the Lord' at Rome.

The Apostle now sends greetings from six believers who were with him at the time of writing, three of them Jews and three of them Gentile. Aristarchus was associated with Paul in the riot of Ephesus (Acts xix. 29) and later went to Jerusalem as one of the two delegates sent from Thessalonica. He also, together with Luke, accompanied the Apostle when he set sail from Caesarea to Rome (Acts xxvii. 2). Paul describes him as his 'fellow-prisoner' which probably means he shared the Apostle's imprisonment voluntarily.

Mark joins in the greetings (iv. 10). He is described as the cousin of Barnabas (R.V.) which explains the link between him and Barnabas in the Acts (xv. 37), causing the dispute between Paul and Barnabas when he failed and left them, not being able apparently to stand the rigours of the way. Now, at the time of writing the Colossian letter, he had redeemed his reputation. It would appear that the Colossians had received some communication regarding Mark (iv. 10) and they are bidden to receive him if he should visit them.

Of Jesus Justus we know nothing apart from this reference. Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua and Justus was a common Latin name. "These only are my fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God" declared the Apostle. We have shown earlier on that the thought of a Kingdom is stressed in the Prison Epistles after Acts xxviii. as well as before, and therefore it is quite erroneous to try to limit the thought of a Kingdom to the people of Israel. It is the *sphere* of the Kingdom that differs before the Acts and afterwards, inasmuch as earth is distinct from heaven.

There is no part of God's redemptive purpose (touching both heaven and earth) that does not come under God's sovereignty. Almost the last thought of Paul in his final letter is to declare that the Lord would preserve or save him "unto His *heavenly Kingdom*" (II Tim. iv. 18). These Jewish Christians had been a comfort and support to the imprisoned Apostle.

He goes on to name three other believers, Gentile by birth. Epaphras, as we have already seen, was the human link between Paul and the Colossian church, and chapter i. stresses his faithfulness and zeal for the Christians at Colossae. His effective life of intercession for them is summed up in verse 12 (R.V.):

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.”

This was vital intercession, complementary to the Apostle’s as chapter i. makes clear. Both were ‘*striving* for them in prayer’, which clearly shows that real prayer or intercession is not something that is just pleasant and easy. It is an *exacting work* that costs, but how rewarding it can be! All those who profess to rejoice in the fact that they are ‘complete, or filled full in Christ’ (ii. 10) should know something of this in experience and service for others.

Luke and Demas complete the list of those sending greetings. Here we are told that Luke was ‘the beloved physician’. The Lord gave Paul a faithful friend who stayed and assisted him right through to the end of his course (II Tim. iv. 11), looking after his physical needs as well as his spiritual and temporal ones. Luke is probably a shortened form of Lucius, a very common Gentile name throughout the Roman Empire. We do not see any point in trying to establish, as some have tried to do, that Luke was a Jew. A Jew was not likely to have a Gentile name!

Lastly we come to Demas and note that Paul makes no comment regarding him. Later on he is evidently pained to record that Demas had left him ‘having loved this present world’ (II Tim. iv. 10). Could he see the traces of this already appearing in Demas when the Colossian epistle was being written? If so, it would explain his silence concerning him. What a powerful effect love can have, either for good or evil! It is obvious we should take great care concerning the things and the persons we profess to love as these can alter the whole course of our lives one way or the other.

In closing the epistle the Apostle Paul directs that it should be passed on to the church at Laodicea after the Colossians had read it at a church meeting. Not only this, but the Colossians should publicly read an epistle of his from Laodicea. There has been a great deal of discussion about this letter, but we cannot be certain as to its contents. Some suggest that it has been lost. If this is true then it did not form part of inspired Scripture, for who can question the ability of the Lord to preserve parts of His own Word and superintend their gathering together in one volume? We do know that Paul wrote letters which do not form part of Holy Writ (e.g. to the church at Corinth, additional to the ones we already have).

On the other hand, some scholars suggest that the Laodicean letter is our epistle to the Ephesians, which, as we have seen, was not addressed to one church, but was for wider circulation. If Colossians was written before Ephesians, as some think, this would be a difficulty. However, it may be the other way round and J. B. Lightfoot and A. Harnack and others uphold the Ephesian letter theory mentioned above. The fact is we do not

know for certain and, therefore, it is not wise to dogmatize. At a later date there was an apocryphal letter entitled “The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans”, but this comes in the category of apocryphal literature which was prominent in the early centuries, just as the Book of Jasher and other so-called ‘lost books’ stimulated other writers to issue compositions bearing these titles.

Paul ends with a personal message to one member of the church:

“And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it” (iv. 17).

Archippus is mentioned in Philemon 2 where the Apostle described him as his ‘fellow-soldier’, and it would seem that he was a member of Philemon’s household and possibly his son. What the ministry involved we do not know, but it was evidently important enough for Paul to send him this stimulating message and it would have been all the more effective because it would have been read before the whole church. Archippus may have been slipping back spiritually and needed this reminder of his responsibility to discharge his God-given ministry (literally ‘fill up’, a typical Colossian thought).

Paul now takes the pen from the amanuensis and concludes in his own handwriting which was a guarantee of the genuineness of the letter:

“The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you” (iv. 18, R.V.).

We should note the last personal touch which was full of feeling, “Do not forget my bonds”. While he rejoiced in being, not the prisoner of Nero, but of Christ Jesus for us Gentiles, yet there was a great personal cost he had to pay and it would do us all good to remember at what price, even from a human standpoint, the precious Word of God has come down to us, first of all through the faithful Apostle of the Gentiles, and then through loyal successors, many of whom gladly gave their lives for the Lord Jesus.

The First Epistle to TIMOTHY

No.1. Introduction, i. 1 - 4. pp. 41 - 46

It is evident that the three Pastoral Epistles of Paul form a group and were evidently written within a short interval of time between his two Roman imprisonments. Thus they were written after the end of the Acts and their contents cannot be fitted into the Acts period.

Authorship. It was universally held by the early church that Paul was the author and this was never questioned until about 100 years ago. Ignatius, Irenaeus, Polycarp, Athenagoras, Justin Martyr and the early Muratorian fragment give their testimony to the Pauline authorship. The reader is referred to the introduction to II Timothy for further facts. We shall only touch upon the assertions of the critics here.

Their main reasons for denying the authorship of Paul are:

(1) There is no exposition of the great basic doctrines (such as justification by faith) which are characteristic of Paul's epistles. But the Apostle was addressing *leaders* in the truth, Timothy and Titus, who did not need this for they had been well grounded by Paul's oral teaching for some 15-20 years.

(2) The church set-up (e.g. as regarding bishops) was not that of the first century but the second, during the lifetime of Ignatius. But this is not true. We find there were bishops (note the plural) and deacons at Philippi (Phil. i. 1) and Paul had ordained *elders* in every church he founded (Acts xiv. 23). When a new assembly came into being there was obviously the need for someone to take charge and care for the spiritual welfare of the group. We find nothing of the exaggerated elevation of *one* bishop ruling over assemblies such as took place at the time of Ignatius and was finally exhibited in the Roman Catholic set-up.

(3) The Pastorals exhibit the developed Gnosticism of the *second* century. This again is not true. In the Pastorals we find an incipient Gnosticism, a transitional stage from Judaism to developed Gnosticism. And even if this were not so, we should remember that Paul had the gift of prophecy and could foresee how events were going to shape (cp. Acts xx. 29-31).

(4) *Linguistic difficulties.* In the Pastoral epistles there are a number of words not used elsewhere in the N.T. But this can be accounted for by the different circumstances of writing. Some have laid great importance on word statistics, but the comment of Dr. R. P. Martins is to the point here:

“One of the great gains of recent Pauline studies is the growing distrust of the value of word statistics in determining apostolic authorship, and our admission that we cannot say with dogmatism just what he could or could not have written” (*Philippians* p.107).

It is absurd to try to guess just what Paul's vocabulary was or to try to restrict it to one's own ideas. In any case would a forger introduce non-Pauline words at about seventeen words per page of the Greek Text if he wanted the epistle to be accepted as Paul's writing?

We shall say no more about the human authorship, believing that the author was Paul the Apostle and that this rests upon a solid foundation.

We next give the structure of the epistle:

The structure of I Timothy.

- A | i. 1, 2. Salutation.
- B | i. 3-20. *Hetero didaskaleo*, “Teach no other doctrine” (i. 3).
The King, incorruptible, invisible (i. 17).
Shipwreck (i. 19).
- C | ii. 1-7. Salvation of all men (ii. 4).
- D | ii. 8 - iii. 15-. These things I write (iii. 14).
- E | iii. -15, 16. The MYSTERY of GODLINESS. Angels.
- E | iv. 1-8. The APOSTACY. Doctrines of demons.
- C | iv. 9-12. Saviour of all men (iv. 10).
- D | iv. 13 - vi. 2. These things teach (vi. 2).
- B | vi. 3-20. *Hetero didaskaleo*, “Teach otherwise” (vi. 3).
The King, immortal, unseen (vi. 15, 16).
Drowning (vi. 9).
- A | vi. 21. Salutations.

This structure shows the balance of the epistle and its leading features. The correspondence is shown by noting the sections headed by capitals. The purpose of the epistle was the guidance of Timothy as a Christian leader as to his attitude to those *within* and those *without*; what his charge involved and what his personal conduct and example should be. The same can be said of the epistle to Titus.

In the opening verses of I Timothy Paul stresses his God-given authority:

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour, and Christ Jesus our hope; unto Timothy, my true child in faith: grace, mercy, peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” (I Tim. i. 1, 2, R.V.).

This personal authority is in order to make unmistakable the authority of the message he teaches and this is intensified by the expression ‘by the commandment of God’. He usually says ‘by the *will* of God’, but he wanted Timothy to realize afresh, and any others who would read the epistle, that he was not expressing his own ideas, but was a man under authority and that authority was nothing less than the authority of God Himself.

The expression “God our Saviour” may appear unusual for the Apostle, but he uses it interchangeably with the phrase “Christ our Saviour” as the occurrences in the epistle to Titus show:

God our Saviour i. 3. Christ our Saviour i. 4.
God our Saviour ii. 10.
Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ii. 13.
God our Saviour iii. 4. Christ our Saviour iii. 6.

Those who deny the deity of Christ will have an insoluble difficulty here, unless they are prepared to state there are *two* Gods and *two* Saviours referred to in this epistle, which is of course sheer heresy, denying the truth of the Old and New Testaments concerning *one* God and *one* Saviour and ‘none else’.

Well may E. K. Simpson write concerning the opening verses of I Timothy:

“This is no slender proof of his conviction of the deity of Christ, especially when we reflect that the statement comes from a monotheist to his finger tips like this Hebrew of the Hebrews” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, p.25).

The word ‘Saviour’ would have a contemporary significance when we remember it was used in the cult of Emperor-worship, being applied to such an infamous character as Nero. What a contrast! Here, Christ Jesus is both Lord and Hope. Let us never forget our hope is indissolubly bound up with a *Person* not a creed, and that Person is the ever-living Saviour.

This is what gives the word ‘hope’ absolute certainty in the N.T., an element that is usually lacking in our modern usage. The true believer, grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ, does not have to speculate about his final end. He knows for certain he is linked for ever by grace with the One Who said “Because I live, ye shall live also” and He lives, never to die again, the eternal Saviour and Lord, Who, “being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him” (Rom. vi. 9).

Timothy is addressed as *gnesios*, ‘true-born’, ‘genuine’. There was nothing spurious about Timothy or his standing in the faith. He was the recognized representative of the Apostle. *Teeknon*, ‘child’, rather than *huios*, ‘son’, strikes a caressing note and shows the close and warm relationship between Timothy and his spiritual father. The Apostle continues:

“As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, neither to give heed to fables and endless genealogies, the which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith; so do I now” (I Tim. i. 3-4, R.V.).

The reference to Ephesus need not imply that Paul had recently been there or that Ephesus was his starting point. *Poreuomenos*, ‘when I was going’, not A.V. ‘when I went’, seems to indicate that Timothy was left *en route* for Ephesus and was charged by the Apostle to remain there for the reason expressed by the next verse, namely to correct the false teachers and uphold the truth committed by the Lord. Timothy’s sensitive nature may have shrunk from this, but he was exhorted to take a strong line with the offenders and maintain the ‘good deposit’ of truth. This was obviously a recognized body of doctrine, as we have seen in other studies, and related to what the risen Christ had revealed and committed to Paul as his human vehicle for making it known to the Christian world. Timothy was to charge certain ones that they were not to teach a different doctrine. “Charge” *parangello*, is a strong military term which means literally ‘to pass commands from one to another’. *Heterodidaskaleo*, means ‘to teach amiss’.

This word gives a timely warning against introducing novelty or deviating from the specific truth which God had deposited with Paul. All who teach should have this warning before them continually. The Lord does not take a light view of any mishandling of His Word and those of His children who do this must not be surprised if, instead of meeting Him with joy in the future, they do so with shame. Faithfulness is the first requirement by God.

The error of false teachers consisted in ‘fables and endless genealogies’. *Muthoi*, ‘fables’ occurs in Titus i. 14, where they are described as Jewish, and it is more than likely that we have the same thing here. While we have not the developed Gnosticism of the second century the beginnings are here with semi-Gnostical theories of aeons and emanations. In addition there was the Jewish delight in speculation, leading to the composition of mythical histories based on the O.T. such as is found in the Jewish book of *Jubilees*. This mixture of error was doubtless being promulgated at Ephesus and was Satan’s counter attack to the truth of the Mystery. The ‘endless genealogies’ possibly resulted from the idea that God, called *Buthos* or *Depth*, by acting on His own mind produced two other beings of different sexes called *Aeons* or *Emanations* and from these two sprang a series of other *Aeons*. When anyone attempted to trace this celestial pedigree or genealogy, there arose great arguments as to the number of *Aeons* and their order of procession. Here was Satan’s travesty of the purpose of the ages with its false mediators in the place of the only genuine One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The danger of all this was that it broke the spiritual unity among members of the Body of Christ and so led to endless queries and doubts. This is always the aim of the enemy, to split the people of God who hold the truth and, looking back upon the past centuries, he has been eminently successful. These are *still* his tactics today, so let us keep a watchful eye and not be drawn aside from what God has committed to our charge. This truth Paul describes as a ‘dispensation of God’ (verse 4 R.V.). This is nearer in translation to what Paul was inspired to write than ‘godly edifying’ of the A.V.

There is hardly any need for us to stress the importance of the word ‘dispensation’. It is *not* synonymous with the word ‘age’, but means the *administration of a stewardship*. We have this word and its cognate rendered ‘steward’ in Luke xvi. 1, 2. In revealing the great truth of the Mystery (Secret) in Eph. iii., Paul declared it to be a *dispensation* or stewardship in verse 9 (R.V.) and *grace* in verse 2. Of course it is a ‘fellowship’ (A.V.) but the Apostle reveals that it is something much deeper and higher than this. It was this precious dispensation of God that these false teachers were marring by their unfaithfulness and erroneous doctrine, hence the serious warning Paul gave to his son in the faith.

No.2. i. 5 - 17.
pp. 66 - 71

Paul had left Timothy at Ephesus to deal with false teachers who were straying from the Truth committed to him and made known through his witness. The best antidote to error is always the truth of God and here the Apostle calls it a ‘dispensation (stewardship) of God’ which had been the subject of the Ephesian and Colossian epistles (I Tim. i. 4, R.V.) and the goal of it all was love:

“But the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned” (i. 5).

The word *parangelia*, ‘commandment’ (a military term) is cognate with the verb in verse 3. *Telos* is the *aim* or goal; surely the goal of all truth is divine love in all its sacrificial giving and unselfishness. Its source is made clear by the preposition *ek* (*out of*) which clearly draws attention to its origin in three ways:

(1) *A pure heart.* The *heart* stands for the totality of a man’s moral affections and outlook, and without purity there, Christian love is impossible. The Lord Jesus had a special promise for the pure in heart (Matt. v. 8).

(2) *A good conscience.* The word *suneidesis* (conscience) implies self-judgment and moral consciousness, a constant awareness of God and His truth. In this very epistle we find the opposers of the truth have a seared or branded conscience (I Tim. iv. 2), one that cannot act because it has been quenched and ignored so many times and finally put out of action by the system known in Scripture as ‘the lie’, whose author is Satan.

(3) *Faith unfeigned.* True faith or trust is where we start in our dealings with God. “He that cometh to God must believe (have faith) that He exists” (Heb. xi. 6). Pretence here ruins the whole approach and in fact all our relationship with Him. The Apostle links love and faith together in his great hymn recorded in I Cor. xiii. and such faith leads to the greatest of all graces—love.

This trinity of graces was conspicuously absent from the opposers of the truth in our context:

“From which things some having swerved have turned aside unto vain talking; desiring to be teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm” (i. 6, 7, R.V.).

These false teachers, instead of keeping to the race track of truth, had swerved off it into a barren waste, their words being nothing more than meaningless chatter (vain jangling). The desire to be ‘teachers of the law’ shows their Jewish character and their ambition seemed to be to rival contemporary Rabbinical exposition, rather than to minister the truth.

Paul's indictment of them is scathing. They were utterly incompetent, being both ignorant and unintelligent. The mention of the law leads the Apostle to discuss it and its purpose, but he does not attempt to deal with it exhaustively. To appreciate this we must study both Romans and Galatians, especially Rom. vii. In I Timothy Paul gives one of the main reasons for the law, the restraint of evil doing:

“But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for men-stealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine; according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust” (i. 8-11, R.V.).

The law has little relevance for law-abiding people; they do not need its restraints and it was not designed for them, but for the lawless and insubordinate, who are not amenable to discipline. The catalogue of sins here begins with those against God and then against one's fellow man. The reference to murderers of fathers and mothers should probably be understood as *smiters* of parents as the R.V. margin suggests, an extreme violation of the fifth commandment.

Paul rounds off these offences with anything that is contrary to sound (healthy) doctrine. There is a tremendous contrast between teaching designed for criminals (the law) and teaching designed for the believer who wants to go on to perfection (maturity). Both *didaskalia* teaching, and *hugiainouse*, sound or healthy, are peculiarly words of the Pastoral Epistles. *Didaskalia* occurs fifteen times in these epistles, eight of them being in I Timothy (i. 10; iv. 1, 6, 13, 16; v. 17; vi. 1, 3). Furthermore the following cognate words should be noted which are also a feature of these important epistles, all revolving round the thought of teaching: *Heterodidaskalia*, to teach otherwise (I Tim. i. 3; vi. 3). *Nomodidaskalos*, teacher of the law (i. 7). *Didaskalos*, teacher (ii. 7). *Didasko*, to teach (ii. 12; iv. 11; vi. 2). *Didaktikos*, apt to teach (iii. 2). The prevalence of these words is easily accounted for when we remember that they were addressed to *leaders* and *teachers* like Timothy and Titus. But nothing is clearer than the fact that all such teaching, to be acceptable to the Lord, must conform to His good deposit of truth made known through Paul. In his second epistle the Apostle reminds Timothy of this when he states “Hold the pattern of sound words *which thou hast heard from me*” (II Tim. i. 13 R.V.).

This exceedingly rich and uplifting deposit of truth Paul now designates as:

“According to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, *which was committed to my trust*” (i. 11, R.V.).

The full grandeur of the original Greek has been missed by the A.V. “glorious gospel”. The emphasis is not so much on the word ‘gospel’, but rather the word “glory” (*doxa*), which is so intimately bound up with the Mystery and its supreme hope (Ephesians i. 6, 12, 14, 17, 18; iii. 16, 21; Phil. i. 11; ii. 11; iii. 21; iv. 19, 20; Colossians i. 1, 27; iii. 4; I Tim. i. 11, 17; iii. 16; Titus ii. 13; II Tim. ii. 10; iv. 18). Note that in every case the noun *doxa* is used, even when the A.V. translates it as ‘glorious’. For instance, our blessed hope is ‘the appearing *of the glory* of our great God

and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 13). That tremendous glory is now hidden and the hope of the Body of Christ coincides with its manifestation (Col. iii. 4).

In I Timothy Paul thrills with joy at the thought of his high commission of proclaiming the good news (gospel) contained in the priceless deposit of truth, filled with the unsearchable riches of Christ and ablaze with His glory (Eph. iii. 9). Yet, at the same time, he cannot help thinking of his own unworthiness especially his pre-conversion days. If the Lord Jesus could change Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners into Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, then there is no limit to His transforming power, and there is hope for the weakest of us if we come into contact by faith with such an almighty Saviour and Lord. This sudden outburst of thanksgiving is typical of the Apostle, who never ceased to marvel at the grace and long-suffering of God and his own past sinfulness and blindness.

He does not attempt to excuse himself in his headstrong persecution of the Lord’s people. He ravaged the early church like a wild animal (Gal. i. 13). In I Timothy he describes himself as a ‘blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious’, only the English “injurious’ is not strong enough. *Hubristen* means a *violent man*, one who is arrogant and overbearing. In his self-drawn sketch we can hardly believe that such a person could ever become one of the most faithful and Christlike servants of the Lord, but such is the truth. All people are naked and open to the all-seeing God (Heb. iv. 13) and in considering Saul of Tarsus, the Lord recognized one who was absolutely faithful to his light, however small it might have been, and that there was a mighty potential in this man once he was saved and enlightened. Whatever Saul of Tarsus was in his pre-conversion days, he was not a hypocrite, “I did it ignorantly in unbelief”, he says (I Tim. i. 13). Here was no willful ignorance which cannot be excused, but the blindness of unregeneracy which, when removed by the risen Christ, could be replaced by the full knowledge and acknowledgment of the liberating truth of God which is resident alone in the ascended Lord. No wonder the Apostle Paul never forgot the wonders of *grace* and we are not surprised to find that he makes more references to grace than any other N.T. writer. It was the Lord’s saving grace that stopped him in his mad career, replaced it by a new spirit of faith and love and a keen desire to ‘apprehend that for which he had been apprehended by Christ Jesus’ (Phil. iii. 12).

The striking formula, “Faithful is the saying” occurs five times in the Pastoral Epistles and nowhere else (I Tim. i. 15; iii. 1; iv. 9; Titus iii. 8; II Tim. ii. 11). This is supposed to present a problem to Pauline authorship, but who can dogmatically say that Paul could not, or would not have appealed to such sayings if they were truth? It appears that he is quoting statements in a rhythmical form current in the churches, which were acknowledged to be ‘sure words’, and *pistos*, faithful, is a characteristic word of the Pastorals, occurring no less than seventeen times. Truth and fidelity are brought to the fore here. The statement that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” breathes the very soul of the gospel as one writer has expressed it, and gives us the basic fact of the Christian faith. In introducing it, Paul is still thinking about himself and the depths of his sinful past for he adds, ‘of whom I am chief’. Paul holds no inflated idea of his own importance. It is ‘less than the least’ (Eph. iii. 8) and ‘the least of the apostles’ (ICor.xv.9). But here he thinks not only of himself for he realizes that, in laying hold of

him, the ringleader of the revolt against Him, the Lord was not only displaying the riches of His grace as far as he was concerned, but was also giving an example of what His grace could do for all subsequent sinners:

“. . . . that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all His longsuffering, for an example of them which should hereafter believe on Him unto everlasting life” (i. 16, R.V.).

Hypotuposis, ‘example’, occurs again in II Tim. i. 13, “the *form* of sound words”. The word means an outline sketch or a word illustration. Paul’s experience was to serve as a compelling example of grace abounding to countless numbers who should hereafter believe on the Lord Jesus unto life everlasting. *Epi*, ‘on’, with the dative case is rare in the N.T., but Paul uses it again in Rom. ix. 33 and x. 11. It points to Christ as the only firm basis of faith. Remember no one is saved by faith alone. Faith must rest on someone or something. It cannot be suspended as it were in mid-air. The faith that saves and brings eternal life of inexpressible joy must be faith or trust that is resting solely and securely on the great Rock of ages, the un-changing Christ and all that He has accomplished for sinners.

Once more an irresistible impulse prompts the Apostle to break forth into praise and thanksgiving:

“Now unto the King of the ages (margin), incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen” (i. 17, R.V.).

The striking title, “the King of the ages”, occurs in Rev. xv. 3 R.V. and in the Apocrypha (Tobit 13:6,10) so it was evidently current in Jewish circles. It is correct to keep the title of God as King solely to Israel, for it is used twice in I Timothy, here and vi. 15 (See also Rev. xix. 16). The invisibility of God as Spirit is stressed in other Scriptures (e.g. Col. i. 15). He is the Author and Ruler of the Ages which He has appointed to carry out His great redemptive purpose and this ‘plan of the ages’ (eternal purpose A.V. Eph. iii. 11) is centred in Christ Jesus. He is *mono Theo*, “God alone”, and there is ‘none else’ to be compared with Him as the middle chapters of Isaiah reveal. To Him be all the adoration and praise for all time and eternity to follow!

No.3. i. 18 - ii. 7.
pp. 101 - 105

After his rapturous doxology (I Tim. i. 17), Paul reverts to the main purpose of his letter, to impress upon Timothy the solemn charge he had been given in connection with the Truth:

“This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience” (I Tim. i. 18, 19, R.V.).

It is significant that the verb commit or deposit (*paratithemi*) is used of Timothy passing the good deposit of Truth to others (II Tim. ii. 2). This young fellow had evidently been marked out by those who had been given the gift of prophecy during the Acts, as being God’s choice for being Paul’s successor, and as such he had no light responsibility, as this epistle makes clear. Satanic opposition and the forces of darkness made warfare inevitable and this has been true ever since Satan’s fall, but Timothy must be the Lord’s good soldier and loyally take his stand and not yield an inch, ‘fighting the good fight of faith’ (vi. 12) and holding faith and a good conscience. Faith and conscience are joined together three times in this epistle (Compare i. 5 and iii. 9). These embrace the fundamentals of true doctrine and practice and the surrender of one can ruin the other. Faith keeps us in close contact with the Lord and His truth, and a sensitive conscience will tamper with nothing that is false, lax, or doubtful. These are really the expansion of the whole armour of God that is described in Eph. vi., which ensures the safety of the believer in this highly dangerous conflict. Paul had witnessed many a spiritual downfall due to lax regard of these essentials and so he warns his son in the faith:

“. . . . holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme” (i. 19, 20, R.V.).

Hymenaeus and Alexander were the concrete examples of this who would have been known to Timothy. Hymenaeus is mentioned again in II Tim. ii. 17 in connection with false teaching concerning resurrection and Alexander is spoken of in Acts xix. 33 and II Tim. iv. 14. As Alexander was a common name it is not possible to say definitely that these are one and the same person, but it seems unlikely that Paul would be referring to two different Alexanders in the Pastoral Epistles without making this clear.

Whoever these men were, they called for strong disciplinary action, if the purity of the Truth was to be preserved. One of the Apostle’s powers was to be able ‘to deliver to Satan’ such people for chastisement, and if possible reformation, under the over-ruling of God. Some think this means excommunication, but in view of Job’s experience in the O.T. it could have related to serious bodily affliction. Acts xiii. 11 and I Cor. xi. 30 are examples of this. In the case of the two mentioned in I Tim. i., the object was remedial: “that they may learn not to blaspheme”, so there was mercy at the back of it all.

The Apostle now proceeds from his general charge to specific regulations concerning the worship and organization of the church:

“I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. ii. 1-4, R.V.).

The words ‘first of all’ relate not to time but to *importance*. How easy it is to become narrow in our praying! Paul would have us take in *all men* in our prayers. The four words he uses here throw light on the great ministry of prayer. *Deesis* (supplications) brings out the sense of *need*. *Proseuchai* (prayers) is the more general word for prayer as a whole. *Enteuxis* (intercessions) is the regular word for petition on behalf of someone else, a vastly important aspect of our prayer life and a ministry in itself. The very variety of terms serves to emphasize the richness and fullness of this spiritual exercise. Giving of thanks (*eucharistias*) is an element that is too often forgotten. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought” (Rom. viii. 26) is so true, but we need have no difficulty in giving thanks and praising the Lord for all His goodness and mercy to each one of us! If we have problems in our prayer life, let us think of the innumerable blessings we receive from day to day and then express our heartfelt gratitude to the Lord.

Paul brings before Timothy the need for prayer on behalf of kings and those in authority. Too often this is forgotten. Whether rulers or civil authorities are perverted and hostile or not, they should be subjects for remembrance at the Throne of Grace, the object being ‘that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life’ so that the work and witness for the Lord may not be hindered. Let us not think that rulers are beyond the Lord’s influence:

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will” (Prov. xxi. 1).

The exiled Jews at Babylon were bidden to pray for the pagan city by Jeremiah, saying ‘for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace’ (Jer. xxix. 7), and in the first century, prayer for those in authority would have included the infamous Nero! Let us not forget then, in our prayer for ‘all men’ to remember the government of nations and those in authority, for we are assured, in the context we are studying, that this is good and acceptable to God our Saviour, and here is the criterion of all prayer and worship. Is it acceptable and well pleasing to the Lord? If not, it is just ‘will worship’ of our devising and quite empty and fruitless.

The words “Who will have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” (ii. 4) have been the centre of controversy for a long time between Calvinism and Arminianism specially in the seventeenth century. It is not easy to assess the distinction between (*thelo*) ‘will’, used here and *boulomai* also translated ‘to will’ in other passages. Sometimes they are used interchangeably in Greek, but generally speaking *boulomai* as G. Abbott-Smith says in his Lexicon, means “to will, wish, desire, purpose, be minded

implying more strongly than *thelo* the deliberate exercise of volition”, whereas *thelo* expresses desire as the simple act of volition without deliberation or consideration. So, in the context we are considering, it would appear that Paul is stating not the decrees of God, but His general attitude to men, without distinction of race, colour, condition or status.

It is foolish for any Christian to get involved in lengthy and unprofitable arguments as to God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility. However contradictory they may seem to us, they are *both* found in God’s will and the problem arises from our short-sightedness and inability to comprehend all the ways of God. Heavenly wisdom will keep us from stressing one at the expense of the other. We can be certain of one thing, namely that I Tim. ii. 4 is *not* a proof text for universalism and those that use it in this way are disregarding the wider context of Scripture as a whole.

E. K. Simpson points out that *sozein*, to save, to the ordinary Greek ear conveyed nothing more than making safe and preserving. “Saviour” was a popular term for adulation given to the Roman emperors signifying little more than Protector. The word is used in this lesser sense in Matt. xiv. 30; John xii. 27; Acts xxvii. 31 and it could be used in this sense in the context of I Timothy. The first coming of Christ was a revelation of the kindness and love of God towards mankind as a whole (Titus iii. 4). Prayer for rulers accords with the divine willingness that all should be preserved from lawless misrule and come to a recognition of the truth which is resident only in Christ, for peaceful conditions give scope to the propagation of the gospel.

The source of all mercies and blessings is one and the same for all, whoever they may be, and *Christ is the sole medium of their bestowal*, which is what the Apostle is now going to emphasize:

“For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times; whereunto I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (I Tim. ii. 5-7, R.V.).

The position of the Lord Jesus as Mediator—a go-between for men and God is brought forward in Paul’s epistles. The need for such a one has been felt from the earliest times. Hence Job’s pathetic cry for a Daysman (Job ix. 32, 33). The gulf between man with his smallness and limitations and the limitless and infinite God is so tremendous that it calls for someone who can fully touch both God and man and the only person who can achieve this is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. As God and Man, He can completely touch both heaven and earth and this doctrine needs emphasizing today for it has largely been forgotten by evangelicals. Our Saviour is like Jacob’s ladder that stretched from heaven to the earth (Gen. xxviii. 12; John i. 51). A true Mediator must be both God and man. If he is not God, he cannot fully reach to heaven and if he is not man, he cannot fully touch and understand mankind. He must be able to fully represent both God and man and this is exactly what the Lord Jesus does. We learn from the papyri that *mesites* was a business term for *middleman*. Let us constantly thank God for such a wondrous Mediator, and remember that our approach to God must always be

through Christ as the one and only Way to God (John x. 1-9; xiv. 6), the great Intermediary on our behalf.

It is only because He is the only Mediator, that He can become the all-needed Ransom for men. In Matt. xx. 28 the Lord asserts that He came to give His life, a ransom for many (*lutron anti pollon*). But Paul uses here *antilutron*, a very rare word which indicates something more than this. It signifies a *counter ransom price* and draws our attention to the infinitude of the Offering. As E. K. Simpson so aptly expresses it: “Of priceless jewels we say they are worth a ‘king’s ransom’; but Christ crucified presents the ransom of the King of kings, a Sacrifice intrinsically illimitable, outweighing everything that can be placed in the counter scale”.

Spurgeon once said: “in Christ’s finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore”. This transcendent sacrifice for sin is the basis on which freedom may be granted to all. Yet not all enjoy that freedom. The ransom has infinite value, but the benefits require the appropriation of individual faith in Christ. God does not force His supreme benefits on men. Man must have a real sense of need, and as he is not a machine, but a moral creature with the power of choice, he must decide whether this priceless treasure is to be his own possession or not.

Now is the time, or season, the Apostle asserts, for the proclamation of this glorious truth far and wide. Once again we see the emphasis on the *right time* for the revelation of truth. God is never too early or too late and the careful student of the Word of God will never spoil the revelation of God by ignoring these divine time-periods.

**No.4. ii. 8 - iii. 1.
pp. 141 - 145**

The context of this epistle which we were studying in the last article, makes known the great doctrine of the One Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. He Who was declared to be God (John i. 1), ‘became flesh’ (John i. 14) taking upon Himself a human body which could be offered in death as the unique sacrifice for sin. Paul declares that in his ministry, the right time had come to make this known (I Tim. ii. 7) and he makes a solemn assertion that, in stating this, he is not lying. The critics of this epistle find a difficulty here that the Apostle needed to make such a statement to a loyal believer like Timothy who knew him so well. But Paul is looking wider with his opposers in view, who constantly sought to undermine his apostleship. Note the stress on his *Gentile* mission. He was pre-eminently the Apostle of the Gentiles, the human mouthpiece of Christ to the Gentile world in this age of grace. And not only this, but he was the prisoner of Christ Jesus for us Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1). It does seem extraordinary that so many who are Gentiles by birth, seek for God’s truth anywhere but through the channel God has appointed!

Paul now passes on to deal with the attitude of men in prayer and the delicate subject of women's actions and attire in the assembly and outside it, for there is nothing in the passage to restrict it to the gatherings of believers for prayer, worship and proclamation of the truth. *Katastole*, translated apparel, can mean demeanour as well as clothing. The Apostle's injunctions here are addressed to believers whom the pagan world were watching closely. Those who wished to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things would reflect this in simplicity of dress and modesty of behaviour in direct contrast to the ostentation that many Asiatic women assumed with their finery, showy jewelry, etc.

“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair, or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God” (ii. 8, 9, 10, N.I.V.).

Dress is a reflection of personality and a woman's dress is a mirror of her mind. Outward ostentation is not in keeping with a devout approach to God. The old English *shamefacedness and sobriety* can be rendered 'modestly and self-control', or as the N.I.V. has rendered it above. These words do not indicate mere seriousness of face and expression, but seriousness of *purpose* as opposed to frivolity and outward display. Paul is not denying all adornment for women, but if a woman's greatest asset is a devout and godly life, then her exterior will harmonize with this in contrast to the gaudy dress which so many Eastern women assumed. In addition to this there was a danger of newly emancipated Christian women abusing their new-found freedom by lording it over men and indulging in empty chatter during the worship of the assembly.

The Apostle enjoins silence on women in public worship reminding them of the God-given status of men and women. This he had already done to the Corinthian church (I Cor. xi. 3; xiv. 34, 35). If disrepute was not to be brought on the whole community, as had evidently happened at Corinth, the subject needed to be dealt with firmly and tactfully. A woman should discuss her problems at home, not in the public assembly. Nor should she teach a mixed congregation including men, for this contradicted God's order to which we have just alluded. Let us not forget that Paul is dealing with *public* teaching. There was no injunction against women teaching women or children in the home.

In these days when the equality of the sexes is so much stressed, such injunctions are not likely to be popular but are to be explained, one finds so often, by the assertion that Paul was a woman hater. Nothing could be further from the truth for he gladly acknowledges his indebtedness to women helpers among his fellow-labourers, such as Priscilla (Rom. xvi. 3-5) and Euodias and Synteché (Phil. iv. 2, 3). Paul could hardly write the words 'I lie not', and then a little further promulgate his own ideas and make them binding on the church. Much is being made today of women's public ministry as teachers, but the fact remains that this is not in accordance with God's will, whether we understand the reason for it or not.

It is not that men are better characters, cleverer or better teachers than women. It could often be the other way around, but God Who has a good and sufficient reason for all He does and commands, has made His mind known on this subject, and we do not believe that any Christian women who reverences the Lord and is sensitive to His mind and will is going to object to this.

The question of the relationship of the sexes is taken further by the Apostle:

“For Adam was first formed, then Eve; and Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression: but she shall be saved through the child-bearing (or her child-bearing, margin), if they continue in faith and love and sanctification with sobriety” (ii. 13-15, R.V.).

In I Cor. xi. 9 Paul had already taught that the priority of man’s creation places him as head in relation to the woman. This relationship, as E. K. Simpson has pointed out was ‘not competitive, but concordant and counterpart’—it is not a question of superiority or inferiority.

Another reason given by the Apostle here is that Adam was not deceived, but the woman was, and became a transgressor. At the same time Paul did not absolve Adam from responsibility and sin as Rom. v. 12 and onwards makes perfectly clear. “By *one man* sin entered the world, and death by sin”, and in this context, Eve is not mentioned. There was evidently a reason why the tempter approached Eve rather than Adam. Generally speaking, women, with their more sensitive nature and awareness, are more impressionable than men.

This in many respects may be perfectly harmless, but when it comes to spiritual things can be very dangerous, and Satan knew only too well than his arguments and deception would have far greater effect on Eve than Adam. It is significant that many of the false religious cults have originated from women and an all-wise God has ruled that women teaching men is not allowable in connection with Christian doctrine and its proclamation.

From the reference to Eve, Paul passes on to women in general, by stating ‘she shall be saved in child-bearing’ which is one of the most difficult expressions used in the Pastoral Epistles.

In what sense is the word ‘saved’ used here? There are at least four different explanations to be considered:

(1) Moffatt translates the phrase “women will get safely through child-birth”, giving them encouragement to have children without fear and this accords with Gen. iii. where a doom is pronounced on Eve, that in sorrow she shall conceive and bring forth children. It could be that child-bearing is emphasized here to counter the false teachers who advocated abstinence from marriage (I Tim. iv. 3).

(2) In this view the word ‘saved’ is used in its spiritual sense, but this brings tremendous difficulties for this would make women’s salvation from sin a matter of

works on her part, and it is inconceivable that Paul could mean this and so contradict the whole of his witness for salvation by grace apart from human effort or merit. And in any case what were unmarried women to do who could not legitimately bear children—or childless wives for that matter?

(3) There is a third suggestion, but equally improbable, that the words should read ‘she shall be saved by *the* child-bearing’ (i.e. the Messiah). If this is what Paul really meant he could hardly have used a more ambiguous way of saying it. The Greek article is generic, describing the whole process of child-bearing, rather than one particular instance. Does the Scripture anywhere teach that the virgin Mary was saved and her sins cancelled, because she bore the Saviour?

(4) The fourth idea takes the phrase in question to mean ‘she will be saved, even though she must bear children’, but this imposes an unnatural meaning on the preposition *dia*.

There seems no doubt to us that (1) is the true meaning of the passage and this imposes no strain on any other part of the Word.

We note that the verbs change from the singular to the plural, “*she* shall be saved”; “if *they* continue”, which shows that the latter part of the verse refers to Christian wives in general. They are to show the virtues of *faith, love* and *self-control* and in so doing they need have no fear of child-birth. It is the sphere of home life where the woman shines pre-eminently and as E. K. Simpson says:

“the pity is that the ‘new woman’ so often scorns her rightful crown and seems to nurse a standing grudge against heaven that she was not born a man when extraordinary cases arise, they must be accredited by peculiar circumstances like David’s seizure of the shew bread. Many tasks not strictly feminine must fall to the lot of female mission pioneers in solitary posts, or in seasons of emergency elsewhere. But the Head of the Church allots the posts of the members of His Body as His wisdom wills; and those who quit that appointed station for one of their own affecting, flout His prerogative of choice to their certain harm and loss” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, p.49).

Paul now proceeds to guide Timothy regarding the qualifications of those who were to lead the local assembly. He gives another of the faithful sayings of the Pastoral Epistles:

“Faithful is the saying, if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (iii. 1, R.V.).

It is important to realize that the modern word ‘bishop’ does not represent the Greek word *episkopos*, which means an overseer. Bishops in the time of the Apostle Paul were not highly educated scholars who had been theologically trained and wore a particular garb. There was no division into clergy and laity. Bishops were ordinary believers who had been adjudged faithful and had the spiritual qualifications the Apostle is about to enumerate. There was no hint here or elsewhere in the N.T. of the monarchical conception of episcopacy such as was later lauded by Ignatius, one man controlling a province consisting of a number of churches. This was a backward step finally leading to Romanism with its spiritual autocracy and its domination by the priesthood.

Every assembly had its leaders or *bishops*, (not one controlling bishop). The Philippian church had its *bishop and deacons* (Phil. i. 1) and the Ephesian its *elders* (Acts xx. 17). *Shepherds* (pastors) and *teachers* are the gifts of the ascended Christ in Eph. iv. 11.

Moffatt translates I Tim. iii. 1:

“It is a popular saying that whoever aspires to office is set upon an excellent occupation.”

Oregomai translated ‘desire’ literally means ‘to stretch oneself out’, hence ‘to aspire to’, but not in a bad sense. The second verb *epithumeo* expresses strong desire “to set one’s heart upon”. We shall see in our next study the divine qualifications for being a leader or overseer in charge of a company of believers in the Apostle Paul’s day.

No.5. iii. 2 - 15. pp. 192 - 196

Our last study ended in a consideration of I Tim. iii. 1, where the Apostle Paul commends the office of an overseer or bishop guiding an assembly of believers. We saw that this was not a sphere of service demanding special theological training or exceptional mental ability, but rather one of Christian character. This is made clear in the verses that follow:

“The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach; no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil” (I Tim. iii. 2-6, R.V.).

Some of these conditions seem to be obvious as relating to a leader, but we must remember that most of these believers were converts from the grossest paganism and so these qualities needed to be stressed. An overseer must be blameless, of good report, specially in respect to the items that follow, which are largely connected with his home life. Practical Christianity starts in the home, as the Prison Epistles of Paul clearly teach, and if conditions are wrong here, they are likely to be wrong everywhere else. “Husband of one wife” has caused much controversy. Is this directed against polygamy or does it ban second marriages? Regarding the former, it can be stated quite clearly that no one would have been allowed to practice polygamy in Christian circles, even though this was rife in the Gentile world. However, it could have been a ban to exclude any who *before* their conversion had been polygamists.

We may find help from v. 9, where one of the qualifications for the support of a destitute widow was that she must have been ‘the wife of one man’ and this can only

mean that she had been married once. A Christian woman could not have had a plurality of husbands. It could well be that the lax views on divorce which obtained at this time could have resulted in a man having a number of wives living, such as we often see in the entertainment and society world of today, thus bringing the sacred state of marriage in God's sight into disrepute.

The next virtues might be better rendered 'temperate, self-controlled, well-behaved, hospitable, competent to teach'. The first three are linked and describe an orderly life. The importance of hospitality will be better appreciated when we consider the stress Paul lays on the overseer's command of his family and home. A 'striker' represents a violent, pugnacious person and a 'brawler' one who was contentious. The opposite of this is *epieikes*, a gracious, kindly and considerate person, who is not a money grubber.

The Apostle now looks upon the home; in fact all the Christian qualifications here are reflected in the home-life. The would-be overseer must be one who exercises wise, but firm control over his family. Slipshod paternal discipline disqualified him from rule in the assembly of God's people and the reason the Apostle gives is unanswerable. If a man fails in a lesser sphere, he is not likely to succeed in a larger one. If he cannot control and lead his own household wisely, how can he take care of the church of God? (verse 5).

Moreover, there was another important reason. The early church met in a believer's home. Three times in the N.T. we have the phrase the "church in the house", there being no buildings specially erected at this time for meeting and worship (Rom. xvi. 5; I Cor. xvi. 19; Philemon 2). We can now understand the importance of hospitality and a well controlled household. One can easily imagine the problems that would have arisen in a home where there was a lack of warm hospitality and a disorderly, undisciplined family. On the other hand what greater honour was there for a Christian home than to be the meeting place of the church of God where His Word honoured and proclaimed, members of His Body built up in the faith and encouraged in their daily lives, and the warmth of true Christian fellowship experienced?

Taking the subject further, Paul insists that the aspirant to the office of overseer must not be a novice, which means both immaturity of age and recent experience of conversion and salvation. Rapid promotion of such meant running the risk of pride creeping in and so committing the sin that brought about the fall of Satan (verse 6).

Not only this, a good report from non-Christians ('those that are without') was needed. On the surface this may have appeared to be impossible, remembering the antipathy shown towards Christianity in the pagan world. Yet those outside usually have a good idea of the sincerity and genuineness of a person's character and faith, and it was essential that an overseer had the respect of those living in his neighbourhood.

The Apostle Paul now deals with the office of a deacon. The earliest reference to deacons is found in Acts vi., where they were concerned in the distribution of the church's charities and with the 'ways and means' of its outward maintenance. They were

the assistants of the bishops or overseers and appear together in Phil. i. 1. The list of qualities that follow are closely akin to those already mentioned:

“Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless” (iii. 8-10, R.V.).

Semnos, grave, once more lays stress on high-mindedness, seriousness of purpose, not seriousness of outward facial expression. “Double-tongued” means saying one thing to one person and something different to another, in fact being unreliable gossips. A deacon must be impervious to avarice or money bribes, his visitation of homes possibly exposing him to this temptation. Moreover he must be a man of spiritual conviction and discernment, faithfully adhering to the faith, the body of truth relating to the Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. If he came up to the standard of these tests, he was eligible to serve as a deacon in the local assembly of believers.

The Apostle now passes on to women in a parenthesis. Are these wives of deacons or are they deaconesses? It would seem that the latter are intended, for there appears to be no reason why special rules should apply to the wives of deacons and not also to the wives of bishops which are not mentioned. If the wives of deacons were meant one would expect the word ‘their’ (their wives) which is not in the Greek. Also *hosautos*, ‘in like manner’ denotes a transition to another class of persons. We must not forget that a deacon was not confined to the male sex. Phoebe was a deaconess at Cenchrea (Rom.xvi.1, where ‘servant’ is *diakonos*, deacon). It seems natural that Paul, after specifying the qualities of a deacon should pass on to those of the kindred office, the deaconess:

“Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things” (iii. 11, R.V.).

A deaconess must exhibit the same qualities as a deacon. She must be ‘faithful in all things’ or ‘absolutely trustworthy’ as Moffatt renders it. More showy gifts would be made of none effect without complete reliability. If one cannot rely on a Christian, what is the use of his or her profession?

Reverting to deacons, Paul asserts that they, like bishops, must be in complete parental control and then he says:

“For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (iii. 13, R.V.).

The word rendered ‘degree’ A.V. or ‘standard’ R.V. is *bathmos*, literally a ‘step’ or vantage ground, apparently referring to the esteem of the community of believers to which bishops and deacons belonged. “Boldness”, *parrhesia*, means outspokenness, a confidence that comes from experience in the practical outworking of the faith.

The next section of the epistle gives the reason for the Apostle’s injunctions to the leaders of the assemblies. In the Greek text the subject of the verb ‘behave’ is omitted

and therefore could refer to Timothy himself (as the A.V.), or to men generally (as the R.V.) or both:

“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (iii. 14, 15, R.V.).

Paul hoped to meet Timothy soon, but he wrote his instructions in case he was delayed. This was most likely to be confirmatory of oral advice given to Timothy at the Apostle’s departure, thus strengthening Timothy’s authority. At this point we come to the key to this epistle and the Pastoral Epistles as a whole, which was to give Timothy and those leaders under his charge explicit guidance as to the discharge of their official Christian duties.

The idea of the assembly as an household has already been given in verse 5. This is no material building but a spiritual one, and the absence of the definite article before ‘church’ here and in verse 5 suggests that the local community is envisaged, yet conceived as a part of a large whole.

The phrase ‘pillar and ground of the truth’ has caused great difficulties because it appears to give greater eminence to the church than to the truth represented by Christ, the living Word and the Scriptures the written Word of God. Bengel and other Protestant expositors got over the difficulty by re-punctuating the sentence to read:

“The pillar and ground of the truth and confessedly great is the mystery of godliness.”

On the surface this looks attractive and would act as an antidote to any Romish pretensions, but alas this does violence to the Greek original. E. K. Simpson pronounces it as ‘fatally artificial and cumbersome’. Dean Alford goes so far as to say that such a clumsy Greek would be sufficient to prove the Epistle spurious.

When we give this context a closer inspection we shall see that such an explanation is unnecessary and is like putting out our hand to stay the ark of God. We will give the problem a closer study in our next article.

No.6. iii. 16.
pp. 221 - 225

In our last study which concluded with I Tim. iii. 15, we pointed out the impossibility of rendering the verse, 'the pillar and ground of the truth and confessedly great is the mystery of godliness' which has been put forward to avoid giving the church the position of 'foundation', and not Christ and the Word of God. Let us look closer at this verse. *Stulos* means a pillar, prop or support. *Hedraioma* (ground A.V.) can be translated 'bulwark' (Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*). Peter, James and John likened to 'pillars' in Gal. ii. 9, but this did not oust Christ from His position as the primary Foundation.

We must note that the definite article is not used before either of these nouns, so the sense of the verse is that the church was *a* support and bulwark of the truth (amongst others). A building needs more than one pillar and the truth of God has more than one 'stay' to support it. Obviously there could be no pillar for the truth in the darkened pagan world. Surely in the groups of God's people who had been lately enlightened into the teaching of the Mystery the Truth was resident, as they shone as lights in the world of darkness, their corporate witness being a support and bulwark for the truth made known through Paul's ministry.

The fact that the churches declined from this cannot alter the fact that Christ intended the members of His Body to be a bulwark and guard for the truth committed to them, as these Pastoral epistles clearly teach. Once this is seen the difficulties of verse 15 vanish.

But our problems are not over for another one faces us in the next verse:

"And without controversy great is the Mystery (Secret) of godliness; He Who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory" (I Tim. iii. 16, R.V.).

The A.V., based on the Received Text, reads "God was manifest in the flesh". Into the vexed question of what is the correct text here we cannot enter because this touches the very specialized knowledge of textual criticism. Let it be said straight away that few have the deep knowledge of N.T. Greek and long experience in handling the various classes of manuscripts which form the basis for all translations and this is necessary for any sound judgment on this matter. We are sometimes amazed at the dogmatism shown by some who truthfully are no more than amateurs in this respect and we deplore some of the wild and partisan statements that have been made regarding the Received Text. All who desire to be 'bulwarks' for the truth should shun this sort of thing.

The reader may be acquainted with the arguments concerning the original reading of the phrase under consideration in the Alexandrian manuscript in the British Museum. Since it came to England 250 years ago the writing has faded considerably and it is so frayed that it is practically impossible to decide whether it reads *Theos* contracted (God)

or *Hos* (He Who). In spite of all the investigation, including X-ray treatment of the manuscript, it must be declared as ‘not proven’, and in any case we must remember that no dependence can be placed on *one* manuscript by itself.

Andrew R. Fausset, who edited Bengel’s *Gnomon*, puts in a footnote on Volume IV page 263:

“*Theos* (God) of the Received Text has none of the oldest MSS in its favour, no version as early as the seventh century, and as to the fathers, ex. gr. Cyril of Alexandria and Chrysostom, quoted for *Theos* (God), see Tregelles on the printed text of the N.T. in which he shows that these fathers are misquoted. Theodore, however, does support it. Liberatus, Victor Tununensis (both of 6th century) affirm that Macedonius, under the Emperor Anastasius changed *Hos* (who) into *Theos* (God) in order to support Nestorianism. AC corrected G, read *Hos* (Who), The Syr. Peschito, and in fact *all* the versions older than the seventh century have the relative *Hos* (Who) not *Theos* (God) The *silence* of the fathers of the fourth century, though *Theos* (God) would have furnished them with a strong argument, is conclusive against it.”

The Companion Bible in the margin says:

“The R.V. prints ‘He Who’, and adds in the margin, ‘*Theos* (God) rests on no sufficient evidence’. The probability is that the original reading was *ho* (which), with the Syriac and all the Latin Versions, to agree with *musterion* (neuter). The Greek uncial being O, some scribe added the letter *s*, making OC (He Who), which he thought made better sense. Later another put a mark in this O, making the word NB C , the contraction for NB EOC , God. This mark in Codex A in the British Museum, is said by some to be in different ink.”

As we did with verse 15, we will look at the next verse more closely. The reading “He Who was manifested in the flesh” can only refer to Christ. It denotes pre-existence and *cannot describe any created being*. If anyone objects and says that angels have appeared as men in Scripture both in the Old and New Testaments, this does not contradict what we have just written. The first chapter of John’s Gospel declares that the Word (Christ) was with God *and was God* (John i. 1). In verse 14 John states “the Word (Who is God) was made flesh, and *dwelt among us*”. This is what angels have never done. They were given the power to assume a body (as the angels appearing to Abraham, Gen. xviii. 1, 2, 8) but they never stayed and lived with humanity in order to aid the human race. John’s Gospel reveals “God manifest in the flesh” and this is what I Tim.iii.16 does, so whether we translate as the A.V. or R.V., the deity of Christ is not touched. In any case this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith *does not rest on one text*. The testimony of the *whole* of Scripture to this truth is overwhelming. The reader is referred to the author’s booklet, *The Lord Jesus Christ, God or only man?* where much of this evidence is assembled.

Paul continues by saying that the Lord Jesus was ‘justified in the spirit’. This appears to be parallel to the previous phrase. “In the flesh” denotes the sphere of operation of the Word ‘manifest’ and ‘in the spirit’ the sphere of the word ‘justified’. This is very much like the statement in Rom. i. 2-4:

“The gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

The Lord Jesus was vindicated in the spiritual realm—specially in resurrection. He was ‘seen of angels’. Angels rendered praise at His birth; they appeared to strengthen Him in Gethsemane and after His resurrection they were at the empty tomb and finally at His Ascension (Acts i. 10, 11). They were never able to see God in His essential nature as spirit.

Christ was ‘preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory’ (I Tim. iii. 16). The failure of Israel was overruled by the Lord for the gospel to spread over the then known world, and in this the ministry of the Apostle Paul was pre-eminent. The verse fittingly closes with the triumphant return of the Lord to the glory that was previously His:

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was” (John xvii. 5).

And the Ascension records the answer to this prayer. He was ‘received up in glory’. Glory is a place—evidently associated with the ‘right hand of God’, the highest of all heights and it is this exalted sphere where the Saviour is now seated and the church which is His Body is seen to be seated with Him (Eph. ii. 6).

Many expositors have felt that in the verses of I Timothy that we have been considering, we have the outline of an early Christian hymn. The short unconnected sentences with the words similarly arranged, and the number of syllables almost equal and the ideas antithetically related, are characteristic of such a hymn. The clauses stand in parallelism; each two are connected as a pair turning on the opposition of heaven to earth: flesh and spirit, angels and Gentiles, world and glory, and there is a correspondence between the first and the last ‘manifested in the flesh, received up in glory’.

Whether this is a primitive hymn or not, one thing is certain, namely that at the beginning and end of the epistle we have ‘God invisible’ and in the middle, “God manifest”:

- A | i. 17. The King immortal, invisible.
- B | iii. 16. Christ Jesus, Who is God, manifest in the flesh.
- A | vi. 15, 16. King of kings . . . Whom no man hath seen or can see.

We should note that the ‘Mystery of godliness’ is in direct opposition to the ‘mystery of iniquity’ (II Thess. ii. 7) and both find their expression in a person (1) the Lord Jesus Christ and (2) the man of sin, the son of perdition, energized by Satan, and both represent a climax of revelation of these two opposing forces. Let us never forget that Christ is Himself the Mystery (secret) of God (Col. ii. 2 R.V.)—Who later became ‘manifest in the flesh’.

Having pointed out the exaltation of Christ in ascension, Paul now deals with the opposition of the evil one in the next chapter, for wherever truth flourishes, Satan will see to it that error will raise its head. This has been so from the beginning and will be intensified as this age comes to its end. We warn all who know and value the dispensation of the Mystery to be on their guard for this, to 'test all things' by the Word of God rightly divided, rigorously rejecting all that fails to meet this divine standard, no matter where it comes from. Satan's object is to undermine the truth committed to us and divide those whose eyes have been enlightened to see it and who are faithfully doing their utmost to make it known. Paul could say, regarding himself, 'we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) devices' (II Cor. ii. 11).

Would that this were true of all who love the truth of the 'good deposit'. The divided state of Christendom is a warning to us all as to how well Satan can do his deadly work. Let us see to it that, putting on the whole armour of God (Eph. vi.), we do not give place to the great deceiver in any respect.

The Second Epistle to TIMOTHY

No.1. Introduction, i. 1 - 6. pp. 26 - 32

We now come to Paul's last epistle, his second letter to Timothy. That this is Paul's last divinely inspired writing, there can be no doubt. In chapter iv. 6 and 7 we read:

“For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (R.S.V.).

These words are perfectly clear. They can be interpreted in no other way than that the Apostle had reached the end of his Christ-appointed ministry and his martyrdom was near at hand. But it has been represented that Col. i. 25 should read: “According to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to *complete* the Word of God”, instead of ‘fulfil’ as the A.V. and R.V., and thus Colossians was not only the last epistle of Paul, but also the last writing of the N.T.

However, such an idea is completely foreign to the context, where the Apostle is dealing with his special ministry in connection with the Body of Christ which revealed the Mystery. It was this fulfilled the Word of God relating to this exalted company of believers. When Paul wished to refer to the *Scriptures* he used the words *grammata* and *graphe*, “all *Scripture* is given by inspiration of God” (II Tim. iii. 16) and if the completion of the Bible had been his subject in Col. i., these were the words he would have used. The word translated ‘fulfil’ he uses in Rom. xv. 19:

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

He certainly did not mean that his gospel witness by voice and pen ended here because it was completed in the sense of being finished. In Col. i. 25 the R.S.V. rendering is ‘to make the Word of God fully known’. Professor A. T. Robertson's comment here is:

“A fine phrase of a God-called preacher, to fill full and or give full scope to the Word of God. The preacher (Paul) is an expert on the Word of God by profession. See Paul's ideal about preaching in II Thess. 3:1” (*Word Pictures of the N.T.*, p. 484).

Those who deny that II Timothy is Paul's last epistle take refuge in the argument that the Apostle *thought* he had finished the race when he wrote this epistle, not knowing there was a further ministry ahead of him. But if this is true, Paul made some serious statements which proved to be *mistakes* on his part. If he erred here, how can we accept any statement in this epistle as being God's truth? He might have made mistakes in other places, in which case the very foundation of Truth is undermined. This idea must be resisted at all costs.

Furthermore much is made of the fact that the word “mystery” does not occur in II Timothy. But then neither do the words ‘redemption’, ‘hope’ and others that are vital

to the good deposit of truth made known through the Apostle of the Gentiles. Are we to assume that Paul had given up the thought of redemption and also 'that blessed hope' when he wrote this epistle?

Let it be said quite clearly that no one with any wisdom bases doctrine on *negative arguments alone*. This is a foundation of sand. Negative statements are of value only when they are accompanied by strong positive ones. If it had been incumbent on Paul to mention every item of doctrine that was of importance when he wrote to the churches or to individuals, he would have had to write books instead of epistles. Furthermore they had the great benefit of his *oral* teaching, making such writing unnecessary. (For this, compare II Thess. ii. 5 and note the context.) There is no doubt whatsoever that the second epistle to Timothy is Paul's last divinely inspired writing.

As regards human authorship, the unbroken tradition of the professing church up to the nineteenth century was to regard the Pastoral Epistles (I & II Timothy and Titus) as the work of Paul and therefore authentic. The first determined attack upon the apostolic authorship was made in 1807 by Schleiermacher, followed by Eichorn, Baur, deWette and others. Some have denied Pauline authorship, but have sought to keep a few genuine fragments, such as Harrison in his book *The Problem of the Pastorals* (1921), despite the fact that this argument has not shred a documentary evidence on which to rest. However, this viewpoint has been ably answered by scholars such as D. Guthrie and E. K. Simpson.

As to the supposed author of such a concoction, Simpson writes:

"If the solemn avowal of these epistles that they are the apostle's authoritative missives be not instinct with the most sterling honour and integrity, but an equivocation, or if they are a patchwork of truth and falsehood, they form no part of the Church's treasures, but sink to the level of pious frauds

Dr. Harrison tries to varnish the matter by asserting his factotum's "loyal devotion to Paul's name", but how a fraudulent abuse of that name breathes the spirit of loyalty is hard to perceive

He was a sorry specimen of a Paulinist, this pseudo-Paul conjured up from a nameless grave by the magic hand of criticism to vend smuggled wares under sacred auspices with such cool effrontery." *The Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 6 & 7.

If any reader wishes to pursue this any further, he is referred to the works of these two scholars. For ourselves, we unhesitatingly believe that Paul was the human author of this great epistle and this attitude is maintained throughout this study.

The structure (by C. H. Welch) of the epistle is now given and those who find such structures helpful should note the balancing sections carefully which will act as a guide to interpretation. The opening verses give the salutation and stress the Apostle's ministry which, as he frequently stated, accorded with the will of God. This is an essential ingredient for all Christian service and witness. The believer who wishes to be accounted faithful by the Lord dare not run unsent. He has to be certain that he is in the centre of God's will, for without this, it is valueless. Paul was a divine messenger with a divine message for the outcast Gentile world, and in this he was unique in his lifetime. He goes on to add 'according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus'. He was at the end of

his earthly course and death was not far away. In these circumstances, what more precious thing could there be than the promise of endless life which was treasured up and only found in the Lord Jesus Christ? In comparison with this, the present life is nothing more than a shadow, transitory and without any permanent endurance.

The Structure of II Timothy as a whole.

A | i. 1-7. Salutations and Remembrance. Lois, Eunice.

F O R S A K E N.

B | i. 8-18. Paul and his message forsaken.

The Lord his Keeper.

Phygellus and Hermogenes—"Turned away".

Onesiphorus—"The Lord give mercy".

Paul the herald to the Gentiles (*kerux*, verse 11).

C R O W N.

C | ii. 1-13. Teach things heard of me (*Exclusive*).

Suffering and reigning.

The good soldier (*kalos*, verse 3).

The crown.

Suffer evil (*kakopattheo*, verses 3 and 9).

A P P R O V E D.

D | ii. 14-26. Hymenaeus and Philetus err concerning the truth. "Shun."

They will increase.

"Approved" (*dokimos*).

Repentance to acknowledging of truth.

D I S A P P R O V E D.

D | iii. 1-9. Jannes and Jambres resist the truth. "Turn away."

Shall proceed no further.

"Disapproved" (*adokimos*).

Never come to acknowledgment of truth.

C R O W N.

C | iii. 10 - iv. 8. Followed my teaching (*Exclusive*).

Suffering and reigning.

The good fight (*kalos*, verse 7).

The crown.

Suffer evil (*kakopattheo*, verse 5).

F O R S A K E N.

B | iv. 9-18. Paul and his message forsaken.

The Lord his Keeper.

Demas—"hath forsaken me".

Alexander—"The Lord will recompense him".

Paul heralding to the Gentiles (*kerugma*, verse 17).

A | iv. 19-22. Salutations. Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia. Benediction.

“God hath given to us eternal life *and this life is in His Son*” corroborates John in his first epistle (I John v. 11). We now have *God’s promise* relating to it. That promise is fulfilled in resurrection, when this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality. Then indeed death will be swallowed up in victory (I Cor. xv. 51-54), and the ‘life which is life indeed’ will commence, never to have an end. Such is absolutely fundamental to our ‘high calling of God in Christ Jesus’, for how could this be enjoyed without life unending?

The Apostle adds ‘mercy’ in verse 2 to his usual salutation of grace and peace. Paul uses this word twelve times and it signifies ‘compassion’ and strikes a tender note here. We have a God Who is rich in mercy and in understanding of our every need and Timothy would be reminded that this was so. The bond between the Apostle and the young man was close, indeed closer than that of any other of Paul’s fellow-workers. While he appreciated all those who faithfully laboured with him, his relationship with Timothy, as a father and son (Phil. ii. 22), was unique, warm, intimate and specially dear to his heart, as the second verse of this letter makes clear where he addresses Timothy as ‘my beloved child’ (R.V.).

This led to constant intercession on the part of the Apostle, for he knew the great importance and value of this ministry of prayer on behalf of others (cp. Rom.i.9; Phil.i.4; Col.i. 3). As he thinks of Timothy he thanks God (verses 1-3) Whom, he declares, he served ‘from my forefathers’. While God’s leading and revelation had taken him away in some respects from Judaism, so much so that he was deemed a heretic, “. . . after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets” (Acts xxiv. 14), yet he had not left their God. He still served Him with a pure conscience (I Tim. i. 5), this assuredly helping him to hold on his way, although it was often a way of loneliness and misunderstanding.

This intercession of Timothy was in no sense spasmodic, it was continuous, “without ceasing, night and day” (verse 3) which shows the seriousness of the Apostle’s purpose, reminiscent of Acts xx. 31. This was not only true in relation to his son in the faith, but also for all the churches. It provides a wonderful example to us all. How often believers have to mourn the poverty of their prayer life!

Paul now refers to the young man’s tears, evidently at their last parting. He was obviously deeply attached to the Apostle and felt the severance keenly. Paul does not disguise his own pleasure at the prospect of seeing Timothy again ‘greatly desiring to see thee’ (i. 4), “that I may be filled with joy”. As we have seen, the word ‘fill’ (*pleroo*) is one of the great words of the Colossian epistle and Paul uses it no less than 23 times. Here his joy would abound as he contemplates their meeting once more if possible, and he is reminded, as he contemplates Timothy’s “unfeigned faith”, of his Christian background, his godly grandmother and mother. These powerful home influences and the saintly atmosphere had evidently greatly impressed Timothy, and many a believer today has to thank God for the influence of an out and out Christian home.

The indwelling faith in Timothy is paralleled in Paul's epistles by the indwelling God (II Cor. vi. 16), the indwelling Spirit (Rom. viii. 11; II Tim. i. 14) and the indwelling Word of Christ (Col. iii. 16). The illustration of a building is often used by the Apostle to express the inner characteristics of the Truth of God. There was no doubt whatsoever of the reality and genuineness of Timothy's faith.

There occurs a threefold reference to 'remembrance' in chapter i. and we shall find the number three stamped on this epistle as it was on Ephesians. Paul now reminds Timothy that he needed no new gift for his Christian service but rather a re-kindling of that already received. We need not be disturbed because the young man was asked to stir up a gift that was given him during the Acts period. Some of the Pentecostal gifts were basic to faithful ministry and so were beyond dispensational limitations. The Apostle does not describe this gift, so it is useless to try to guess what it was, but it was evidently as needful to Timothy at this juncture as when it was first given. The word is used of re-kindling the dying embers of a fire. Something needed reviving in Timothy's experience, hence the exhortation. The times had become difficult and dangerous indeed. Paul's young son in the faith could not afford to neglect any source of strength. As we look around today, we are in a similar position. Let us lean hard upon the Lord's strength and the greatness of all His promises that can never fail.

No.2. i. 7 - 11.
pp. 49 - 54

After exhorting Timothy to stir up that had been given him at the outset of his ministry, Paul reminds him that "God has not given us the spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline" (II Tim. i. 7 R.V.). *Deilia* 'fearfulness' means shrinking to the point of cowardice and here the Apostle is delicately reminding his sensitive son in the faith of the need of being brave and not playing the coward, however difficult and dangerous were the times. For this the almighty resurrection power of Christ was at his disposal to make him more than sufficient, together with the love of God that 'passes understanding', both of these leading to self-control and practical prudence which would be invaluable in the outworking of the 'good deposit' of truth.

Now comes a threefold reference to being ashamed (R.V.):

"Be not *ashamed* therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner" (8).

"I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher. For the which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not *ashamed*" (11, 12).

"Onesiphorus oft refreshed me, and was not *ashamed* of my chain" (16).

We need not assume that Timothy had already shown symptoms of shame, but Paul is evidently seeking to strengthen his mind should the temptation arise. The Apostle was now living for the most part in loneliness and rejection. Imprisonment for the truth

evidently carried with it a social stigma and the danger of giving a public witness to a religion that was now illicit, made the possibility of shame a real one.

At first sight it seems extraordinary that the Apostle should couple himself with the Lord. We can well understand the need to urge Timothy not to be ashamed of his Saviour, but at the same time to say ‘do not be ashamed of me either’ appears to be sheer egotism. This is not the only time he seems to push himself forward. Note the following:

- “ the gospel; whereunto *I* am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (i. 10, 11).
- “Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard *of me*” (i. 13).
- “All they which are in Asia be turned away *from me*” (i. 15).
- “The things that thou hast heard *of me* commit thou to faithful men” (ii. 2).
- “Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead according to *my gospel*” (ii. 8).
- “Thou hast fully known *my doctrine*, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience” (iii. 10).
- “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that *by me* the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear” (iv. 17).

This stress on *self* would be sheer egotism apart from the position given him by the ascended Christ as His mouthpiece to us who are Gentiles. When Paul refers to himself alone, he is ‘less than the least of all saints’ (Eph. iii. 8), and ‘the chief of sinners’ (ITim.i.15), and he can say with truth, “not I, but Christ” (Gal. ii. 20). But when he speaks as the Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, he is then the channel through which the Lord Himself is speaking, and he writes and teaches with all His authority. When this is understood, the constant references to himself and his ministry can be seen in their true light and we therefore do not talk of “Pauline doctrine” as though his epistles were just the putting forward of his own ideas.

To be ashamed of Paul and his ministry is to be ashamed of the Lord and this reminds one of His solemn words in Luke ix. 26, “for whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s, and of the holy angels”. Alas, it is only too easy to deny, by word or deed, the special testimony given through Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus, or to keep silence when we should speak, for fear of other believers and their attitude toward us. May we ever be delivered from the ‘fear of man that bringeth a snare’, and any attitude or mode of life that can be construed as being ashamed of the glorious deposit of truth given through Paul’s prison ministry.

Timothy is now reminded that he must be ready to accept any hardship that a faithful witness to this ‘good deposit’ might bring:

- “ suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God” (i. 8, R.V.).

Sunkakopatheo ‘suffer hardship’ seems to have been coined by the Apostle ‘to share suffering with someone else’ (compare also ii. 3). Timothy is invited to share Paul’s sufferings and this evil treatment meted out to those who determined to be faithful is a recurring theme in this epistle (ii. 9; iv. 5). Later the Apostle states, ‘all that would live

godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution' (iii. 12 R.V.) and this is a reminder to all of us that there is a price to be paid if we want to be counted among those whom the Lord deems 'faithful'. Let us not therefore be surprised when the tests and difficulties come.

However, it is indeed good to realize that the almighty power of God is the source of all strength, wisdom and endurance and again and again the Apostle relied alone on this and urged other fellow-believers to do the same. To trust in anything else is to court disaster; to rely on the exceeding power that conquered death is to find it always more than sufficient for every need. So Timothy is urged not to fear the consequences of standing loyally for the sacred trust committed to him, for this glorious power could be his at all times, enabling him to triumph over all the trials and persecution through which he might have to pass.

Paul now continues:

“God, Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose (plan) and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the age-times” (i. 9, R.V.).

While the Bible is the revelation of a mighty plan conceived by God in past eternity involving both heaven and earth, how wonderful it is that the individual child of God is not lost in all its vastness! Each member of the Body of Christ did not come into this relationship by accident or human choice. It was all part of the Lord's design and exceeding grace and love. Human merit could not come into it, for there was none ('not according to our works'). Just as Eph. i. 4 assures each member that he was 'chosen in Christ *before* the foundation of the world', so here a glorious part was given to every member in Christ Jesus *before* the age-times (literally), a unique time period, as we have seen when studying Ephesians. Other phases of God's purposes are linked with the period '*since* the foundation of the world' and if words mean anything, these two periods must be distinct, for *before* an event and *after* an event express two distinct aspects of time. We have the same expression in Titus i. 2 which the A.V. translates 'before the world began'. J. N. Darby renders both 'before the ages of time' and Weymouth's original version reads 'before the commencement of the ages', which are both truer to the original God-inspired Greek than the A.V.

In contrast to this vast look back into the past and the beginning of God's great plan for His creation is the *now* of manifestation:

“But hath *now* been manifested by the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher” (i. 10, 11, R.V.).

This is parallel again to the opening of the epistle to Titus, the 'now' of II Timothy corresponding to the 'due times' of Titus i. 3 A.V., or as the R.V. renders it:

“God, Who cannot lie, promised before times eternal (lit. age-times), but in *His own seasons* manifested His word in the message *wherewith I was intrusted* according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

God chooses His own time in His perfect wisdom to reveal the various phases of His redemptive purposes, and these time periods are always exact and fitting. The accurate student of the Word will always recognize this and seek to avoid the error that comes from reading past truth into the present and vice versa. Much confusion in Christendom could have been avoided if this had always been carried out. How often do we read of an explanation of the Mystery of Eph. iii. that takes us back to the O.T., when it is clearly stated that, at that time, it was hidden in God! (Eph. iii. 9; Col. i.26). The revelation of this great Secret to the children of God and its heavenly calling and destiny is *now*, according to God's own *season*, and is made known through Paul 'the prisoner of Christ Jesus', according to His commandment.

The epistle continues:

“. . . . our Saviour, Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel, whereunto I was appointed a preacher ('herald' margin), and an apostle, and a teacher" (i. 10, 11, R.V.).

'Abolish' is too strong a translation, for we know only too well that death is still with us. *Katargeo* 'abolish' is one of Paul's favourite words, for he uses it twenty-five times. It is a rare term scarcely used outside the papyri. It means to frustrate, nullify, disempower or more literally, to put out of gear or render inoperative. We notice its usage in Rom. vi. 6 where it is translated 'destroyed', again too strong a rendering, for we know, alas, from practical experience at times that our sinful old nature has *not* been destroyed.

It has been 'rendered inoperative' by being crucified with Christ and this becomes true in our experience when we 'reckon' it to be so. Death was not abolished at our Saviour's first advent, but He defeated it by His redemptive work on the cross, and by His glorious resurrection took the sting out of it for the believer, which is sin (I Cor. xv. 56) and so the 'king of terrors' has been robbed of his domination and fear, for the Lord Jesus has tasted all death's bitterness in our stead and for us who know Him as Saviour and Lord, we only 'fall asleep'. Death cannot finally hold the believer, for he has been united to the Conqueror of death, and because He lives, we shall live also eternally.

Not only did the Lord Jesus make death inoperative for the believer, but by His sacrificial work on the cross He brought life and incorruption to light by it. We have already seen that this incorruptible life and immortality are to be found only in Christ and not in fallen humanity. Any teaching that man possesses these apart from the Lord and His salvation is pagan in origin, flatly contradicting the Scriptures and comes from the father of lies. The Apostle refers to his threefold office of herald (preacher or proclaimer), apostle and teacher once more in I Tim. ii. 7. He was a proclaimer of the truth committed to him by the Lord Jesus, a sent one (apostle) by Him and a teacher of the Gentiles, and to emphasize the importance of his ministry he declares 'I lie not' (ITim.ii.7), showing that he was not inventing or exaggerating the unique position given to him by God, as His mouthpiece to the Gentile world.

No.3. i. 12 - 18.
pp. 61 - 66

The Apostle Paul, having referred to the gospel which had been committed to him by the risen Christ (I Tim. i. 10, 11), now reminds Timothy of the cost: “for which cause I suffer these things”. His imprisonment and treatment as a criminal was the direct result of his faithful stand for Christ and his ministry during the perilous time in which he was living. Yet, in order to encourage Timothy, he states:

“Yet I am not ashamed; for I know Him Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (i. 12, R.V.).

The margin of the Revised Version reads “or, that which He committed unto me” (Greek: my deposit). Paul did not say “I know *what* I have believed”, but “I know *Him Whom* I have believed”, and this is immeasurably greater and better. The knowledge of Christ Jesus is the summing up of all truth, and the goal for the believer is “that I may get to know Him” (Phil. iii. 10). This will include, of course, the precious deposit of truth which He has committed to us to guard and proclaim for His glory. This truth He will most certainly protect until “that day”, and Paul’s continuous assurance of this is made clear by the perfect tense in the Greek.

Paratheke (deposit) is the shortened form of the full term for a legal deposit *parakatatheke*, and many examples of its use can be found in the papyri. This word occurs in verse 14 and I Tim. vi. 20 describing the truth deposited with Timothy and it has the same meaning in verse 12. Paul is not thinking of something which he had deposited with the Lord, but rather the wondrous revelation of truth *the Lord had deposited with him* to make known primarily to the Gentiles. This is further explained in verse 13:

“Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

Hypotuposis (form or pattern) is only used in one other place in the N.T. where the salvation and ministry of Paul is declared to be a ‘pattern’ for those who would hereafter believe (I Tim. i. 12-16). The word means delineation or outline. Arndt and Gingrich in their *Greek-English Lexicon* give the meaning as *standard*, which fits the context in II Timothy perfectly. All the truth deposited by the Lord with the Apostle Paul was the divine standard of truth for Timothy, and still is the standard by which all Christian preaching, teaching and service must be measured. As the Apostle of the Gentiles his ministry specially fits this Gentile age. How thankful we ought to be that we have this divine standard by which we can test all we hear and read with so many conflicting ideas on every hand. This is the only sure way we can sort out for ourselves truth from error and know exactly where we stand.

Although Timothy knew of the ministry of Peter and John he is not directed to this by the Apostle. Such constituted the standard of truth relating primarily to the faithful remnant of Israel and it will be so again at a future time when the Lord takes up Israel again just prior to His Second Advent. Timothy must now guard what he had heard and received from Paul in faith and minister it in love (13). The Apostle reminds him of the one source of power that is sufficient, namely 'the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us'. The important word 'deposit' is another term occurring three times in II Timothy. We have had it in i. 12, 14 and in ii. 2 it occurs in a verbal form and is translated 'commit'.

It is well to be clear as to what this 'good deposit' embraces. It surely consists of all the truth made known through Paul's Prison Epistles, namely the glorious news of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus through grace, apart from human works or merit. This he received directly from the Lord Jesus (Gal. i. 8-12). But this is not all. It is a profound mistake to stop here. This gospel is certainly the foundation, but upon it rest the truths of sanctification, consecration in service and then, to crown all, the revelation of the Mystery (secret) concerning the joint-Body, the church which is Christ's fullness (Eph. i. & iii. and Col. i.). Its special constitution, witness, walk and hope are at the heart of this 'good deposit' which Paul declares was made known to him by revelation of the Lord Jesus (Eph. iii. 1-3). In the mercy and purpose of God this has been preserved by the Lord and come down to us today. Have we entered into it by faith and, rejoicing in it, do we regard it as a sacred trust?

Timothy is thus encouraged by the Apostle to hold fast and guard the special teaching that had been delivered to him by God. Now he warns Timothy of some who had not done so:

"This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned away from me: of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes" (i. 15, R.V.).

The defection of the Asiatics is spoken of as a fact well known to Timothy. It has been suggested that witnesses for the Apostle who had come from various centres in Asia Minor became terrified to Christianity and, out of fear, forsook Paul lest they should become involved. This may have been true, but such a number could hardly justify the phrase "all *in* Asia", nor can this be construed as meaning "all *from* Asia". That the perils of the day played a large part in this defection there can be no doubt. Any who publicly associated themselves with the Apostle took their lives in their hands and, if they failed to stand with him, who are we to judge them? Are we prepared to give our lives for the Saviour if need be? Two Christians are named who would be known to Timothy, namely Phygellus and Hermogenes. These were evidently leaders in this defection who failed Paul in his hour of supreme need and would therefore be a warning to his beloved son in the faith. Even allowing for the danger of the times, we can see that the spiritual condition of the sphere in which Paul had laboured could not have been healthy. No mention is made of local churches by Paul in this epistle nor their attitude toward him at this time of his service testing. The Apostle was making a lonely stand. In iv. 16 he says, "at my first defence no one took part, *but all forsook me*; may it not be laid to their account". We quote the words of Dr. H. D. M. Spence on this passage in chapter i.:

“The simple and more obvious meaning is here to be preferred, and we assume as certain that the forsaking, the giving up St. Paul, took place in Asia itself. Large numbers of Christians, if not whole churches, repudiated their connection with the great father of Gentile Christianity, and possibly disobeyed some of his teaching. What, in fact, absolutely took place in Asia while St. Paul lay bound waiting for death in Rome, had been often threatened in Corinth and in other centres. Party feeling ran high in those days, we know, and one of the most sorrowful trials the great-hearted St. Paul had to endure in the agony of his last witnessing for his Lord, was the knowledge that his name and teaching no longer was held in honour in some of those Asian churches so dear to him. The geographical term Asia is rather vague. It may, and indeed strictly speaking does, include Mysia, Phrygia, Lydia, Caria; but such widespread defection from Pauline teaching seems improbable and there is no tradition that anything of the kind ever took place. St. Paul probably wrote the term more in the old Homeric sense and meant the district in the neighbourhood of the river Cayster.”

There are some expositors who deny that there was any large scale apostasy at this time, but one comes to a different conclusion when one searches for the distinctive truths of his prison ministry in the early centuries that followed. While there must have been the faithful who had eyes to see and divine courage to hold fast to the good deposit of truth, for the most part Paul’s witness has made little impression upon history all down this age. The early believers and leaders did not fully grip this doctrine and gross spiritual darkness soon followed, coming to its climax in the Middle Ages up to the Reformation. Even the basic truth of justification by faith was lost, so it is not to be wondered at that great truth of the Mystery was all but unknown. Since the Reformation, truth has been in the process of recovery in the inverse order in which it was lost*. If today we are glorying in the spiritual riches revealed in Paul’s prison ministry, let us not only rejoice and be thankful, but also realize the great responsibility this brings and the need for absolute faithfulness to witness to this sacred trust.

[* - The first truth to be lost was the Mystery,
then the doctrine of the Second Coming,
followed by Justification by faith.]

The Apostle Paul now refers to the testimony of one who had remained loyal to him and therefore was an example to Timothy:

“The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day); and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well” (i. 16-18, R.V.).

Onesiphorus was a brave man, for we have pointed out the danger of anyone linking himself publicly with Paul. How easily he could have excused himself by saying Paul’s whereabouts were difficult or impossible to find! But instead of this, he searched ‘diligently’ for him till he discovered where he was imprisoned. Not only this, but the Apostle declared ‘he often refreshed me’. The word translated ‘refreshed’ is unique in the N.T. As a noun it occurs in Acts iii. 19, ‘the times of refreshing’, referring to the blessed effects of the Lord’s Second Advent. Moffatt’s translation is ‘he braced me up’.

The simple ministry of this believer was like a refreshing breeze to the Apostle, undergoing the rigours of his Roman imprisonment and would not be forgotten by the Lord 'in that day', that is the day of His assessment of Christian witness and service. Onesiphorus was not ashamed of the witness for which Paul stood and this gives us the third occurrence of the word 'to be ashamed' in this epistle.

Because Paul refers to the *house* of Onesiphorus some have argued that he must have been dead when the Apostle wrote. But he could just as easily have been away from home and in any case we should realize that the head and his household are inseparable. The Roman church has tried to make capital out of the prayer here offered by asserting that this was an example of prayers for the dead.

One thing is certain, that such a practice finds no foundation whatsoever in any part of the Scriptures, and a person must be hard pressed to try to extract this meaning from these verses.

The Apostle's son in the faith knew very well of his friend's loyal service at Ephesus, for Timothy was the overseer there, and this again would be an encouragement for him to emulate the faithfulness and courage of Onesiphorus.

We live in similar days of testing and difficulty. The need is great for us to avail ourselves of the Lord's strength so that we can say in Paul's words:

"I can do all things through Christ Who makes me strong" (Phil. iv. 13).

No.4. ii. 1 - 9.
pp. 81 - 87

The second chapter commences with the word 'therefore' which links it with what has gone before:

"Thou therefore, my child, be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (ii. 1, R.V.).

The encouragements and warnings of the first chapter must be constantly borne in mind by Timothy and the one thing needful to face up to these adequately was *to be strong*. The only strength however that would be all-sufficient was found alone in *Christ Jesus* and for Timothy to trust any other was to court disaster. This is a practical word for us all. We are brought back once more to the *grace of God*, and it is a profound mistake to limit such grace to initial salvation; "Unto every one of us is grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Eph. iv. 7). Divine grace not only saves, but it equips and strengthens us for Christian service, however exacting this may be. The word translated 'be strong' is used eight times in connection with the Apostle Paul. This is the number of resurrection and it is no less than *resurrection power* that is at our

disposal by faith (Eph. i. 18-21). This is the greatest of all powers, the power that conquers death. How foolish we should be not to trust it to work in and through us rather than to rely on our own feeble strength!

Paul's message to Timothy continues:

“And the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit (deposit) thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (ii. 2, R.V.).

The Apostle had received this sacred deposit of truth from the risen Lord Jesus and had made it known through his oral and written ministry. In this way Timothy had received it, and with the Apostle's witness so soon coming to an end, he was about to assume the leadership and full responsibility for this great deposit of truth.

In his turn, he must look to the future, for Paul was ever solicitous for the preservation of this distinctive and precious witness, and such preservation must never be left to chance. Timothy must pass on or *deposit* this teaching (*paratithemi* a word linked with *paratheke*, deposit, which we have already considered). But this must be to (1) faithful men, (2) with the ability to pass it on and teach others. Let us note the order, for it is of the utmost importance; it is absolute *loyalty* first and *ability* afterwards. Many times this has been reversed with disastrous consequences. A man is given prominence in Christian work because he is an able speaker; or he is a brilliant scholar; or he has a winning personality and is very capable. None of these qualifications will be sufficient without the necessary ingredient of *faithfulness*. “It is required in stewards, that a man be found *faithful*” (I Cor. iv. 2). “Well done, thou good and *faithful* servant” (Matt. xxv. 21, 23). Over and over again this is stressed in God's Word, for the Lord requires not *quantity* first but *quality*. Those who ignore this do so at their peril, for there is the judgment seat of Christ to face for all of us in regard to our Christian service. Without utter faithfulness, all our efforts may be regarded as ‘wood, hay and stubble’, to be consumed by the fire of God's holiness (I Cor. iii. 11-15).

Faithfulness may well be costly to us of course, sometimes leading to a pathway of loneliness and misunderstanding, but what does this matter when the Lord Himself has promised never to leave or forsake us, and in the day of resurrection, His smile, His commendation, His reward, will more than outweigh either the praise or the condemnation of men. It is important too to note that in this context we have the only ‘apostolic succession’ known to the N.T. All else is based on claims that cannot be substantiated by the Word of God.

We have already seen in our Ephesian studies the importance of *teaching*. The teacher is as much a gift of the ascended Christ as the evangelist (Eph. iv. 11). For the most part today the evangelist gets the prominence, while the teacher is relegated to second place, or no place at all! Is it any wonder that churches and chapels contain babes in Christ who never advance and grow spiritually? Such cannot receive any more than the milk of the gospel (I Cor. iii. 1, 2). The ‘strong meat’, the exceeding spiritual riches of Paul's prison

ministry, is beyond them, and this is one reason why the unsearchable riches of Christ are so little known and received among God's children today.

Another reason is the difficulty and often isolation of the way that accompanies faithful witness to this truth. This has been so from the beginning, for Paul now says to Timothy:

“Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (II Tim. ii. 3, R.V.).

None of us likes hardship and the temptation is to desert the straight and narrow pathway of loyalty when we see it coming. The Apostle does not paint this pathway in rosy colours. Timothy is warned before hand of the cost (compare also i. 8), and to emphasize this Paul uses three illustrations (1) the soldier, (2) the athlete, and (3) the farmer or husbandman.

(1) The good soldier is brought forward first, but it is not fighting qualities or prowess that are stressed! Indeed the faithful servant of the Lord is told that he ‘must not fight (strive A.V.)’ (II Tim. ii. 24). Rather it is *suffering* and *endurance* and the complete freedom from all entanglements which was demanded of the Roman soldier. A good soldier must be prepared to ‘rough it’, to endure hardness and discomfort. Not for him are the comforts and luxuries of the home. Soldiering must be a full-time occupation without any distractions:

“No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life: that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier” (ii. 4, R.V.).

The word *bios*, life, has a different shade of meaning from *zoe* the more frequent word. It is translated ‘living’ in Mark xii. 44; Luke viii. 43; xv. 12. It means ‘livelihood’ or getting one’s living by one’s business or daily work. Now there is nothing wrong in this *until it entangles*. When this happens it begins to occupy the place of Christ-directed service and with the result that we are weighed down in the heavenly race. The earnest runner must be on the alert for this, for weights must be laid aside (Heb. xii. 1, 2) if we wish to run like the Apostle did and finish our course with joy.

(2) Paul further enforces his point by referring to the athlete in the Olympic Games:

“And if also a man contend in the games, *he is not crowned, except he have contended lawfully*” (ii. 5, R.V.).

Many points could have been stressed in connection with the athlete, but the one brought forward here by the Apostle is the need ‘to contend lawfully’, in other words *to keep the rules*. The rules governing the Olympic Games were strict. Athletes had to state on oath that they had completed ten month’s training before they were eligible to enter the contest.

Any runner who had not done this would have no chance to win and *be crowned*, but would also lower the standard of the Games. Severe penalties were imposed on all who infringed the rules. The application to the believer is clear. Saving grace has placed our

feet at the beginning of the heavenly race, but there is no possibility of receiving the Lord's approval at the end and *being crowned* by Him unless we have kept the rules which are so clearly set out in the practical sections of the Prison Epistles which make known our 'high calling of God in Christ Jesus'.

(3) The Farmer:

"The husbandman that laboureth must be the first to partake of the fruits" (ii. 6, R.V.).

The reference here is to the *labouring* husbandman, i.e. the farmer or gardener who works. Everyone knows that hard work must precede any lasting results in gardening or farming. The lazy man gets no results. His land, covered with weeds, is an open indication of his idleness. In this section of the epistle therefore, the stress is on *Christian service* and all that it entails. In the Scriptures distinction is made between the believer looked at as a saved sinner and justified in the Lord's sight by faith and grace, and the believer as a *servant of the Lord* who can render to Him either good or bad service. Let us be quite clear as regard to this. Some, not recognizing the all-sufficiency of God's work in justifying the sinner who believes in Christ, try to combine this with human works and so attempt to supplement what God has done. This is serious indeed for it denies the finished work of Christ on the cross. When He said "It is finished", the work of redemption was completed in the fullest sense of the word and needed no human addition.

Indeed, all such are an evidence of unbelief. On the other hand, there are others who so stress salvation by grace apart from works that "good works" form no part of their conception of Truth. They have forgotten that although Eph. ii. 8, 9 states that grace-by-faith-salvation is 'not of works', yet it is '*unto good works*' (verse 10). In other words 'good works' or Christian service and witness should flow from such free and unmerited salvation. The sinner has been *saved to serve*, and let us make no mistake, every true believer is called by the Lord to serve Him and to discover His will in this respect. It is only self-deception to refuse to recognize this. The words servant and service so permeate the epistles that it must be deliberate blindness that eliminates such service and responsibility to the Lord from the Christian's life. To the believers at Colossae Paul wrote 'ye serve the Lord Christ' (Col. iii. 23, 24) and what a privilege it is to be allowed to serve such a Saviour and such a Master! On the other hand let us remember that the Lord has no conscripts among His people. Service will never be forced by Him. It must rather be the practical response of our love and gratitude to Him. We can be good servants or bad servants, faithful or unfaithful, and a righteous heavenly Father must and will take account of this in the day of reckoning for what we have done in His Name during our earthly life time.

In the section of II Timothy we are studying, we repeat that it is the *labouring* farmer that is being stressed. How far are we prepared to really *labour* for the Lord? Are we prepared to sacrifice and tire ourselves for Him? We can often tire ourselves in our pleasures, but what about our daily service for the One Who has given His all for us? The true answer to this shows the extent of our love for Him, no more and no less. Let us

stir ourselves while the day of opportunity lasts and make the most of the time remaining to us!

The Lord will not be in any man's debt and He takes account of all loyal and practical response to Him. Crowns and rewards are for *faithful* servants, those who have pleased Him in their outworking of His truth and have been prepared to suffer if need be. "No cross, no crown" expresses this truth. II Timothy is really going over the same ground as Philippians, but with different illustrations. In both it is the response of the believer that is stressed, with the possibility of a prize or crown at the end. Never let us forget that prizes or crowns may be lost, but equally they may be won. We are deciding each day which it is to be in our experience when we meet the Lord in resurrection face to face.

Let us sum up the teaching of these three illustrations:

THE GOOD SOLDIER. Endurance. Non-entanglement.
THE DISCIPLINED ATHLETE. The Crown. Keeping the rules.
THE PRACTICAL FARMER. Toil. Then first partaker of the fruits.

Verse 7 continues:

"Consider what I say; for the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things" (R.V.).

Noeo, translated 'consider', means 'to think over', 'to grasp the meaning' and if Timothy will do this, the promise is that the Lord will supply all needed understanding. For our encouragement we should remember that if we ponder and apply God's truth to our own lives, the Lord will increase our power of understanding which will blot out our ignorance and conform our lives closer to His will.

Paul has not only brought before Timothy God's truth, but also what it would cost, if faithfully lived and proclaimed.

There were 'afflictions of the gospel' (i. 8). He would be called to suffer hardship with the Apostle (ii. 3) and in order to come triumphantly through these experiences, Timothy's gaze is now directed to the risen Christ just as it is expressed in Heb. xii. 1-3. So Paul goes on to say:

"Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel: wherein I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor; but the Word of God is not bound" (II Tim. ii. 8, 9, R.V.).

The A.V. reads "Remember *that Jesus Christ was* raised from the dead" as though the Apostle was asking Timothy to remember *the fact* of His resurrection. There was no need to ask Timothy to accept the truth that Christ had been raised from the dead. As a genuine believer, he could not do otherwise. What the A.V. has missed is the passive participle (*egegermenon*) which draws attention to a *present experience of the risen Lord*. He is saying in effect, "look away from the present testing and hardship to the risen One Who is all-sufficient for your needs". Paul was doing this very thing, for although he was now being treated as a criminal, chained night and day in a Roman

dungeon, yet the risen and ascended Lord Jesus was his constant sufficiency. The Apostle's reference to Christ as the "seed of David" takes us back to Rom. i. 3 where, as in our present context, he is dealing with the gospel he had received from Christ (Gal. i. 11, 12). But this gospel was not without its cost to Paul. He was able to endure all his sufferings "for the elect's sakes". He realized that although nominally he was the prisoner of Nero, in actuality he was the 'prisoner of the Lord for you Gentiles' (Eph. iii. 1). He was in this position by Christ's permission, and although he himself was chained, yet the Word of God was still free and making headway in bringing sinners to a knowledge of salvation and then to the deeper truths resident in Christ. Satan might rejoice that he was shut up in prison, yet he could never imprison the Word of God! "The Word of God is not bound" (II Tim. ii. 9). These triumphant words still ring out with truth today.

No.5. ii. 10 - 15.
pp. 106 - 111

The Apostle Paul has stated a reason for the endurance of his sufferings as a prisoner at Rome. It is "for the elect's sakes" (II Tim. ii. 10), that is, not only for those who had already responded to the Truth, but for those in the future who would yet do so. The Apostle doubtless had in mind the whole company of God's children who constitute the Body of Christ, those whom the Father had elected in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 3, 4). His desire was not just that they might be saved but might experience 'that salvation *with eternal glory*' (II Tim. ii. 10) which takes the thought much further. It is comparable with the salvation *to the uttermost* of the epistle to the Hebrews, which like Philippians and II Timothy is stressing in parallel teaching the maturing of the saint; the running of the race with respect to the recompense of *reward* (Heb. xi. 24-26) as Moses did.

That there is such a difference the following verses of II Timothy make clear. To enforce this, Paul quotes the fourth of the five "faithful sayings" of the Pastoral Epistles (I Tim. i. 15; iii. 1; iv. 9; II Tim. ii. 11; Titus iii. 8). These were probably fragments of hymns in which doctrine was embodied. This one reads:

"Faithful is the saying: for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we endure, we shall also reign with Him: if we shall deny Him, He also will deny us: if we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself" (ii. 11-13, R.V.).

We shall have problems with this context unless we recognize two distinct lines of truth that we have already touched upon when dealing with the Philippian epistle. We must distinguish between (1) salvation by grace and all it entails, which is not of works, but is the free gift of God and is received personally by faith in Christ and what He has accomplished on the cross, and (2) Christian service which should follow or 'accompany' salvation, resulting in a prize or crown which will be awarded by the Lord if that service is reckoned by Him as faithful. If not, the crown or reward will be denied, as the above

verses teaches, but initial salvation cannot be lost, for “He abides faithful, He cannot deny Himself”, or take back what He has given *as a free gift*, for the ‘gifts and calling of God are without repentance’, that is, change of mind on His part (Rom. xi. 29). The reader should carefully ponder I Cor. iii. 10-15 where a sharp distinction is made between reward for service and salvation by grace.

Since all believers died with Christ in God’s reckoning, they will all live with Him in resurrection somewhere in that new heaven and earth that He is yet to create when the present universe passes away. Their dying with Christ does not depend upon their faithfulness or unfaithfulness in service; it is solely God’s doing. Likewise their living with Him by being raised from the dead and changed into His likeness does not depend on them either. It is the consummation of the glorious work of salvation wrought by the Lord Jesus and will be brought about by Him ‘that quickeneth the dead’. He said “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John xiv. 19).

But in II Tim. ii. 12 we step out of the realm of free grace into the realm of responsibility and service. We are saved to “*work out* our salvation” (not work for it) which God has worked within us (Phil. ii. 12, 13). If we do this faithfully, then this context assures us that we shall not only *live* with Christ, but also *reign with Him*. The word ‘also’ shows this is something additional to salvation. We have millions of people *living* in Great Britain, but only one, our Queen, is *reigning* on the throne. There is a vast difference between living and reigning, even in human affairs. It is the *reigning*, symbolized by the *crown*, that the Lord will deny His children if they are counted by Him as being disloyal or unfaithful. The passage may be set out as follows:

- A | “Faithful is the saying, for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
- B | “If we patiently endure, we shall also reign with Him.
- B | “If we deny Him, He will also deny us
(the reigning with Him, sharing His throne).
- A | If we are faithless, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself”
(that is, He cannot deprive such of their resurrection life with Him).

Living with Christ does not depend upon the faithfulness of the believer, for resurrection to eternal life is the culmination of salvation *by grace*. The believer is eternally linked with the One Who said “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John xi. 25). The believer’s subsequent failures after salvation cannot alter the initial fact of his future life with Him. But when we come to the question of sharing Christ’s *throne* and His reign over the whole creation in heaven and earth, we are dealing with something *additional to salvation*. Whether we are considered by God worthy as good servants, for a ‘crown’, obtaining a ‘prize’, receiving a reward or in other words reigning with Christ, depends upon our response to the claims of His Truth here and now.

When we study the word translated ‘deny’, we find it to be equivalent with the words ‘to be ashamed’:

“Whosoever therefore shall be *ashamed* of Me and of My words of him also shall the Son of man be *ashamed*, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (Mark viii. 38).

“But whosoever shall *deny* Me before men, him will I also *deny* before My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. x. 33).

We can now better understand the statement ‘if we deny Him, He will deny us’ and the link with not being ashamed in II Tim. i. 8, 12, 16 and the most important verse 15 of chapter ii., ‘a workman that needeth not to be ashamed’. There is not one of us today who does not need a clear understanding of these distinct yet related truths and a constant reminder of their practical implications. To be denied by the Saviour is surely a solemn thing, and thus to lose the matchless privilege of sharing His throne will be a terrible loss indeed.

These are such important truths for the believer to apprehend that Timothy is now instructed to remind those under his charge of these great facts:

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of the Lord, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting (overthrowing) of them that hear” (ii. 14, R.V.).

This is not the first time that Paul had warned Timothy concerning this senseless and dangerous striving (I Tim. i. 4, 6, 7; vi. 3-5, 20 also Titus i. 10, 14; iii. 9) which could only lead to the overthrowing of the faith. The word *katastrophe*, ‘subvert’ literally means ‘to turn upside down’, the very opposite of edification or building up. It may not be possible to say exactly what the ‘endless genealogies’ were, but it seems clear that Satan had fabricated a scheme involving ages and false mediators, (angelic princes), which was a travesty of the Truth revealed in the Scriptures which is centred in Christ. The Colossian heresy, as we have seen, was probably linked with a similar conception. This led to endless debates and arguments and word battles which only accomplished what the enemy was aiming at, namely the dividing of the people of God and turning them away from Christ as the fullness of God.

The next section of II Timothy revolves around the great subject of the Truth of God. The word ‘truth’ occurs three times, ‘rightly dividing the word of *Truth*’ (ii. 15); ‘those who concerning the *Truth* have erred’ (ii. 17, 18) and ‘repentance to the acknowledging of the *Truth*’ (ii. 25). Can anything be more important to the practical believer than a knowledge of God’s Truth? How can he *live* the Truth and pass it on to others if he does not apprehend it himself? If what he believes proves to be error then he is a deceived person and becomes a tool of Satan the arch-deceiver and is a misleader of other people. The ‘girdle of Truth’ (see Eph. vi. 14) is an essential part of the protective armour of God against the wiles of the devil. Surely we come here to the heart of all Christian service and witness. If we are wrong here, we shall be wrong everywhere.

But what is Truth? Pilate’s question comes ringing down the centuries and many thousands have asked it since, apparently oblivious of the fact that the Saviour has already answered it in John xiv. 6 “I am the Truth” and “*Thy Word is Truth*” (xvii. 17).

To show the great importance of this subject, the Apostle links our attitude to it with the approval of God:

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (ii. 15).

The word *spoudazo*, study, does not refer to reading books. It occurs again in iv. 21 where it is translated ‘do thy diligence’. It has the notion of persistent zeal and could be rendered in up-to-date language, ‘do your utmost’, the aim being to present oneself approved unto God, a workman without any shame. What greater aim than this can there be for the servant of God? The approval of men can be discounted. The only approval or commendation that matters is one that comes from God when we stand before Him and give an account of our stewardship.

It is this that must constantly be in the forefront of our minds as we live day by day. All else is of secondary importance, for stupendous things are resting on the way we have handled and used the sacred Scriptures, the Word of God, in this day of opportunity. If we have handled the Word unfaithfully or with slackness, then, as the previous section of this epistle has shown, we shall have denied God’s Truth and He will deny us the supreme privilege of reigning with Him over the restored universe. We shall be ashamed before Him, and He will be ashamed of us as *unfaithful servants*. The perfection of our standing in Christ must not be brought in here to try to undo as it were the serious statements of the context we are studying. We are amazed how some who claim to see the Mystery do this and so stress grace that service and responsibility before the Lord are ruled out! Yet they constantly quote II Tim. ii. 15 and talk about ‘right division’! This verse makes perfectly clear that only those who are unashamed *workmen* have rightly divided the Word of God. In other words these are *practical people, workmen*, who have rendered acceptable service to the Lord in the way they have handled and proclaimed the Truth of the Scriptures.

What does “right division” mean?

The faithful workman is one who has ‘rightly-divided the Word of Truth’. *Orthotomeo* is not easy to define because it is used nowhere else in the N.T. and only occurs twice in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the O.T. used by the Lord and the apostles). The passages are Prov. iii. 6 and xi. 5 where, instead of “He shall *direct* thy paths” (from the Hebrew text) we have “He (or it, referring to wisdom in verse 5) shall *rightly divide* thy paths”. The illustration here is that of a sign-post dividing off and pointing to the right road out of a number before the person concerned. This would certainly influence Timothy’s understanding as he knew the holy Scriptures (the O.T.) which had made him ‘wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’ (II Tim. iii. 15).

The word *orthotomeo* has a primary meaning of ‘cutting straight’. It also had a secondary meaning of ‘handling aright’ and translators have used either of these two meanings. We give a selection:

Rotherham: “Skillfully handling the Word of truth”.

Cunnington: “Rightly handling the message of truth”.

Moffatt: “The way you handle the word of truth”.

R.S.V.: “Rightly handling the word of truth”.

N.I.V.: “Correctly handles the word of truth”.

J. N. Darby: “Cutting in a straight line the word of truth”.

Berkeley Version: “Correctly analyzing the message of truth”.

The *Berkeley Version* is suggestive here. “To analyze” is ‘to divide or resolve into constituent parts’, and as the Word of God is a supreme revelation of ‘the eternal purpose (or the purpose of the ages) in Christ Jesus’ (Eph. iii. 10, 11) which touches the heavens as well as the earth, we need to divide or distinguish between these wonderful facets of God’s almighty plan which lies behind the creation of the universe. If we do this and give due weight to all the revelation that God has given in His Word, we shall be ‘handling it aright’ with that faithfulness which God demands from everyone who seeks to know it and proclaim its unsearchable riches which are treasured up in Christ Jesus.

No.6. ii. 15. **pp. 121 - 127**

We have been considering II Tim. ii. 15, a verse of vast importance, for it impinges upon our understanding and proclamation of the truth of the Word of God. Moreover it is solemnly associated with a believer’s service for the Lord and the Lord’s approval or disapproval which will result in the gaining or losing of a ‘crown’ which symbolizes not just living with Christ in the future glory, *but reigning with Him over the restored universe*.

Now what are the practical implications of verse 15? First of all let us state what it is not. “Right Division” does not mean chopping up the Bible into sections of our making which may accord with the pet ideas that we hold. When properly understood, it is not *divisive* in the wrong sense of the word. What it does in its application is to recognize the distinctions that the Author, God the Holy Spirit, has Himself made. The margin of Phil. i. 10 tells us ‘to try the things that differ’ and this is with the object of ‘approving things that are excellent’, in other words getting to know *God’s best*. The word ‘better’ is one of the key-words of the epistle to the Hebrews and ‘better things’ can only be appreciated by believers who are doing this. We believe that this is the way God wants us to approach and handle His precious Word. Right Division is therefore a great principle of interpretation of the Scriptures and we will try to indicate its application to this great Book of Truth.

Examples of Right Division.

(1) If we obey the injunction of II Tim. ii. 15 we shall note the various *time periods of Scripture* and not confuse them. Time is of the utmost importance in the revelation of

God's redemptive plan for earth and heaven. God's clock is always correct and there is always a special time for the revelation of His Truth. He is never a moment too soon or too late.

The importance of God's time is seen in Titus i. 1, 2:

“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, Who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and *at His appointed season* He brought His Word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour” (N.I.V.).

The truth given through Paul's ministry therefore was divinely regulated as to *time* as well as to its *content*. It would have been out of place before this and too late if it had been postponed to the future. We must therefore learn from this and *distinguish between the time periods of Scripture*. What was true and according to the will of God in the O.T. times is not necessarily true today. If a believer sins now, he does not bring an animal sacrifice to God in order to be forgiven. Yet this was God's command to Israel in the O.T. and refusal to obey it would have resulted in judgment from Him. It was truth *then*; it is not truth *now*. This is obvious, but it is a plain example of a principle that obtains throughout Scripture.

Conversely, the present must not be read into the past. For instance, the great Secret (mystery A.V.) concerning the Body of Christ, dealt with in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. iii. 1-9; Col. i. 24-27) which God *hid in Himself* from past ages (time) and generations (people) must not be read into the past or in fact any time *before* this was revealed to Paul as the chosen human channel (carefully note this in the last two Scripture references). The time of its proclamation was from his Roman prison after the Acts period. He alone claims to be the appointed minister by Christ in connection with this favoured heavenly company of believers. If we do not distinguish the time periods of the Bible we make the Word of God contradict itself, which is a serious thing in the sight of God, and we turn it from truth to falsehood and rob ourselves of the glorious revelation it contains.

We must also note that the future must not be read into the present. The future prophetic period of wrath and judgment of God known as the Day of the Lord must not be read into the present age of grace (Isaiah ii. 12; xiii. 6-9; Zeph. i. 14, 15; Joel i. 15; ii. 11).

The example of the Lord Jesus in connection with Right Division.

We have a supreme example of the Lord Jesus applying this principle to the time periods of Scripture in Luke iv. 14-21. He gave the public reading of the O.T. in the Synagogue which was taken from Isa. lxi. The reader should turn to this reference and read it carefully and then compare it with what the Lord did. His reading was indeed short. He stopped in the middle of verse 2, closed the book and sat down. No wonder His listeners were surprised and gripped, not only at its brevity, but also for the fact that He stopped reading after the phrase 'to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord'. Had

He gone on and read ‘and the day of vengeance of our God’ He could not have said with truth, “*this* day is *this* Scripture *fulfilled* in your ears” (Luke iv. 21), for He came, as He had taught, not to judge and condemn, but to save (John xii. 47).

Now is the age of grace. Grace now reigns (Rom. v. 21) and God does not sit on a throne of grace and judgment at the same time. Judgment and wrath are now held back, and in infinite patience God waits for the repentance and response of a sinful race. But He does not wait for ever. The age of grace has its end and then wrath and judgment must follow.

That Christ believed and taught this too the context of Luke xxi. 22 makes perfectly clear and Rev. vi. 16, 17 solemnly reveals that the future wrath of Christ will be a terrible reality. This may not be popular theology, but it is revealed truth.

Here then we have an example given by the Lord Jesus of ‘rightly dividing the Word’ and separating the present ‘acceptable year of the Lord’ from the future Lord’s Day of wrath and judgment and all who handle the Word of God are surely without excuse with this divine example before them.

(2) We must distinguish between *Law* and *Grace*, especially with relationship to the gospel and the way of salvation. Salvation by faith in Christ, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life are the free gifts of God, and can never be attained by attempting to keep the law. Man’s imperfect sinful nature makes this impossible, for God requires *perfect* keeping of His law (James ii. 10, 11), if this is the ground that man chooses to approach Him. Salvation and righteousness are ‘not of works (human merit or attainment) lest any man should boast’ (Eph. ii. 8-10), but it is ‘*unto* good works’ *after* salvation. This we have already stressed and ‘right division’ will carefully note the difference between receiving the gifts of grace by faith (God’s favour to the unworthy) and human attempts to obtain salvation by one’s own unaided efforts.

(3) This leads to the difference between *salvation by grace*, apart from works, and *prize or reward* resulting from faithful service following salvation which we have already touched upon. The former is sure and certain because it depends solely upon what Christ has done on the cross and what He is now doing for us in resurrection and not in any way upon the believer. The Lord will surely finish the salvation He has begun:

“ He Who began a good work in you will *carry it on to completion* until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. i. 6, N.I.V.).

Prize or reward is *not* certain. It is only for those believers who have been faithful to the truth committed to them and have endured even through suffering and loss for the truth’s sake.

(4) “Right division” will also distinguish between the *standing* and the *state* of the believer, the distinction being what the believer is made to be by God, in Christ, holy and clothed with His righteousness, and his state, what he is *in himself* in thought, word and deed. All the believers at Corinth were addressed as *saints* (holy ones, I Cor. i. 2), but

many of them were anything but saintly in their walk and witness as the epistle shows. Our constant aim must be to balance our state with our standing and seek to do this in the strength of the Lord.

(5) We must learn to distinguish between the various *judgments* of Scripture. The assessment of a believer's service by the Lord (II Cor. v. 9, 10; I Cor. iii. 10-15) must not be confused with the judgment of the living nations at the Second Advent of Christ (Matt. xxv. 31, 32), and the judgment of the Great White Throne (Rev. xx. 11).

(6) There is more than one resurrection in the Word of God and these must not be confused. Scripture knows nothing of a 'general resurrection'. It is 'every man in his own order' (I Cor. xv. 23). The *first* or *former* resurrection *before* the Millennium (Rev. xx. 5) cannot be the same as the Great White Throne judgment with its resurrection *after* it (Rev. xx. 11-15). The word 'first' clearly indicates there must be more than one.

(7) *The future spheres of blessing* indicated in Scripture for the redeemed should be noted carefully. If 'the meek shall inherit *the earth*' (Matt. v. 5) is the same as being 'seated together in the heavenly places, far above all' (Eph. ii. 6), where Christ is now enthroned, then words have lost their meaning and Bible study is a waste of time. Yet, in spite of this, many Christians believe that *all* the saved will go to *heaven*, while others insist that all the saved will be blessed on *earth*. Both cannot be right. God's Word reveals that there are three goals for companies of the redeemed: earth (Matt. v. 5), the 'heavenly Jerusalem' which finally descends to the new earth (Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2, 10) and heavenly places 'far above all' (Eph. ii. 6; Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1-4).

If these are confused or not apprehended, how can a clear hope for future glory be entertained?

The above are some examples of the great interpretive principle of II Tim. ii. 15 in practice. They have only been lightly touched upon since a large volume would be needed to do the theme justice. This principle governing interpretation ramifies throughout the Bible, going much further than distinguishing dispensations, which are often confused with ages or periods of time. A dispensation is the administration of some important aspect of the truth of God. It is in the realm of time of course, but is much more than a time period.

Some translators, as we have seen, insist that *orthotomeo* must be rendered with its secondary meaning of 'handle correctly', rather than 'rightly divide'. Even if this is allowed, provided it is faithfully followed in our exposition of the sacred Scriptures, the results will be the same. How can the Word of God be 'correctly handled' if the foregoing lines of teaching are confused or ignored? Some truths in the Bible are true for always. They are basic or foundational, not dispensational, e.g. sin, and its remedy, God's salvation, sanctification and consecration. Others, as we have seen, are true only for a limited time, e.g. the Mosaic law of type and shadow, or they are separate lines of truth which must not be confused.

We believe that this is a sane and reverent way of handling the Word of God, and moreover it is a principle we all carry out to some degree in our daily lives. Who would mix up the contents of the bedroom, lounge and kitchen in their homes, or the various departments of their business? The same sanity is needed in the approach to and interpretation of the Word of God.

If the principle of II Tim. ii. 15 is not obeyed, then confusion reigns and we see the result of this in the divided state of Christendom around us. All denominations appeal to the Bible yet they are all in disagreement on many points of doctrine. If this sacred Book can be interpreted in any way one pleases without any divine guiding principle then it becomes like a musical instrument that plays any tune the player wishes. Even Satan can and does quote Scripture but he never rightly divides! The most serious consequence is that *Truth is not obtained* however much the Bible is quoted. Every text has a context, and each context is related to truth that is linked to the company of the redeemed to whom God has sent it.

Taken out of the setting in which God has placed it, the Bible becomes untruth and we believe this is why such solemn consequences follow the refusal to obey II Tim. ii. 15. Nothing can be more serious than turning the Word of truth into error and if we do so we must not be surprised if we do not receive God's approval in that future day of glory.

Too often this is treated lightly by Christians, but we say with definiteness that no believer can consistently disobey the divine command of II Tim. ii. 15 and be 'approved of God'. The divine 'crown' will not be his, this heavenly prize will be forfeited.

On the other hand if 'right division' or 'correct handling' is faithfully carried out and its result is manifest in our lives, we can confidently look forward to God's richest blessing here and now and His exaltation of us to His throne in the next life.

One more important fact needs to be brought before the reader namely that, when II Tim. ii. 15 is consistently applied *every statement of the Scriptures can be taken without alteration*. It allows God to mean what He says and have a meaning for everything He says. There are no contradictions, and everything falls into its proper place in the outworking of the great purpose of the ages centred in Christ Jesus, and is finally seen to be carried out to a glorious conclusion by Him Who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

No.7. ii. 16 - iii. 5.
pp. 155 - 160

Having given some consideration to the great principle of interpretation contained in II Tim. ii. 15 we proceed to note that the Apostle Paul now goes on to bring before Timothy two professing Christians who failed to ‘rightly divide the Word of truth’ namely Hymenaeus and Philetus:

“But shun profane babblings: for they will proceed further in ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a gangrene: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; men who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some” (II Tim. ii. 16-18, R.V.).

Hymenaeus is referred to in I Tim. i. 20 where the Apostle delivers him to Satan so that he might learn not to blaspheme. Evidently he had already gone off the track of truth. Of Philetus, we know nothing, but both were obviously well known to Timothy.

Paul takes a very serious view of their false teaching, likening it to a spreading gangrene which was dangerously affecting other believers. In what way could they have taught that resurrection (there is no definite article) was past already? They could not have been referring to the Lord’s resurrection (I Cor. xv. 20) for this was already a blessed historical fact and certainly past at the time Paul wrote. It could therefore only refer to *the resurrection of the believer*. They either denied the need of the believer for a bodily resurrection by spiritualizing and interpreting it as a purely spiritual experience, or they taught that believers who had died had already received a bodily resurrection. Either denies the truth of a *literal bodily resurrection in the future* at the manifestation of the Lord.

The Apostle had already clearly emphasized this:

“We wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory” (Phil. iii. 20, 21, R.V.).

There is teaching today that comes perilously near to the two false ideas mentioned above. We need to watch carefully lest we fall into the same error as Hymenaeus and Philetus. Let us note that they did not deny the *fact* of resurrection as some had done at Corinth (I Cor. xv. 12), they merely misplaced it *as regards time*, putting a future truth into the past. Here is a definite example of *wrongly dividing the Word of truth* and it stands out all the more vividly in a context that stresses the supreme importance of *right* division.

Not nearly enough attention has been paid by expositors to the *time element* in Scripture. As we have pointed out before, all truth has its time setting and is made known by an all-wise God not a moment too soon or too late. Let us note I Tim. ii. 5-7 and Titus i. 1-3 “. . . . Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony

to be borne in *its own times*" (R.V.); ". . . . the knowledge (or acknowledging) of the truth which is according to godliness but in *its own seasons* (margin) manifested His Word in the message, wherewith I (Paul) was intrusted". There is a right and fitting season or time for the revelation of God's truth which must be recognized.

The Apostle now turns away from error to the firm foundation of God that stands sure and unchanging and likens it to a seal or coin whose two sides represent (1) the infallible Lord and His knowledge, "the Lord knoweth them that are His"; the tares and the wheat are all known to Him; and (2) "Let everyone that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (II Tim. ii. 19). The first is internal and unseen by men and may be likened to a *root*. The second is external and can be seen by all and may be compared with *fruit*. "By their fruits ye shall know them." We should be thankful that the final sorting out between the true and the false will be accomplished by the Lord Who will make no mistakes.

An allusion is made to Numb. xvi. 5 and 26 in which the Israelites are reminded of this fact. God unerringly knows His own children and while we have both Divine sovereignty and human responsibility here, it is the fact of *responsibility* that the Apostle wished to bring home to Timothy. Consequently he now brings forward the illustration of a great house and its furniture:

"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour (or no honour). If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. ii. 20, 21).

The vessels unto honour may be likened to the ornaments of beauty in the drawing-room or lounge; the baser vessels, those of a lack of honour or beauty, in the kitchen. The stress here is not the use of these articles, but on their quality or worth. Paul is urging Timothy to aspire to be a vessel of real worth to the Lord, one who can bring glory to His Name.

Hymenaeus and Philetus and those who followed them could be compared with vessels of dishonour, and there was only one course open to Timothy, namely to purge himself and separate himself from such. Only then could he be true to the name Timothy, which means 'one who honours God' or is 'honoured by God'. The tenses of the verb here should be rendered, 'having been sanctified' and 'having been prepared', that is by God, 'unto every good work'. The root meaning of sanctification is *separation*, and here we have *separation for service* (the Master's use). By separating himself from all who taught false doctrine, Timothy would be taking to a practical conclusion the sanctification which was his in Christ. Only by so doing could he be loyal to the Lord and the truth committed to him and thus be a vessel of beauty and honour, a vessel that the Lord could use to His glory. Doubtless by so doing he would render himself open to the charge of being narrow and unchristian, but there must be no compromise whatever the cost.

All who wish to become honoured servants of the Lord must follow the same pathway. Such must choose whether they wish to please men or please the Lord,

remembering the words of the Apostle Paul in another context, ‘for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ’ (Gal. i. 10).

Paul continues:

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, love (charity), peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Tim. ii. 22).

We have seen that the word translated ‘lust’ is sometimes used with a good meaning in the Scriptures (see Luke xxii. 15; Phil. i. 23; I Tim. iii. 1). It denotes any strong feeling or wish, either bad or good. Inasmuch as strong inclinations can be fraught with danger, specially during the impetuosity of youth, Timothy is exhorted to avoid such and exhibit the fruit of the Spirit that alone could make him outstanding as a leader for the Lord.

Again he is warned to avoid those who quibble and cause quarrels, thus breaking the unity of the Spirit:

“The Lord’s servant must not strive (fight), but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves” (ii. 24, 25, R.V.).

How difficult it is to be gentle and meek yet inflexible where God’s truth is concerned! How often opposition stirs the very worst in us and we hit back in the strength of the sinful old nature and spoil our witness! Only by consciously and continually drawing upon the Lord’s inexhaustible grace can we yield ‘no, not for an hour’ (Gal. ii. 5), yet avoid fighting and anger which so often has disfigured controversies in doctrine. Those who oppose may be temporarily in the devil’s snare, and they need that change of mind (repentance) to the acknowledging of the truth, so that they may recover themselves out of it (verse 26). The Lord’s servant should remember he follows One Who did not strive or cry, but rather enlightened and instructed (Matt. xii. 19).

Graphic words are used in the closing verses of the chapter. The word *ananepho*, ‘recover themselves’, literally means ‘that they may return to soberness’ (R.V. margin) as though they have been duped, intoxicated and paralyzed by the devil. Let us never forget that all around us the great battle for the domination of man’s mind goes on unceasingly, for whoever controls this controls the whole personality. The unsaved are walking according to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2) and only God’s saving power can break this terrible bondage and bring liberty. The believer who has already been freed can become enslaved again if he gives place to the devil and it is these things that Paul has in mind when he warns Timothy of this possibility.

We must be careful here with the pronouns *him* and *his*. To whom do they refer? The A.V. suggests in both cases (‘taken captive by *him* at *his* will’) the devil is the antecedent. The R.V. margin reads ‘by the devil unto the will of God’ which we feel is what Paul is teaching. It is difficult to believe that Satan can capture any believer who is walking worthy, *just whenever he chooses*. This would take away all assurance and make Christian service and witness one of uncertainty and fear. The devil can only touch the child of God with His permission (as in the case of Job) or the believer can walk in the

flesh and expose himself to Satan's activities (as Hymenaeus and Philetus). Even here it is under the Lord's control and the enemy's domination can be snapped by a change of mind (repentance) which the Lord can give to those who realize and acknowledge their sinfulness and foolishness.

Chapter iii. opens with a preview of the last days of this dispensation and it does not make pleasant reading:

“ men will love nothing but money and self; they will be arrogant, boastful and abusive, they will be implacable in their hatreds, scandalmongers, intemperate and fierce, strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers, swollen with self-importance. They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of religion but are a standing denial of its reality” (II Tim. iii. 1-5, N.E.B.).

While Timothy lived to see the beginning of this terrible state of affairs, the Apostle concentrates on the end of this Gentile age with all its godlessness and corruption.

Wherever this is dealt with in the Scriptures, whether in prophecy, symbol or doctrine; whether in the Gospels (and specially note the Lord's discourse concerning the end of the age in Matt. xxiv.) or in the epistles, the picture is as black as it can be. In fact Christ depicts a time of world trouble whose climax has never been equaled in the past or ever will be in the future (Matt. xxiv. 20, 21). It is a time when humanity can annihilate itself and would do so unless God steps in (verse 22). This He will do and cut short these terrible days by the personal coming to the earth of the Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory (verses 29 and 30). Only by God's personal intervention in this way can world deliverance be accomplished and Satan's domination and kingdom be destroyed. There is certainly no room in the Scriptures for the deceptive idea that the world will get better and better and man will eventually bring in the millennium of peace and plenty! And it is now a fact that the annihilation of the human race is a possibility which is an ominous sign of the times.

**No.8. iii. 6 – 17.
pp. 161 - 166**

The last days of this age in which we live, described by Paul in the opening verses of II Tim. iii., are terrible indeed. They have always existed in some measure of course, but here they are world-wide and describe a time of darkest paganism and utter apostasy in the world of religion where men will turn away their ears from the truth of God to myths (iv. 4). They are indeed 'perilous times' (iii. 1). *Chalepos*, 'perilous', could be rendered 'menacing'. The only other place of its occurrence in the N.T. is Matt. viii. 28 describing the condition of demon-possessed men.

Rom. i. 28-32 gives a similar description of the pagan world in the Apostle's day. In the terrible list of vices we note the recurrence of the word 'love'; (1) lovers of their own

selves; (2) 'covetous', literally, 'lovers of money'; (3) 'not loving (despisers of) those that are good'; (4) 'lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God' or perhaps 'lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God'. Here is the stark tragedy of misplaced love. When we love we touch the very centre of our being whether for good or evil. Where truth is concerned, all may be summed up in the word 'love' which is perfectly expressed in the law of God (Rom. xiii. 10). It fulfils all Christian service (Gal. v. 13; I Thess. i. 3) and without it Christian labour is rendered null and void (I Cor. xiii. 1-3). The believer is 'rooted and grounded in love' (Eph. iii. 17) and his main aim should be to get to know more of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge (Eph. iii. 19).

The tragic fact is that sin has twisted man's capability of loving in the proper sense, with the result that we see the passage that is now before us. Instead of loving God with all his heart, man loves himself, his pleasures, his money and anything that ministers to his own desires and thus his love is frittered away on empty transitory things that can never satisfy. It is indeed sad to read in II Tim. iv. 10, "Demas hath forsaken me, *having loved* this present world". The warning is given regarding this in I John ii. 15-17, "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever".

It seems impossible that after nearly two thousand years of Christianity, man could lapse into such a condition as Paul describes, but the Word of God never exaggerates. This is a true picture of the end time and believers must face up to it. These last days will have no place for Christ crucified, risen and ascended and the glorious gospel centred in Him. All this will be unknown or denied, following the turning away from the truth of the Word of God to fables, myths and lies of the devil, which will dominate the thinking and actions of mankind who will have rejected God and His claims.

As we look around today who can doubt that these times are already upon us? The rapid downward slide morally and nationally that we see everywhere today is evidence of this. Some Christians are hoping and believing that all this can be halted and ended by revival. But there is no place for any such revival in II Tim. iii. Those who expect revival should remember that the work of the Holy Spirit is bound up with *the Word He has written*. There can be no possibility of revival, in individuals or on a large scale, until the Word of God is given its rightful place in heart and life. Only then has the Holy Spirit something to work on in order to exalt the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is His supreme work to testify to the Lord Jesus and to glorify Him (John xv. 26; xvi. 14).

But these last days are times of turning away from God's Word and rejecting its light and truth. Those of us who are truly believers in Christ can best serve Him by holding fast and faithfully holding forth the word of life (Phil. ii. 15, 16), and not yielding an inch from the great deposit of truth the Lord has placed in our hands. Results we must leave to Him, they are not our province, but *faithful testimony* by lip and life is what God requires from all His children however dark the days may be.

The reference to Jannes and Jambres, the magicians who withstood Moses, again throws light on the Satanic character of the opposition of the Truth. These were able, up to a point, to copy the miracles that Moses wrought and they did it by Satanic power. Satan is always the ape of God, and the Scriptures warn us of lying wonders, signs and miracles that he produces at the end of this age in order to deceive the whole world (II Thess. ii. 8-10; Rev. xiii. 11-15).

Those who withstand the truth of God at this time do so by the same means; they are corrupt and reprobate concerning the faith (II Tim. iii. 8). The word 'reprobate' is the negative of the word translated 'approved' in ii. 15. This is the opposite of the unashamed workman. These reprobate ones worm their way into houses, seeking women of the weaker sort. "Silly women" of the A.V. is literally 'little women', a contemptuous term indicating feebleness of character. Such are 'laden with sins'; their consciences are overwhelmed and they clutch at any solution before them. They are 'swayed by various impulses' (iii. 6 R.S.V.) and while they listen to other people, their minds have become so warped that they become incapable of attaining to 'a knowledge of the truth'. Thus they become an easy prey to the false teachers and Satan behind them.

The Apostle now turns back in his thought to Timothy and reminds him:

"But *thou* (emphatic) didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings; what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me" (iii. 10, R.V.).

Timothy had been closely linked with the Apostle from the earliest days of his ministry and up to this point had followed Paul in his doctrine and manner of life. How good to be able to link together teaching and conduct! It could always be said with truth that the Apostle practiced what he preached. He not only called attention to his teaching, but could uphold it all by the manner of his life, thus giving power to his witness. He could say without egotism, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. xi. 1). His life was dominated by one great purpose, namely to make known fully and complete the truth ("the good deposit") entrusted to him by the risen Saviour.

Timothy knew well Paul's faith, his persuasion, his longsuffering and patience which enabled him to endure extremes of testing when others would have given up; his love which ever manifested itself in pouring himself out for others, a practical example of the wonderful exposition of divine love he gave in I Cor. xiii. Timothy knew the Apostle's sufferings and persecutions for Christ and how faithfully they were endured.

Paul's mind travels back to the beginning of his ministry at Antioch and the first great missionary journey he undertook when justification by faith was first preached (Acts xiii. 38, 39); then to Iconium and the assault made on him there (Acts xiv. 1-5) and lastly Lystra, where he was stoned and left for dead (Acts xiv. 6-20).

However, we cannot but feel that in the mind of the Apostle the terrible experience at Lystra was softened by the fact that this was the place that gave him his beloved son in the faith. Timothy was a native of Lystra (Acts xvi. 1, 2). Lest these great tests should overwhelm Timothy, Paul adds, “but out of them all the Lord delivered me”, clearly showing that he dealt with an almighty God Who was able to rescue in all circumstances, however intense the trial. He continues, “Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (iii. 12). Weymouth renders this verse ‘everyone who is determined to live a godly life’, for we have more than the plain future tense here. In Acts xiv. 22 he warned the disciples that ‘we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God’. Christ Himself had said, “Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John xv. 20), and faithfulness to Him will surely entail misunderstanding, persecution and perhaps loneliness, for we follow One Who is still ‘despised and rejected of men’.

Timothy is now warned of a rapid increase in evil (iii. 13) and truth having been cast away, deception is bound to take its place. World-wide deception is the hallmark of the end of this age (Matt. xxiv. 4, 5, 24; II Thess. ii. 9, 10; Rev. xiii. 11-15), and its only antidote is the Word of truth, which protects completely from Satan’s lie. Timothy must learn to stand firm whatever the cost, and realize the tremendous importance of the holy Scriptures as the foundation and equipment of the man of God for all demands that are made on him:

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (iii. 14-17, A.V.).

Timothy’s effectiveness as a teacher was bound up with faithfulness to the Word of God, which had been brought before him from the earliest days of infancy by a wise Christian mother and grandmother (i. 5) and then, on attaining manhood, he had come to know the distinctive truths committed by the Lord to Paul and embodied in his epistles, which were already getting recognition as part of the holy Scriptures as the Apostle Peter makes clear (II Pet. iii. 15, 16).

This section of II Timothy is of utmost importance, for it deals with the divine origin of the Word of God which is the basis of the Christian faith. No wonder it has been the subject of persistent attacks by the evil one and his followers. If the Bible can be entirely discredited then Christianity crumbles, for we have no historic basis for our faith, for ‘faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God’ (Rom. x. 17), and we can know little or nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the centre and circumference of it all if the Bible has no authority.

Satan always seeks to undermine what God has said and to sow doubt in the minds of those who read it. This commenced in Eden with the insidious question, ‘hath God said?’, and has continued all down the centuries. Doubt in the Bible leads to doubt

regarding Christ. Doubt is really unbelief, and unbelief is the one sin that cuts a person off from God (Heb. xi. 6; I John v. 10-12). It is therefore in Satan's interest to keep man in a perpetual state of unbelief. In contrast the holy Scripture, the written Word of God, reveals the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ Who can meet every problem and need of man. He has given Himself and therefore given His all for him and because of this is utterly worthy of man's faith and confidence.

As Timothy had known the holy Scriptures from his earliest days and evidently believed them, there was no need for the sudden 'right about turn' that was necessary for Christ-opposing Saul of Tarsus. In the O.T. Scriptures Christ is portrayed by type and shadow, all being prophetic of the One Who was to be the Saviour of mankind. Old Testament believers therefore looked forward to Him by faith as we today look back with that same faith. We will consider the supremely important words Paul gave concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures in our next study.

No.9. iii. 16.
pp. 181 - 186

In the context of this epistle which we are studying, we have seen that in II Tim. iii. 14-17 the Apostle Paul, in order to combat the evil effect of the false teachers and degenerates, now refers Timothy to the written Word of God as the antidote.

He assures him that all of it is inspired by God and fully sufficient to equip the man of God for all his needs. This most important passage needs careful attention, for it is dealing with one of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. First of all, we must be careful with the word 'inspired' and not import into it modern ideas. Men can look at a work of art or listen to a symphony written by one of the great masters and call these 'inspired', that is to say, they are of superb quality. But Paul does not use the word 'inspiration' in this way. The word *theopneustos*, is very rare, being found only three times in secular literature up to this period. It means "God-breathed", literally, and puts the Scriptures in a class by themselves as does the adjective 'holy' in the previous verse. The 'holy letters', *hiera grammata*, and the God-breathed 'scripture' (*graphe*) are one and the same, and of all the millions of books written by men, not one can truthfully be said to have the imprimatur of Deity on it and so be described as 'holy', which is God's prerogative alone.

Much controversy has raged concerning the proper translation of the opening words of verse 16. The R.V. reads "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable" etc. and puts in the margin as an alternative, "Every Scripture is inspired of God, and profitable". The modernist, and all who reject the plenary inspiration of Scripture, find that by pulling verse 16 of the R.V. out of its context, they have a basis for teaching that only the *inspired parts* of the Bible are profitable, assuming this context allows that some parts are *not* inspired. But to be fair to the Revisers, we have seen that the 'sacred writings' of the

previous verse describe the *whole* of the written Word, so that their translation of the next verse asserts that *every one* of these sacred writings is inspired. It would be impossible to teach in one verse that the sacred writings as a whole are ‘holy’, but at the same time (in the following verse), only *some of them* are inspired.

While the translations of the A.V. and R.V. are grammatically possible, we believe the A.V. more clearly renders what Paul is writing to Timothy, and one is glad to see that this translation is adhered to in modern versions such as the Revised Standard Version, the Berkeley Version, the New International Version and others.

Some translators treat *theopneustos*, as an adjective (Paul omits the verb ‘to be’) rendering the phrase “Every God-breathed Scriptures is profitable etc.”, but this makes the rest of the sentence tautological for it stands to reason that every God-breathed Scripture *must* as a consequence be useful in the fullest sense. Moreover the natural place of the adjective would be *before* the noun, not after it as here.

While the Greek *pas* can mean both ‘all’ and ‘every’, constructions similar to II Tim. iii. 16 demand the rendering ‘all’, otherwise we should have the following translations of Rom. vii. 12, “the commandment (being) holy *is also* just”; I Cor. xi. 30, “many (being) weak *are also* sickly”; Heb. iv. 13, “All things (being) naked *are also* opened before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do”; and I Tim. iv. 4, “Every good creature of God *is also* not one of them to be rejected”.

Such renderings are impossible and taking everything into consideration, the A.V. translation of II Tim. iii. 16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” is fully justified. E. K. Simpson rightly comments here:

“This enthronement of the Holy Scriptures (primarily, but not exclusively, the O.T.) in the seat of authority is so insistent and prolific of consequences that we cannot wonder that the modern spirit of license rises in revolt against it or labours to dilute its significance. First of all we have the declaration that the sacred *graphie*, the invariable meaning of the word, whether singular or plural, in the N.T., re-echoing the *hiera grammata* of the previous verse, *God-breathed* in quality, has the seal of divine truth stamped upon it throughout. The imprimatur of Deity countersigns these scripts, instrumentally the work of human minds yet prompted by an unseen Power. That fact sets them apart from all other writings” (*The Pastoral Epistles*, p.151).

The word ‘Scripture’ means ‘that which is written’ and if all that was *written* was *God-breathed*, there was no room left for fallible human opinion in the original manuscripts. Other evidences for the full inspiration of the Bible are given in the author’s *God’s Word Written*, obtainable from *The Berean Publishing Trust*. The reader will note that we do not propound any *theory* of inspiration, for the simple reason that it is impossible. We reject any mechanical theory which amounts to automatic dictation. The Word of God is a blending of the divine and the human, like the living Word, Christ Himself Who combines Deity with humanity. *The God-breathed Scriptures are a miracle*, and miracles by their very nature, are not explainable. Those who believe that the Lord Jesus miraculously fed the 5,000 and raised Lazarus from the dead should have no difficulty in accepting the plenary inspiration of the Word of God as asserted in

II Tim. iii. 16. Either God is almighty and is able to do this or His is not. The modernists, and alas many of them are Christian leaders and teachers, deny the infallibility of the sacred Scriptures, and therefore they have no sure ground for their faith, for if the Bible is only inspired in parts, who is to decide without any doubt which are these parts and which are not? They are forcibly thrown back on fallible human opinion where there is no agreement. The Apostle Paul taught that the Word of God is the 'sword of the Spirit' (Eph. vi. 17), the one offensive weapon permitted to the believer, sufficient to overcome all the attacks of Satan, and we have the divine example of the Saviour's use of it three times in the wilderness so effectively that the devil retired defeated (Matt. iv. 1-11).

The modernist has a broken sword in his partly inspired Bible, one that is utterly useless to foil the great deceiver of mankind. The most impressive fact to all who sincerely trust in the Saviour and who seek to follow Him faithfully is *His attitude to the Scriptures*. This was always one of complete reverence and acceptance. Not once did He suggest that any part of the O.T. was untrue. On the contrary He declared "Thy Word is Truth" (John xvii. 17) and stated that it cannot be broken, and every jot and tittle must be fulfilled (John x. 35; Matt. v. 17, 18). He pointed to the truth of the Pentateuch as a prelude to belief in Himself (John v. 46, 47), and accused His enemies of being in error because of their ignorance of the Scriptures (Mark xii. 24).

Surely no one has the right to name the Name of Christ and call himself a *Christian*, who does not accept *all* that the Saviour taught. E. K. Simpson was quite right when he stated that the modern spirit of license rises in revolt against a fully inspired Bible, for once this is accepted, then one's own thoughts and ideas *must be subjected to its divine teaching*, and this obedience is something that the pride of man will not allow. He must be able to bring in his own opinions and have the last word in his beliefs, or it would be better to describe them as *his unbeliefs*.

We would point out, in order to avoid misunderstanding, that the word 'God-breathed' as Paul used the term, referred to *something already in existence*, namely the O.T. Scriptures and the N.T. as far as it had been written. This was God's Word written as far as he was concerned and this was what he was commending to Timothy. It should be the same to us also who profess to follow him even as he followed Christ. It cannot refer to *future translations*, some of which were not made for over 1,000 years later, nor does it mean that all that is contained in the Bible is inspired. We have the words of Satan in the prologue to the book of Job. Often we read of the sayings and doings of those who were the enemies of God. Neither of these could be 'inspired', but the *account* of them is, and therefore is true.

Regarding translations, we should be thankful for faithful scholars, men of God like Dr. E. W. Bullinger, Charles H. Welch, F. F. Bruce and others who have laboured to give us accurate versions in our own language. The scholars who gave us our A.V. recognized the *originals* to be the Word of God and, as Hebrew and Greek scholars, made their translation from the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, having regard also to the versions already made, especially Tyndale's, which greatly influenced them.

Professor J. Isaacs state “nine tenths of the Authorized New Testament is still Tyndale, and the best is still his”.*

[* - *The Bible in its ancient and English Versions* ed. H. W. Robinson p.160
and see *The English Bible* by F. F. Bruce.]

There is no need therefore for anyone who has no access to the original languages to be in any doubt as to what God has written. Some are perturbed because God did not see fit to preserve the original documents. But it was His *wisdom* that overruled this. Just imagine what the Roman Church would have made of them as idols for worship together with many so-called relics and other superstitions that this church holds! We are reminded of the reformatory acts of king Hezekiah which included the destruction of the brazen serpent Moses had made. This, in Hezekiah’s day, had become an object of worship (II Kings xviii. 4) thus producing idolators among the people of God.

If the Lord has not seen fit to preserve the original manuscripts, He certainly watched over the texts from which our translations are made. And here we should be thankful for the archaeological discoveries which, under the Lord’s guiding hand, have so wonderfully confirmed the truth of God’s Word. Sir Frederick Kenyon, generally recognized as being the greatest textual authority of this century states:

“We must be content to know that the general authenticity of the New Testament text has been remarkably supported by the modern discoveries, which have so greatly reduced the interval between the original autographs and our earliest extant manuscripts, and that the difference of readings, interesting as they are, do not affect the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.”*

[* - *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* p.179. This book, together with *The Books and the Parchments* by F. F. Bruce are “musts” for anyone who desires an accurate and up-to-date knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek texts and their preservation. Another helpful volume is *A General Introduction to the Bible* by Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, published by The Moody Press.]

What is the alternative to plenary inspiration of the Bible? Either fallible human opinion or an equally fallible church. The Roman Catholic rests upon a church that claims to be infallible and therefore the infallible interpreter of the holy Scriptures. This claim every true Protestant rejects, for Rome has never been able to substantiate such a claim and is getting more unsure of herself in this respect.

Some profess to honour the living Word, Christ Himself, but reject the full inspiration of the written Word which alone reveals Him. This is illogical, for if the Word of God is not true in every particular, how much certain knowledge could we have of Christ today? All one could be sure of is what history records, namely that a man called Jesus Christ walked this earth nearly 2,000 years ago and somehow stamped His name on our calendar. Who He really was, or what He did or said, are questions of which we could know practically nothing with certainty without the N.T. record, for He Himself left nothing in writing.

There is no doubt that the Bible stands or falls as a whole on its claims to be the Word of God and we are shut up to it for all that can be known of our Saviour, His redeeming love and God's great purpose revealed in and through Him. If II Tim. iii. 16 is not true, we can never say with certainty, "Thus saith the Lord" as the prophets of old did, but are thrown back on fallible human opinion and are forced to replace assurance and peace with doubt and uncertainty. Moreover both Paul and Peter must have been deceived men; for Peter, together with Paul, insists on the divine origin of the Scriptures (IPet.i.21 R.V.). This view is regarded as old fashioned and unintelligent today, but it matters not, for what good enough for Christ should be good enough for us. We can unhesitatingly pin our faith to the "Word of God that liveth and abideth for ever" (IPet.i.23).

**No.10. iii. 16 - iv. 5.
pp. 201 - 206**

Having stated that all God's Word written is by its very nature "holy" and "God-breathed" and therefore unique, the Apostle Paul now stresses to Timothy its great purpose to equip the believer fully for all the will of the Lord in life and testimony. It is:

"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction (discipline, margin) which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. iii. 16, 17, R.V.).

Teaching (doctrine) occupies a very important place in the Pastoral Epistles where it occurs 15 times, 8 occurrences in I Timothy, 3 in II Timothy and 4 in the epistle to Titus. The ability to teach and pass on the Truth to others has already been emphasized in II Tim. ii. 2. In chapter iii. we have the one great subject matter for the teacher, namely the inspired Word of God. One of Paul's last injunctions to Timothy is to 'proclaim (preach) the Word' (iv. 2), and this is not only a piece of advice to preachers or ministers of religion, but a command to all who would loyally witness to the Saviour.

The great lack today, especially in our pulpits, is the ability to expound the Scriptures. Too often the Bible is used merely as a peg on which to hang the opinions of the speaker. What we greatly need today is not just fluent preaching or attractive oratory, but a clear and faithful setting forth of the message of God's Word. This gives the Holy Spirit the good ground of truth to work on, for God has promised: "My Word . . . shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 11). Timothy, to be a profitable leader for Christ, must constantly rightly divide, correctly handle and set forth the Word of God. This is the only teaching that God will recognize and bless, and it is the profound ignorance of the holy Scriptures all around us that is the cause of the landslide in spiritual and moral standards, bringing so many personal problems, besides giving the opportunity for many false cults to flourish.

The inspired Word is also profitable for *reproof*. The word means ‘refutation of error’ and the conviction that comes from it. *Correction* is next mentioned by the Apostle. This means to ‘straighten out’ or to set right what is wrong; and both ideas are included in the next item, “instruction in righteousness”. The A.V. has rendered this word ‘chastening’ or ‘chastisement’ in Heb. xii. 5, 7, 8, 11. “Discipline” would be a good rendering. We all need the constant discipline and guidance of the Scriptures, otherwise we shall surely stray from the pathway of Truth.

Paul links the Word of God with the infant (*brephos*, iii. 15) and right through to spiritual adulthood, to being a ‘man of God’. This outstanding title was first borne by Moses, and then by Elijah, Elisha, David, Shemaiah and Igdaliah. Timothy, who was well acquainted with the O.T., could not fail to appreciate the importance of this title when it had been borne by so many illustrious characters.

The Apostle continues: “that the man of God may be perfect” (complete, R.V.). The Greek word is used of the complete equipment of a soldier for service, or of a ship for a voyage. All that is necessary for the voyage of life is found within the covers of the Book. There is no need to look anywhere else. Such divine equipment would cause Timothy to be ‘furnished completely unto every good work’ (verse 17 R.V.) and thus he could be the loyal and fruitful servant that God desired, and this is true of all of us today who seek to walk worthy of the ‘high calling of God in Christ Jesus’.

Chapter iv. opens solemnly with a charge to Timothy. We are now reading the Apostle Paul’s last words of his written ministry to his son in the faith and they are rich with meaning and importance. When writing his first letter to Timothy the Apostle had used the word ‘charge’ twice (I Tim. v. 21; vi. 11-14) in connection with church affairs. Here was his last charge:

“I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick (living) and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word”
(II Tim. iv. 1, 2, R.V.).

Timothy’s gaze is now directed from himself once more to the Lord Jesus and the fact of His future assessment of his Christian service. Some would like to eliminate this from the Body of Christ, just as others would remove the word ‘kingdom’ from this church and limit it to the people of Israel. We have dealt with this before, but would again point out that this is indeed dangerous and must be avoided by all those who desire to be commended by the Lord as faithful witnesses to His truth. Later on in the chapter, Paul describes Christ as ‘the righteous Judge’, Who will award him the ‘crown of righteousness’ (iv. 8). All wise Christian servants will constantly keep an eye on this future assessment of service by the Lord and this will deliver them from bondage to men or man’s approval. *Only His verdict* will matter in that day.

Let us not miss truth because of archaic words in our A.V. “Quick” means *living*, so from this verse we can deduce there will be some members of the Body who will be alive at the Lord’s manifestation. All of us should therefore “live looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 12,

13, R.V.), and keep this as a daily inspiration for service. This can sweeten all the trials and troubles that may beset us and enable us to hold on our way without swerving from the track of truth.

Paul does not go into details with Timothy as to *how* this will be accomplished, but he had already taught that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, so the glorious transformation of Phil. iii. 20, 21 is a necessity and we can rest assured that it will be true of all, whether alive or asleep in Christ, at the manifesting of the Lord's glory in the heavenlies. The Apostle has already referred to the kingdom of the Son of His love in Col. i. 13 into which the Body of Christ has been graciously placed by the Father, and at the end of II Tim. iv. he looks forward by faith to this 'heavenly kingdom' (verse 18) associated with the ascended and seated Christ at the right hand of God. This must not be confused with the *earthly* phase of God's kingdom with which redeemed and restored Israel is so intimately associated. Phil. iii. 20 makes clear that our homeland is not an earthly one but *exists in heaven*, and Colossians urges us to keep our minds fixed there as our certain hope and not on things on the earth (Col. iii. 1).

As the darkness described in II Timothy descends upon us, may our testimony to the good deposit of God's truth entrusted to us shine all the brighter as 'lights in the world' (Phil. ii. 15). We can constantly be light-bearers for Him Who alone is the true Light of the world (John viii. 12).

Paul now gives five exhortations in his last charge to Timothy. We give Moffatt's vivid translation:

"Preach (proclaim) the Word; keep at it in season and out of season, refuting, checking and exhorting men; never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching; for the time will come when people decline to be taught sound doctrine, they will accumulate teachers to suit themselves and tickle their fancies, they will give up listening to the truth and turn to myths" (II Tim. iv. 2-4).

We have seen that we must not confine the word 'preach' to the pulpit. It applies to all of God's children who should feel the responsibility that a knowledge of the truth brings. Each one of us is under an obligation to the Lord to proclaim the Word to others in wisdom as opportunity offers and this must be done at all seasons. If we fail to do this, we are not 'redeeming the time' (Eph. v. 16). Our privilege is to pass on to others, not our opinions, but God's truth which He has placed in our keeping.

It is significant that the Greek *logos*, translated 'word' occurs seven times in this epistle, which marks its importance (i. 13; ii. 9, 11, 15, 17; iv. 2, 15). Here is an expanse of spiritual knowledge which can never be fully plumbed this side of glory, but it is more than sufficient for both teacher and those taught till that day of glory dawns.

Timothy is told to reprove, exhort, and teach with all patience and not to give up, specially as there will be a turning away from the truth and people will only want to hear the things that please them and tickle their fancy. What a temptation it is for the servant of God to give his hearers what they *want* rather than what they *need*, in other words to avoid the risk of displeasing them. There is many a minister today who is at the mercy of

his congregation. He dare not proclaim all he knows of God's truth for fear of losing his job. Quite a lot of opposition to the witness given through Paul has this as its basis if only the critics would be honest and state the real reason.

The result is clearly given by the Apostle: "they will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (verses 3, 4 R.V.). In chapter i. 15 Paul declared that all in Asia had turned away from him. If people turn away from the human channel through which the risen Christ is speaking, there can be only one consequence, they will turn away from the truth. And that is precisely what we see all around us today. Modern Christendom has largely turned away from the revelation of Christ given through the Apostle of the Gentiles, and the result is confusion, declension and the reception of myth in the place of the 'good deposit'. If truth is rejected, something must take its place and that can only be error.

Much of today's opposition comes from what is described as 'science', but it is anything but scientific, being merely speculation. Yet how many eagerly cling to this rather than submit to the authority of the Word of God, which only indicates where their hearts and true inclinations lie!

The Apostle's thoughts turn back to Timothy:

"As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry" (iv. 5, R.S.V.).

The Greek *su* is emphatic, which the R.S.V. rightly indicates by translating it, 'as for you'. Timothy must always be on the alert and be ready at all times to "rough it" for Christ's sake. It is surprising to find that, with the frequent stress upon evangelizing or preaching the gospel, the word evangelist only occurs three times in the New Testament (Acts xxi. 8; Eph. iv. 11 and here). After the foundation ministry of apostles and prophets, before the N.T. was completed, there followed the evangelist, pastor, and the teacher (Eph. iv. 11). We are to expect no more apostles and prophets, for their work finished after laying the foundation. They are succeeded by a lower yet necessary order of ministry, namely the three referred to above.

To be an evangelist in those early days meant doing rough pioneering work that is often foreign to modern evangelization. One has only to compare the conditions in Paul's day with ours. Thus Timothy is exhorted to *finish* the work that had been entrusted to him, no matter how difficult the conditions. This was the same message that the Apostle gave to Archippus in Col. iv. 17.

We have many discouragements and results seem very small, but let us never forget that we are in the safe keeping of One Who, having started us on the heavenly race, can bring us safely to the goal as we appropriate Him continually by faith.

No.11. iv. 5, - end.
pp. 232 - 240

The Apostle, having given his last solemn charge to Timothy in view of his impending martyrdom, goes on to say:

“Do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come” (II Tim. iv. 5, 6, R.V.).

Paul had already used the words ‘depart’ and ‘offered’ once before in Phil. i. 23 and ii. 17. The R.V. margin of verse 6 points out that the word ‘offered’ (*spendomai*) means ‘poured out as a drink offering’, a beautiful figure of sacrificial spending of himself in service for His Lord. We readily understand this figure when we see people giving their lives in devoted service for others. We say they are ‘pouring themselves out’ for the benefit of other people. Thus it was with the Apostle Paul; his conception of service was to spend himself and all that he had without stint for his Saviour and Lord. This was the ‘mind of Christ Jesus’ (Phil. ii. 5-8) Who freely gave Himself for sinners to the utmost, even to Calvary’s cross, and this attitude of mind remained with Paul right to the very end.

We might well ask ourselves, how much does our Christian service *cost* us? Are we willing to go ‘all out’ for the One Who gave His all for us? Service that does not cost is worth very little!

Paul continues:

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing” (iv. 7, 8, R.V.).

The three perfect tenses here convey a sense of finality. For the Apostle this is the end. In I Tim. vi. 12 he had appealed to Timothy to ‘fight the good fight of faith’ and now he states that his own fight is over. “I have finished my course (race)” he declares. When he addressed the Ephesian elders in Acts xx., considering the afflictions that lay ahead, he said,

“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” (Acts xx. 24).

This was his own aim all along, ‘one thing I do I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. iii. 13, 14). He has now attained his goal and could write with truth: “I have finished (completed) the race (course)”. While he was running he had to say ‘not as though I had already attained’ (Phil. iii. 12). Now he has the assurance that at last he had breasted the tape and won the victor’s crown. We have seen that the ‘crown’ speaks of the added reward and reigning of the overcomer

and faithful servant. “If we patiently endure, we shall *also* reign with Him” (II Tim. ii. 12) and we have already pointed out the vital difference between salvation, membership of the Body of Christ by grace and living with Him, contrasted with the added prize, reward or crown. This will give the unspeakable privilege of not only living with Christ, but of sharing His throne and the administration of the universe in the glory to come, all being contingent on loyal and unselfish service for the Lord right to the end.

The Lord is the righteous Judge or Umpire, Who will justly award to each member of the Body his due. We can certainly leave all to His impartial assessment. The opinions of others concerning our lives will not intrude there and we can safely disregard them here. One is our Master, even Christ, and all service must be rendered as to Him and not to men.

The R.V. correctly translates the perfect tense, “*have loved* His appearing”, not “love His appearing” (A.V.). A sudden love for any phase of the Second Advent at the end of our lives will not win a crown; it must be the consistent love all along, influencing our life and witness. The N.T. speaks of various “crowns”: (1) an incorruptible crown (I Cor. ix. 25); (2) a crown of life (James i. 12; Rev. ii. 10); (3) a crown of rejoicing (I Thess. ii. 19); (4) a crown of glory (I Pet. v. 4). All these give us various aspects of the added prize a believer in each calling of Scripture may obtain. With Paul it was a crown associated with *righteousness*; righteousness being at the very heart of his ministry, commencing with Galatians and Romans, “the *just* (righteous) shall live by faith”.

The concluding section of this epistle (iv. 9-22) now follows, commencing with some personal requests. He urges Timothy once more to do his utmost to come to him as quickly as possible lest the difficulties of traveling should prevent him from doing so, and it was all the more urgent because of the defection of Demas. His forsaking the Apostle is attributed to his love of the present age instead of loving the Lord’s appearing. How we need to beware of the insidious pull of present things around us rather than the ‘things above where Christ sitteth’ (Col. iii. 1, 2). In contrast to disloyal Demas, we find Luke, the beloved physician, faithful to Paul right to the end. The Lord was merciful in not only granting him the precious boon of a faithful friend, amidst so many who deserted him in his time of need, but one who could care for his health.

John Mark, in contrast to Demas, though once unfaithful, causing the dissension between Paul and Barnabas, is now ‘profitable (or useful) for the ministry’ (i.e. Christian service of any kind). Timothy is to pick him up en route and bring him along. Of Crescens we know nothing, but tradition links him with the churches of Vienna and Mayence in Gaul. The dispatch of Titus to Dalmatia seems to indicate that his work in Crete had finished. His new sphere was on the eastern shore of the Adriatic sea which is now Yugo-Slavia.

Tychicus was one of Paul’s reliable associates. He was the bearer of the epistles to both Colossians and Ephesians and it is possible that he was to relieve Timothy at Ephesus during the latter’s absence while visiting Paul in Rome.

Timothy is now enjoined to bring the cloak which the Apostle had left with his host, Carpus, at Troas. This was an outer garment of heavy material that would help to ease the rigours of climate in a Roman dungeon. Paul did not attempt to pose as a martyr. There was no virtue in feeling cold needlessly, though we know from his list of sufferings for Christ, detailed in II Cor. xi., that many times he must have experienced this.

We know nothing of the books and the parchments. These were evidently documents that the Apostle valued and possibly some contained parts of Scriptures. These personal requests bear strong marks of authenticity. A fabricator would be very unlikely to write in this way. Paul then warns Timothy against Alexander the coppersmith who had bitterly opposed him and his ministry. We cannot identify him for certain with the Alexander of Acts xix. 33, 34 or the one mentioned in I Tim. i. 20, as Alexander was a common name, but it is possible that he is the same person as was mentioned in I Timothy, otherwise Paul would have differentiated them clearly. In verse 14 the verb 'requite' is in the future tense, 'the Lord *will* requite him for his deeds'. There is no wish for revenge on Paul's part as suggested in the A.V.

The Apostle now comes to the incidents pertaining to his trial before Nero:

"At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account. But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (II Tim. iv. 16, 17, R.V.).

It would appear that this is a reference to the preliminary investigation preceding the formal trial. So dangerous had it become to be publicly associated with such a prominent Christian leader as the Apostle Paul that no one was brave enough to come into the open as his friend and plead his cause. All in Asia had turned from him (i. 15) and Paul stood deserted and alone. Like his Saviour (for all forsook Him and fled) Who prayed for those who crucified Him, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do", so this great man of God, left by all, as Christ was in His hour of need, could pray and say, "may it not be laid to their charge".

But Paul, severely tested though he was, could never cry, like the Lord Jesus, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Rather, he gladly recorded that the Lord stood by him and strengthened him to go through to the end victoriously, so that the sacred deposit of truth committed to him 'might be fully known and that *all* the Gentiles might hear' (verse 17). This was evidently the last opportunity Paul had for public testimony to the truth entrusted to him primarily for the Gentiles, for he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, the channel through which the Lord made known the Gospel of His grace to all nations (Rom. i. 5) and through whom all who were to constitute the Body of Christ would be enlightened as to the Mystery (Eph. iii. 1, 9 R.V.).

There has been much speculation as to what the Apostle meant by being rescued from the lion's mouth (verse 17). Some have thought this is a reference to Nero, or possibly Satan, the roaring lion (I Pet. v. 8). It is most unlikely to refer to being thrown to the lions in the amphitheatre, for this was not allowable for a Roman citizen. It evidently

was deliverance from some immediate and extreme danger, which enabled Paul to fully perform his Christ-directed ministry. All the opposition of Satan and the powers of darkness could not prevent this. It meant that the Apostle was immortal till his work was done, and then he could look forward with unspeakable joy to the glories of the Lord's "heavenly kingdom" (verse 18). Almost his last thought therefore was for the Lord's kingdom and this heavenly aspect of it. God's great kingdom embraces all the heavenly spheres as well as the earth, and we have learned, we trust, not to confuse these two linked yet distinct portions of His great redemptive purpose.

Before laying down his pen for the last time, Paul mentions believers who had been intimately associated with him and Timothy. Priscilla and Aquila, the devoted couple who had laid down their necks for him and to whom all the Gentile churches were indebted (Rom. xvi. 3, 4); the household of Onesiphorus, the refresher (i. 16, 17). Erastus remained at Corinth. There is one Erastus mentioned in Rom. xvi. 23, described as the city treasurer, and another person of the same name in Acts xix. 22. Whether either of these is to be identified with the Erastus of II Tim. iv. we cannot say for certain. Trophimus is left at Miletum ill and here again we are reminded, as also with Epaphroditus (Phil. ii. 25-27) of the change of dispensation, and the absence of the gift of miraculous healing as an evidential miracle. It is unthinkable that Paul, if he still had the gift of healing, would not have used it on behalf of these faithful believers who were in such desperate need physically, and who meant so much to him. Acts xx. and xxi. should be consulted for details of the association of Paul and Trophimus.

Once more Timothy is urged to make every effort to come to the Apostle before winter sets in (verse 21). Salutation is sent from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia. We know little or nothing of these believers who were evidently well known to Timothy. According to Irenaeus, Linus was the first bishop or overseer of the church at Rome. Some have tried to identify Pudens and Claudia with two people of the same name mentioned in two poems of Martial, the wife being British. But it has been pointed out that Martial did not come to Rome until 66A.D. and most of his epigrams belong to the next generation, so this identification is far from being established, interesting though it is.

The Apostle Paul's last words, in his own handwriting, were his characteristic ones referring to grace which guaranteed the authenticity of his epistles (II Thess. iii. 17, 18) and they were his final message to his dearly-loved son in the faith:

"The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you" (iv. 22, R.V.).

The last pronoun is plural showing Paul also had in mind the remainder of the faithful ones of that time.

Did Timothy reach the Apostle before his execution? Did he stand faithfully after Paul's departure? We do not know, for church history does not mention him, but we shall know when we all stand together in resurrection likeness to our Saviour and Head before His presence. Neither can we say whether Paul went to his triumphal death alone or with the faithful few. Tradition tells us that he was led three miles out of the city of

Rome and executed by the Roman sword, that three of the guard were converted on the way and that they too suffered martyrdom later on for the Lord Jesus.

How much Timothy would need the Lord's presence, strength and grace in the dark and dangerous times which lay ahead of him, only Paul himself knew. But he must have been assured that the One Who had caused him to triumph over all difficulties, discouragements, persecutions and bitter opposition would be more than sufficient for this young man, so soon to take the tremendous responsibility for the truths that characterize this age of abounding grace.

What can we say concerning such an utterly faithful and devoted servant of the Lord? We can only seek by the same grace to follow loyally in his steps as he followed Christ (I Cor. xi. 1) and to thank the Lord with all our hearts for such a wonderful example to us Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1, 13; Col. i. 24). F. W. Farrar's words are appropriate here:

“No saint of God has ever attained the same heights in so many capacities, or received the gifts of the Spirit in so rich an outpouring, or borne in his mortal body such evident brand marks of the Lord. In his lifetime he was no whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles and he towers above the very greatest of the saints who have striven to follow the example of his devotion to his Lord.”

And so our study of these prison letters of Paul draws to a close. A careful and prayerful consideration of the riches contained in these epistles will indicate something of their vast spiritual wealth which awaits our exploration by faith:

“(Christ, the Beloved One) in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the *riches* of His grace” (Eph. i. 6, 7).

“the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the *riches* of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. i. 18).

“that in the ages to come He might show the *exceeding riches* of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. ii. 7).

“that I (Paul) should preach among the Gentiles the *unsearchable riches* of Christ” (Eph. iii. 8).

“that He would grant you, according to the *riches* of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit” (Eph. iii. 16).

“But my God shall supply all your need according to His *riches* in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. iv. 19).

“. . . . the mystery (secret) which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the *riches* of the glory of this mystery (secret), which is Christ among (margin) you (Gentiles), the hope of glory” (Col. i. 26, 27).

“. . . . being knit together in love, and unto all *riches* of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery (secret) of God, even Christ” (Col. ii. 2, R.V.).

May both reader and writer learn to ‘possess our possessions’ by faith in what God has revealed in these prison letters of Paul and then by grace remain absolutely faithful to such a wondrous calling and inheritance whatever the cost in these darkening and testing days, remembering that our ‘blessed hope’ cannot be far distant. May this constantly strengthen, encourage and inspire us while we are:

“awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds” (Titus ii. 13, R.S.V.).

Thoughts on John's Gospel

No.1. pp. 95 - 100

John, having finished his account of the gospel story, writes:

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John xxi. 25).

Thus we see that a selection of events concerning our Lord and His word was made with this in view:

“And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed or appointed One), the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name” (John xx. 30, 31).

Here then is a simple and plain statement of what we shall expect to find in this Gospel. The first two verses of chapter i. speak of the ‘Word’. For the human mind to begin to understand an idea or thought, it must be made manifest to our senses of sight or sound. We cannot know God without an intermediate medium for He is spirit. God now declares the link between Him and us is the Word and then identifies that word with the Lord Jesus Christ and Himself:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John i. 1, 2, 14).

Again to anticipate the message of this Gospel we shall find it is that the Father, the Son, the original written word in our Bible and the Spirit of Truth (see John xvi. 13, etc.) are all one, and are linked for the purposes of God. Each of the manifestations of God has to be accepted in its respective context and with our human limitations we cannot expect to understand how God can be the Father, Son and Spirit at the same time.

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (John i. 3, 4).

The writer consulted the many volume of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to learn how the pundits defined “life”. It was: “There is no generally accepted definition of life” (13/1083).

Col. i. 16-17 reads:

“All things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

“Consist” has the sense of ‘put together’ or ‘set’. When we consider all life about us there is design and an ordered balance. For example, the interchange of gases in the

atmosphere to make human and plant life possible: the interaction of birds, insects, animals (in the popular sense) and plants to maintain the process of nature. This design, if man will only see it, is to teach man about the invisible things of God:

“The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom.i.20).

The supreme power of God through the ages (His eternal power and Godhead) of the earth has manifested itself at specific points of time in the Bible record. For example: the creation of Gen. i.; the universal deluge of Noah; the signs and wonders performed by Moses before Pharaoh; the parting of the Red Sea; the virgin birth of Christ; the raising of Lazarus; the resurrection of Christ, etc.

When we see how complex life is and yet purposeful in God’s hands we do not wonder man cannot define it in words. Yet God declares through His Word that Christ is life. Can we not see that Christ and the message of this Gospel are going to make meaning and purpose to all life? The O.T. focuses by type and prophecy, attention on the coming Saviour of the world, while the N.T. magnifies and explains the result of His first advent, and looks forward to the blessed results of His Second Coming. All this teaching is in human terms (life) that we can understand (light). For example:

Gen. xxii. The faith of Abraham ready at the command of God to sacrifice his long awaited son. This is a picture of the ordeal of God the Father. “He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Rom. viii. 32). Needless to say the story of Abraham has other implications.

Exod. xvi. The daily provision of manna to Israel in the wilderness. A picture of the True Bread from heaven. “Your father did eat manna in the wilderness I am the living bread which came down from Heaven” (John vi. 49-51).

In this context Christ speaks of eating His flesh and in verse 63 He explains that ‘the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life’. When we eat bread (a food containing many life sustaining chemicals) it becomes part of us. Even so the picture is that by reading and understanding the Word of God with guidance by the Spirit of Truth we can grow in spiritual understanding of the will of the Father through the words He has committed to the Son. This understanding leads to true life.

Consider a perfect human family. Man, his wife, one flesh in procreation, the training of the infant child, at first firm quick correction unexplained, later discipline with explanation for application, and later still at maturity entering and enjoying the close counsels of his father. All this is a picture of what our relation with God can be in spiritual terms. The Bible teems with similar lessons including the characteristics of the ant, moth, rust, sow, dog, etc. These examples of human experience in contact with surrounding works of God’s creation are not chance, but we believe they have all been planned by God to teach those who are ready to be taught the spiritual realities of God’s will.

The selection by John, guided by the Holy Spirit, of our Lord’s teaching on the subject of life continuously underlines the gift of unending spiritual life the believer enjoys by his

complete acceptance of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is, however, a more immediate blessing stated by our Lord in John x. 10 "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly". This blessing of more abundant life is an experience that the believer can expect to enjoy as he becomes so free from concern for himself that he allows the Spirit of Christ free rein in his daily living. Thus it will make every thought and action a most satisfying contribution to the glory and the will of God. When we consider this latter aspect of life, we remember that it can cover mental ability and judgment as well as the physical functions of the human body. The O.T. has many examples where this same aspect of more abundant life was given to men for the special purposes of God. Some of these were:

"Through faith also Sarah herself *received strength* to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful Who had promised" (Heb. xi. 11). See Gen. xviii. and xxi. for the story.

"And his master (Pharaoh) saw that the Lord was with him (Joseph), and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand" (Gen. xxxix. 3).

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore" (I Kings iv. 29).

Deut. xxviii. lists the blessings and curses that God has in His power to bestow to reward the actions of His people Israel. Do we realize that these and many other examples of life bestowed are in the hands of the Son of God, Who is the same yesterday, today and forever, and that this power is as potent as ever?

Associated with 'life' in the context of John i. 4 is 'light'. This word like 'life' has implications in this physical world as well as the mental and spiritual. Its physical properties teach us mental and spiritual truths. Where light is absent we see nothing. All objects become visible and assume colour and character by the reflection of the prime source of light. With light we can see obstacles, find our way, observe the face of our neighbour and judge his pleasure or anger or other emotion. We can observe the marvels of nature. Taking our picture book into the adult realm of the mental and spiritual, we begin to understand what Christ can do for us when He claims and the Scriptures declare "He is the light of the world".

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not"
(John i. 10).

Here is the plain statement that the Creator of the world visited the world in person and the world did not recognize Him as such, and the next verse records that His own people, who should have been ready to recognize Him because of their teachers and the reading of the O.T. in their synagogues, also failed to discern the arrival of the long prophesied Messiah or the appointed One of God. John, writing his Gospel so many years after Christ's visit could still say, "The world knew Him not". Of how many today, alas, is this still true? Although Christ is preached the message is ignored by so many.

"But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God" (i. 12, R.S.V.).

Although as we have said the general reaction of the world and even the Jewish people was to fail to recognize Who He was, yet the above verse declares that those who did then, and do today, accept Him as being all that His name implies, have the power (authority to assume a position) to become a child of God. Notice the importance and insistence on the “Name” given by God to His Son in the Scriptures. This name or names, as we shall find, describe Who He was and it is on our unqualified acceptance of these descriptions that the decision rests whether we can have the power to become children of God.

“Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins”
(Matthew i. 21).

“They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us”
(Matthew i. 23).

If we could put in few words what is involved here we should declare: God in the person of His Son paid the penalty for our sins for us, or instead of us, on the cross. Explanation and expansion of this vital transaction of God on our behalf must be deferred, but at this stage let it suffice to say that it is this plain statement that we have to accept, trusting that God as a result will lead us into life in its fullest sense and one of satisfying and rewarding service and unity with Him, and this blessed state leading on to fulfillment in resurrection.

No.2. pp. 135 - 140

The first article in this series, looking at John i., reviewed the implications of light and life. We hope readers have had their own thoughts on this as it affects their own experience and environment in their business and home life. It is important to remember that the existence of darkness is stressed. So very many people go through life without close contact with Christ and His Word and despite what they think, they must be walking in darkness if the Word of God has any meaning at all: “the darkness comprehended it not”.

John the Baptist was specifically prepared by God to bear witness to this Light. In very emphatic words he points away from himself to the Light itself:

“He was *not* that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light” (i. 8).

How sad it is that many actively engaged in organized church work do not make their first aim to point to Christ *and* His Father’s Word, the Bible. Later in this chapter Christ will call His disciples to begin their witness to this Light, that is Christ, and His Father’s words. May we prepare ourselves as reflectors and be seen by others reflecting this Light.

The more we get to know God the more we appreciate sweet reasonableness of His ways and this is so often hidden from the world, for at times, men in rebellious words

question His justice and righteousness. God told John the Baptist how he would recognize the Messiah:

“Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost” (i. 33).

In an equivalent but less dramatic way God honours our response in faith by things that have a personal message to us:

“He that hath received His (Christ’s) testimony hath set to his seal that God is true” (iii. 33).

If we see a seal on a document we can identify the one who has authorized the deed. So God says I will make Myself known to you in apparently small ways that will be recognized by you who have been *seeking* Me.

At the end of chapter i. Philip comes to Nathanael saying they had found Him of Whom Moses and the prophets had written. They had been seeking and they knew the Scriptures. Christ saying to Nathanael that He had seen Philip call him under the fig tree was the seemingly inconsequential happening that sealed Nathanael’s faith in the Lord. To us confirming events can happen in a variety of ways, but most common will be the passages of Scriptures that will for us stand out in startling clarity and appositeness to illuminate a problem we have at that moment.

The life of Mary the mother of our Lord must have been full of such incidents revealing the identity of the Lord Jesus as God’s Son. When Mary therefore appeals to Christ to supply what was lacking on that family occasion, namely wine for a wedding feast, she is quite prepared to see something supernatural if that is necessary, and warns the servants accordingly:

“Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it” (ii. 5).

What must have been going through the mind of Christ? In Matt. xxii. He reveals by parable His knowledge of the plans of His Father that the faithful in Israel should typically become His Bride, but the precise hour of the fulfillment of prophecy has always in the hand of the Father alone. Rev. xix. 7 refers to this fulfillment. Thoughts on these happenings may well have been in the mind of Christ when He said the strange (to us) words:

“Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come” (ii. 4).

“The beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory: and His disciples believed on Him” (ii. 11).

Here is a definite statement that this was a miracle. Why is it that many leaders of Christianity think that they must reconcile such happenings with the laws of nature in order that the gospel shall be acceptable to the youth of today? Moses, that great man of God, was barred from entering the promised land because he spoilt the typical nature of the miracle of water coming from the rock by the word only:

“Take the rod *spea*k ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water. Moses said hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice. And the Lord spake unto Moses, because ye believed Me not, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numb. xx. 8-12).

Moses, by not obeying God’s precise command, not only made the incident less of a miracle than God intended but also spoilt the picture and its message that God planned this miracle to convey both to Israel at that time and also to the world who would later read the record of its occurrence. The miracles of God carry an underlined message and the very nature of their occurrence is their identification with the Creator. What is man that he should rob God of His glory because in man’s puffed up human wisdom he cannot reproduce these miracles in his laboratory, or see such happenings in surrounding nature in his small life span? We should take warning of God’s judgment on the unbelief of Moses.

Before we leave the opening chapters of this Gospel, consider the important place God accorded to John the Baptist. Indeed, Christ testified of him:

“Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” (Luke vii. 28).

This important witness for God was given special circumstances surrounding his birth (Luke i. 5-25), and the date and place can be fixed today by the details given in verse 5. John the Baptist’s witness can be summarized:

1. I am not the Christ (John i. 20).
2. I am not Elias (verse 21. He is referring to Mal. iv. 5 where Elijah, same as Elias, is prophesied as coming before the dreadful Day of the Lord, an event still future).
3. I am not that prophet (verse 21. He is referring to Deut. xviii. 18, a prophecy made by Moses concerning Christ).
4. Positive testimony:
 - “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (i. 29).
 - “And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (i. 32-34).

This almost reads like evidence in a court of law. For many of us, familiar with the Bible in a superficial way from childhood, some passages have lost their bite and impact. The above verses underline the importance God considers should be attached to the Person and words of His Son, and the evidence should be more than sufficient to satisfy the critical Thomases of today.

Coming to chapter iii. and the visit by night of Nicodemus to Christ, we notice that Nicodemus accepted Christ as a prophet sent by God, for he accepted the works of Christ as true miracles, but that was as far as he would go. Christ goes straight to the need of Nicodemus:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (iii. 3).

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (iii. 6).

Let John in his first epistle supplement this teaching:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God” (I John v. 1, 4, 5).

Here, let it be said, is the foundation of the Christian faith. Birth means infancy in spirit whatever the natural age of the one professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The figure of the natural baby carries with it the thought of food selected for stages of growth. Milk where the bones and sinews are forming, with meat at the final state of development. The baby in spirit needs the same programme of nourishment from the Word of God. Foundational truths are needed first to be learnt and absorbed: faith in God, redemption, sanctification, resurrection, etc. At the other end of the diet sheet, for the mature adult we find the advanced teaching of Paul’s letters from prison which enshrine amongst other precious things the Truth of the Mystery. All is necessary but in the right order. Most important of all, let us not stay in babyhood:

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment” (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

While this passage is addressed to Hebrew Christians the appropriate warning applies as well to us who are Gentiles.

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (iii. 14).

This verse refers to Numb. xxi. 4-9. God had delivered His people from bondage. He had miraculously provided bread and water, yet they could not wait for His eventual blessings in the promised land. They murmured against Him and God used the serpent to bring death to them in judgment. Adam and Eve had all the wonderful delights of a new creation put at their feet. Yet they could not trust God Who in His wisdom denied them at that time, participation in the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve neglected the wise control of their Maker and the penalty of death eventually fell. God in this chapter of John again places before the world a choice. See the alternatives spelt out:

Verse	15	Perish—Eternal life.
	16	Perish—Eternal life.
	17	Condemnation—Salvation.

- 18 Belief, not condemned—Believeth not, condemned.
19 Darkness—Light.
20- Hating the light, evil deeds—Doeth truth (lives out
21 their faith in Christ), cometh to light.

The story of Israel and God's rewards and chastisement of His people is a witness that God means what He says and we need to re-examine the message of salvation in all its aspects.

The story of Abraham and Sarah, their long years waiting for a son to bring fulfillment to their lives is recorded in Gen. xxi. Can we imagine the joy this couple must have experienced when God overruled the weakness of old age to give them renewed life to have their son Isaac. And now God tests the faith of Abraham:

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and offer him there for a burnt offering” (Gen. xxii. 2).

Abraham obeyed God:

“Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son” (Gen. xxii. 10).

Abraham did not have to slay his only beloved son:

“Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me” (Gen. xxi. 12).

“God so (like this) loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John iii. 16).

May this well used text lose nothing of its depth of meaning when we remember that our heavenly Father caused the story of Abraham and Isaac to portray only something of the full sorrow that the Father had to bear to righteously give us His erring children the opportunity of forgiveness and eternal life with Him.

No.3. pp. 170 - 174

Shall we look at John iii. 23 to the end? These verses bring to our notice the special and differing ministries that God had entrusted to John the Baptist and our Lord. John wants the distinctive messages to be understood and not that human traditions should intrude to confuse and divert attention from the teaching:

“Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying” (iii. 25).

God gave His servant Moses rules for Israel to observe for washing or purifying after contact with such as God declared at that time to be unclean to that nation. Lev. xi. contains many such rules. What had happened? The Jewish elders had enlarged the rules given by Moses and because these traditions were of themselves they took excessive pride in their observance, just as they did for their interpretation of how the sabbath was to be observed. Yet for all their zeal they were quite prepared to adulterate other parts of the law of Moses where it affected their financial interests:

“This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, honour thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, if a man shall say to his father or mother, it is corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have *delivered*: and many such like things do ye” (Mark vii. 6-13).

Notice the implication that the elders had *delivered* many of their traditions without divine authority.

In John iii. 26 we see some of John the Baptist’s disciples finding an element of competition in numbers between his followers and those of Christ. John immediately emphasizes the distinctive qualifications of each servant of God and his distinctive message; Christ the Bridegroom to the elect of Israel while John was the friend of the Bridegroom sent to prepare His way on earth and speaking of earthly requirements.

We see a similar failure by the Corinthians to give attention and importance to the word of God rather than to the vessel used to declare it:

“. . . . one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?” (I Cor. iii. 4-5).

John now emphasizes the origins of himself and the Lord Jesus and the consequent character and importance of the message we have from each:

“He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: He that cometh from heaven is above all.”

“For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand” (John iii. 31, 34, 35).

Would it not be better for us today to avoid problems of textual criticism and the opposition of scientific theories and rather give all our attention to the words God has put in our hands, trusting Him that He would not permit man to weaken His Book with legends, myths and half truths. What mystery of divine instruction from the Father lies in the words “what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth” (verse 32) and again “He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God” (verse 34). How can God say more plainly that here is divine revelation from heaven?

While we are considering the failure of the majority of men in our Lord’s day to see the spiritual truths behind the earthly figures of water baptism, the Lamb of God, the Bride, the Bridegroom, etc., let us look at another very important truth our Lord taught by an earthly symbol. A few chapters ahead in chapter vi. Christ declares that He is the Bread of Life. So important is it, He says it over and over again as in:

“He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread that came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John vi. 56-58, 63).

Does not this text declare that the words of God are spirit and quicken us, giving the essential means to grow, the divine plan for spiritual growth? The study of these words of God (the whole Bible), their acceptance and understanding, leads us to be one with the Father and His Son. The reading of the Word and subsequent incorporation into every part of our life is illustrated by the extremely strong metaphor of eating the flesh of the Son. Drinking His blood carries the figure in a similar way, that of receiving into our lives all the implications of the work of Christ on the cross and its blessed resultant benefits to us here and hereafter.

The words in John vi. 63 provide an example of an antonym, a favourite subject of Mr. Welch currently running in *The Berean Expositor*. We quote the literal English translation of the Nestle Greek text:

“The Spirit is the One quickening; the flesh not profits anything” (Emphatic negative).

There is no question that it is the Holy Spirit working on the words of Christ that gives us life, and this is in line with the purpose of God. Thus we are not making a god of the Bible (an accusation once leveled at me by a vicar), but rather giving this Book its rightful place in God’s scheme of revelation. A further paraphrase we believe could read:

“It is the Spirit (the Lord’s words and the Holy Spirit behind them) that makes alive (or gives life); the flesh (the body and the old nature) profits nothing.”

Can there be greater confirmation of this teaching than by our Lord's quotation from the O.T.?:

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. iv. 4).

Our Lord was quoting from God's words recorded by Moses:

“. . . . the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live” (Deuteronomy viii. 2, 3).

The manna for Israel in the wilderness prefigures the part our Lord and the Bible play in the world today. God does not now force on us supernatural demonstrations of His presence and existence. We see no angels with additional revelations from our Creator. Rather He is suffering us to be without human proof of His presence but is trying our faith by letting the complete Bible be His sole tangible witness. God's Son has completely accomplished the Father's will in making a righteous way back into reconciliation and unity with Him. The Lord Jesus Christ has instructed His servant Paul to explain to us this gospel and to announce to us the abiding presence of His Spirit that can empower and guide the life of a believer in His Name. This is the Bread of life that we have figuratively to eat so that in spiritual growth such knowledge of God and His Son become part of us. Herein is full life, health of mind and body, peace and unity not only in the believer but in his relationship to God and his neighbour.

Many of those that first heard the doctrine of eating the Lord's flesh (John vi.) were offended, finding it a hard saying to accept and walked no more with the Lord. Today many also misunderstand the words of the Lord. They miss this pointer to the channel of life, the Word of God, and allow instead this chapter to be linked with and to anticipate the church's ordinance of Holy Communion, thus diverting attention from such a vital lesson from God.

No.4. pp. 206 - 210

This chapter (iv.) includes the encounter by the Lord with the woman at the well in Samaria and the healing of the nobleman's son. Remembering that every word in this Gospel was written for a purpose we look at verse 27:

“And upon this came His disciples, and marveled that He talked with the woman: yet no man said, what seekest Thou? or, why talkest Thou with her?”

This verse indicates that God wishes us to have an enquiring mind that seeks to get behind the words written, and so achieve the maximum benefit and instruction from the text. The woman was of Samaria and verse 9 reminds us that Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Our Lord's disciples could therefore well have asked Him why He was acting contrary to the Jewish custom. The woman, however, asked this very question and was rewarded by our Lord's encouragement for her seeking, by His words relative to the true worship of God. Our Lord or John inspired by the Holy Spirit goes on to say:

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit (or better, God is spirit. R.V. margin): and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (iv. 23, 24).

Only by soaking ourselves in the Word of God and relying on His spirit of Truth to dwell with us and teach us, can we know how God works, the goals to which He is working, and most important of all His justice, righteousness and infinite love. To know, assess, value, accept, and praise is really the spiritual worship that God desires. The words and attitude of His Son exemplify this requirement from us.

In II Kings xvii. Israel by their persistent idolatry were removed from Samaria to Assyria and men from Babylon and other nations (verse 24) were set up in the cities of Samaria instead. The new inhabitants not fearing God were subjected by Him to attacks of lions. On appealing to the king of Assyria he arranged for Jewish priests to live in Beth-el and teach the new inhabitants how to fear the Lord, but it is recorded that they still followed their idolatrous religion. The lapse of time between II Kings xvii. and our Lord's day may well have modified the composition of the population of Samaria and its religion yet Christ could still say to the woman: “Ye worship ye know not what” (iv. 22).

The Lord's supernatural knowledge of her past life made a great impression on her and she says: “Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet”, and then goes on to take advantage of the opportunity to settle some of her religious problems, mainly the vexed question as to whether Jerusalem was the only place where God had set His name for worship.

Before we consider our Lord's reply let us admire the earnest spirit of enquiry shown by this Gentile woman and later by her compatriots. Would that there was today a greater move to question and examine the basis of church worship and ordinance so that

it could be entered into with knowledge and understanding acquired first hand from the Word itself. To her and a few selected people Christ plainly reveals Himself as the Messiah. To direct questioning from antagonistic Jewish leaders He gives no direct reply that can be twisted against Him, but leaves them in no doubt as to His claim to the title.

“How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly?” (iv. 24).

Our Lord’s statement “I and My Father are one” (verse 30) was the most satisfaction He would afford them on this occasion.

To those who have made much of the Bible their own, it is good sometimes to stand back and try to see the broad plan God has for His creation, and this is not only earth but heaven with its host of spirits as well. What a wonderfully comprehensive summary of the gospel is II Cor. v. 19: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself”. John’s gospel is devoted to forging the links for this plan of reconciliation. First the insistence by the Son that the Father had sent Him. Secondly that He and His Father were one. Thirdly, the blessed gift of eternal life to those who understood and accepted *all* that the sacrifice of the Lamb of God involved and secured.

John’s gospel anticipates the way Jew and Gentile responded to this message. In this chapter (iv.) of John’s gospel the Gentile Samaritans say:

“Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (iv. 42).

But of the Jews, our Lord said to some:

“Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe” (iv. 48).

For us the path of salvation commences with faith:

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope” (Rom. viii. 20).

“Hope” here is our utter conviction in the truth of God’s Word. How overjoyed our Lord must have been to have received this response from the people of Samaria.

Looking now at John iv. 10:

“Jesus answered and said unto her (the woman at the well), if thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water”,

and in verse 14:

“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Here is a picture of the life in Christ—the new nature—being born a child of God—a spring that will beautify, strengthen and feed our every act and thought in our life in Him. The cup of water from the earthly well refreshes and then we thirst again, but with this gift of God we have a well of spiritual water implanted in us. The words ‘springing up’ suggest development with the goal of eternal life. Natural water is the vehicle designed by God to feed and maintain all the functions of the human body. Spiritual water has a counterpart in us. The visible vehicle has been deliberately chosen by God to demonstrate the invisible operation of the Spirit. Think it out for yourself. The words of God are not empty rhetoric. The woman at the well seems to have missed the lesson our Lord taught. It may well have dawned on her later. If we read the Word hurriedly and without meditation we too may miss the many precious lessons that are going to strengthen and guide our spiritual education and maturity.

The new nature—life in Christ—is the gift of God and is one of several gifts that John records:

- iii. 16: “God gave his only begotten Son.”
- iv. 10: links the above gift with “living water”.
- x. 11: “. . . . the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”
- xiii. 15: “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” One of the many examples set before us to emulate.
- xvii. 8: “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me.”
- xvii. 14: “I have given them Thy Word.”
- xvii. 22: “. . . . the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.”

And what can we understand by this last text? Glory carries the idea of approval by God. Where we let the Spirit of Christ have full reign and free rein in us we shall be conscious of a unity with Him, and our lives by reflection will witness in measure His glory to the world.

Finally the episode of healing the nobleman’s son who was at the point of death:

“And as he was going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him” (John iv. 51, 52).

The nobleman’s time check proved to him the miracle of Christ’s gracious act of healing:

“So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house” (iv. 53).

Divine prophecy is used by God to demonstrate to man His overruling power through the platform of time. If man would see it, it vindicates the truth of His Word. As an example, Stuart Allen in *The Unfolding Purpose of God* lists 14 prophecies that were fulfilled concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in 24 hours, and these prophecies were spread all over the O.T. May we prime ourselves with such prophetic utterances and their fulfillment that we like Paul in Acts xxviii. 3 can in some measure be qualified to persuade men out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets ‘concerning Jesus’.

No.5. pp. 229 - 232

A rhyme tells of a dear old and tired charwoman who, at the end of her days, looked forward to heaven where 'she could do nothing for ever and ever'. The facetious skeptic talks of playing on a harp on a cloud. But what says the Scriptures:

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (I Cor. vi. 2, 3).

"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke xxii. 29, 30).

"In My Father's house are many mansions I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2).

These are not the only references to our future state, but if few in number, our finite human conditions could not envisage the spiritual conditions of God's other kingdoms for which this life is a preparation. Israel was an earthly example of such a plan of God.

The children of Israel were delivered by God out of the bondage and idolatrous conditions of Egypt and began in their wilderness journey a course of preparation for the future service of God. Their immediate goal which He had promised them was a land flowing with milk and honey:

"I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exod. iii. 8).

On the threshold of this land God ordered selected men to be sent to reconnoiter the land and bring back specimens of its fruits:

"And they returned from searching of the land after forty days and said surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it But the men (not Joshua and Caleb) that went up brought an evil report" (Numb. xiii. 25, 27, 31, 32).

The men of Israel had not faith in the God of their fathers but, ignoring that God had kept faith with them and graciously given them material witness of the blessings of the land, they discounted the power of God to aid them in the overthrow of its occupants as the Lord had promised. Rather they impugned God and accused Him of wanting to destroy them and their little ones in the wilderness. In judgment God kept that nation impotent in the wilderness until all that generation of adult males had died, namely for thirty-eight (38) years:

"And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them" (Deut. ii. 14).

Turning at last to the subject of this article, John v., we find that here Christ is outlining the spiritual equivalent of Israel's journey in the wilderness. The miracle or selected sign at the beginning of the chapter; the healing of the impotent man, in that condition for 38 years (5) and that due to sin (14); makes a link with our opening remarks.

Christ makes several references to the work of His Father:

“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will shew Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will” (v. 19-21).

Our scientific books propound the existence of planetary systems such as ours with a central sun, being repeated in infinite numbers at infinite distances in space in every direction. How then shall we even start to think of the work of the Father? We should be utterly lost if the Son did not bring into our finite vision and understanding sufficient to witness to the certainty of spiritual horizons that could be the goal and promised land of those of us who have faith. The raising of Lazarus and other miracles are ‘the grapes of Eshcol’ of our future estate. And Heb. vi. 5 describes them as ‘powers of the world to come’.

Christ makes repeated statements of the links between His Father and Himself:

Verse	19	The Son—nothing done of Himself but what He sees the Father do.
	20	The Father loves the Son and shows Him His works.
	21	The power to quicken the dead, common to Father and Son.
	22	The Father commits all judgment to the Son.
	23	Honour common to Father and Son.
	26	Life in Himself, common to Father and Son.
	30	Judgment of the Son just, for “as I hear I judge”.
	36	Christ came to “finish” the works of the Father.

It is of interest to note the reference in verse 36 to ‘finishing’ the works of the Father. We remember our Lord on the cross before yielding up the ghost said “It is finished”. All the works of God in Christ “reconciling the world unto Himself” find their climax here.

At verse 37 Christ points to their dependence on Him to bring to them the knowledge of the Father:

“Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.”

We can imagine the excitement amongst these Jews when they thought that Christ in saying this was ignoring all the oracles that Moses had delivered to them from God. But our Lord confronts them:

“(Ye) search the Scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me” (v. 39).

“Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me” (v. 46).

The over ruling necessity for man is to have the Word of God abiding in him and this is done by faith in God's messengers whom He has sent them—Moses, the prophets, the apostles and here the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

“And ye have not His Word abiding in you: for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not” (v. 38).

Even as it is true that without Christ, the Living Word, we cannot know the Father, so it is true that without the written Word, the canon of Scripture, that God has preserved for us, we can have no adequate knowledge of God and His purposes for us.

In the service of God in this life each one will vary from others in sphere and function. God has a purpose for every believer. God foresaw our response and we are children of His in His family. Age, environment, health, infirmities, finance, spiritual maturity will all play their part as to how God can use us. May we do as Paul enjoined Timothy “stir up (rekindle) the gift of God for He has given us the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (II Tim. i. 6, 7). As we use these gifts let us entirely forget ourselves—our pride or position and ‘seek the honour that cometh from God’ only (John v. 44).

Before leaving this chapter, one verse requires mention:

“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true” (v. 31).

Mr. Welch in his excellent book *Life Through His Name*, page 172, shows why we cannot accept the Authorized Version's translation and puts forward sound reasons for the better rendering:

“Though I bear witness of Myself, is not My witness true?”.

Blessed be God, we know this is so:

“He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true” (John iii. 33).

May we, with the impotent man, having found the Lord Jesus, put away spiritual slumbering and ‘walk in the Spirit’ fulfilling our part in the work of the Father.

The Will of God

No.8. The Worthy Walk---Ephesians. pp. 10 - 16

As we consider the worthy walk as an expression of the Will of God for the member of Christ's Body, let us turn to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians.

In the prayer at the commencement of this letter (i. 17-23), Paul makes clear that this calling is none other than the calling of Christ Himself: "that ye may know what is the hope of His calling" (18). Thus it is a calling almost beyond comprehension: how can *we* understand the full significance of "His calling"? Perhaps it can be summed up in words which Paul uses elsewhere: 'that God may be all in all' (I Cor. xv. 28). Hence it is necessary for the believer to come to the point where he recognizes in practice that in the new man "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11). But as we consider the walk which is counted 'worthy' in Ephesians we find that in contrast to the tremendous heights 'far above all' at the commencement of the epistle, the later 'practical' section brings us very much 'down to earth'.

It is in the first verse of chapter iv. that Paul says 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called'. The word he uses for 'worthy' has the significance, when used of price, of 'equal value': our walk should 'balance with' or 'equate with' His calling. Here is a tremendous thought! We may well ask 'who is sufficient for these things?' It is, then, not surprising to find that we are to walk 'with all lowliness', or better, 'with humility of mind'. For our walk to equate with His walk we must "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5), and this exhortation is in the context of 'lowliness of mind' (verse 3). In both instances Paul uses exactly the same word. It is with the disposition of the mind that the worthy walk begins. Christ 'being in the form of God', was called to walk with such humility of mind that 'even the death of the cross' was not beneath His dignity. The 'lowliness' this calling demands of us should equate with this. But 'meekness, with longsuffering' is also called for: 'gentleness, with patience (or endurance)'. These qualities are required for 'forbearing one another in love'. So often it is when we are not lowly in mind we are impatient with others, but realizing there are aspects of our own character others may find a trial, we are gentle with them and prepared to 'put up with' them 'in love'. Clearly this love is something far greater, and different from, much that passes for 'love' in our day: this love is not dependent on feelings, nor does it seek gratification, it is a self-giving concern such as that manifested by the Lord when He became obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. The whole of verse 2 might well be summed up "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus".

Arising directly from this in the worthy walk is the endeavour 'to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. The word for 'endeavouring' is precisely the one Paul uses in II Tim. ii. 15, "*Study* to shew thyself approved unto God". Perhaps here a better translation would be 'give diligence to keep the unity'. How careful we ought to be, both

in word and deed, in our dealings with one another to preserve (or guard) the spiritual oneness. For it is a 'oneness' which exists by reason of '*the* peace'. The peace which we all enjoy with God was made 'through the blood of His cross' (Col. i. 20), and it is the 'bond' which binds us together. The bond is a strong one, it can be translated 'cramp'. We are bound together, 'cramped' (or clamped) together because we each have peace with God. Here, as always, our relationships with each other result from a prior relationship with God and not, as is sometimes suggested that our relationship with God depends upon our right relationship with one another.

When we come to verse 4, *The Companion Bible* note suggests, "Ye are" as better than "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling". This would seem to supply the sense better: being bound together with the peace, says Paul, ye are one Body, and indeed, have one Spirit, for "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). On this basis it would seem almost difficult *not* to keep the spiritual oneness, yet we all know from our own experience that, in spite of the fact that we *are* one in Christ, it is only too easy for that oneness to disappear on occasions. Hence the need to 'give diligence' to this matter. Yet in addition there is but "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all". Notice there is *one* God Who is the Father of *all*, and not only so, He is also above *all*, through *all*, and in you *all*. God has supplied the strongest possible basis on which to preserve the spiritual oneness. Self, in its varied and multitudinous forms, destroys what God has established; how much we need to "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"!

The most important, and therefore practical, instruction concerning the worthy walk is 'doctrinal' or 'theological'. Here are the basic facts which do not depend upon us in any way whatsoever, they are all of God. To these facts we should 'give diligence', 'studying' them until we come to 'reckon' on them, and to 'reckon' *with* them in our dealings with each other.

But the worthy walk does not mean that every one has the same responsibilities, the same capabilities. These are given 'according to the measure of the gift of Christ' (Ephesians iv. 7). "Wherefore (better, 'for this reason') He gave gifts unto men." The gifts Paul mentions in particular are gifts of ministers given for certain particular reasons:

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12, 13).

Thus it seems that primarily the Will of God for the believer, and therefore the worthy walk, is concerned with the well-being of the Body. Is this how we live our lives?

Then for the moment Paul turns to the '*unworthy walk*'. The unworthy walk is very much concerned with doctrine: the doctrine of 'the error'. His desire is that 'we be no longer babes' swayed by the opinions and teachings of men, but that we should come to

maturity in Christ. In contrast to heeding the doctrines of the error, the believer should be 'speaking the truth in love': more accurately 'truthing in love'. *Speaking* the truth in love is of course included, but the thought is very much wider: *being* the truth, *embodying* the truth, living out the truth we believe. The object is that we 'may grow up (mature) into Him in all things' (Eph. iv. 15). He is the Head:

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16).

Again there is emphasized the good of the Body and the need for it to mature. It is also 'according to the effectual working of every part'. If the Body is to come to maturity then every one of us has a contribution to make, however small that contribution may seem to us. If this is 'the grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ' it is as important in His eyes as the contribution made by the most gifted.

Verses 17-19 outline the kind of walk which is not the Will of God for the believer, and this because "ye have not so learned Christ". Hence comes the exhortation to 'put away the old man and (put on) be clothed with the new man'. A similar injunction is found in Rom. xiii. 13, 14:

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Here also the thought is to put on as a garment the Lord Jesus Christ: in our conduct, in our walk we should 'make visible' our Lord.

Having enjoined clothing with the new man Paul continues in Eph. iv. 25 and onward, by expounding what this means: putting away the lie, speaking truth. He deals with anger, and whatever may be the precise meaning of verse 26 it is clear that at most anger must be put away as speedily as possible; place must not be given to the devil. We should be careful to do nothing, to go nowhere, indeed to think nothing, on which the devil may work. The former thief is to work and so be able to help the needy; conversation should be of such a nature as to edify and minister grace to the hearers. We should do nothing to grieve, pain or cause sorrow to the Holy Spirit. Rather we should be 'kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you' (iv. 32). Paul continues through the first part of chapter v. in much the same vein, interspersing practical exhortations with doctrinal statements. Then from verse 22 he deals with personal relationships.

The relationship between husband and wife should be governed by that between Christ and the Church. Children are to obey their parents 'in the Lord'; fathers are not to provoke their children, but rather 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'. Servants are to be good employees, not with fear and trembling before their human masters, but before Christ, thus whole-heartedly doing the will of God. Employers also are to behave in a similar way to their servant, recognizing that they have themselves a Master to Whom, as employees, they are rendering service.

So far Paul has been dealing with conduct, relationships and situations which are common to all. But what of situations peculiar to the individual? It is here that so often difficulty is experienced in knowing the Will of God. He continues (vi. 10) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might". "Finally" is literally 'of the remaining': of those matters which are individualized and to which he has made no reference. Nor can he do so, he can only say "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might". Yet what more can he say? "Be empowered (or enabled) in the Lord", he has already exhorted "Be clothed with (put on) the new man". But this is not all, for the enablement is also "in the power of His might". The word translated 'power' is the one from which our *democracy*, *theocracy* are derived (*kratos*), and has the significance of 'power of mastery, or government', and in His might is the power to 'master' any situation which can arise; power to govern our every situation and action. Small wonder then, that he continues "*Be clothed with* (put on) the whole armour of God". The 'armour' we need is Christ Himself, 'that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil'. Here the word translated both 'that' and 'against' is the little word *pro* which has the general significance of 'towards'. There are sometimes situations from which we would choose to flee, to take 'the line of least resistance', but Christ has the mastery in such situations, and we should face 'towards' them in 'the power of His might', for in them the devil is cunningly scheming for our downfall.

Paul reminds his readers (and us) that often, when personalities are involved, and, perhaps, we fear to give a friend offence, we struggle not against *flesh and blood*, but against spiritual beings, both of the highest and lowest orders, who are seeking our undoing. On account of this, says the Apostle, take up the whole armour of God, the *panoply* (the equipment of the heavy-armed soldier) of God. Once this equipment has been taken up, every weapon of defence is at hand *in order that ye may be able to stand against* in the evil day, and having done all, to *stand firm*. It has been pointed out that in the inventory of the equipment which follows there is no protection for the back.

As we look in detail at the equipment available for us the whole panoply can be summed up in the Lord Jesus Christ. First on the list is the girdle of truth; without the Truth we have no prospect whatsoever of dealing with these difficult situations, yet the One in Whose power and might we are to stand against(?) is the One Who claimed "I am the Truth". The breastplate of righteousness, what is this but Christ living in and through us? The sandals of the preparation (or readiness) of the Gospel of the peace are provided for us through 'the blood of His cross' (Col. i. 20); the shield of the faith, it has been suggested, is Christ Himself (Jehovah said to Abraham, 'I am thy shield', Gen.xv.1); the helmet of salvation can come from none other than Christ Himself, and the spiritual sword, which is the Word of God, speaks to us of Christ Who is Himself the Living Word. When each member of the Body takes up the whole armour of God 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication *for all saints*' (18) a formidable and invincible phalanx is formed. It is said that when Roman soldiers formed close order with their long, oblong shields overlapping, no chariot was capable of breaking their ranks; rather the chariot would be driven over them without harming

them. How much we need the help of each other, even when it comes to the question of finding the Will of God for our own personal problems.

The walk which is worthy of this highest of all callings is very lowly: with lowliness of mind, with patience and forbearance, with mutual concern, simply living a very ordinary everyday kind of life, but doing so ‘as unto the Lord, and not unto men’, living clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ that our lives may be governed by His might, praying always for all saints.

Perhaps it may all be summed up in the first two verses of chapter v.:

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour”,

or again, as Paul puts it to Titus, ‘adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things’.

No.9. The Worthy Walk---Colossians (1). pp. 32 - 36

In the last study we saw how the ‘worthy walk’ reflects the will of God for the member of Christ’s Body, as that walk is outlined for us in the Epistle to the Ephesians. In the present study we wish to see how His will for us is reflected in the outline of the worthy walk in Colossians. There are re-statements of a number of the factors involved, together with new thoughts and expansions.

Paul’s prayer in Col. i. 9 onwards is pertinent to our subject. As in the case of the prayer in Eph. i., so here the prayer is ‘on account of’ their ‘faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints’ (Col. i. 4, 8). He prays ‘in order that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will’: *completed* with the knowledge of His will. It is not, however, simple knowledge (*gnosis*), but ‘upon-knowledge’ (*epignosis*) which is sometimes taken to signify ‘further knowledge’, sometimes ‘acknowledgment’. There seems to be no good reason why both thoughts cannot be included here. So far, the knowledge these Colossian believers had, had resulted in ‘faith and love’, but faith without *further knowledge* can be ‘blind’ faith, mere credulity: uninformed love can mislead. It is worth noting that in both the other main prison epistles the initial prayer is concerned with *epignosis*: ‘may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge* of Him’ (Eph. i. 17), ‘that your love may abound yet more and more in *knowledge*’ (Phil. i. 9). The latter reference leads up to that tremendously challenging third chapter with its call to emulate the Apostle Paul in his desire ‘to know Him’ (to *get* to know Him). There is also in this prayer in Colossians the same inference: Paul ‘asks that ye might be completed in the knowledge of His will’, and after enumerating the glories of Christ in chapter i. 13 onwards, he concludes (ii. 10) “And ye are complete in Him”. It seems clear then that the knowledge of God’s will is found in the knowledge of

Christ, and it is to the end ‘that ye might walk worthy of the Lord’. The ‘worthy walk’ requires further knowledge of Christ.

In any sphere knowledge which is not put into practice is of little value: here also, the knowledge we have, and the further knowledge we gain, needs to be put into practice, needs to be *acknowledged*. Hence we have suggested above that both thoughts may be included in this instance.

The phrase ‘in all wisdom and spiritual understanding’ is very near to the thought in the Ephesian prayer for ‘the spirit of wisdom and revelation’ (Eph. i. 17), and reminds us that the knowledge of Christ does not come by means of human reason, wisdom or ability. We need to be granted by God the spiritual wisdom and ability which will unfold to us the superlative glories of Christ and of His place at the right hand of God in ‘heavenly places’.

All this is required to the end ‘that ye might walk worthy of the Lord’. Recalling that to walk worthy is to live a life which ‘balances’ or equates with the Lord, we can understand to some extent why all this is needed, when we come to consider the glories of our Lord and Head detailed for us later in this first chapter.

The worthy walk, and therefore the will of God for each one of us, is ‘unto all pleasing’, which might be paraphrased ‘every desire to please the Lord’. The R.S.V. puts it ‘to lead a life worthy of the Lord fully pleasing to Him’: every desire to please Him in everything would seem to sum up the thought. Are we so motivated?

The prayer continues ‘unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work’. This almost suggests that being occupied in ‘every good work’ we shall be ‘fruitful’. But the ‘good works’ are not themselves the fruit: bearing fruit in every good work is more accurate, suggesting the ‘good work’ as the *sphere* in which the fruit is borne. This brings us to the question what are the ‘good works’? Are they those activities popularly known today as ‘good works’? Should the member of Christ’s Body be a ‘do-gooder’? There is a reference in Eph. ii. 10 dealing with good works which may be helpful:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

This would seem to make clear that the good works are the ‘worthy walk’, for we are to ‘walk in them’. The ‘walk’ equates with the ‘life’: good works are the life of the believer, not part-time or spare-time activities. This is made clearer in Titus iii. 14:

“And let our’s also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.”

Here again ‘good works’ and ‘fruitbearing’ are linked together. These good works are for ‘necessary uses’. Our people, says the Apostle, are to bear fruit in good works for necessary uses: for *necessary needs*. Perhaps we may simplify this expression by ‘for necessities’, bearing in mind the emphasis. Many of those covered by the term ‘ours’ at that time had but recently been converted from paganism, which was (in the widest

sense) 'permissive'. Some of them may have had their occupations directly dependent upon the worship of a pagan deity, as in the case of the "silversmiths" at Ephesus (Acts xix. 23-27), the occupations of others may have been indirectly so, as in the case of food sold in 'the shambles' at Corinth, where a good deal of the meat had probably been 'offered to idols'. Against this background it becomes clearer that the 'good works' are occupations, the means of livelihood, which were honest and morally good. In such a situation the choice of an occupation which would be worthy of their Christian profession could well mean that their income would be seriously reduced, and their consideration must not be primarily to obtain lucrative work, but, providing their necessary needs were met, that which was honest and good.

Possibly the position today is even more complicated than it was in the days of the Apostle. Paganism, although of a different kind, is as widespread now as it was then. Some thirty or forty years ago a business man remarked that 'it is almost impossible to be a Christian and in business today', and in the years since then there has been no improvement in the situation. In seeking employment or a change of employment there are certain areas in which it should be quite clear to the believer he can have no part; it should also be clear that the primary interest should be the reputation of the occupation rather than its profitability. Yet there are many occupations where there is not such clarity: some printers publish pornographic literature: does this mean that no believer can have a part in the printing industry? Here it would seem that the *occupation* is honest and largely of good repute, and therefore suitable for the believer, but if the Company being considered is known to produce undesirable publications, that Company cannot be considered to provide 'good works'. In many spheres in modern business only the individual can decide for himself, in the light of Scripture and his conscience before God. What, for example, is the position of a family of believers who breed race horses and who claim that they only breed *horses*, it is nothing to do with them to what use the animals are put after they are sold? For what purpose can horses bred for racing be put?

Paul speaks of some in the following terms:

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i. 16).

Here were some who were not prepared to *acknowledge* the knowledge of God in Christ which had come to them, and they had professed to receive. The meaning of 'reprobate' (*adokimos*) is 'not standing the test', and so 'worthless'. The test of the believer is whether he is prepared to put into practice (to acknowledge) what he professes to know of God, even, if need be, to the extent of being reduced to the bare necessities of life: whether his walk is 'worthy' or 'worthless'.

Clearly 'good works' in the popular sense of the expression are not excluded: here may be one of those occupations suitable for a believer, one where he may earn little more than enough for 'necessary uses'. For some, one or other of such good works may provide a useful spare time occupation. The test must always be: is this what "God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"?

It is therefore significant that Paul continues to pray (Col. i. 10) “and *increasing* in the knowledge of God”. If our knowledge (and acknowledgment) of God stagnates, so will our knowledge of His will, and imperceptibly our walk will deteriorate from ‘worthy’ to ‘worthless’.

Considering these matters one may ask “Who is sufficient for these things?” Paul recognized the difficulties involved in the worthy walk, and so he is found praying also (11) ‘strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power’. As we recognize the frailty of our flesh there comes the assurance that God will *enable* us with all *enablement*. Here is an echo of the Apostle’s claim in Phil. iv. 13:

“I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me.”

Moreover the enablement is ‘according to His glorious power’, or the might of His glory. How important it is then that we should pray for ‘the spirit of wisdom and revelation that (we) may know what is the *exceeding greatness of His power* to usward who believe’; this again is ‘according to the working of His mighty power’, the energy of the strength of His might. Here is ability, energy, strength beyond description, save that it is that:

“. . . . which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all” (Eph. i. 17-23).

No.10. The Worthy Walk---Colossians (2). pp. 46 - 49

Involved in the worthy walk is also ‘all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness’ (cf. Eph. iv. 2). Here ‘joyfulness’ is added; it is quite possible to endure and suffer-long miserably! Yet with such tremendous sufficiency available, and recognizing all that is expressed later in this same chapter, how can it be otherwise than with joyfulness?

There is some uncertainty whether ‘with joyfulness’ should be linked with ‘patience and longsuffering’, or with ‘giving thanks to the Father’. For the believer should not both apply? Certainly as we consider all for which we have to ‘give thanks unto the Father’, this should fill our hearts with joy as can nothing else. To begin with He has ‘made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light’: we, who once were:

“. . . . without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. ii. 12).

He has made such ‘meet’ for an inheritance beyond comprehension! Moreover He has rescued us from the authority of darkness, ‘and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son’. Clearly an exposition of this and the following verses is beyond the scope of this study; but in this passage are the grounds both of Christian joyfulness and of the worthy walk. Notice how Paul’s prayer “That ye might walk worthy” inevitably points to

Christ and His glories: without the appreciation and apprehension of these the worthy walk is not possible.

The basis of all our belief, experience and service comes next (i. 14):

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

It is true all the critical Greek texts omit ‘through His blood’, but in the light of the parallel verse in Eph. i. 7 there can be no doubt that the thought was very much in Paul’s mind, as later he refers to ‘peace through the blood of His cross’. Notice the extent of that forgiveness (chapter ii. 13), ‘having forgiven you *all* trespasses’.

Now follows a description of the One through Whom we have this inheritance, through Whom we are rescued from the authority of darkness and in Whom we have this great redemption. He is the ‘image of the invisible God’. In defining the word for ‘image’ (*eikon*) Dr. Bullinger’s Critical Lexicon states: “*denotes not merely the image but also the pattern*”. In Christ is the *pattern* of the invisible God, a thought which is expanded in verse 19, “for in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” (R.S.V.), or again (ii. 9) ‘for in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily’ (R.S.V.). It may be beyond our ability to comprehend the wonder and immensity of this fact, yet it remains true that in some sense God was wholly present in Christ. He is also ‘the Firstborn of all creation’, and this “*because* by Him were all things created’, and the remainder of verse 16 clearly places the emphasis on *all* things, as John puts it in his gospel (John i. 3):

“All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life.”

So He is the Creator Himself, the very Source of all life, a point further emphasized by the following verse (Col. i. 17):

“He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (R.S.V.).

All such descriptions as ‘chief corner stone’, ‘foundation’ and ‘head’ come together in this thought. Without Christ, even if a creation were possible, it would be self-destroyed; it could not ‘hold together’. The whole universe, the whole created order, depends upon Him both for existence and maintenance. No other being is of more importance than the Lord Jesus Christ. The context of these three verses makes it plain that ‘Firstborn’ does not mean the first created being, as some erroneously claim: in which case the first created being has become of greater importance than the Creator.

He also ‘is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead’, and this is so that in this sphere (the church which is His body), ‘in all things He might have the pre-eminence’: and perhaps this is the most complete and satisfying definition of the worthy walk. Through Him also is reconciliation and peace, ‘through the blood of His cross’. We can no doubt include ourselves within the scope of verses 21 and 22:

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.”

These thoughts lead on to the affirmation that the believer is united with Christ (Colossians ii. 10-13), and this in turn to the exhortation of chapter iii. 1-5. Here is the underlying secret of the worthy walk, and of the knowledge of the will of God:

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

Not until these ‘doctrinal’ matters have been dealt with, as being a part of the worthy walk, does Paul then outline the ‘practical’ instructions. These are very largely a restatement of the similar instructions given in the epistle to the Ephesians. For this high calling, for this glorious Lord and Head, the worthy walk in its ‘practical’ aspects is to live an ordinary life on earth but ‘as unto the Lord, and not unto men’, with the mind ‘set’ on things above, on Christ Himself at the right hand of all authority and power and glory. May we not thus say: This is the will of God concerning you?

No.11. Summary. **pp. 71 - 73**

As we conclude this series of articles on the Will of God, we would re-affirm what we said at the commencement. This subject is by no means easy. We have sought to deal with it comprehensively, though not exhaustively. We trust we have been able to cover the important points which we now purpose to summarize, but in so doing we would emphasize that it is not possible to lay down certain principles which if applied will reveal God’s will in any given circumstance. The only sure advice which can be given is to have a right relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; this we believe will be made clear, if the previous articles have failed to do so, in the summary which follows.

In the first of this series we thought of Rom. xii. 1, 2, where the key-thought is to ‘yield yourselves a living sacrifice’, by no means a popular thought nowadays. The unpopularity arises out of forgetfulness and neglect; forgetfulness of the ‘mercies of God’ to which Paul draws attention in this very Scripture as the ground of his appeal, and neglect of the ‘glory’ which always accompanies thoughts of sacrifice and suffering in Scripture. It is at least hinted at in Rom. xii. 1, 2 ‘be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind’, where the word ‘transformed’ is the same one translated ‘transfigured’ in the accounts of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The Lord, when speaking to the disciples of His death, always went on to speak of His resurrection, e.g., Matt. xvi. 21,

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and *be raised again the third day.*”

The same thought of suffering and sacrifice occurs in the first letter to the Corinthians,

“Know ye not that they which run in a race all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainty; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Cor. ix. 24-27).

If ‘they’ are prepared to make sacrifices for a mere laurel wreath which will soon fade and fall, how much more incentive have we for a ‘crown’ which will last eternally?

Closely associated with the thought of ‘yielding’ sacrificially is that of ‘sanctification’, of separation to God so that the whole life is lived ‘unto the Lord’ (Colossians iii. 23), a combined thought which has recurred frequently in our studies of this subject.

The believer is one who has ‘received the adoption’, the placing as a son. God receives him as ‘My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased’. He is accounted by God as spiritually mature and should therefore live maturely, live a Christ-like life. But how can we live like Christ unless we know Him? Clearly the better we know Him the more like Him shall we live. Hence the importance of ‘getting to know Him’, the value of such knowledge being so great to Paul that he counted no sacrifice too great to increase it (Phil. iii. 7-11, and note the association of ‘resurrection’ with the ‘fellowship of His sufferings’). Dare any of us compare favourably our knowledge of Christ with that of Paul? Paul had found that the more knowledge of Christ he had, the greater was his desire to know Him even better—a desire which for Paul, or any of us, can only be fulfilled when “we see Him as He is”.

As we put into practice what we know of the Will of God for us seeking to be well pleasing to the Lord, we come to know Him better, and are the better equipped to know more of His Will for us. Particularly in the more personal aspects of this matter, in those circumstances which are uniquely our own, His Will becomes the plainer the better we know Him. In the wider spheres of everyday life, as we have seen from both the epistle to the Ephesians and that to the Colossians, it is simply a matter of living an ordinary, everyday life, but with a motive very different from that of the ‘man in the street’, with the object of being ‘well pleasing unto the Lord’.

To know the Will of God for me, in my own particular circumstances, is not at all easy. Most of us will have seen at some time or another a ‘Darby and Joan’; an old couple who have live closely together for many years, they have probably known a ‘fellowship of suffering’ in the course of their life together, they have shared their joys and their sorrows, and now they not only think alike, but (often) even look alike. Such a couple present a parable for all who seriously would know the Will of God; live closely with the Lord and as your knowledge of Him increases you will increasingly think ‘like’ Him, and in deeds be ‘like’ Him.

The prayer, above all others, for those who earnestly desire to know the Will of God is, 'that I may know Him'.