

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 of the ONE BODY,

With the completion of this volume we also conclude twenty-five years of most blessed fellowship in public testimony to the claims and glorious results of “rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

It is an outstanding privilege to be permitted to bear witness to such wonderful grace as is revealed in the dispensation of the mystery, and the demands made upon us have appeared “light” as the unfolding blessing of the years now sped have been realized.

We would include all those whose loving co-operation enables us to issue this monthly testimony, and we pray that this fellowship may deepen as the days go by—a practical exhibition of that Unity of the Spirit that we are called upon to keep.

Yours for Christ and His Church,

CHARLES H. WELCH
FREDERICK. P. BRININGER

1st December, 1934.

INDEX

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, THE--	
The book as a whole	9
The Gentile in the Gospel of Luke	12
Luke xxiv. and Acts i. 1-14	16
The question of Acts i. 6: Was it right?	24
The hope of the Acts and Epistles of the period	27, 30
ARCHÆOLOGY AND RIMMON	6
BEREAN CHARTS--	
Ephesians	36
Philippians	39
Colossians	40
II Timothy	41
BIBLE, THE--	
Marking of	43, 44
Study of	43
Reading for the Beginner	44
BIBLICAL BLESSINGS--	
The blessing of confidence	47
The blessing of consistency	49
The blessing of consideration	51
The blessing that satisfies	53
The blessing of anticipated victory	56
COLOSSIANS, STUDIES IN--	
The circumcision made without hands (ii. 11)	59
Baptism and burial (ii. 12)	63
Dead <i>to</i> sins and uncircumcision of the flesh (ii. 13)	67, 69
The forgiveness of all trespasses (ii. 13)	70
Blotted out, nailed, spoiled: The body is of Christ (ii. 14-17)	74
Things that beguile of the Prize (ii. 18)	79
FUNDAMENTALS OF DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH--	
DEUTERONOMY: possession east of Jordan (i.-iii.)	83
DEUTERONOMY: The song of Jehovah's name (xxxii.)	87
DEUTERONOMY: The blessing of Moses (xxxiii.)	92
JOSHUA: The end of the law Newness of life (i. 1, 2)	96
GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES--	
The hope of the promise made of God (Acts xxvi. 6)	100
According to that which was spoken (Rom. iv. 18)	102
He is faithful that promised (Heb. x. 23)	104
Fully persuaded promised to perform (Rom. iv. 21)	106
Through faith and patience inherit the promises (Heb. vi. 12)	108
The promise of life (II Tim. i. 1)	110
PENTECOST AND SINAI	5
ROMANS, THE EPISTLE TO THE--	
Receive not the grace of God in vain (vi. 14 - viii. 6)	113
Two illustrations: Master and husband (vi. 16 - vii. 6)	116

Law and grace (vi. 15-23)	119
Servants to righteousness unto holiness (vi. 15-23)	123
Death ends the dominion of law (vii. 1-6)	126
Light on the relation of law and sin (vii. 7-12)	129
SIGN OF THE TIMES--	
Darwinian theory a dream	134
The Chester Beatty Papyri	135
Ships flies flag of Palestine	136
SPIRITUAL LIFE, THE	8
THIS GOD IS OUR GOD--	
The sovereignty of God	137
The righteousness of God	140
The power of God	142
The immensity of God	145
TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?	7
ULTRA DISPENSATIONALISM--	
The place of Acts xxviii.	148
A dispensational secret and hope	151
The written testimony to the mystery, and Things that differ	154
The Jew first. Body and Bride. Paul's two-fold ministry	157
VOLUME OF THE BOOK, THE--	
THE REVISED VERSION: The consistent translation of identical words	161
Things that differ	165
The prepositions	168
The verb and its tenses	170
The marginal notes, and the American Readings	173
The use of	175
WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE--	
SYMBOL OF SERVICE: Debtors and Disciples	176
The ear and the eye	178
Fishers, Forsakers and Followers	180
Gatherers and Guides	183
Helpers and Husbandmen	185
WHEN THE COMMANDMENT CAME--	
Gen. xv. 16 and its typical teaching	188
The testimony of the three spheres	190
The testimony of the time appointed	192
The testimony of the words "hidden" and "manifest"	193
WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET UNDERSTANDING--	
The fallacy: Fallacies classified	195
Some elements of crooked thinking	198
The importance of analogy	201
The definition of analogy	203
Analogy, and the Image of God	205
WORDS IN SEASON--	
Gospel notes on John iii. 16	208

Pentecost and Sinai.

pp. 139, 140

Perhaps the Whitsun season is not yet too far from our thoughts for it to be inappropriate to offer some suggestions upon the meaning of the Feast for the consideration of your readers.

The *Rev. H. St. John Thackeray*, in his Schweich Lectures, shows that the Synagogue Lessons for the Feast Day were from the Law, Deut. xvi. or Exod. xix.; from the Psalms, Psa. xxix. or lxviii.; from the Prophets, Ezek. i. or Hab. iii.

Of these passages, Deut. xvi. gives the Law setting up the Feast. Exod. xix. records the arrival of the children of Israel at Sinai and the subsequent theophany. This passage was read because, according to the Jewish reckoning, the arrival at Sinai took place on the fiftieth day from the Passover in Egypt. Hab. iii. and Psa. xxix. & lxviii. will all be found to contain reminiscences of Sinai and the Exodus. The same cannot be said of Ezek. i., which seems to have been included on account of resemblances between the theophany there recorded and that on Mount Sinai. Thus, to the Jews Pentecost had the dual significance of a Harvest Festival and the commemoration of the giving of the Law. It will be remembered that Tabernacles also had a dual significance—it is the Feast of in-gathering and also a reminder that Israel dwelt in tents during the Exodus.

Come now to Acts ii. Is it not remarkable that on the day when the minds of pious Jews were turned to such passages as those just referred to, there should come from heaven the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind and tongues like as a fire? Before meeting with Thackeray's work, the writer had turned to the Old Testament seeking for something that might shed light upon these physical manifestations in Acts ii. It appeared to be found in Ezek. i. and Exod. xix.—the very passages which, upon other grounds, had been chosen by the Rabbis for the Pentecost Synagogue Lessons.

The inference drawn is that in Acts ii. we have the incipient inauguration of the "New Covenant" predicted in Jer. xxxi. It is true that the whole of Jer. xxxi. was not then fulfilled, but the same thing applies to Peter's quotation from Joel ii. If this suggestion be correct, the rushing of the mighty wind, and possibly also the fiery tongues, are intended to remind us of the Old Testament theophanies, and particularly that in Exod. xix.

As regards the Harvest aspect of the Festival, it is interesting to notice that the "saying" predicting the baptism of the Spirit in Matt. iii. occurs between two "sayings" concerning the harvest. Fruit trees in verse 10, and wheat in verse 12. Also, with this in mind, it is interesting to notice that just before the words quoted from Joel ii. we have several Harvest allusions—verse 19: "corn and wine and oil"; verse 22: "for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength"; verse 24: "and the floors shall be full of wheat and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil."

[From a correspondent who, in sending, states that some contend that Exod. xix. 1 is sixty (and not fifty) days from Passover.]

Archæology and Rimmon. pp. 179, 180

During one of our series of Bibles Lectures given in the Provinces, we were asked whether there was any archæological reference to Rimmon. We do not remember our questioner's name, but we trust this short notice will be seen by him.

Naaman's reference to the house of Rimmon indicates that this god was worshipped in Syria (II Kings v. 18). Among the archæological references to Rimmon is a prayer in use at the time of Assur-bani-pal, where Assur the national god is associated with others such as Ishtar, Nebo Merodach and Rimmon. The lines concerning Rimmon read:--

"To Rimmon the minister of heaven and earth, the Lord of the wind and the lightning of heaven" (K100 line 12).

Sayce in his Hibbert Lecture 1887 says:--

"The Kings of Edom seem to have had a predilection for assuming the names of the divinities they worshipped. We have among them Hadad titles of the supreme Baal in Syria, whose attributes caused the Assyrians to identify him with their own Rimmon."

"And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon" (I Kings xv. 18).

Rimmon, moreover, was mourned for as was Tammuz:--

"There sat women weeping for Tammuz" (Ezek. viii. 14).

Both names, Hadad and Rimmon, occur together in association with national mourning in Zech. xii. 10, 11: "They shall mourn as the mourning of Hadadrimmon."

Tablet W. A. I. ii. 49, 30 gives Rimmon an Accadian appellation: *Uta-edina-guba* = "the everglowing sun of the desert", and further, the name Rimmon is spoken of in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions as Ramanu or Ramman. References to Hadad, Tammuz, Adonis and the Descent of Ishtar, together with the above, will open up the way to a fuller knowledge of the subject. However, it is not of sufficient general interest to warrant an extended examination in these pages, but we trust what has been mentioned above will be of service.

“To whom shall we go?”

p. 200

“With eager knife that oft has sliced
At Gentile gloss or Jewish fable,
Before the crowd you lay the Christ
Upon the lecture table.

From bondage to the old beliefs
You say your rescue must begin;
But I want refuge from my grief
And saving from my sin.

The strong, the easy and the glad
Hang, blandly listening, on thy word;
But I am sick, and I am sad
And I want Thee, O Lord”

(CANON AINGER).

“I have a life in Christ to live,
But ere I live it must I wait
Till learning can clear answer give
Of this or that book’s date?

I have a life in Christ to live,
I have a death in Christ to die;
And must I wait till science gives
All doubts a full reply?

Nay rather, while the sea of doubt
Is raging wildly round about,
Questing of Life, of Death, of Sin;
Let me but creep within
Thy fold, O Christ, and at Thy feet
Take up the lowest seat
And hear Thy awful voice repeat
In gentlest accents, heavenly sweet,
Come unto Me and rest,
Believe Me, and be blest”

(PRINCIPAL I. C. SHARPE).

The spiritual life.
p. 211

The *attitude* of the spiritual life LOOK UP (Psa. v. 3).
The *strength* of the spiritual life GIRD UP (I Pet. i. 13).
The *exercise* of the spiritual life STIR UP (II Tim. i. 6).
The *discipline* of the spiritual life TAKE UP (Matt. xvi. 24).
The *secret* of the spiritual life GROW UP (Eph. iv. 15).
The *foundation* of the spiritual life BUILT UP (Acts xx. 32).

The Acts of the Apostles.

#1. The book as a whole. pp. 1 - 3

The very focal point of our witness is Acts xxviii., for we believe that in that chapter the dispensation of the mystery began. From time to time there have appeared in *The Berean Expositor* studies of this great dispensational boundary, and from time to time the place and purpose of Pentecost and allied themes have been touched upon. We have, however, never found opportunity to give the Acts itself systematic examination in these pages, and as we desire to remember the needs of new readers, and knowing that the book of the Acts is the battleground of the whole position that we take up, the time seems ripe for such an exposition.

In many minds one of the uppermost questions relative to the purpose of the book is: Does the Acts introduce something new, or does it confirm something old? This of course embraces the questions that arise out of Acts i. 6 (where the apostles asked the Lord if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel) and the place and purpose of Pentecost. The baptism with the Holy Ghost that took place at Pentecost must certainly be tabulated as a new experience, but the question that needs careful answer is: Did that new experience usher in a new dispensation, or did it confirm something old? There is but one true way to deal with this and all other subjects that come into our study, and that is to see their place in relation to the book as a whole. This can only be done after a patient perusal of the whole book, and the comparison of each part with its corresponding member. To express opinions before this has been done is but to express opinions and nothing more. Patiently to plough through the complete book to lay bear its structure is not the work of a few hours merely. This, however, has been done, and although the results may be glanced at in a few minutes, the bearing of the outline thus discovered abides, and rightly influences the interpretation of every section.

Let us, then, go over the book of the Acts together, and make its outline our own. Commencing our reading, we are at once apprised of the fact that another treatise had been written by the same author, which must have some bearing upon the Acts itself. While we cannot make a digression here to study the connection that may exist between the first and second treatises, we are conscious that the opening verses of the first chapter sound very much like a resumé of something already written. Upon examination we discover that Acts i. 1-14 overlaps Luke xxiv. 36-53, details of which we reserve for another article. The recognition of this overlap, however, influences the structure, for, with this fact before us and the truth as our goal, we are compelled to tabulate our findings as follows:--

A | i. 1-14. The former treatise. All that Jesus began to do and to teach.

The new record commences with Acts i. 15: "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples", and the first *act* of the apostles is to make their number complete

again. This was accomplished by the appointment of Matthias, a much debated subject and one which demands our earnest attention, as there are those who teach that *Paul* was the true twelfth apostle and that Matthias was mistakenly appointed. This we do not deal with at the moment, except to say that the Scriptures abundantly prove that the appointment of Matthias was entirely in agreement with the will of God.

As we read on through succeeding chapters we cannot help but notice how Peter dominates every section. But chapter xii. finds Peter in prison, and after his release, he appears once more, in Acts xv. Meanwhile a new figure has arisen, introduced first as a fanatical persecutor, but who afterwards become a zealous, though humble, follower of the Lord. Presently, together with Barnabas, he receives a special commission from the Holy Ghost, and finally he becomes the second dominating character of the book. Our structure therefore must exhibit these divisions, and we put them down thus:--

A1 | i. 1-14. The former treatise.

All that JESUS *began* to do and to teach.

A2 | i. 15 - xxviii. 31. The present treatise.

All that Jesus *continued* to do and to teach,
through the ministries of PETER and PAUL.

We have observed, in passing, that Barnabas and Saul received a special commission from the Holy Ghost in a manner somewhat parallel with the special equipment of the twelve on the day of Pentecost: This we record as follows:--

Equipment of the TWELVE (i. 15 - ii. 13).

Equipment of BARNABAS and SAUL (xiii. 1-3).

Next we observe that the ministry of Peter, like the ministry of Paul, spreads in widening circles, until, at length, both ministries terminate in prison. Without compelling the reader to piece together every item and to weigh over every comparison, we give the complete outline of Acts as follows, trusting that no reader will be satisfied to accept such an important aid to our study at second hand, but that each will make it his own.

The Structure of the Acts of the Apostles.

A1 | i. 1-14. The former treatise.

A2 | i. 15 - xxviii. 31. The present treatise.

The present treatise.

A2 | PETER.

B | i. 15 - ii. 13. JERUSALEM.—Holy Spirit.

Enduement of the twelve.

C | ii. 14 - viii. 1. Ministry of PETER and others to the nation of Israel in Jerusalem and the land.

D | viii. 1 - xi. 30. Ministry of PETER and others in the land.

Peter ministers once to the Gentiles: Cornelius.

E | xii. 1-23. Jerusalem.

Peter's imprisonment.

Close of ministry.

| PAUL.

B | xii. 24 - xiii. 3. ANTIOCH.—Holy Spirit.

Enduement of PAUL and BARNABAS.

C | xiii. 4 - xv. 39. Ministry of Paul and others to the dispersed of Israel, independently of Jerusalem and the twelve.

D | xvi. 1 - xix. 20. PAUL'S ministry in association with the twelve.

His seven epistles to the believers.

Paul ministers once to the circumcision: Hebrews.

E | xix. 21 - xxviii. 31. Ephesus to Rome.

Paul's imprisonment.

Close of one ministry and

commencement of the prison ministry,
and the "dispensation of the mystery".

#2. The Gentile in the Gospel of Luke. pp. 41 - 46

As the writer of the Acts speaks of a former treatise which he had written, and as the first fourteen verses of the Acts traverse the closing verses of Luke's Gospel, it will be necessary to make some acquaintance with that Gospel, and to examine the portion that is, in measure, repeated in Acts i. 1-14.

It would be too great a digression to attempt an analysis of Luke's Gospel here, but there have been provided for us means whereby its distinctive features can be seen clearly enough to give some idea of the purpose of the writer, and with it some indication of what to expect in the second treatise, the Acts itself. These means consist of the comparison of a series of passages in Luke's Gospel with parallel ones in Matthew's Gospel. The first obvious comparison is the genealogy given by both writers.

(1) *The genealogy of Christ* (Matt. i. and Luke iii.).—It is evidently sufficient for Matthew's purpose if he proves that the Lord Jesus was heir both of David and of Abraham. Matthew knew as well as we do that Abraham was not the first man, but with the object he had in view, no good purpose would have been served by taking the Lord's genealogy back further than the Patriarch himself. With Abraham commenced the purpose of God that had Israel as a nation in view, and with David commenced the purpose of God that had the kingdom and the throne in view. When we turn to Luke's account, we find that he, too, traces the Lord's genealogy back to David and to Abraham (Luke iii. 31, 34), but the purpose for which he wrote necessitated the prosecution of the genealogy back still further, and consequently it does not end until Luke records: "Which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (iii. 38).

Investigation of the further differences observable between the two genealogies would demand a lengthy article, and as we are dealing with Luke's Gospel merely to get its general trend, such an examination would but distract. Keeping in mind, therefore, the first point of departure observable between the two accounts, let us make another comparison.

(2) *The birth of Christ* (Matt. ii. and Luke ii.).—In Matthew's account the birth of the Saviour is heralded by wise men, and in Luke's account by angels. Matthew makes no reference to the angels and the shepherds; Luke takes no notice of the wise men. Is there a reason? There must be. Can we discover it? We can, if we compare the records:--

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is He that is born King of Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matt. ii. 1, 2).

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was

governor of Syria), and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city and there were shepherd abiding in the field and the angel said unto them, Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord goodwill toward men” (Luke ii. 1-14).

Quite apart from the fact that here are two distinct events, the moment the reader passes from Matthew’s account to that of Luke he is conscious of a different atmosphere and point of view. This essential difference may be expressed in the words of the wise men and of the angel:--

“Where is He that is BORN KING OF THE JEWS?” (Matthew).

“Unto you this day is BORN in the city of David a SAVIOUR” (Luke).

Everything else, also, in the two narratives is similarly differentiated:--

“In the days of HEROD THE KING” is the dating of Matthew.

“A decree from CÆSAR AUGUSTUS” is the dating of Luke.

The first is local, the second is world-wide. The first harmonizes with the way Matthew, in his genealogy, fixes upon Abraham and David, the second with the way Luke, in his, fixes upon Adam. The first insists that the Lord is “King”, the second that He is “Saviour”. The first speaks of “King of the Jews”, the second speaks of “men”, without distinction.

In the days when Matthew wrote his Gospel the Jewish element was strong, and he had no need unduly to emphasize the fact that Christ came first of all to Israel. Luke, however, takes the opportunity of recording the testimony of another witness soon after the birth of Christ. This was the testimony of aged Simeon, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and therefore had no bias toward the Gentile. Yet when he addressed God as he took the young Child up in his arms, he puts the Gentile first: “A light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of Thy people *Israel*” (Luke ii. 32).

Let us make another comparison.

(3) *The Forerunner* (Matt. iii. and Luke iii.):--

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way for the Lord, make His paths straight” (Matt. iii. 1-3).

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins: As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth: and all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke iii. 1-6).

Compare the casual dating of Matthew's account with the precision of Luke's. See also, once again, how Luke views things from the Gentile standpoint. He does not call Herod a King, but simply a Tetrarch, a subordinate ruler. Then observe what is said of John the Baptist: both records tell us that he preached "repentance", but it is Matthew's account which stresses the "kingdom", and Luke's which stresses "remission of sins". Again, both records quote a passage from Isaiah; Matthew's quotation is brief, Luke's is longer. Why? Surely it is in order to include the words "all flesh", which had no essential bearing upon Matthew's purpose. Once again, it must be obvious that a definite, selective, process is at work governing the writing of these two accounts.

(4) *The opening of the Lord's ministry* (Matt. iv. and Luke iv.):--

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 1, 17).

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke iv. 1, 2, 18, 25-27).

Look at the extraordinary differences here. We have purposely included the references to the temptation, so that it shall be clear that in both quotations the same period is in view, yet Matthew selects the moment when the Lord stressed the "kingdom", while Luke passes that by and selects the words that angered the assembly in the synagogue of Nazareth. Again, Luke is seen using every opportunity to announce the news that the Gentile was to have a place in the kingdom ministry.

While but four items have been compared, the searcher will find numerous others, down to the precision of small phrases and even words. For example, let him compare Matt. xxiv. with Luke xxi., and say why Luke alone gives any record of the "times of the Gentiles" (verse 24). One other most important piece of contributory evidence of the purpose of Luke's Gospel is the parables peculiar to that Gospel. Luke alone speaks of the good Samaritan, at the expense of the Jewish Priest and Levite, who could do nothing. Luke alone gives the pearl of parables, The Prodigal Son, where the prodigal is seen to advantage over against his elder brother. Again, Luke alone gives that anticipation of the epistle to the Romans in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, introducing, as it does, the doctrine of justification. Once more, Luke alone reveals that Israel were like Unjust Steward, and, finally, it is Luke alone who recounts the parable that speaks of the Lord's absence under the figure of "a certain Nobleman (who) went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return" (Luke xix. 12), thus checking the idea that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear".

We have not felt it necessary to set out these parables in detail. The full force of their bearing upon Luke's purpose can only be felt by those who ponder them prayerfully and carefully.

Let us set out what we have seen:--

Matthew.	Luke.
The Subject.	
King and kingdom, with the Jew prominent, is the theme.	Sin and salvation, with the Gentile in view, is the theme.
The Genealogies.	
Abraham and David.	Adam.
The witness at the Birth.	
Herod the King. Wise men. King of the Jews.	Cæsar Augustus. All the world. Angels, Saviour, men. Simeon, Gentiles.
The Forerunner.	
Casual dating. Repent, for kingdom is at hand. Short quotation from Isaiah.	Gentile dating. Repentance for remission of sins. Long quotation from Isaiah in order to include references to "all flesh".
The Lord's opening Ministry.	
Repent for the kingdom is at hand.	The emphasis upon the Gentile in the synagogue at Nazareth.
The Second Coming.	
The time of the end.	The reference to the intervening "times of the Gentiles".
The distinctive Parables peculiar to Luke.	
-	The Good Samaritan.
-	The Prodigal Son.
-	The Unjust Steward.
-	The Pharisee and the Publican.
-	The Nobleman.

Here is clear evidence that Matthew's Gospel is intended to show that the covenants made with Abraham and David are vested in the Lord Jesus Christ in Whom alone they can be fulfilled. Luke's Gospel, while admitting all that, points out that while Israel were themselves to be blessed, they were to become the destined channel of blessing to the nations, which precluded the idea that only Israel mattered, and revealed the larger purpose of the kingdom of Heaven.

When we remember that Luke, who so emphasized the Gentile aspect, was raised up to accompany the apostle Paul, can we not praise God that Paul had to his hand a record of earthly life, the death, the resurrection and the ascension of the Lord, that went back to Adam, and which would therefore be of great importance in the controversies over the inclusion of the Gentile that we find in the Acts of the Apostles itself? Of the four Gospels, Luke's is the one that particularly belongs to saved Gentiles. Have we possessed our possessions?

**#3. Luke xxiv. and Acts i. 1-14.
pp. 89 - 98**

We have considered the teaching of “the former treatise” (Acts i. 1), namely, Luke’s Gospel, and have found that its general trend is to stress that aspect of the Gospel connected with the Saviour and the Gentile, as compared with Matthew, which stresses the Kingly and Jewish aspect. Luke states that the former treatise is a record of “all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach”. Are we justified in this deduction? Mark’s Gospel ends with the words:--

“And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature these signs shall follow So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark xvi. 15-20).

These words prove that the Acts is a continuation of the narrative of what the Lord had begun to do and to teach in the days of His flesh, and that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were intended to “confirm” the witness. This may be seen by consulting Heb. ii.:--

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

To the same effect is the teaching of the epistles to the Corinthians:--

“Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Cor. i. 6, 7).
“Now He which confirmeth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God” (II Cor. i. 21).

The “confirming of *us* with *you*” of II Cor. i. shows that the same subject is in view, which we have already seen in Heb. ii.

Returning to the opening chapter of the Acts, we note that the writer speaks of several things that had already been recorded by him in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke. The only way to realize this is to compare the two passages. This we will do.

A comparison of Luke xxiv. 36-53 with Acts i. 1-14.	
L u k e.	A c t s.
Many infallible proofs.	

<p>“And as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have. And, when He had thus spoken He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb, and He took it and did eat before them.”</p>	<p>“. . . . the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days.” <i>(It will be seen that what Luke wrote in fuller detail, Acts summarizes under one head. This is exactly what we do when referring to previous correspondence on any subject).</i></p>
<p>The Lord’s words to His apostles.</p>	
<p>“And He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you; that all things must fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scripture.”</p>	<p>“Speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” <i>(Notice how these two aspects of truth are brought together in the last verse of Acts, “preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD, and teaching those things which concern the LORD JESUS CHRIST”—an unobtrusive connection such as delighted Paley. Further, the fact of their opened understanding shows their question in Acts i. 6 to be right and fitting, as also i. 16-26).</i></p>
<p>The commission.</p>	
<p>“Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem and ye are witnesses of these things.”</p>	<p>“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”</p>
<p>The enduements.</p>	
<p>“Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.”</p>	<p>“Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me Ye shall be baptized with holy spirit not many days hence Ye shall receive power after that holy spirit is come upon you.”</p>
<p>The ascension.</p>	

<p>“And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”</p>	<p>“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”</p> <p><i>(Notice how each supplements the other. The Gospel tells us, “He was parted from them”, but does not say how; Acts adds the information concerning “the cloud”. Acts also adds statements regarding the angels and the second coming of the Lord).</i></p>
<p>The apostles’ return.</p>	
<p>“And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.”</p>	<p>“And they returned unto Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.”</p>

Each separate item that we see repeated in this introduction is worthy of study, but for our present purpose we must pass over everything else, and concentrate our attention upon the question of the apostles given in Acts i. 6.

The fact that Luke inserts the word “therefore” in this verse, shows that the apostles’ question arose out of that marvelous opening up of the O.T. Scriptures mentioned in Luke xxiv. 44 and Acts i. 3:--

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him: saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts i. 6).

It is beyond the powers of any man to attempt what the Lord alone could do, but we are permitted to turn to the same Scriptures that He used and see some of the references to the restoration of Israel and their kingdom, which will enable us to appreciate the force of the apostles’ question.

To cover the whole ground we, too, must begin at “Moses”, but for the present let us be satisfied with a few references from those prophets who wrote during or after Israel’s captivity. To Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel said:--

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven, hath He given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all” (Dan. ii. 37, 38).

At the end of Gentile dominion “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed”. Daniel saw in the night visions, and beheld:--

“One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him; and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages, should serve Him. His

dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

“The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High” (Dan. vii. 13, 14, 27).

In Dan. ix. we find the prophet, having read the promise of restoration from the desolations of Jerusalem, earnestly praying for its fulfillment. He is then instructed that within a specified time the whole purpose comprising Israel’s restoration shall be accomplished. We do not embark here upon a consideration of Dan. ix., but, later, some more pointed references must be made to the chapter.

Daniel is followed in the A.V. by the Minor Prophets, and these are particularly rich in their testimony concerning Israel’s restoration. Hosea takes a wife at the command of God, and the children which are born are given the following symbolic names:--

JEZREEL (Hos. i. 4).—The word has two meanings:--

(1) “May God scatter” (Jer. xxxi. 10, 11).

(2) “May God sow” (Zech. x. 9).

LO-RUHAMA (Hos. i. 6).—“Not having obtained mercy.”

LO-AMMI (Hos. i. 9).—“Not My people.”

Yet immediately following these figures of woe come the words of restoration:--

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel” (the day of sowing, i.e., the restoration) (Hos. i. 10, 11).

“I will sow her unto Me (*Jezreith*) in the earth, and I will have mercy (*ruhamah*) upon her that had not obtained mercy (*lo-ruhamah*); and I will say to them which were not my people (*lo-ammi*), Thou art My people (*ammi*), and they shall say, Thou art my God” (Hos. ii. 23).

Joel, too, is full of the same blessed promise. First we have utter desolation:--

“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten” (Joel i. 4).

The Jews refer this to Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, and Jeremiah confirms this application:--

“Gather against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her, cause the horses to come up, as the rough caterpillars; prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes” (Jer. li. 27, 28).

But in Joel ii. 25-28 this utter desolation is reversed:--

“I WILL RESTORE to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, My great army which I sent among you and it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh”

Is it any wonder the apostles asked, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Amos, with all his denunciations, does not finish without the promise of restoration:--

“And I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel and I will plant them upon their land’ (Amos ix. 14, 15).

Micah ii. 12 reads: “I will surely gather the remnant of Israel”, and although one more strong denunciation is made against Israel’s sin, yet Micah concludes with the pardoning love of God, and says:--

“He will turn again Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah vii. 19, 20).

Zephaniah says:--

“I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord” (Zeph. iii. 20).

Haggai must be read through to catch the spirit of the closing verses.

Zechariah simply burns with the spirit of restoration; so complete will be the redemption of the people, so holy will that kingdom be, that he can say:--

“In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD yea, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts” (Zech. xiv. 20, 21).

Malachi concludes with the promise of the sending of Elijah before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Speaking of John the Baptist, the Lord said to His disciples, “If ye will receive (it) this is Elijah which was for to come” (Matt. xi. 14).

Do we still wonder that the apostles, remembering with divinely opened understanding all the Lord’s teaching, and all the teaching of the O.T., should say, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

It is impossible here to pursue the theme. He who would know something of the full import and bearing of the matter must search of the whole of the Prophets and Psalms, together with much of the Law. So far as our present study is concerned we must be satisfied to awaken the already interested reader to further enquiry. Those who already know the subject will agree as to the fullness of the Scriptures on the theme.

Let us now pass on from the O.T. to the additional evidence which the words of the Lord Jesus (spoken during His ministry in the hearing of the apostles, and intended for their instruction) constitute.

The Lord's own teaching concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

The genealogy with which the Gospel according to Matthew opens establishes the fact that Christ is the Son of David and Heir to his throne. The annunciation of Gabriel to Mary is occupied mainly with the kingly aspect of the incarnation:--

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the THRONE of His father DAVID: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for the ages; and of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke i. 32, 33).

The prophecy of Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist, speaks of deliverance from the hand of enemies, and the fulfillment of covenant and oath sworn to Abraham and the fathers (Luke i. 68- 79).

The birthplace, Bethlehem, is chiefly associated with kingship:--

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews? In Bethlehem of Judæa; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel” (Matt. ii. 2-6).

The opening words of the Lord's ministry announce the kingdom:--

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and saying (1) The time is fulfilled (hence the kingdom is that of O.T. prophecy), (2) the kingdom of God has come nigh (the King being present); and (3) Repent ye, and believe the good tidings” (the condition) (Mark i. 14, 15).

John the Baptist opened his ministry to Israel with the call to repent (Matt. iii.). The Lord opened His ministry to Israel with the call to repent (Matt. iv. 17). Peter reopened the ministry to Israel with the call to repent (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19).

The miracles which the Lord wrought immediately following His opening words were with the confessed object of bringing Israel to repentance, and thereby instituting the kingdom:--

“Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Matt. xi. 20, 21).

The parables which immediately follow the Lord's rejection introduce the theme of the restoration. Matt. xii. records the rejection of Christ by Israel; Matt. xiii. records the first parables. These parables were uttered because:--

“Seeing, they see not; and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah” (Isa. vi. 9, 10; Matt. xiii. 10-15).

The seed that is sown by the sower is “the word of the *kingdom*”; and although the earlier sowings were marred, yet in God’s good time that seed of the kingdom shall fall into good ground, and the harvest shall be abundant.

The Transfiguration testified to the fulfillment of prophecy concerning the kingdom of which both Law and Prophets speak. This is made perfectly clear by Peter’s inspired testimony:--

“We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty We have also a more sure word of prophecy” (II Pet. i. 16-19).

The promise of the Lord to those who had forsaken all and followed Him is directed to the restoration of the kingdom:--

“Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. xix. 28).

The accomplishment of the final great prophecy of Matt. xxiv. and xxv. necessitates the restoration of the kingdom:--

“When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all the NATIONS Then shall the King say, inherit the KINGDOM” (Matt. xxv. 31-34).

In the last solemn verses, of trial, suffering, and crucifixion, the KING and the KINGDOM are prominent. The High Priest said:--

“I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64).

The Roman Governor said:--

“Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest” (Matt. xxvii. 11).

The actions and words of the Roman soldiers gave evidence that the Lord’s claim to kingship was widely known and steadily maintained:--

“And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying. Hail, King of the Jews” (Matt. xxvii. 29).

The accusation set over the Lord's head on the cross was: "*This is Jesus the King of the Jews*" (Matt. xxvii. 37).

The chief priests mocked Him with taunting words:--

"If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (Matt. xxvii. 42).

The dying malefactor said unto Jesus:--

"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy KINGDOM" (Luke xxiii. 42).

When the Lord answered the apostle's question it is surely significant that He said no word to reprove them for their slowness of heart: neither did He say that they were fools. All that He did was to take up that part of their question which related to the "time", saying: "It is not for you to know the time or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (Acts i. 7). Yet in Luke xxiv., *before* His exposition of Moses and all the Prophets, they had merited these rebukes.

The kingdom shall be restored to Israel, and upon the fulfillment of conditions already laid down, but it was impossible to reveal to the apostles the foreknown failure of Israel to repent, and the consequent postponement of the hope of Israel. That is understandable and true, but it does not in any way invalidate their question as to the restoration of the kingdom. It gives no warrant for substituting the church in the place of Israel.

If, while Israel were still a people, and while prophetic times were still running their course (Dan. ix. 24), the apostles were not permitted to know "times and seasons", how much less, during this period of Israel's blindness—this parenthetical period during which the clock of prophecy has been stopped—how much less warrant is there for attempting to fix dates concerning the end of the age or the coming of the Lord. We have not a list of names of all those who from time to time have turned prophets and announced the date of the second coming, nor do we wish to be cumbered with such sad evidences of error, but the reader should be warned against all such attempts, by whatever method—all are unscriptural and doomed to failure. *Captain Crossby* announced that in 1925 this dispensation would close, and that the most conspicuous figure in Europe at that date would be Antichrist. We neither saw Antichrist in 1925, nor did the age end seven years later, namely 1932, with Israel restored to their land. *Baxter* toured the country lecturing upon the forty coming wonders that should be seen during 1896-1908; Not one came to pass. *Dimbleby* computed by astronomical reckoning that the end would come in 1898. During the year in which we write these words claims have been made to divine illumination, illumination that, if resisted, would mean resistance of the Holy Ghost. These claims were that the teaching of the Scriptures had been made plain, and that about 12th June, 1933, the coming of the Lord, according to I Thess. iv., would be fulfilled. Newspapers ridiculed the prophet in advance: unstable believers were moved to all sorts of extravagancies by it—and nothing happened. Nothing, we say; yet, is it nothing that the Word of God should be thus held up to scorn? Is it nothing that the faith of many has been so rudely shaken? What difference should it make, if we positively

knew the date of the Lord's return? He said, "occupy" till I come, and if, did we know the exact date of His appearing, we would give up our business, change our mode of life, alter our address, or make any other change, does not that indicate that we should make these changes *now*, out of love of His appearing, without knowing the times or the seasons?

But we must return to the examination of Acts i. and take up the teaching of the whole of the book and period in connection with the hope that was then before the believer. This we shall do in our next article.

#4. The question of Acts i. 6. Was it right? pp. 126 - 129

Were the apostles right when they asked the Lord about the restoration of the kingdom to Israel? Were they actuated by Jewish prejudice? Should they have asked concerning the church instead? An affirmative answer has been given by different students to each of these questions.

But what are the facts? The Lord had spoken to the apostles about the baptism of the Spirit that they should receive "not many days hence" (Acts i. 5), and the next verse records their question which we are considering:--

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6).

It is essential to keep in mind that during a period of forty days, the apostles had received instruction as to the O.T. passages that spoke of Christ and His kingdom. Among these the following from Isaiah would make plain the connection between the outpouring of the spirit, and the restoration of Israel:--

"Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and is sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. xxxii. 15-18).

A number of like passages would occur to any well-taught reader of the O.T., such as the apostles were, and until the reader is in possession of at least some of these passages, he cannot be competent to judge the matter of the rightness of the question of Acts i. 6. Coupled with this let us remember that He Who opened up the Scriptures during those 40 days, at the same time "opened their understanding". In the face of such a comprehensive statement is it possible to maintain that prejudice and ignorance prompted the question of Acts i. 6?

The O.T. teaching concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

Isaiah's prophecy divides into two great sections; the first, chapters i.-xxxix., deals mainly with Israel's rejection; the second, chapters xl.-lxvi., deals mainly with Israel's restoration. This second section opens with the words:--

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her APPOINTED TIME is accomplished (see margin), that her iniquity is pardoned” (Isa. xl. 1, 2).

The word rendered “warfare” in the A.V. occurs in Dan. x. 1, where it is rendered “the time appointed”. This prophecy of restoration makes immediate reference to “the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness”. The apostles would know the close connection between John the Baptist and this prophecy, hence their pertinent question in Acts i. 6. Isa. xliii. contains the promise:--

“I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back, bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth” (Isa. xliii. 5, 6).

Jeremiah, too, is a prophet of rejection and restoration. First, the Lord declares that He will:--

“watch over His word to perform it” (i. 12) (which word, here, was a word of judgment and wrath).

In chapter xxxi. 28 the Lord says:--

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith the Lord.”

These words refer to Israel, as a nation, and not to “a church”, as verses 35, 36 bear testimony:--

“. If those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a NATION before Me for ever.”

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel If I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, then will I cast away the seed of JACOB and DAVID My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy upon them” (Jer. xxxiii. 14-26).

Small wonder that the apostles said: “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

Jeremiah's prophecy concludes with the transference of sovereignty from Israel to Nebuchadnezzar. As to this transference and its outcome, Daniel is one of the chief spokesmen:--

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim King of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it; and the Lord gave Jehoiakim King of Judah into his hand” (Dan. i. 1, 2).

Nebuchadnezzar was the divinely-appointed head of gold. What Israel's sovereignty covered and what the restoration of that sovereignty will involve is shown by the words of Daniel in describing the extent of the authority which had been transferred to Nebuchadnezzar:--

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings” (Dan. ii. 37).

When Israel's kingdom is restored, and great David's greater Son is King, His title will be:--

“King of kings, and Lord of lords, Prince of the kings of the earth” (Rev. xix. 16; i. 5).

That such vast sway and majesty was included in the covenant with David. Psa. lxxxix. 27 testifies:--

“Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.”

Daniel continued:--

“For the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory” (Dan. ii. 37).

The God of heaven gives this kingdom, and it can as well be called the kingdom of heaven as the kingdom of God. When the Lord taught the disciples to pray, it was for the restoration of the kingdom and its ultimate blessing:--

“Thy kingdom come in earth for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory” (Matt. vi. 10-13).

Compare these words with Daniel's to Nebuchadnezzar when he said “a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory”. The words are echoed in the ascription of praise recorded in Rev. iv. 11, v. 12, 13. Nebuchadnezzar's dominion extended beyond mere territory or human subjects.

Before we proceed with our examination of this opening section, it will be well to discover its structure. This is simple, and focuses our attention upon what the Lord did until “He was taken up”, at which point both the Gospel according to Luke and the opening section of the Acts terminates. Let us see this:--

Acts i. 1-14. The former treatise.

- A1 | B | 1. What the Lord began to do and teach.
- C | 2. Until the day.
- D | 2. Command to apostles.
- E | 2. Taken up.*
- B | 3. What the Lord continued to do and to teach.
- C | 3. During forty days.
- D | 4-9. Command to apostles.
- E | 9-14. Taken up.

[* - The order of this section follows that of the Greek and not of the English translation.]

The next matter of great importance to all students of the Acts is the question of the apostles concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and to this we shall address ourselves in the next article, sufficient preparation having now been made.

#5. The hope of the Acts and Epistles of the Period. pp. 161 - 164

The question of the apostles in Acts i. 6 regarding the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, engenders other questions, as, What is the hope dominating the Acts of the Apostles? or, Does the hope change at Pentecost, or subsequently? and, most important for us who read, Is the hope of the Acts period the same as the hope of the church as expressed in the epistles of Paul written during the same period? In other words, Can there be one hope in Acts and another, different, hope in the epistles of the same period? The answer to this question is vital to our understanding of the relation of the earlier epistles of Paul to his later epistles of the mystery. If the hope of Israel persists throughout the Acts, and if it embrace all the churches that were called into existence during the Acts, then I Thess. iv. cannot express the hope of the church of the mystery, for that would bring the hope of that church down to the hope of Israel, whether that hope be heavenly or earthly. The matter is of such importance that no apology is needed for thoroughness of investigation.

Let us proceed at once to the end of the Acts to discover whether a hope is there expressed, and if so what hope it is. Undoubtedly, in Acts xxviii. 1-10 we have in full force the signs of Mark xvi. 17, 18. Among these are the taking up of serpents with immunity from danger, and the laying on of hands for the recovery of the sick. As we have said, these signs are found in operation in Acts xxviii. 1-10, where a viper, called a "venomous beast", fastened on the apostle's hand. The experience of the islanders who watched is a plain testimony of the miraculous nature of Paul's escape:--

“They looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god” (Acts xxviii. 6).

Subsequently the same apostle healed a man of “a fever and dysentery”, and other sufferers in the island of diseases not specified.

The fact that Mark xvi. penetrates so far, reveals an unbroken connection of the Acts with the Gospels. Presently we find the apostle at Rome, and, standing before the chief of the Jews, he said:--

“For the HOPE OF ISRAEL, I am bound with this chain” (Acts xxviii. 20).

This statement was followed by an all-day exposition, to the chief of the Jews, of Moses and the Prophets concerning the kingdom of God and “Jesus”. It is impossible in the face of such testimony to think that up to that date, the hope of Israel had been set aside, cancelled, or changed. Should any be found who would spiritualize this reference to the hope of Israel, it will be sufficient to turn to Acts xxvi. 6, 7 to prove its literality:--

“And now I stand and am judged (I am bound with this chain) for the HOPE OF THE PROMISE made of God unto our Fathers: unto which promise our *twelve tribes*, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.”

During the course of our exposition we shall show many other references to the hope of Israel, but if we find one, unchanged, hope in chapter i., chapter xxvi., and chapter xxviii., it is difficult to deny that the same hope obtains in chapters ii.-xxv.

Let us now come to the epistles of the period. It matters not whether we agree as to the exact order in which they were written, so long as we distinguish between those epistles of Paul written before his Roman imprisonment, recorded in Acts xxviii., and those written during that imprisonment. During the Acts the apostle wrote seven epistles, six to the churches, and one to the Hebrews. They are associated together thus: Galatians, Hebrews, and Romans are single epistles, and Thessalonians and Corinthians are in pairs.

The truth we here seek to set forth is that the hope of the church during the Acts was millennial in character, and that a millennial hope is the hope of Israel. To teach that the hope of the Acts was one thing and the hope of the churches during the selfsame period was different, cannot be justified either by sound argument or from the epistles themselves. There is but one hope running through both the Acts and the epistles of the period.

Every reader will agree, that of all the epistles written by Paul during this period, the most fundamental is the last, viz., that to the Romans. Again, if any change is to be sought in the teaching of the epistles, we would expect to find it in the last of the series rather than in the first or the second. Most certain it is that the hope of the church to which the epistle to the Romans is addressed would not be *more Jewish* than the hope entertained by the church addressed in the epistles to the Thessalonians. On all counts

then, whatever we find in Romans is conclusive evidence as to the whole period. Turning therefore to Rom. xv. 12 and 13 we read:--

“And again Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

There are a number of things that we must note in examining the testimony of this passage.

First, the word “trust”, being the Greek verb *elpizo* should be translated “hope” so that the connection with the word “hope” (*elpis*) in the next verse shall be made clear. This correction has been made in the R.V., yet some so-called literal Versions still veil the truth by variant renderings. The article is used with the word, and a due recognition of the usage of the article here justifies the translation of the Emphatic Diaglott Version, which reads: “And may the God of *that* hope”, specifically referring back to the hope already mentioned in verse 12. This hope was something very personal to the saints addressed, for they were to be “filled with all joy and peace in believing”, and were to “abound” in this hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. No words are more explicit in any epistle. Now what was this hope entertained by the church of the Acts? (1) It had to do with a prophecy of Isaiah; (2) It is associated with Christ as a root of Jesse; (3) It is related to His reign over the Gentiles. Any of these three characteristics is enough to indicate that this hope could not be connected with the “one hope” of Eph. i. 18, but all three together make it impossible of application except to a company intimately connected with the hope of Israel.

We “open the book” at the passage quoted in Rom. xv., and there we find ourselves in millennial surroundings:--

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and a little child shall lead them they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people” (Isa. xi. 1, 2, 9-11).

Words cannot make more plain the fact that this hope of Rom. xv. is intimately associated with the restoration and the hope of Israel. Nor can words more plainly forbid any attempt to make the hope of this church the same as the hope of the church of the mystery. To do so is misleading. To the same effect is the association in Rom. viii. 19-25 of the hope of the church there addressed, with the day when creation’s groan shall cease. To the same effect also are the words of Rom. xvi. 20: “And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.”

We have already examined the references to the second coming of the Lord in a series of articles in Volume XIX-XXII, where every passage is given consideration, and the conclusion is justified that there is not a reference to the second coming of the Lord, outside the revelation of the mystery, that is not either a fulfillment of some O.T. prophecy, or allied to one by the context. While therefore there is much doctrine in Romans that is fundamental both to the church of the Acts, and to the new company called after Israel were set aside in Acts xxviii., it nevertheless stands to reason that while Israel are set aside their hope would remain in abeyance. Ephesians speaks of “one hope of His calling”, and “one hope of your calling”, and seeing that each calling has its associated hope, it follows that it is a vital principle of interpretation that different callings with their appropriate hopes be kept separate and distinct from each other.

#6. Further teaching concerning the hope of Israel in Acts i. 6-14. pp. 221 - 227

In our last article we considered the fact that the hope that runs throughout the Acts, and the hope that the epistles of the same period entertain, is the hope of Israel. It is true that this hope has its heavenly, as well as its earthly sphere, but that is no justification for making that heavenly sphere of Israel’s hope the same as the “one hope” of the mystery. Further light upon the hope of this Acts period is found in the verses that follow Acts i. 6, and to the consideration of this testimony we now address ourselves:--

“And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the Father appointed by His own Authority” (Acts i. 7).

One of the most natural things to do, whenever the second coming of Christ is before the mind, is to conjecture whether it is possible to forecast the date of its advent. While this may be natural, it is unscriptural, and consequently wrong. The servant who concluded that the Lord’s coming was delayed, began to smite his fellow-servant and to drink with the drunken. The salutary attitude in view of the Lord’s return is, surely, to carry out his injunction and “occupy” till He comes, remembering that “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing” (Matt. xxiv. 46).

Every now and again some one will arise who forecasts the date of the Lord’s return, and some will always be found who will, as a consequence, dispose of their business, and wait the expected day. It strikes the outside observer as strange that in such circumstances a business should be sold: why should it not be given away? Of what use would the proceeds be in that day? Again, if the nature of one’s business is such that, being assured of the nearness of the Lord’s return, one would leave it, surely that is sufficient reason for leaving it now, irrespective of “times and seasons”. The Lord’s own instruction to His servants in view of His coming is not: “Give up your work”, but “Carry on”, “Occupy”.

There are a number of passages that warn the believer against attempting the computation of the date of the second coming:--

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. xxiv. 36).

“Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. xxiv. 42).

“In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. xxiv. 44).

“Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. xxv. 13).

“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, 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).

The fact is that since the setting aside of Israel in Acts xxviii., prophetic times are in abeyance and we are living in a parenthetical period during which the prophetic clock has been stopped.

The basis of all prophetic computation is found in Dan. ix., and it is evident that the present interval of well-nigh 2,000 years has no place in Daniel’s 70 weeks. If, then, the computation of times was clearly wrong during the periods of the Gospels and the Acts when the hope of Israel was still before the believer, how much more should it be discountenanced during the present dispensation of the mystery? Instead of being left to speculate about “times and seasons” the apostles were instructed how they were to “occupy”, with the hope of Israel’s restoration in view:--

“But ye shall receive power, the Holy Spirit having come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the end of the earth” (Acts i. 8).

The expression, the “end of the earth” is of great importance, because by its use the Lord associated with His command a passage from Isaiah which has a bearing upon the apostles’ question of Acts i. 6. The passage of Isaiah, to which we refer, is one that is difficult to translate with certainty. We will compare it as it appears in the A.V. and R.V., when the difference will at once be manifest:--

“And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, *Though Israel be not gathered*, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength” (Isa. xlix. 5, A.V.).

“And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, and *that Israel be gathered unto Him* (for I am honourable in the eyes of the Lord, and my God is become my strength)” (Isa. xlix. 5, R.V.).

The difference between the two renderings depends upon whether we read the Hebrew word *lo* as meaning “to Him”, or “not”. The Lord, Who knew the end from the beginning, and Who knew that the same Hebrew word could be read as it appears in either the A.V. or the R.V., so caused Isaiah to write that the prophecy sets forth the facts without providing Israel with excuse. It was the Saviour’s mission to gather Israel to the Lord, and this gathering shall yet be accomplished. But it was known that Israel would

not repent at the Lord's first coming, and that the salvation of the Lord would extend to the Gentiles; consequently, Isa. xlix. 6 continues:--

“And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My Salvation unto *the end of the earth*” (Isa. xlix. 6).

In the structure of the Acts as a whole, we have already shown that Acts xiii. constitutes a parallel with the equipment of the twelve on the day of Pentecost, and accordingly we find Paul traversing much the same ground in his early ministry.

When the Jews refused his testimony at Antioch, the apostle refers to this identical passage in Isaiah, when he says:--

“Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto *the ends of the earth*” (Acts xiii. 46, 47).

There are some who would make this the point where Israel is set aside and the mystery begins, but seeing that the apostle is fulfilling a passage in the prophet Isaiah, such cannot be the case, for the mystery was, at the time of his fulfilling utterance, unknown and unrevealed in any part of Scripture, and was disclosed only by revelation to him as the Lord's prisoner. This ground has been covered in many articles in this magazine, in many booklets, and in the three larger volumes published by us. While it is beside our purpose to go over the ground again here, the matter is nevertheless of supreme importance, and the reader, who is unaware of the unique character of the dispensation of the mystery, is earnestly urged to consider the claims of the apostle in Eph. iii. 1-13 as a matter of prime importance, if studies of such as these in which we are engaged are to be effectively pursued.

The spiritual equipment of the apostles, received at Pentecost and promised in Acts i. 8, had in view the gathering of Israel (a feature that will receive fuller exposition as we proceed to the study of Acts ii. and iii.), and also the gathering of a company from among the Gentiles, during the period in which opportunity of repentance was permitted to Israel. This we shall find is referred to by the apostle Paul in such passages as Rom. xi. 7-24 and I Cor. xiv. 21, where the extension of spiritual gifts to the Gentiles had for its object the provocation of Israel. When, however, Israel refused to be provoked to emulation, and as a nation were set aside in Acts xxviii., a new dispensation, with new characteristics, was introduced, and among the new characteristics is the very evident change in connection with supernatural gifts of the Spirit.

The last recorded utterance of Christ on earth is in Acts i. 7 and 8, where His words give assurance that, whatever the answer may be to their question concerning the time of Israel's restoration, all was well, for all was in the Father's hands. Their part was to witness faithfully, even though “Israel be not gathered”. Their enduements included a

witness to “the end of the earth”. What the Lord did not say to the disciples in so many words is very vividly brought before the mind by the event that immediately followed:--

“And having said these things, as they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts i. 9-11).

Further questioning concerning the hope of Israel is thus referred to the second coming. The words “shall so come, in like manner” would make the apostles realize not only that the restoration of the kingdom of Israel would be fulfilled when Dan. vii. was fulfilled:--

“I saw the Son of man come with the clouds of heaven and there was given him dominion” (Dan. vii. 13, 14).

but that the angel’s statement also had Zech. xiv. 4 in view:--

“And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east” (Zech. xiv. 4).

“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey” (Acts i. 12).

There is a close parallel in Acts iii. with the outstanding teaching of Acts i.

(1) In both, the “restoration” is in view:--

“Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?” (Acts i. 6).

“The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began” (Acts iii. 21).

(2) In both, there is the possibility that Israel would not be restored immediately:--

“It is not for you to know the times or the seasons” (Acts i. 7).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts iii. 19).

(3) In both, the second coming of the Lord is prominent:--

“This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts i. 11).

“He shall send Jesus Christ Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution” (Acts iii. 20, 21).

(4) In both, there is the hint that the Gentile may be blessed as a result of Israel’s attitude:--

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and unto the ends of the earth” (Acts i. 8).

“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. 26).

That the Gentile, if not specifically mentioned here, is nevertheless in mind, may be seen by reference to Acts xiii.:--

“It was necessary that the word of God should FIRST have been spoken unto you, but seeing that ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles unto the ends of the earth” (Acts xiii. 46, 47).

The more the opening chapters of the Acts are scrutinized, the less is warrant found for the introduction there of “the church”. All is intimately bound up with the hope of Israel’s restoration. When we say “all”, we mean every item that is brought forward, such as the forty days’ exposition of the O.T. Scriptures (Acts i. 3), the association of the baptism of John with Pentecost (Acts i. 4, 5), the extension of the witness to the ends of the earth (Acts i. 8), and the coming of Christ to the Mount of Olives (Acts i. 11, 12). All these have a bearing upon the restoration of Israel: not one can be made to speak of “the church”, without dislocation. With the return of the disciples to Jerusalem and their meeting together in prayer with the women, and Mary, and the Lord’s brethren, the introduction to the Acts finishes, leaving the way open for the examination of the new story of Acts itself, which commences at i. 15.

In view of its prominence in the opening chapters of the Acts and its close bearing upon many points of doctrine and practice found both in the Acts and in the epistles of the period, it will be of service if we give the matter of Israel’s restoration further consideration before commencing the study of the Acts proper, that is Acts i. 15 to the end of the book. The very use of the word “restore” presupposes “loss”, “forfeiture”, “cessation”, or “lapse”, and the history of Israel clearly shows that the covenants and promises that were made with them and the fathers were withdrawn, or postponed, because of the faithlessness of the people.

Three great causes of Israel’s rejection are indicated in the Word, viz., (1) Idolatry; (2) Rejection of Christ; (3) Antagonism to the preaching of the Gospel. Other, intermediate, causes will be found, but these are the most prominent.

Before Israel entered the land of promise, and before a king sat upon the throne, Moses warned the people of the consequences of departure from the covenant of God:--

“Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus with this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, who had not given to them any portion (see margin) . . . and the Lord rooted them out of their land in anger . . .” (Deut. xxix. 24-28).

Before proceeding the whole of Lev. xxvi. should be read. The chapter is full of teaching on the subject of Israel’s rejection.

The second great cause of Israel’s rejection was their blindness and hardness of heart at the coming of Christ:--

“And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke xix. 41, 42).

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38).

The third cause of the rejection of Israel is seen in their bitter opposition to the spread of the gospel. Such passages as Acts xvii. 1-7 and xxii. 1-22 should be read. Space for the citation of many of these passages cannot be afforded, but we give one of them from the epistle to the Thessalonians:--

“Ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost” (I Thess. ii. 14-16).

Berean Charts.

#1. Ephesians.

pp. 4 - 6

- - - Illustration - - - (BE-XXIV.4).

The chart represents the epistle to the Ephesians under the figure of a fruit tree, having *seven* branches on either side, and bearing on each branch *three* fruits. This visualizes the literary structure of the epistle which has seven sections of doctrine in correspondence with seven sections of practice. The tree is seen to be “rooted and grounded in love”, and is culminated by the prayer that leads on to “all the fullness of God”.

The balancing of the doctrinal and practical sections is fairly obvious (as an example note ii. 21 and iv. 16—“fitly framed together” and “fitly joined together”). The triple subdivision of each section being not so obvious, we tabulate these in the hope that the chart may prove of service to the reader, not only in his own reading, but also as a help in quickening the interest of others.

Doctrinal Section (Eph. i. 3 - iii. 13).

- (1) THE THREEFOLD CHARTER (i. 3-14).
 - (a) The Will of the Father.
 - (b) The Work of the Son.
 - (c) The Witness of the Spirit.
- (2) THE THREEFOLD PRAYER (i. 15-19).
 - (a) That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.
 - (b) That ye may know what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
 - (c) That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.
- (3) THE THREEFOLD FELLOWSHIP (*Doctrinal*) (i. 19 - ii. 7).
 - (a) Quickened together with Christ.
 - (b) Raised together.
 - (c) Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- (4) THREE WORKS (ii. 8-10).
 - (a) Not of works, let any man should boast.
 - (b) We are His workmanship.
 - (c) Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

- (5) THE THREEFOLD PEACE (ii. 11-19-).
 - (a) Far off made nigh He is our peace.
 - (b) Of the two a new man created, so making peace.
 - (c) Reconciliation and access. He came and preached peace to those that were afar off, and to those that were nigh.
- (6) THE THREEFOLD FELLOWSHIP (*Dispensational*) (ii. -19-22).
 - (a) No more strangers but *fellow* citizens.
 - (b) The whole building fitly framed *together*.
 - (c) Builded *together* for an habitation of God.
- (7) THE THREEFOLD EQUALITY (*Doctrinal and Dispensational*) (iii. 1-13).
 - (a) In spirit the Gentiles are heirs on an *equality*.
 - (b) They are members of a body, all on perfect *equality*.
 - (c) They are partakers in the promise of Christ by the gospel entrusted to Paul, on an *equality*.

Practical (Eph. iv. 1 - vi. 20).

- (1) A THREEFOLD EXHORTATION (iv. 1-6).
 - (a) Walk worthy of the calling.
 - (b) Forbear one another in love.
 - (c) Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.
- (2) A THREEFOLD MEASURE (iv. 7-19).
 - (a) The measure of the gift of Christ.
 - (b) The measure of the fullness of Christ.
 - (c) The measure of every part.
- (3) A THREEFOLD APPLICATION OF THE TRUTH "IN JESUS" (iv. 20-32).
 - (a) Put off the old man, concerning the former conversation.
 - (b) Put on the new man which is created in righteousness.
 - (c) Put away the lie, speak every man truth.
- (4) A THREEFOLD WALK (v. 1 - vi. 9).
 - (a) Walk in love. WIVES and HUSBANDS.
 - (b) Walk as light. CHILDREN and PARENTS.
 - (c) Walk circumspectly. SERVANTS and MASTERS.
- (5) A THREEFOLD STAND (vi. 10-13).
 - (a) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
 - (b) Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.
 - (c) And having "worked out" (*see* i. 19, "worked in") all, to stand.
- (6) A THREEFOLD EQUIPMENT (vi. 14-18).
 - (a) GIRDLE of Truth and BREASTPLATE of Righteousness.
 - (b) SHOES of Peace and SHIELD of Faith.
 - (c) HELMET of Salvation and SWORD of the Spirit.

- (7) A THREEFOLD PRAYER FOR UTTERANCE (vi. 19, 20).
- (a) That I may open my mouth boldly.
 - (b) That therein I may speak boldly.
 - (c) As I ought to speak.

The Central Prayer (Eph. iii. 14-21).

- THE THREEFOLD PRAYER (iii. 14-21).
- (a) In order that He would grant you to be strengthened.
 - (b) In order that ye may be able to comprehend.
 - (c) In order that ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God.

#2. Philippians.
pp. 61, 62

- - - Illustration - - -
(BE-XXIV.61).

There are two words that are of importance in studying Philippians, viz., “Perfection” and “Perdition”. The latter word is rendered “destruction” in Phil. iii. 19, “perdition” in Heb. x. 39, and “waste” in Matt. xxvi. 8.

The atmosphere of Philippians is that of the arena; a prize is in view, which is specially associated with “the out resurrection” (Phil. iii. 11). Four examples are given to encourage the believer to stay the course. First that of the Lord Himself (Phil. ii. 5-11), then that of the apostle (Phil. iii. 4-10). In these examples, the death of the cross is indicated as the deepest depth to which it is possible to descend, followed, however, in each case by a most wonderful exaltation and glory. The two examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus indicate the spirit that must characterize all who would run this race, and suggest that where these things are lacking, small hope can be entertained of attaining the prize.

We sought to avoid the actual use of a cross in the diagram, but found it impossible. We trust that no one will be offended by this symbol, for the cross is essential to the crown. The apostle, in I Cor. ix. 24-27, supplies us with a full commentary upon the nature of a prize, and gives examples from Israel’s history (as he does also in Heb. iii.) to enforce the fact that *all* who are redeemed do not necessarily attain the prize.

The festoons that appear in the chart are not for mere ornament, but are intended to suggest that the prize of the high calling is vitally linked with the teaching given under the various headings. It is not a matter of qualifying for salvation or for membership of the one body—that is all of grace, and can neither won nor lost. Philippians is addressed to those who have believed, and urges them to “work out” the salvation which is theirs. They are assured that as they do so, it is God’s good pleasure to “work in” all needed grace and strength.

For detail exposition, the reader should consult the articles in Volumes VI to XI on “The Hope and the Prize”, or the book, “The Testimony of the Lord’s Prisoner”.

#3. Colossians.
pp. 121, 122

- - - Illustration - - -
(BE-XXIV.121).

This epistle is a companion to the epistle to the Ephesians. It traverses the same ground so far as the revelation of the mystery is concerned, but lays more stress upon the Headship of Christ, and devotes its central member to a solemn note of warning: “Beware” (Col. ii. 8).

This note of warning speaks of three items, namely, philosophy, tradition and rudiments. We have accordingly adopted the triangular danger sign in this chart. Nailed to the post and “blotted out” will be seen those items enumerated in Col. ii. 14-17. While Colossians corresponds mainly with Ephesians, it also indicates the glorious encouragement the reader—like the reader of Philippians—has for pressing on to “perfection”. This we have indicated, using the desire of Paul (Col. i. 28), and the prayer of Epaphras (Col. iv. 12) to draw attention to the fact that our experimental “presentation”, through heading the warning and teaching of the apostle, is but our realization and standing upon the completeness that is already ours in Christ (Col. i. 22, ii. 10).

There are three hidden things in Colossians, and in the actual chart used at Bible meetings the centre of the triangle contained the word “Hope”, and two rectangular panels contained the words “Riches” and “Glory”. These panels were then removed, revealing underneath, three hidden things:--

- (1) The hidden mystery (Col. i. 26).
- (2) The hidden treasure of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3).
- (3) The life hid with Christ until glory (Col. iii. 3, 4).

We have been obliged to resort to the expedient of partly removing these panels—and trust the reader will understand.

The secret of Colossians is that the believer is so complete or “filled full” in Christ, that he has no room for either philosophy, tradition, rudiments, ordinances or observances, but finds that for all things “Christ is all and in all”.

#4. II Timothy.
pp. 181 - 183

- - - Illustration - - -
(BE-XXIV.181).

This last prison epistle corresponds with Philippians, for it speaks of the athlete (II Tim. ii. 5), the possibility of winning or losing a crown (II Tim. ii. 5, 12; iv. 7, 8), the finishing at a race course (II Tim. iv. 7).

Three “good” things are mentioned by the apostle:--

- (1) THE GOOD DEPOSIT (II Tim. i. 14, *see* I Tim. vi. 20 and II Tim. i. 12, ii. 2).
- (2) THE GOOD SOLDIER (II Tim. ii. 3) where endurance rather than fighting qualities are uppermost in the apostle’s mind.
- (3) THE GOOD FIGHT (II Tim. iv. 7). This too is not a “fight” in a military sense, but rather a “contest”, and is translated “race” in Heb. xii. 1.

There are four emphatic statements about the Word in this epistle.

(1) *Preach the Word* (II Tim. iv. 2).—Here the word “preach” means “to herald”—not to “evangelize”, and looks to the character of the times when men will not endure sound doctrine.

(2) *The inspiration of the Word* (II Tim. iii. 16).—The word scripture (*graphe*) means something which is written down, not something merely in the mind, or spoken by the mouth. The words “given by inspiration of God”, if translated literally, mean “God breathed”, and indicated that what is “written” in our Scriptures is what God *said*, thereby eliminating the interference of the mind and short-comings of the human instrument. As a speaker once summed up the passage: *It is a matter of dictation than of composition.*

(3) *The pattern (form) of sound words* (II Tim. i. 13).—The word “form” indicates a pattern from which others may work. The chart shows the planning of a pattern. One square is complete, and shows “the unit of repeat”. This unit is turned over and over and covers the whole surface, thereby making a balanced and harmonious pattern. Should anyone venture to place in one square a rose, in another a bird, in another a geometric pattern, we should get variety, but the pattern would vanish.

Paul’s life and doctrine have been given to us as “the unit of repeat”. Timothy, so far as grace was given him, continued the design. We are not all like Paul or Timothy.

Someone must spend the time to rule up the small squares: someone must draw down the pattern in outline; someone must spend their precious time simply filling in a “background”. There is a temptation to go off after something more “original” or spectacular, but commendation is only for those who obey and whose service has been according to plan. When the pattern is complete the ruled up squares will have vanished. Yet the Lord knows all about the quiet “humdrum”, and without it the pattern would not hold together nor be true and pleasing.

(4) *The right division of the Word* (II Tim. ii. 15).—This is fundamental to all study. Right division recognizes the difference between kingdom and church, the mystery and the gospel, also the many sub-divisions that clarify the vision.

Timothy’s Bible would have been the Greek Septuagint (he was a Galatian, and his father was a Greek). Consequently the word used by the apostle for “rightly dividing” would have been familiar to Timothy, for it comes in that well known verse, Prov. iii. 6: “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall *rightly divide* (direct) thy paths.”

The illustration of a sign post at the fork in the road is a scriptural representation of “right division” which can be appreciated by all.

The Bible.

The study of the Bible

(An extract from a book entitled: "The Study of the Bible",
published 1862. Author unnamed.)

"Why is it that Christian people read the Bible so differently?"

p. 80

"In searching for an answer we have been led to conclude that the true explanation will be found in that prevailing neglect of the Bible *as a whole*, which arises from its being always read in mere fragments; in the *forgetfulness* of the particular purpose for which the Book was given; in *confusions* regarding its inspiration; in *errors* relating to the Holy Spirit; in the confounding of *revealed facts* with *human inferences*; in bias of one kind or other; in reading either for 'edification' or for kindling of devout feeling, without first ascertaining *the meaning* of that which is read; in the habit of *accommodating* Scripture, or of *perverting* it, by exaggeration, projection, or other misapplication of texts; in *allegorizing*, under the influence of unbridled fancy; in the abuse of parallel passages and references, in the *darkening* of the sense which is frequently occasioned by the injudicious division into chapters and verses; in the *acceptance* of interpretations drawn from Hymns; in the *neglect* and consequent abuse of unfulfilled prophecy; in *inattention* to the character of the particular dispensation under which we are living; in *errors* as to church authority, and the value of tradition; in *undue reliance* on the professional labours of the clergy; in turning helps into hindrances; and above all, in *habitual indifference* to the demand Scripture makes on every man for prolonged study, as an essential pre-requisite to the elevation by its means of moral character."

Bible Marking.
p. 180

Bible marking *may* be good, or it *may* be very, very bad. The following extract sheds light upon the evils and dangers of overdoing the so-called “railway connections” and other markings in the text or margin, that stultify rather than encourage true study:--

“Human conceptions, however helpful, should not find a permanent place, even in your own individual copy of the Word of God. The particular line of truth they emphasized may have been the teaching of that particular hour of study. But, every time you turn to a passage, you may expect fresh light and a newly revealed line of thought. If your eye is at once arrested by notes and comments, or even by the underlining of special words, your minds slips into the groove of a past meditation; thus the liberty of fresh light, and the free course of fresh revelation, are checked and impeded. Do not crowd into the sacred *sanctuary* of the Word, ideas which may most helpfully be garnered in the *classroom* of your notebook” (*The Following of the Star* by FLORENCE L. BARCLAY).

Bible reading for the Beginner.
pp. 197 - 200

On several occasions a young believer has approached us with the problem of “How to read the Bible”. Upon being told that one usually “Begins at the beginning” he has explained that his difficulty was connected with the bulk or amount that had to be read. Long genealogies, difficult names and places, a mass of matter that made no immediate appeal, were real obstacles. We also realized that the character of the times in which we live makes it difficult to concentrate for any period. The young believer is surrounded by rush and hurry. Short cuts to almost every branch of knowledge is thrust before his face, and therefore his problem must be dealt with sympathetically.

All Scripture is not only inspired, but profitable, but the reader must feel his need, otherwise he will degenerate into a machine, and reading the Word under compulsion is horrible to contemplate. So much reading per day may be wise and profitable, but rules and readings can be a snare. What profit have some received from reading the Bible through six or seven times, except to be able to make that feat their boast? Guarding therefore the liberty of each believer, and making no rules to bind him, we offered him, at his own request, the following scheme, believing that when this is followed the interest will be so quickened that nothing short of the whole Bible will satisfy the awakened understanding. We pass it on for what it is worth to any who may have to meet the same difficult.

GENESIS. This *must* be read. It is “the book of beginnings”. After the book has been read, and before the next book is commenced, the reader would be well advised to read, with the help of a Concordance, what the N.T. says about such typical characters as Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Joseph.

EXODUS. This is the book of redemption. The reader should have an eye for its typical teaching—knowing that the items are divinely selected for our learning. Before commencing the next book, the reader should note all that is written in the N.T. on Israel in Egypt, the Passover, the Tabernacle and the law of Moses.

ISAIAH. We pass over the whole of Israel’s eventful history and come to the days of their last Kings, and read of the failure yet ultimate restoration of this people. Every N.T. reference to Isa. liii. should be read before passing to the next book.

MATTHEW. We now come to the fulfillment of the promises made unto the fathers, in the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Care should be taken to observe the emphasis that Matthew lays upon the fact that Jesus Christ was “King of the Jews”, and the parallels in Luke to the genealogy, and birth of Christ, the testimony of the forerunner, and the opening ministry of the Lord should be noted. Where Matthew stresses King and Kingdom, Luke stresses Saviour and Gentile blessing.

JOHN. This Gospel has a message for the world, and the reader should note the many occurrences of the word “world”. It is written with a particular object which is stated in John xx. 31.

ACTS. The Acts must be read in order that one may appreciate the grace of God toward Israel, and His wonderful provision in the ministry of Paul for the Gentiles. Parallel statements in the Acts concerning Peter and Paul should be looked for. Ponder the dispensational importance of Acts xxviii.

GALATIANS. Of all the epistles of Paul, this short letter to the Galatians should be read first. In it the absolutely independent ministry of Paul is established, and the great doctrine of justification by faith without legal works is defended and taught.

EPHESIANS. We pass into a different atmosphere when we open this epistle. Israel is gone. The Gentile is no longer spoken of as an heir of Abraham. New Covenant blessings are unknown. Here we have the revelation of a secret, the calling of a new company, the body of Christ, and a new sphere of blessing “in heavenly places”.

REVELATIONS. This book brings the testimony of the Word of prophecy to its completion. It balances Genesis. Here we find paradise restored, sin and death banished, and a new heaven and a new earth, after the great and dreadful day of the Lord has accomplished its purpose.

After the reader has made this selective reading, he will be, or should be, so desirous of filling in the gaps occasioned by this selection, that he will feel the bulk and mass no

burden, but will gladly and thankfully begin at the beginning, omitting nothing, but patiently and prayerfully follow the unfolding of the purpose of the ages, which it is the chief purpose of the Bible to make known, discovering also on almost every page some feature that illumines the character, the Person or the Work of Him Whose name, too, is: *The Word*.

In conclusion we give the following extract from the work, *The Study of the Bible*:--

“In reading Scripture, we are *bound*, and that most emphatically,--no less by reverence for its author than by integrity of heart, to ask but one question,--‘*What does it say?*’ And if, to get this question answered, it is necessary to ascertain not only what the precise words are, but when and to whom they were spoken,--to observe the connection in which they stand, and to note the circumstances in which they were uttered. We must neither grudge the labour that may be involved, nor imagine that we can evade its necessity by indulging in our own fancies, however ingenious they may be, or by prolonging mere meditation, however spiritual or devout. When the *true meaning* of a passage is made out, and *not till then*, shall we be able to *apply* it with simplicity of purpose, or receive and realize as living words that which has been written or spoken.”

Facts and Inferences.

(From “*The Study of the Bible*.”)

p. 220

“The revelation contained in the Scriptures extends only to FACTS: not to the theory of these facts, of their original causes. The most important truths are communicated in a dogmatic, not a theoretic manner. We are taught, on the testimony of Him Who cannot lie, *insulated facts*, which we cannot connect with those reasons with which they are undoubtedly connected, or the Divine mind. They rest solely on the basis of Divine Authority; and we are left as much in the dark with respect to the mode of their existence, as if they were not revealed” (*Robert Hall*).

“St. Peter teaches most distinctly that Christ “hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Pet. iii. 18); that “His Own self bare our sins in His Own body on the tree”; that “by His stripes we are healed” (ii. 24); while St. Paul, with equal distinctness, asserts that Christ “redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. iii. 13); the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (ix. 22); and our Lord Himself, that “the Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. xx. 28).

“They are revealed FACTS on which the doctrine of Atonement rests; and happy is he who, receiving them in the spirit of a little child, believes and lives.”

“The INFERENCES ordinarily deduced are various, and commonly relate rather to *the philosophy* of the Atonement, than the fact of its having been made.”

Biblical blessings.

#3. The blessing of confidence (Psa. ii. 12; xxxiv. 8 and xl. 4). pp. 28 - 30

The first blessing we have considered is the blessing of confession (Psa. xxxii. 1-5). The first logical step for any thus blessed is to trust unreservedly the One Who so graciously and wondrously delivered from the bondage of unforgiven sin. Trust is the logical outcome of faith.

We remember a famous tight-rope walker who seemed as much at home upon a rope as most folks seem upon solid earth, asking a spectator whether he believed that he, the tight-rope walker, could carry him across the rope on his back. "Yes", replied the spectator, "I believe you could". "Will you let me then?" asked Blondin, for such was his name. "No", replied the spectator. In a crude way this suggests to us the difference that we must make between "believing" something as a fact, and "trusting". Most of us "believe" the date "1066 William the Conqueror", but such belief makes no appreciable difference to our lives, our hopes or our destinies. James tells us the demons "believe" that there is one God, His Word and His Work, we trust Him, thereby concluding that He is worthy of our fullest confidence. This "Biblical blessing" finds a place in the first book of the Psalms:--

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psa. ii. 12).

"O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psa. xxxiv. 8).

"Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies" (Psa. xl. 4).

Two words are used in these verses for the idea of "trust". In Psa. ii. 12 and xxxiv. 8 the word conveys the idea of a "refuge", such as might be afforded by a "rock", a "shadow", a "shield" or a "wing". In Psa. xl. 4 the word means rather to "hang upon" or "cling". In order to make our "trust" intelligent, let us see one or two illustrations of the use of each word.

Trust as a "refuge":--

"Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted?" (Deut. xxxii. 37).

"Under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth ii. 12).

"He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him" (II Sam. xxii. 31).

Trust as "clinging."—As a noun this word means a "melon" which clings by tendrils, and so supports itself (Numb. xi. 5). As a verb it is translated "make me hope" in Psa. xxii. 9, where the figure of a child clinging to its mother is used.

W. Kaye in a note on Psa. ii. 12 says:--

“The object of this trust must be a divine Person (‘The Son’). See Jer. xvii. 5-8: which is a paraphrase of Psa. i. 2, 3, and this serves to bind Psalms i. and ii. together.”

Let us turn to this passage in Jeremiah:--

“*Cursed* be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like *the heath in the desert*, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a *tree planted by the waters*, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit” (Jer. xvii. 5-8).

Psa. ii. is prophetic of the day of the Lord, and will be a word in season when the kings of the earth assemble together against the Lord and against His Anointed.

Psa. xxxiv. 6-8 strikes a personal note:--

“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

It is doubly blessed when we not only enjoy the goodness of the Lord ourselves, but can give personal testimony to this blessedness: “This poor man cried”; “O taste and see.”

In Psa. xl. we have a most wonderful description of the horrors of sin, its defilement, its terrible power, and the hopeless and helpless condition of all who are under its dominion, followed by the exultant feeling of security, the blessed relief, the exchange of miry clay for solid rock, and the establishing of one’s goings. Then the song of praise and the testimony of others:--

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust” (Psa. xl. 2-4).

Here then is the second Biblical blessing of the Psalms, the blessing of trust, the blessing of confidence, the blessing of a mighty refuge, a rock of ages, a shield and buckler; someone to whom the weak may cling and be at peace.

If we know the blessedness of sins forgiven, we may also know the blessedness of perfect trust:--

“The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it” (Prov. x. 22).

#4. The blessings of consistency (Psa. i. 1). pp. 77 - 79

We have called the blessing recounted in Psa. xxxii., the “blessing of confession”, and that found in Psa. xxxiv. 8, the “blessing of confidence”. We now turn to a third aspect, which we find in the first book of the Psalms—“the blessing of consistency.”

“Walk”, in the Scriptures, indicates a way of life. To “walk worthy” of one’s calling is the ideal set before every believer. We read of “walking after other gods” (Deut. viii. 19), of “walking in His ways” (Deut. xxviii. 9), of “walking uprightly” (Psa. xv. 2). Speaking of Enoch and his righteousness, the Scriptures record: “And Enoch walked with God” (Gen. v. 22). In the N.T. we read of a walk that is in “newness of life”, a walk that is “by faith”, a walk that is “in the spirit”, and a walk that is “in love”.

And now we come to the subject of the present article. We open the Psalms, and in the first verse of the first Psalm, the opening sentence of the whole book, we read:--

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.”

As an example, from Scripture, of the negative side of this verse we may take Ahaziah, King of Judah:--

“His mother’s name also was Ahtaliah the daughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was the *counselor* to do wickedly. Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab: for they were his *counselors* after the death of his father TO HIS DESTRUCTION. He walked after their *counsel*” (II Chron. xxii. 1-5).

The blessedness of Psa. i. 1, however, is not limited to walk. There is a progression. First there is the *walking*; then the *standing*; and finally the *sitting*. “Walking” has in it the idea of movement, of progression. “Standing” suggests resolution, the taking up of a position. We read of standing “to minister”, of standing “in the Lord’s counsel”, of standing “in grace”. And here in Psa. i. 1 it is “standing in the way of sinners”. The blessing of the Lord that maketh rich is not for those who either walk or stand in evil ways. Neither is it for those who sit in the seat of the scornful. “Sitting” often indicates some aspect of rule or authority. “Lot sat in the gate of Sodom” (Gen. xix. 1); “Thou satest in the throne judging righteously” (Psa. ix. 4).

Psa. xxvi. has a good deal in common with the opening verse of Psa. i.:--

“I have *walked* in mine iniquity” (verse 1).

“I have *walked* in Thy truth” (verse 3).

“My foot *standeth* in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the Lord” (verse 12).

“I have not *sat* with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers” (verse 4).

The teaching of Scripture on the character and end of the scornful is a solemn study. There is but one other reference to the scorner in the Psalms:--

“The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from Thy law”
(Psa. cxix. 51).

The Book of Proverbs, on the other hand, speaks of the scorner no less than eighteen times. The last reference is in chapter xxiv. 9: “The scorner is an abomination to men.”

Psa. i. 1 is expressed negatively: “Blessed is the man that walketh *not, nor* standeth *nor* sitteth.” While a negative attitude is not ideal, let us not under-estimate the fact that, although to do good is more blessed, to abstain from evil is blessed also. Those who are timid should be encouraged by this verse. What though your strength is small, and the way you have traversed a negligible quantity? What though you have not yet reached the height of walking worthy of your calling, or of walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing? Is it not something to have refrained your foot from evil? To have entered into the blessedness of *not* walking with evil, is but the prelude to the further and fuller blessedness of walking with God. If we cannot yet look upon our stand for the truth with any sense of approval, let us not miss the blessing that is assured to those who do *not* stand in the way of sinners. If we have not reached, in our experience, the realization of our position as “seated” in heavenly places—which is blessing raised to its superlative degree—we may still experience the blessedness that attends those who have *not* sat in the seat of the scornful.

Positive statements immediately follow what we get in Psa. i. 1, but the verse itself is negative. The next verse completes the story with its “delight in the law of the Lord”, and meditation therein “day and night” (Psa. i. 2).

We have already seen the blessedness of confession and of confidence. We now see the blessedness of consistency, another of the blessings of the Lord that make rich, and bring no sorrow with them.

#5. The blessing of consideration (Psa. xli. 1). pp. 117 - 120

We have now to consider the fourth ground of blessing that is mentioned in the first book of the Psalms, and this we find in Psa. xli. 1:--

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.”

Psa. xli. is one of the Messianic Psalms. When we say this, let us not be misunderstood. Christ is the sum and substance, the Alpha and the Omega of all Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Every Psalm, therefore, speaks of Him. Some, however, speak prophetically of Him in a special way, as, for instance, Psa. ii. and Psa. xxii. Among these we must place Psa. xli. Verse 9, as originally written by David, referred to Ahithophel who betrayed him, and as Ahithophel had some connection with Bathsheba there were some grounds, humanly speaking, for his action. The Lord Jesus quotes this verse with reference to His own betrayal by Judas. It is important, however, not only to observe what the Lord quoted, but what He omitted. He quoted the words: “He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.” But He did not quote: “Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted” (John xiii. 18). Judas was a devil, and known as such by the Lord from the beginning (John vi. 70), and as such could never have been the Lord’s own familiar friend. Neither could it be said of Christ that He “trusted in” Judas for it is written that “He knew what was in man” (John ii. 25).

We shall find some things in these Messianic Psalms that are true of both the Psalmist and of Christ, but there are others that belong strictly to the Psalmist himself as the fallible type. For example, the words of Psa. xli. 4, “I have sinned against Thee”, could never have been spoken by the Saviour. Even though He bore our sins, and was made sin for us, it was ever true that He knew no sin, and that He did no sin.

The English reader of Psa. xli. 1 is most likely to read it as though it inculcated kindness to the poor, almsgiving and charity. While we would not say anything against a simple act of kindness, but would rather urge a more responsive spirit on the part of most of us, the thought of kindness is not the meaning of this passage. The word translated “consider” occurs 72 times in the O.T. and the following are the translations found in the A.V.:--

“Behave wisely, guide wittingly, be instructed, wise, consider, consider wisely, deal prudently, give skill, have good success, have understanding, instruct, make to understand, make wise, prosper, teach, understand, expert, maschil, prudent, skilful, understanding, wise, wisely, wisdom.”

“*Blessed is he that the poor.*”—How shall we translate this word? What is its special meaning?

In the first place, the “poor” may refer to the impecunious (Exod. xxx. 15), the weak (Gen. xli. 19), or the sick both in mind and body (II Sam. xiii. 2). The word translated “poor” can be used of the son of a king; we must, therefore, take care not to limit its meaning. The translations of *sakal* (“consider”) already given, preclude the idea of almsgiving or of charity. The emphasis all through its upon wisdom.

There is but one way of arriving at the solution, and that way is too long to be included in an article. We must all, personally, read the history of David, from the rebellion of Absalom and the betrayal of Ahithophel in II Sam. xv., throughout the heart-breaking history of chapters xvi.-xviii., on to the chapters of restoration, xix.-xxi. There we shall read of Zadok and his two sons, and of Hushai, who though loyal to David, and willing to share his exile, went back to Jerusalem and defeated the counsel of Ahithophel, so that Ahithophel, like Judas, “hanged himself” (II Sam. xvii. 23; Matt. xxvii. 5).

Whenever we are faced with a difficulty in the translation of an O.T. passage, it is always a wise thing to see how the translators of the LXX version have rendered it; for it is clear that these Hebrews, 200 years B.C., knew something of their mother tongue. We find that they used the word *sunemi*, which is translated 24 times “to understand”, once “be wise” and once “consider”. About half these occurrences are found in the quotations made from Isa. vi. and the explanations that follow. This is very suggestive, for Israel as a nation have not “considered the afflicted” but have refused Him. In Eph. v. 16, 17 the word is associated with evil days as it is in Psa. xli.

We regret that in this article we have been obliged to deal with our subject a little in the manner of the lexicon. It would have been easier to have enlarged upon the blessedness of having compassion on the poor, or of passing on one’s blessings in fellowship, but such a treatment would have been a betrayal of the truth, and we shun the slightest approximation to the counsel of Ahithophel. These men “considered wisely the afflicted” and received blessing from the Lord.

How far can this passage be true of ourselves? The Lord Jesus is denied His lawful sovereignty here, and has left us in this scene of His betrayal, and we, too, are called upon to remember Him, His rightful claims and His coming glory. Quite apart from our assured acceptance in the Beloved, we are told that “if we endure, we shall also reign with Him” (II Tim. ii. 12).

The Psalmist in Psa. xli. 1 speaks of deliverance in the day of evil. In like manner, the apostle writing to the Ephesians as overcomers, says:--

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having worked out all, to stand” (Eph. vi. 13).

A comforting thought is expressed in the third verse of the Psalm: “Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness” (Psa. xli. 3). The margin reads “turn”, as in Psa. lxvi. 6: “He turned the sea into dry land.” The meaning of the verse is rather as follows:--

“It is no longer a sick bed, for Thou hast healed him of his disease” (*Perowne*).
“Thou hast changed his bed of sickness into health” (*Translation of “Four Friends”*).

The blessing of the Lord that maketh rich, which is promised to each one who takes his place with the Lord in His rejection, is manifold. He delivers in the day of evil; He preserves and keeps him alive (the word also includes the thought of resurrection); He blesses “upon the earth” (i.e., in spite of the usurper each shall yet stand in his appointed sphere of blessing, heavenly or earthly); He will strengthen him while sick; and finally change his sickness to health. What was physical to David is spiritual to us, but whether then or now, these are Biblical blessings that enrich indeed, and add no sorrow with them.

#6. The blessing that satisfies (Psa. lxxv. 3, 4). pp. 150 - 153

The second book of the Psalms (xlii.-lxxii.) contains only one “blessing”, but it is of sufficient fullness to stand alone. The passage is Psa. lxxv. 4:--

“Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest, and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy holy temple.”

It would be inappropriate in a series like this to devote too much time to analysis, and we therefore give only the merest suggestion of the structure of the Psalm in which this blessing is found:--

Psalm lxxv.

- A | 1. Praise. Silence.
- B | 2. All flesh.
- C | 3, 4. “Blessed” (*ashere*); “dwell”; “satisfied with goodness”.
- B | 5, 6. All ends of the earth.
- C | 7-13. “Thou blessest” (*barak*); “dwell”; “crown with goodness”.
- A | 13. Shout. Sing.

It will be seen that the blessings of verse 4 are balanced by those of verse 10, although we must remember that two different words are employed. The blessings of verses 3, 4 are associated with spiritual things—“iniquities, transgressions, Thy courts, Thy house”—whereas the blessings of verses 7-13 are the blessings of field and furrow, fatness and flocks.

The Psalms seems to have been written to celebrate the goodness of the Lord in giving a bounteous harvest. Possibly during a drought, vows had been made, and now in a solemn silence these vows are performed. One rendering of verse 1 is: “Praise waits all hushed”; and this solemn hush is in contrast with the “shout” of the concluding verse. The words, “A psalm and song of David” need not necessarily mean that David was the

author, but, as *The Companion Bible* indicates, they may imply a prophetic anticipation of the day of David's greater Son. The reference to the "temple" in verse 4 also points in this direction, for no temple existed until Solomon's day.

Leaving these considerations, however, let us give our attention to the blessings specified in this passage. It is most important that we should not forget that this record of blessings commences at verse 3:--

"Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away."

It may at first seem strange to commence a list of blessings with "prevailing iniquities". But until the believer has come to an end of himself and has realized his complete ruin and hopelessness, fullness of blessing cannot flow out from God into his heart. It is the empty vessel that He fills. The margin indicates that the word "iniquities" should read either "words" or "matters", and the LXX translates it *logoi anomon*. The Psalmist was overwhelmed by the record of his sin; he felt himself condemned, and ready to cry out with the "wretched man" of Rom. vii. 24. The blessing of Psa. xxxii., the blessedness of covered transgression and of forgiven sin, is here repeated: "As for our transgressions, Thou shalt purge them away." The way is now open for the special blessings of verse 4.

These blessings are connected with (1) Choice, (2) Approach, (3) Dwelling and (4) Satisfaction.

(1) "*Blessed is the man whom Thou choolest.*"—This initial blessing, the blessing of God's choice, rests upon nothing but the sovereignty of God and moves entirely in a realm of grace:--

"The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers" (Deut. vii. 7, 8).

This initial blessing separates the recipient, in the eyes of Him that chose, from all else:--

"The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deut. xiv. 1, 2).

In Psa. cvi. 5 the Psalmist desires to see and rejoice in:--

- i. The Good of Thy chosen.
- ii. The Gladness of Thy nation.
- iii. The Glory of Thine inheritance.

When we turn to the N.T. we find the same insistence upon the sovereignty of the Chooser, the peculiarity of the chosen and the glory of their inheritance:--

“God hath chosen the weak things of the world” (I Cor. i. 27).
“He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. i. 4).
“The purpose of God according to election not of works, but of Him that calleth” (Rom. ix. 11).

(2) “*Blessed is the man whom Thou causest to approach unto Thee.*”—Those who were chosen before time began, were chosen in order that, in time, they might draw near to the Lord Who chose them for Himself. Eph. i. 4 speaks of our election; Eph. ii. 18 speaks of our approach:--

“But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. ii. 13).
“For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. ii. 18).

It is of the utmost importance that we observe the order here. We are made nigh by the *blood*, before we draw nigh by the *Spirit*. Those whom the Lord “caused to approach” in Psa. lxxv. were those who knew something of “prevailing iniquity” and of “covered transgressions”:--

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (I Pet. iii. 18).
“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. x. 19-22).

Once again we must draw attention to the order here. We have no full assurance of *faith*, unless we have boldness by *the blood*. The blessings of Psa. lxxv. 4 must be preceded by the blessing of covered sin in verse 3. So must it ever be with regard to all the blessings that shall be enjoyed in whatever sphere; we must all start as sinners saved by grace.

(3) “*Chooseth causest to approach that he may dwell in Thy courts.*”—Just as true home life is at the centre of all national life, and largely the gauge of its stability and purity, so we find that the conception of home is an integral part in the purpose of grace. Soon after Israel were delivered from Egypt, the Lord planned the tabernacle in order that He, the Holy One, might be able to *dwell* with His people: “Let them make Me a sanctuary: that I may dwell among them” (Exod. xxv. 8). The Psalmist, when he wrote, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” had in mind the goal: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (Psa. xxiii. 1, 6). All the intervening verses are but steps that lead to home.

When at length the apostle sees the new heaven and the new earth he also hears a voice which says:--

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will *dwell* with them” (Rev. xxi. 1-3).

Whether we think of the Lord God walking with man in the garden of Eden, the tabernacle in the wilderness, the temple of Solomon, the words of John xiv. concerning the “many mansions”, the indwelling of Christ by faith in Eph. iii., the “Shepherd

Psalm”, or the apocalyptic vision, we see that all Scripture speaks in glowing words of that blessed dwelling-place, the home of those who were chosen and are made nigh.

(4) “*We shall be satisfied.*”—All possible blessing is summed up in the word “satisfied”. Satisfaction cannot be found “under the sun” (Eccles. i. 8; iv. 8). It belongs to the life to come:--

“I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be *satisfied*, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psa. xvii. 15).

#7. The blessing of anticipated victory. pp. 201 - 203

The third book of the Psalms (lxxiii.-lxxxix.) contains a fourfold blessing, and this fourfold blessing belongs to the second part of this book, namely, Psa. lxxxiv.-lxxxix.:--

“Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house” (Psa. lxxxiv. 4).

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee” (Psa. lxxxiv. 5).

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee” (Psa. lxxxiv. 12).

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound” (Psa. lxxxix. 15).

The first of these Psalms is written for the sons of Korah, and when we remember that the sons of Korah were “Keepers of the thresholds (margin) of the tabernacle” (I Chron. ix. 19), we better appreciate the words:--

“I had rather be a doorkeeper (Heb., *sit at the threshold*) in the house of my God, than dwell (Heb., *Go round about, have free access*) in the tents of wickedness” (Psa. lxxxiv. 10).

The blessing of Psa. lxxv. 4 (“chosen”, “made nigh”, and “dwelling”) considered in the last number of this series, and which we found “satisfied”, is evidently satisfying the Psalmist here. He has not yet reached the day when he shall awake, satisfied, in the likeness of his Lord, but he lives in blessed anticipation of it, for the Lord he serves will give “grace (now), and glory (then)” (verse 11). Consequently he adds, “Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee” (verse 12).

The Psalmist, by using the figure of the swallow and the sparrow, helps us to realize the sense of security, warmth and peace that he found in the dwelling-place provided for him:--

“Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, Even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, My King, and my God” (Psa. lxxxiv. 3).

George Herbert has sung in much the same strain:--

“Oh let me,--when Thy roof my soul has hid,--
Oh let me roost and nestle there,
Then of a sinner Thou art rid,
And I of hope and fear.”

In Psa. cii. we find the pelican, the owl, and the sparrow grouped together, a threefold symbol of loneliness: “I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top” (7). The way in which the swallow has endeared itself to man by its habit of building its nest under the eaves of his very roof is a commonplace in prose and poetry. The allusions to birds and beasts in the Psalms would make an interesting study in itself.

The writer of this Psalm is most certainly an exile. His soul faints with its longing once more to stand in the courts of the Lord. He envies the sparrow and the swallow which make their nests under its very roof, and calls them blessed indeed who dwell in the house of the Lord. From meditating upon the house of the Lord, the Psalmist turns to the thought of pilgrims making their way through the valley of Baca, the vale of tears, sustained by the strength of the Lord, and upheld by the prospect of arriving at the house of the Lord:--

“Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee;
In whose heart are the ways *of them*” (Psa. lxxxiv. 5).

As translated in the A.V. the second line does not make sense. The R.V. reads: “In whose heart are the high ways *to Zion*.” The LXX reads: “In his heart he has purposed to go up the valley of weeping”, thereby running two verses together. *Davidson’s Hebrew Lexicon* reads: “They fondly think of the roads leading to Jerusalem.”

This blessed hope turns the Valley of Weeping into a place of springs, and of goings from strength to strength, until the pilgrims finally appear before God in Zion. Thus encouraged the writer utters his third blessing:--

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee” (Psa. lxxxiv. 12).

“Trust” here is “confidence”. God is his Sun and Shield: the Lord will give both grace and glory: He will not withhold any good thing from them that walk uprightly.

The remaining blessing of this book is but the anticipation of that blessed day when the outcast and the exile shall indeed be gathered home:--

“Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound” (Psa. lxxxix. 15).

What joyful sound? It is nothing less than the Jubile, when all forfeit is recovered, all bondage has ceased. It is nothing less than the sound of the trumpet that means victory. It is an anticipation of the sounding of the seventh trumpet when all the enemies of the Lord shall fall and the kingdom of the Lord be established. The word that is translated “joyful sound” is *teruah*, which is rendered, “blowing of trumpets” (Lev. xxiii. 24), “trumpet of the Jubile” (Lev. xxv. 9), “Shout”, at the fall of Jericho (Josh. vi. 5). In the

verses that precede the blessing of Psa. lxxxix. we have great stress laid upon the strength and victory of the Lord. Rahab is broken in pieces, enemies are scattered. As Psa. lxxii. closes the second book of the Psalms with a glorious picture of the reign of Christ, so Psa. lxxxix. closes the third book with a picture of His mighty triumph.

We too in our sphere are strangers, pilgrims, exiles. We too are sustained by hope, and are blessed indeed, because by faith we know that Jubilee sound, and can even now call ourselves “more than conquerors through Him that loved us”.

Studies in Colossians.

#23. BEWARE.

The circumcision made without hands (ii. 11).

pp. 15 - 20

The apostle has just written, “Ye are complete in Him”, and now proposes a severe test. To the Jew, and also to the Christian Jew, circumcision was essential, as was baptism, its equivalent, to the Christian of the Acts period.

The rite of circumcision is introduced in the Scriptures in connection with Abraham and the birth of Ishmael. The birth of Ishmael was the result of the intrusion of the flesh into the purposes of grace and promise. The following sequence in the history of Abraham will enable the reader to see where and why circumcision was instituted.

(1) God promises to Abraham a seed (Gen. xv.); Abraham believes God, and it is accounted unto him for righteousness. Justification by faith is here experienced and foreshadowed. There is, however, something more than this. While justification is a necessary beginning, it is not by any means the end.

(2) Time passes, and the promised seed does not come. Faith is sorely tried, and at length a scheme is propounded whereby God shall, as it were, be helped out with His purposes. Hagar, the bondwoman, becomes the mother of Ishmael (Gen. xvi.).

(3) While this departure from the path of faith cannot alter justification, it does indicate that Abraham had much further to go before he could be pronounced “perfect”. And so in Gen. xvii. we find: “Walk before Me and be thou perfect” (Compare Col. i. 28: “that we may present every man perfect”). Ishmael is repudiated as the seed and the true seed again promised; and it is here, in this connection of parenthood, that circumcision is introduced. To Abraham, only too conscious of the part that the flesh had played in the birth of Ishmael, this strange rite would speak eloquently of its repudiation. While Abraham could be *justified* without circumcision, he could not be *perfected* without it. In Phil. iii., before the apostle speaks of “perfection” he speaks of circumcision: “We are the circumcision which have no confidence in the flesh” (verse 3).

The analysis of Gen. xv.-xvii., so far as it bears upon our subject, is as follows:--

- A1 | Promise of a seed. JUSTIFICATION.
- B1 | The flesh intervenes and spoils.
- A2 | Promise of a seed repeated. PERFECTION.
- B2 | The flesh cut off and set aside.

The desire of the apostle in Col. i. 28 that he might be able to present every man perfect is *subsequent* to the thought of their complete acceptance, and is *followed* by a reference to their circumcision in Him:--

- (1) "In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy" (Col. i. 22).
- (2) "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28).
- (3) "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11).

A further survey of the history of Abraham and his association with the covenants of God will illuminate still more the place that circumcision occupies in the divine purpose.

Gen. xii. opens with the initial covenant made by God with Abraham, in which the promise concerning a great nation and a blessing to all families of the earth is made. A specific promise concerning the land and the seed is made in verse 7. This is followed by Abraham's first aberration owing to the famine in the land. After the separation of Abraham and Lot, a further and more detailed covenant concerning the land is given (Gen. xiii. 14-18). Abraham meets Melchisedec, and as a result asserts his independence of all but God alone. God appears to him in a vision, and sets aside the suggestion that Eliezer of Damascus should be his heir. He is told to look at the numberless stars; he believes God's promise concerning the seed, and his faith is counted unto him for righteousness. This is followed by a covenant made while Abraham is in a deep sleep, indicating plainly that Abraham himself made no promises (Gen. xv. 12-21). In Gen. xvi. we have the second departure from the pathway of faith, resulting as we have seen in the birth of Ishmael. Abraham was at this time eighty-six years of age. Another long period of severe testing follows, and thirteen years after, when Abraham is ninety-nine years old, the Lord appears to him and says: "I am Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). Then follows the restatement of the covenant, and the change of name. In this passage (Gen. xvii. 1-8) the Lord gathers up all the promises that are found in the five preceding chapters.

Then comes the covenant of circumcision:--

"This is my covenant, which ye shall keep it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you" (Gen. xvii. 9-14).

Here for the first time is a covenant that Abraham was to "keep", and which was in the nature of a "token". To this the apostle refers in Rom. iv. 11:--

"He received the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised."

Circumcision did not justify Abraham, neither did it merit the promises; it was a seal and a token, and by its very nature a reminder of creature failure and of the need of all-sufficient grace—a thought resident in the title "Almighty God", *El Shaddai*, or "God all-sufficient".

Two passages in the epistles will give some idea of the spiritual meaning of circumcision:--

“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision for he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. ii. 25-29).

“We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. iii. 3).

The worship of God “in spirit” must be set over against what the apostle in Col. ii., calls “will worship” and the observance of mere “shadows”. And rejoicing in Christ must be set over against “glorifying in the flesh” (Gal. vi. 13). “No confidence in the flesh” sums up the whole of Col. ii. 8-23.

The circumcision of Col. ii. 11 is first defined as a “circumcision made without hands”. The word *cheiropoiotos*, “made with hands”, occurs six times in the N.T. (the number of man and imperfection). *Acheiropoiotos*, “not made with hands”, occurs three times in the N.T., three being the number that denotes completeness and resurrection. The references in Heb. ix. 11 to the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, has the added phrase, “that is to say, not of this creation” (“building” in A.V.). That which is made with hands belongs to this creation, but that which is not made with hands belong to the new creation. This was probably in the apostle’s mind when contrasting circumcision with the “new creature” in Gal. vi. 15:--

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

Circumcision in Col. ii. 11 is further explained as “putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ”. The A.V. reads, “the body of the sins of the flesh”, but there is a preponderance of evidence for the omission of the words “of the sins”. Sin is not so much in view as “the flesh”. When we reach Col. ii. 13 we shall find both “sins” and “the uncircumcision of the flesh” mentioned together, but at the moment we are concerned with the flesh and the believer.

Sin involves the whole race in condemnation (Rom. v. 12-21). And sins are the fruits of that root within, and cry out for justification (Rom. iii. 21-31). It is the flesh that hinders the believer in his subsequent “going on unto perfection”. For this cause the apostle buffeted his body (I Cor. ix. 27) lest he should be disqualified. It is the repudiation of the flesh that is uppermost in Col. ii., and this is set forth by the rite of circumcision.

No one is saved or justified by self-denial and the putting-off of the old man with his deeds, but such putting-off is a “seal” and a “sign” that ministers to the comfort and assurance of the believer. It is here, however, where the tragic mistake can be made, of imagining self-improvement possible or acceptable. Col. ii. 11 does not turn our attention to ourselves; it does not tell us to crucify the flesh; it does not tell us to neglect

the body. It points to the work of Christ, just as all Scripture, in the first instance, points the seeking sinner to that same work.

“Putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”—That Christ was literally circumcised, we know by the record of Luke ii. 21, but this is not in mind here. He was also baptized in Jordan; but when that baptism was past, He still looked forward to a baptism which nothing less than the cross could fulfil (Luke xii. 50).

Circumcision was performed on “the eighth day” and so looks forward to resurrection for its fulfillment. Christ died to put away sin for us, and in His resurrection we find our true circumcision or repudiation of the flesh.

To go back once more to the O.T. for further teaching upon the typical place of circumcision, let us turn to the book of Joshua. The people have come out of Egypt, and have wandered for forty years in the wilderness. They cross over Jordan dry-shod, and camp in Gilgal over against Jericho. This brings us to the end of Josh. iv. With the opening of chapter v. comes the command to circumcise the children of Israel, and there the “reproach of Egypt” is rolled away. Not till this is accomplished is Jericho taken and the conquest of the land begun. Gilgal figures in the subsequent history of Israel as a place to which to repair after failure—and a place which precedes success. This typical teaching will be more fully considered in the series entitled, “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” in the exposition of the book of Joshua. A great deal of light on Col. ii. 11-13 is also given in Rom. vi. and vii. As these passages are already receiving a careful examination in the series on “Romans” we would ask the reader to acquaint himself with all that has been written in that series.

In conclusion, we would draw the reader’s attention to Col. iii. 5 where the apostle puts the mortifying of the members in its right sequence, following the positive teaching of Col. iii. 1-4. Our perfecting will never be accomplished by “neglecting the body”; it can only be found in a more perfect realization of our completeness in the work of Christ. We were crucified in His crucifixion, we died in His death, we were buried in His burial, we were raised in His resurrection—only as we “reckon” these things can we grow in grace; only as we stand firmly on this foundation shall we be proof against the wiles of the devil that would beguile us of our reward. The section before us is too great to deal with in one article; and to avoid unduly lengthening the present one, we will defer further comment upon burial and baptism until our next paper.

#24. BEWARE.
Baptism and burial (ii. 12).
pp. 50 - 55

The rite of circumcision and the ordinance of baptism have something in common. We have given some space to the consideration of the place and purpose of circumcision, so we now devote attention to the allied subject of baptism.

Baptism was not introduced by John the Baptist; it belonged to the ceremonial of the Levitical law:--

“A figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service *perfect*, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers BAPTISMS and carnal ordinances, imposed upon them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, *not made with hands*” (Heb. ix. 9-11).

The reader will note, on either side of this reference to Levitical baptisms, the idea of “perfection” and “not made with hands” that reveal something parallel in the teaching of Hebrews with Colossians. We will not make the digression here, but we hope before this series is finished to demonstrate the parallelism of Hebrews with Colossians for the better elucidation of its central theme contained in Col. ii. 4-23. For the time being we must pursue our present line of enquiry.

The other reference to baptism in Hebrews is in a context that is also suggestive of the argument of Colossians:--

“Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto *perfection*; not laying again the foundation of the doctrine of BAPTISMS” (Heb. vi. 1, 2).

The context speaks of the ascended Christ as the High Priest after the Order of Melchisedec, of the contrast between babes and full-grown, or as the word “full-age” in Heb. v. 14 actually is, “perfect”. In both passages therefore where baptism figures in Hebrews it is set over against “perfection”. It hardly seems likely therefore that literal water baptism is intended in Col. ii. 12.

We need not stay to discuss the place and purpose of the baptism of John, which is so evidently part and parcel of his ministry as the forerunner of Christ, that there is no need to prove its dispensational place in the Scriptures.

The baptism that was commanded by Christ, and which we find practiced during the Acts of the Apostles, should, however, be given consideration:--

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe demons tongues serpents deadly thing sick” (Mark xvi. 16-18).

The reader will note that on either side of the words “shall be saved” stand two signs, thus:--

FIRST SIGN.—The sign of baptism (Mark xvi. 16). “Shall be saved.”
SECOND SIGN.—“The signs following” (Mark xvi. 20).

The baptism of Mark xvi. cannot be introduced into the church ministered to by Paul without havoc being caused therein. Many who hold to water baptism to-day, and who think they hold to Mark xvi., do no such thing, but reverse the order given. Most Baptists believe and teach that when a person believes and is saved he should be baptized. Mark xvi., however, puts baptism before salvation: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

Moreover, we have no right to substitute any other word for “shall” in what follows: “These signs *shall* follow them that believe”, for these signs *did* follow, as Acts xxviii. 1-10 clearly shows. They do not follow now, and if Mark xvi. be truth for the times, we are without scriptural evidence for our salvation.

We find the apostle Paul baptizing during the period covered by his freedom in the Acts (Acts xvi. 15 and 33; xviii. 8), but the inspired language of I Cor. i. 17 reveals a condition and a ministry quite different from that exercised by the twelve. Peter certainly could not say with truth: “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.”

Whether there is a reference to water baptism in Rom. vi. 3, 4 we will not discuss here; suffice it for us, that when we read the great epistle of the Mystery, we discover but one baptism acknowledged and permitted. If that one baptism of Eph. iv. 5 be water, then the church of the One Body is destitute of the baptism of the Spirit. Instead of being blessed with all spiritual blessings, the chief means of entering into those blessings is absent. This, however, is not the case, for in that seven-fold unity of the Spirit there are found three pairs on either side of the one Lord, and just as one hope is balanced by one faith, so one baptism is balanced by one Spirit. Colossians therefore—which is an epistle of the same dispensation as that of Ephesians—does not speak of baptism in water, but of that baptism of the Spirit whereby the believer is identified and incorporated with Christ:--

“Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. ii. 12).

Alford's remark on the word for “buried” here is:--

“Buried together, i.e., ‘when you were buried’, the aorist part, as so often, is contemporary with the preceding verb.”

This, therefore, would lead us to read:--

“In Whom also ye were circumcised when ye were buried together with Him in baptism” (Col. ii. 11, 12).

The circumcision was without hands and the baptism was without water, therefore both are spiritual and find their reality only in the work of Christ.

Should one agree, yet plead for the retention of the typical ordinance of baptism, he should read Col. ii. 16, 17, and, moreover, remember that most of the arguments in favour of the perpetuation of water baptism, could equally be used in favour of the literal perpetuation of circumcision: But all shadows are gone so far as the church of the One Body is concerned, being for ever fulfilled and swallowed up in the fullness of Christ.

Let us now turn to Rom. vi. and again read the emancipating words of its opening verses:--

“Know ye not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection” (Rom. vi. 3-5).

We have drawn attention in other articles to the place that faith occupies in this epistle, but faith is absent from this inner section (Rom. vi. 8 is the one reference, but its use is not parallel with the use of faith in the earlier chapters). The statements of Rom. vi. 3-5 are statements of fact, not merely of experience. When Christ died we died with Him, when He was buried we were buried with Him, when He arose from the dead, never again to submit to its dominion, we rose with Him. All this is fact. The believer is “in Christ”, and this union is by baptism; not indeed the baptism of water, but that true and effectual baptism of the Spirit, which unites the believer once and for ever to Christ, and identifies him with all that He as Saviour and Head accomplished.

Rom. vi. stresses the fact that we are baptized into the death of Christ, into His burial, and into His resurrection.

Moreover, this chapter is not dealing with our sins, but with sin, the old man, the dominion of sin, and the release of the members of the body from its demands. What has been made ours *actually* by our being baptized in Christ by the Spirit, is made ours *experimentally* when we “reckon” what God has reckoned us to be in Christ (Rom. vi. 11). No amount of fasting, or neglect, or self-imposed tasks, or humility, is of any avail. Our ground of triumph and our strength to walk in newness of life is in Christ and His work for us, and our identification with Him. All else leads to bondage.

In the A.V. Col. ii. 12 reads as though the reference to baptism is continued throughout the verse. This is not so however:--

“In WHOM (*en ho*) ye were circumcised when ye were buried together with Him in baptism. In WHOM (*en ho*) ye were also raised together.”

Burial speaks of the utter end of ourselves; resurrection of a new beginning in Him.

We must now turn our attention to the remainder of the verse:--

“In Whom ye were also raised together through the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” (Col. ii. 12).

Webster’s note here is helpful:--

“Faith has respect to the power of God in the resurrection of Jesus, as having therein effected that on which objectively our salvation depends, and also as effecting that subjectively which *is* our salvation, viz., our new spiritual life.”

In order to establish the connection of this passage with Eph. i. 9 - ii. 1, we must just refer to Col. ii. 13:--

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him.”

These words are evidently a parallel with Eph. ii. 1:--

“And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

We leave, for the moment, the question of the true translation of these words, as our present intention is to establish a connection between Eph. i. 19 onwards and Col. ii. 12 onwards.

Ephesians.	Colossians.
<p>“The fullness in Christ” (i. 23). “Head over all things to the Church. Far above principality and powers” (i. 21, 22). “To us-ward who believe, according to the working (<i>energeia</i>) of His mighty power, which He wrought in (<i>energeo</i>) Christ, when He raised Him from the dead” (i. 19, 20). “Dead in trespasses and sins” (ii. 1-5). “Hath quickened us together with Christ” (ii. 5). “Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (ii. 15).</p>	<p>“The fullness in Christ” (ii. 9, 10). “Head of all principality and powers” (ii. 10). “The faith of the operation (<i>energeia</i>) of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead” (ii. 12). “Dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh” (ii. 13). “Hath He quickened together with Him” (ii. 13). “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us” (ii. 14).</p>

The above evidences are sufficient to establish the fact that the apostle follows the same line of teaching in Col. ii. 12, 13 as is more fully developed in Eph. i. 19 - ii. 5.

One can imagine the apostle's grief when he learned that those who, by virtue of their union with Christ, were not only raised but seated together far above all principalities and powers, had been so deceived as to become worshippers of angels, to learn that although no middle wall now stood, and the enmity of ordinances had been removed, yet these Colossians saints were reverting to the weak and beggarly elements, were observing days and feasts, and exchanging substance for shadow—all for the attaining of a completeness which was already theirs in Christ.

The opening words of verse 13 are too vital to be dealt with at the close of this article, and although when dealing with Eph. ii. 1 we set out our proofs for the new translation offered there, this was written so long ago that it will be necessary to go over the ground afresh so that new readers shall have the benefit of all the evidence. Meanwhile, we trust that every step we have taken together has broken down trust in all but the Lord Himself and His finished work. We can say with a fullness unknown by Israel: "All my springs are in Thee."

#25. BEWARE.
“Dead to sins” and “Uncircumcision of the flesh” (ii. 13).
pp. 98 - 100

The completeness of the church in Christ, which entirely precludes any attempt at improvement by fleshly means, has been opened up by revealing that all that circumcision stood for in the law has its spiritual equivalent in the death and resurrection of Christ—"the putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." This repudiation of the flesh is further enforced by the fact that the believer is united by spiritual baptism with Christ in His burial, and that, through faith of the inworking of God that raised Christ from the dead, he is risen with Him, with power to walk in newness of life and with the privilege of being able to live unto God.

One of the things that we discovered in Rom. vi. (*see series on the Epistle to the Romans*) was that liberty is essential to sanctification, life and growth. Sin and sinful tendencies cannot be checked by shackles; if this had been possible, then sanctification and victorious life could have come by the law. The dominion of the flesh cannot be put away by neglecting the body, or by submitting to ordinances, "Touch not, taste not, handle not". It is only possible by that true circumcision in which the old man was crucified and the body of the flesh put off.

We now take up the thread of our study, commencing at verse 13:--

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him" (Col. ii. 13).

There is an evident parallel here with Eph. ii. 1 and 5. On the other hand, the passage is not by any means a mere repetition. Much that belongs to Eph. ii. 11-22 provides a truer parallel with Col. ii. than that which is found in Eph. ii. 1-10. This, however, needs some explanation to be intelligible. First we must observe that Eph. ii. deals with two distinct though related subjects. For the sake of clearness, we use the words “doctrinal” and “dispensational” to indicate this difference. Eph. ii. 1-10 shows the *doctrinal* position of the Gentile; Eph. ii. 11-22 shows his *dispensational* position. In the former, we have “sins”; in the latter, “distance”. In the former we have “the desires of the flesh”; in the latter, “uncircumcision in the flesh”. This will perhaps be better understood if set out in structure form:--

Ephesians ii. 1-22.

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|----------------------------|
| A | | 1-3. Once. Walk and conversation. The world and the flesh. | |
| B | | 4. But God. Rich in mercy. Great in love. | |
| C | | 5-10. Made alive together. \ | |
| | | Raised together. } | In relation to sin. |
| | | Made to sit together. / | |
| A | | 11, 12. Once. Gentiles in flesh. In the flesh and in the world. | |
| B | | 13-18. But now. Made nigh. Made one. | |
| C | | 19-22. Citizens together. \ | In relation to |
| | | Fitly framed together. } | dispensational privileges. |
| | | Builded together. / | |

In the preceding article we observed several points of contact between Eph. i. 19 - ii. 22 and Col. ii. 4-23. We must now notice that, while Ephesians divides its theme up into two sections, to deal with each phase separately, Colossians links the doctrinal and the dispensational together. This, however, is not an exact presentation of the case. Circumcision and uncircumcision in Eph. ii. have no reference to “the body of the flesh” as they have in Colossians; Ephesians simply deals with the two great divisions of humanity, the Jew and the Gentile, in relation to dispensational privileges. The middle wall of partition in Eph. ii. 14, 15 is the barrier that perpetuated the dispensational superiority of the Jewish believer over the Gentile believer even though they were both one in Christ. This is seen in the words, “the Jew first”, and in the reference to the olive tree and the wild olive in Rom. xi. In Col. ii. there is also an enmity connected with ordinances, but in this case they do not separate individual members of the church from each other, but the church itself from its Head. And so, while Ephesians limits the reference to being “dead in sins” to the first half of chapter ii., Colossians introduces it in a wider connection.

As the words stand in Eph. ii. 1 and 5, they appear to refer to the death of the race by reason of sin. We believe, however, that, instead of referring to the state of all men by nature, they refer to the state of the church which is His body, by grace. First let us notice that the verb is in the present tense: “You being dead” (*ontas*). It seems to indicate some consciousness of the unsuitability of the rendering that the A.V. should alter the verb from the present to the past—“dead in sins”. When the Lord is recorded as saying, “Ye shall die in your sins” (John viii. 24) the preposition *en* (meaning “in”) is used. When the Jews say to the man whose sight was restored, “Thou wast altogether

born in sins”, again the preposition *en* is used. But the preposition *en* does not occur in Eph. ii. 1 or 5. The words “trespasses” and “sins” are in the dative case; and while this case does express the idea of “rest in”, it also expresses the ideas conveyed by the words, “by”, “to”, “with”, etc. Who is to decide, therefore, the true translation of such an important passage as Eph. ii. 1 undoubtedly is? In the absence of the preposition *en* can we be sure that one of the other shades of meaning is not intended? Fortunately the matter is settled by the occurrence of the same phenomenon in other passages. We therefore present no argument other than the consistent usage of the N.T. Greek, confirmed by the translation of the A.V. itself:--

“We that are dead TO SIN” (Rom. vi. 2).
“He died UNTO SIN” (Rom. vi. 10).
“Dead indeed UNTO SIN” (Rom. vi. 11).
“Dead TO the LAW” (Rom. vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19).
“Dead TO SINS” (I Pet. ii. 24).

Can we substitute the words “*in sin*” or “*in sins*” in these passages? Could we translate Rom. vi. 2: “How shall we, that are dead *in sin*, live any longer therein?” without nullifying the whole argument? How could we introduce the words, *in sin*, into Rom. vi. 10 without approaching blasphemy, and denying the very basis of all our faith? The Lord died *to sin*; this is the glory of the teaching of Rom. vi.

(To be concluded).

#25. BEWARE. (*Concluded*).
“Dead to sins” and “Uncircumcision of the flesh” (ii. 13).
pp. 113, 114

The passage quoted from I Pet. ii. 24 has much in common with Eph. ii. 1, for in this reference the word “sin” is in the plural. We have, therefore, a test passage. The verb in Peter is in the perfect tense and we translate the passage as follows:--

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, *having died to sins*, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed.”

Here it is evident that it is not man’s state by nature that is in view, but his state by grace, consequent on the fact that the Lord has borne his sins. And the end in view is that he may live unto God. Resurrection life following upon death to sin is the burning theme of every passage quoted above. And this is also true of Eph. ii. 1 and 5. The manner of life in the past is contrasted with the new life now begun—a new life expressed in the words, “Quickened together with Christ”.

With the true translation of Eph. ii. 1 and 5 before us, we now return to Col. ii. 13, where the same construction occurs:--

“And you, being dead to the trespasses and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened, having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. ii. 13).

Not only has the believer died to sin, but he has died also to sins, and to the uncircumcision of his flesh.

The positive side of this glorious truth is expressed in the words, “You hath He quickened”. This quickening is associated with the resurrection of Christ, and so teaches us the sphere of all acceptance, service, progress, sanctification, “newness of life” and “life unto God”. This is not all, however. In addition to the emancipating fact that those who were buried with Christ and raised with Christ, have died to their sins and to the uncircumcision of their flesh, we have the words, “Having forgiven you all trespasses”. The glorious doctrine of the forgiveness of sins is almost too good to be true. We may readily believe that our sins committed before we were saved are forgiven, but somehow we hardly credit the statement that the sins of saints will never come up for judgment. This results from confusing service with its related reward or loss, and sin with its guilt and punishment. It may, of course, be objected that such a conception of grace will lead to carelessness of life among believers. The same charge was made against the apostle’s teaching concerning grace in Romans (Rom. vi. 1), but while he repudiated the charge, he did not modify his doctrine.

The revelation of God concerning the forgiveness of sins is so important and so closely bound up with our peace of heart, that we shall not attempt to deal with it hurriedly at the close of the present article. We hope to devote the next article of the series to its consideration.

#26. BEWARE.
The forgiveness of all trespasses (ii. 13).
pp. 130 - 134

The believer’s union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection, by virtue of which he died to his sins and to the uncircumcision of his flesh, is vitally connected with the fact that all his sins are forgiven him. Indeed the forgiveness of sins here, by the tense of the verb used, refers back to the same time and act wherein were accomplished our circumcision in Christ, our burial with Him, our rising with Him, and our quickening with Him.

The forgiveness of sins is a marvelous revelation of love, yet many a child of God can hardly bring himself to believe what is here written, “Having forgiven you *all* trespasses”. We are prone to think that while the sins of our unsaved days are graciously blotted out, some sins into which we fall after salvation will be held against us in that day, robbing us of our reward. There are two evils here. One is the confusing of sins

with service; and the second evil is that this confusing of truth makes the child of God a prey to fears and doubts and lays him open to suggestions for self-improvement in the vain hope that sins can thereby be excluded.

It is a part of the apostle's teaching in Col. ii. that, not some sins, but *all* are forgiven. Should anyone object that such a doctrine will lead to laxity and carelessness, let him observe Rom. v. 20, 21 and vi. 1. Paul did not modify his statement about abounding grace because some might be found who would abuse it. Neither must we.

Forgiveness of sins is presented under two aspects in the N.T., and a comparison of these will enrich our conception of the grace of God manifested toward us. Under the dispensation of the kingdom, forgiveness was conditional and could be revoked. To introduce either of these elements into the dispensation of the mystery would be completely erroneous, but they are clearly seen in Matthew's Gospel:--

“When ye pray Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. vi. 7-12).

It may be objected that these words do not suggest a condition but rather a reason—that we forgive as the Lord has forgiven us. This might have been true if the Lord had not explained His own words otherwise. At the close of the prayer which He taught His disciples, these words are added:--

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive NOT men their trespasses, NEITHER will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. vi. 9-15).

We are not, therefore, left to infer the truth. The Lord has stated it, and we are left with no alternative but to believe or reject it.

So important is this truth to the dispensation of the kingdom, that the Lord gives it in parable form. The parable is linked up with Peter's question: “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Matt. xviii. 21). The Lord answers, “Until seventy times seven”; and then gives the parable of the two debtors. Space will not permit our quoting the parable; the reader should turn to Matt. xviii. 21-34 and read it through himself. We draw particular attention to the “moral” that is given by the Lord:--

“So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses” (Matt. xviii. 35).

“*So likewise.*”—What had been taught in the parable is used to enforce this lesson. The debtor had been “forgiven” (verse 27), but seeing that he had not forgiven his brother, the lord who had forgiven him cancels that forgiveness and delivers him to the tormentors “till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise” It is absolutely impossible to bring the doctrine of the parable over into the dispensation of the grace of God, yet by the constant use of the “Lord's prayer” many are attempting to do so every day.

The reason for this great difference regarding the forgiveness of sins is that one “forgiveness” is the *pardon* of a King, and the other the *acquittal* of a Judge. It is the prerogative of a King to extend the royal clemency to a prisoner, but this forgiveness does not in any sense mean that the man is justified. There is no question of the law having been satisfied—it is the clemency of the King. A judge, however, cannot forgive in this way; he can only condemn or acquit. On many occasions, a Judge has felt deeply sorry for the prisoner’s plight; he would, if he could, let him go free, but pardon is not among his prerogatives. But when the Judge acquits, then the prisoner is free indeed. He is justified, and cannot be called into question concerning his trespasses again.

Summarizing these essential differences, we may say that a King can pardon but cannot justify; and that a Judge can justify but cannot pardon.

It will be seen that the fundamental basis of forgiveness in the ministry of the apostle Paul is that of justification by faith, a doctrine that is not announced in the Gospel according to Matthew:--

“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom. iv. 6-8).

Here it will be seen that the *negative*, the non-imputation of sin, is consequent on the *positive*, the imputation of righteousness. This is seen again in II Cor. v. 19-21:--

“Not imputing their trespasses unto them for He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

It is as impossible for this blessing to be revoked by God, as it is for Christ to undo His sufferings and death. None can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect. Christ has died, yea rather is risen again, and is seated at the right hand of God.

Forgiveness is expressed by two different words: *aphesis* and *charizomai*. These words must be studied if we are to have a scriptural understanding of this great subject.

Aphesis means a discharge, a setting free (from *aphiemi*). Where the word is used doctrinally in the N.T. it denotes “the abrogation of the divine legal claims upon man, the remission of the amends due, or of the punishment due for imperfect, sinful conduct—that is the deliverance from suffering the divine judgment” (*Cremer*).

The fact that in the LXX this word is used of the “setting free” that was ushered in with the Jubilee is of great importance:--

“Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land” (Lev. xxv. 10).

The word that is translated “forgiveness” in Eph. i. 7 is found in Luke iv. 18:--

“To preach *deliverance* to the captives to *set at liberty* them that are bruised.”

And the typical meaning of the year of Jubilee is in view, as the passage continues: “To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke iv. 19). Both Eph. i. 7 and Col. i. 14 use this word in association with redemption by the blood of Christ. The believer thus forgiven is free, released, set free, dismissed.

Charizomai means “to be kind or gracious to any one”. It is one of a beautiful group of words, all of which have their origin in grace. *Charis* (grace) means “an act of spontaneous favour wherein no mention can be made of obligation” (*Cremer*). As for example in Eph. ii. 7. *Charitoo* is the word “accepted” in Eph. i. 6. *Charizomai* (“to be gracious to”), when used of God, indicates that gracious and unmerited favour that is bestowed upon poor sinners, who though destitute of any power or means of acceptance in themselves are the objects of God’s free favour and ineffable love. The word is used not only for the bestowal of grace in general in the gospel, but for that special favour, the forgiveness of sins—the remitting of all just dues, because of the great sacrifice of God’s own Son on our behalf. It is this word that is used in Col. ii. 13.

To the believer in Christ, Paul declares this twofold forgiveness:--

Aphesis.

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. i. 14 and Eph. i. 7).

Charizomai.

“Having forgiven you all trespasses” (Col. ii. 13).

“Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. iv. 32).

What folly, therefore, to leave the ground of acceptance and grace, for a “religion” consisting of observances, shadows, negations and rudiments, which are but a vain attempt to make oneself “perfected by the flesh” (Gal. iii. 3; iv. 9, 10; v. 2; vi. 15). I have no need to fear the face of God, but rather, in the full assurance of my beloved Lord, I can give thanks for meetness for the inheritance (Col. i. 12). No amount of self-mortification can rid me of a single sin or break a single fetter; but I need no such vain attempts to bring peace. As an enemy I have been reconciled by the blood of His cross, and, being reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, I shall be presented “holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight” (Col. i. 21, 22). Shall I dare to presume that any effort of my own can improve upon that presentation? Does not the apostle “warn and teach” that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus? (Col. i. 28). Is not the warning note sounded again and again in Col. ii. 4-23 against every attempt to accomplish by any means what has been done once and for ever by Christ?

Just as surely as not one of us can add a cubit to his stature by taking thought; just as none of us can save himself from sin and death, or accomplish the salvation of another, so

just as surely we can never make ourselves fit for glory. The apostle continually points back to a finished work, and on to a glorious consummation. “Ye are complete in Him.” “Ye are circumcised by the circumcision of Christ.” “Ye are buried with Him.” “Ye are risen with Him.” “Ye are dead to your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” “He hath quickened you together with Him.” “He has forgiven all your trespasses.” Why do we not believe God and reckon as He has reckoned? “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vi. 11). God does not say, “Wait until you feel this in your experience before you so reckon”; for the feeling may never come in this life. There should, by all means, be a genuine concern for a spiritual walk, and growth in grace; there should be a continual recognition of the awfulness of the flesh and its terrible snare. This, however, is very different from attempting to set ourselves free and to accomplish a sanctification in our own strength, ignoring all the implications of grace. Not only have we been forgiven, but all that was contrary to us has been removed and cancelled, giving added confirmation to our sense of acceptance in the Beloved. This, however, must be considered in our next paper. Let it suffice us here, that we are the recipients of such grace. We have received a forgiveness that is unconditional, and which can never be revoked. We are not called upon to forgive our brethren so that we ourselves may be forgiven—we are called upon to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven us:--

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; EVEN AS CHRIST FORGAVE YOU, SO ALSO DO YE” (Col. iii. 12, 13).

#27. BEWARE.

Blotted out, Nailed, Spoiled: The body is of Christ (ii. 14-17). pp. 164 - 170

Our last study left us with that unspeakable blessing, the forgiveness of sins—“Having forgiven you all trespasses.” The passage stand, as it were, half-way in the explanatory matter that reveals its foundation in the person and work of Christ. Looking back over the path we have come, we realize that the emphasis has been upon the person of the Saviour. He is the test of all philosophy and tradition. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In Him, moreover, the believer is complete. He is discovered to be the Head not only of the church, but of all principality and power. In Him also, the body of sin has been put off as in a spiritual circumcision. The union effected by our one baptism has buried us together with Him in His tomb. And with Him, through the same mighty power that raised Him from the dead, we too are raised, having died to our sins, and having been quickened together with Him. Looking forward, the believer has his attention directed to that wondrous work which the Lord accomplished on the cross, there to see the complete canceling of all legalism, the removal of all authority but the

Headship of the Lord, and emancipation from all ceremonies and observances—the passing, in fact, from the shadow to the substance in Christ.

Third item of warning with its corrective.

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ” (Col. ii. 14-17).

The words “blotting out” and “nailing” speak plainly of something cancelled. *Exaleipho*, in its primary meaning, is “to rub off ointment, after anointing”. The word then came to mean “to rub off” in any sense. So in Rev. vii. 17 and xxi. 4 it is used of “wiping away” tears; and in Rev. iii. 5 of “blotting out” from a book. When we remember that in the apostle’s day it was usual to write brief messages upon a tablet of wax (Luke i. 63), it will be seen how easy it would be to efface completely anything so written. Some readers, moreover, may have seen the originals or photographic copies of what are called “palimpsest” manuscripts, where the original lettering has been sponged down, and a new set of characters has been superimposed. The word is also used for the “blotting out of sins” in Acts iii. 19.

Not only do we read of the blotting out of the handwriting of ordinances, but also that they were completely cancelled by being “nailed” to the cross of Christ. This word has entered into the figurative expressions of our own tongue. To “nail to the counter” or to “nail to the barndoor” are figures of speech which are almost self-explanatory, especially if one has actually seen a transfixed coin or rat. The two expressions, “blotting out” and “nailing” combine to convey the idea of canceling beyond the possibility of revival.

We must next consider what it was that was thus cancelled—“the handwriting of ordinances.” It is impossible to ignore in this connection the earlier reference to the hands in verse 11: “the circumcision made without hands.” In the N.T. there are six references that contain the words “made with hands”, and three that contain the words “not made with hands”. As the best explanation of these terms arises out of a consideration of their usage, we will set out the passages in the order in which they occur in the A.V.:--

“I will destroy this temple that is *made with hands*, and within three days I will build another *made without hands*” (Mark xiv. 58).

“The Most High dwelleth not in temples *made with hands*” (Acts vii. 48).

“The Lord of heaven and earth dwelleth not in temples *made with hands*” (Acts xvii. 24).

“We have a building of God, a house *not made with hands*, eternal in the heavens” (II Cor. v. 1).

“Gentiles . . . called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh *made by hands*” (Eph. ii. 11).

“The circumcision *made without hands*” (Col. ii. 11).

“A greater and more perfect tabernacle *not made with hands*, that is to say, not of this creation” (Heb. ix. 11).

“Christ is not entered into the holy places *made with hands*, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself” (Heb. ix. 24).

A survey of these references makes us realize that things “not made with hands” are “not of this creation” and not “figures”, but the “true” and the “heavenly”. The “handwriting of ordinances” belongs to the realm of type and shadow, and must pass away in the new creation which has already commenced in the church which is the body of Christ. Both Ephesians and Colossians speak of “ordinances” that have been done away. The “ordinances” of Eph. ii. formed a middle wall of partition and divided the Jewish believer from the Gentile believer. These were ceremonial ordinances, and can be understood in the light of Acts xv. 20, observing that in Acts xvi. 4 the word “ordinances” is rendered “decrees”.

The ordinances of Col. ii. 14 appear to be somewhat different. It may at first sight seem a small thing whether a man observes a day or not, or whether he eats this or abstains from that. Indeed Rom. xiv. says: “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (Rom. xiv. 5). And in I Cor. viii. 8: “Neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.” Nevertheless, we know how seriously the apostle viewed the attitude of the Galatians:--

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them, which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal. iv. 8-11).

It was the underlying reason for these observances that called forth the strong denunciation of the apostles:--

“Christ is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. v. 4).

So with the Colossians; the apostle desired that their wholehearted trust should be in Christ alone, and would allow neither philosophy, nor tradition, nor the rudiments of the world to rob the Lord of His supreme place.

Before, however, he speaks definitely of these observances in Col. ii. 16, the apostle has something more to say regarding the complete emancipation of the redeemed. Not only were all ordinances cancelled at the cross, but by that cross the Lord has triumphed over all possible foes, and over all who might have claimed allegiance. The word “spoiled” in verse 15 is *apekduomai*, and is cognate with “to put off” in verse 11, which is *apekduosis*. The word *apekdoumai* also occurs in Col. iii. 9: “Ye have put off the old man.” The R.V. translates verse 15:--

“And having put off from Himself.” And in the margin, “Having put off from Himself His body, He made a show of principalities”

The verb “having spoiled” in Col. ii. 15 is in the middle voice, and means literally “to divest oneself of clothing”. Commentators have interpreted this passage in a variety of ways:--

“Divested Himself of His flesh.”

“He divested Himself”, as (with reverence be it said) Joseph did when he extricated himself from the grasp of Potiphar’s wife.

“He divested Himself of the principalities and powers which had mediated the law.”

At first sight, this diversity of opinion among scholars is discouraging, but remembering the proverb, “In the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. xi. 14), we perceive that the paradox of the cross solves the problem. The cross was, from one angle, the lowest depth of ignominy; yet it proved to be the wisdom and power of God. The cross marked the most complete victory of the powers of darkness; and yet it proved their most complete defeat. The Lord did indeed strip Himself at the cross, but at the same time He stripped His foes. He made His very shame His greatest glory; He turned the malefactor’s gibbet into His triumphal car; He “death by dying slew”.

We now proceed with our study, bearing in mind the two sides to this marvelous truth.

In Col. ii. 15 we have a series of military metaphors, *apekdoumai* refers to the stripping of the vanquished foe; and *deigmatizo* (“to make a show”) refers to the “exposure” of the vanquished to the vulgar gaze. Cleopatra’s fear of this public exposure upon Cæsar’s triumphant entry into Rome is well expressed by Shakespeare:--

Cleopatra. Know you what Cæsar means to do with me?
Dolabella. I am loth to tell you what I would you knew.
Cleopatra. He’ll lead me, then, in triumph?
Dolabella. Madam he will, I know it.
Cleopatra. Now Iras, what think’st thou?
Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shall be shown
In Rome, as well as I: mechanic slaves,
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers, shall
Uplift us to the view
Saucy lecturers
Will catch at us like strumpets; and scald rhymers
Ballad us out of tune
And I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness.

The word “openly” (*parrhesia*) means “publicly”, as may be seen in John vii. 4, xi. 54, etc.

“Triumphing over them.”—*Thriambaio* is from *thriambos*, a triumph, which originally signified a hymn in honour of Bacchus, sung in solemn procession. Plutarch uses the word in the phrase, “He led Kings in triumph”.

It will be noticed that while it is the handwriting of ordinances that was cancelled at the cross, it is principalities and powers that are stripped and led in triumph. What is the connection between these two things?

We have already read in verse 10: “And ye are complete in Him, Which is the Head of all principality and power.” Moreover, in chapter i. 16-22, “principalities and powers” are closely associated with the Lord’s headship, and with the church’s reconciliation and completeness in Him. The epistle to the Ephesians reveals that there are some principalities and powers that are definitely antagonistic to the church, and describes them as the “world-holders of this darkness, spiritual wickednesses” (Eph. vi. 12). And Col. i. 13 speaks of our being delivered from “the authority of darkness”.

An examination of Dan. x. will show that these angelic rulers seek at every turn to frustrate the purpose of God, and to keep His children in blindness and bondage. We are assured by the testimony of the epistles that their activities are not limited to the prophetic earth, but that the church and its holy doctrines are also objects of attack. It is a blessed fact, that cannot be kept too clearly before the mind, that we have been delivered from the authority of darkness (Col. i. 13). This, however, does not mean that, while we are in this sphere, we need have no concern about the activities of evil spiritual powers. The wiles of the devil (Eph. vi. 11), and the cunning craftiness whereby men lie in wait to deceive (Eph. iv. 14) must be considered together, for the same word is used in the original of both. The saint is warned, moreover, in Eph. iv. 27 not to give place to the devil.

If we examine the contexts of these passages we shall discover that the one great remedy of Col. ii. is to be found there also. For the wiles of the devil the remedy is to “put on the whole armour of God”. For the cunning craftiness of men, the remedy is “the fullness of Christ”. Instead of giving place to the devil, the believer is enjoined to “put on the new man” and to “put away the lie”; in other words, to stand in the completeness that is his in Christ (Col. ii. 10). The principalities and powers of Col. i. 16-20 are included in the reconciliation effected by “the blood of His cross”; the principalities and powers of Col. ii. 15 are excluded from reconciliation by the same cross. They are stripped and repudiated.

The Colossian church had yielded to a false system of worship, that included “the worshipping of angels” (Col. ii. 18), just as the heathen, who bowed down to idols, really offered worship to demons (I Cor. x. 19, 20). This false system made much of ceremonial (see Gal. iv.-vi.), including the observance of special days and feasts. These the apostle sweeps aside, even the sabbaths, saying that they are all, like the ordinances that were against us, cancelled by the cross of Christ, and that they are all but “shadows of things to come”, as Heb. x. 1 says of the sacrifices of the law. They have no place with the church of this dispensation; it is the body of Christ, and for this church, shadows have no place. “The body (i.e. the substance) is of Christ.”

Once more the clarion call of liberty and completeness in Christ has gone forth. May all who own Him as Saviour and Head stand fast in this liberty, rejoicing in His fullness, and resolutely refusing to seek in any other source or in any system of shadows what is theirs in glorious reality in Christ.

#28. BEWARE.
Things that beguile of the Prize (ii. 18).
pp. 203 - 208

The section just studied, namely, Col. ii. 14-17, occupies a central place in the structure of the whole passage, as a reference to Volume XXIII, page 84, will reveal.

The apostle now turns back upon his theme, shedding further light upon those insidious doctrines and practices which, while promising an advance in holiness, really led to pampering the flesh; while affecting modesty, really denied completeness in Christ; while multiplying mediators, really set aside the one Mediator; and while observing days and seasons, really ignored the absolute victory of the cross. The passage before us, Col. ii. 18-21, corresponds with Col. ii. 11, 12.

In Col. ii. 11, 12 we have the repudiation of the “body of the flesh”, while in Col. ii. 18-20 we have the “mind of the flesh” vainly puffing up and leading to bondage. In Col. ii. 11, 12 we have the true fulfillment of both circumcision and baptism, whereas in Col. ii. 18-20 we have “humility and worshipping of angels”. In both passages we are directed either to the “inworking (operation) of God” or to the “increase of God”, and “death with Christ” is the all-sufficient answer.

The passage before us is one of great complexity, and has produced a great number of different translations. Where so many have failed, dare we hope to succeed? We are sure that every word of God has been written for our learning, and that nothing is too hard for Him. May He deign to illumine our studies together, so that we may attain at least to some approximation of that Word whose fullness may remain unfathomed while time lasts:--

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col. ii. 18 A.V.).

“Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col. ii. 18 R.V.).

Both the A.V. and the R.V. have marginal notes. The A.V. says for “beguile”—“judge against you”, and for “in a voluntary humility”—“being a voluntary in humility”. The R.V. margin reads “of his own mere will, by humility, etc.” and for “dwelling” (“intruding”, A.V.) reads “taking his stand upon”. It would serve no useful purpose to

give a multitude of different translations, so we shall proceed to examine in fuller detail the actual words given by inspiration of God.

“*Let no man beguile you of your reward.*”—The word that demands attention here is *katabrabeuo*. *Kata* means “against”, and *brabeuo* means to be a judge or umpire, and so to assign the prize in a public game. *Brabeuo* occurs in Col. iii. 15 where the peace of God is said to “act the umpire (rule) in your hearts”—a precious thought. *Brabeion* is a prize. It is found in I Cor. ix. 24 and Phil. iii. 14, “The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. We are therefore not without guidance as to the subject of this section. It has to do with the prize. Now Colossians, whilst running very parallel with Ephesians, has much in its central section that bears upon Philippians. Philippians is the epistle of the “prize” and the “perfecting”, and if we look at Col. i. we shall find under the idea of being “presented” the two aspects of truths set forth by Ephesians and Philippians. We shall distinguish between that which can never be lost, and that which may be lost, and return to Col. ii. with clearer views:--

The first presentation.

“In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in His sight” (Col. i. 22).

The second presentation.

“Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. i. 28).

The first presentation rest solely upon the finished work of Christ; the second involves the idea which is found in the word “perfect”—of pressing on to the end. In the first no effort of our own could ever present us “holy”; in the second we stand in need of “warning”.

Satan does not waste his energies in attempting to deprive us of our acceptance in the Beloved. “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” Scripture nowhere says: “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy *life*”, but it does say: “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy *crown*” (Rev. iii. 11). Satan was permitted to touch everything belonging to Job except his life.

The same is true of all the redeemed. There is a prize to be won, a crown to be gained, but no man is crowned except he strive lawfully. If therefore Satan can turn the saint away from the fullness of Christ, and get him occupied with other means and ways—be they ordinances, days, feasts, meats, drinks, false humility, neglect of the body, unscriptural mediators, or any other thing save “holding the Head”—then the prize is lost, the saint dishonoured, and above all the Saviour robbed, for what is a crown to us, but an added crown to Him?

We now approach the steps that lead to the loss of the prize.

“*In a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.*”—The word “voluntary” is a translation of *thelon*, from *thelo* = “to will”. A great number of renderings have been offered. Some see in *thelon en* an equivalent to the Hebrew of I Sam. xviii. 22, “hath

A prominent opponent of Paul, though not mentioned by name in the N.T., was *Cerinthus*, who incited the believers against Peter for baptizing Cornelius, and against Paul for not circumcising Titus. The Cerinthian heresy was an attempt to blend Judaism with Gnosticism, and the student of Galatians and Colossians will realize that in these two epistles the two parts of this deadly error are exposed and attacked.

The Cerinthians affirmed that the world was made by *angels*, which gives point to the place to which angels are assigned in Heb. i. & ii., and *Cerinthus* himself professed to have received revelation from angels. Closely allied with the Cerinthian heresy was the teaching of Simon Magus and his school, which taught the necessity of learning the names of invisible principalities and powers, and to offer sacrifices to the Father by their mediation. *Tertullian* says that “the magic of the Simonian doctrine was *angelis servieus*”. The worship of angels was prevalent in Asia in early times. At the Council of Laodicea (A.D.320) it was decreed, that believers may not:--

“Leave the church of God, and go away and invoke the names of *angels*.”
“Christians may not receive presents from Jews on *Feast-days*, or feast with them.”
“Christians may not Judaize, and rest of the *Sabbath*” (Canons 36, 38 and 29).

Such were the snares that were set for the unwary at Colosse; no wonder, as a corrective and glorious contrast, Paul preached “Christ”, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, for there is no alternative. The apostle charges the false teacher at Colosse with:--

“*Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*”—Although the R.V. omits the word “not” here, the margin reads, “Many authorities, some ancient, insert *not*”. The traditional text is widespread, being supported by the “Fathers”, and many ancient versions.

The word “intruding” is from *embateuon*, which means, “putting our foot into another man’s land as if it were our own” (see Josh. xix. 49-51), stepping into the unseen world with all the assurance of possession, prying into those things that have been veiled from human sight. *Josephus* uses the word in Ant. ii. 12, 1, where he says of Mt. Sinai: “The shepherd durst not *intrude* upon it.” Anyone with effrontery enough will find some credulous listeners, and such was unhappily the case at Colosse. They were like the Gnostic teachers spoken of in I Timothy, who gave heed to “fables and endless genealogies desiring to be teachers of the law” yet “understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (I Tim. i. 4-7).

The corrective to this terrible error is found in verses 19 and 20, which we must consider in a separate article, the subject being too important to introduce here. It will, however, be for our good if that blessed corrective be here stated, even though the examination of its teaching be deferred:--

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye dead with Christ” (Col. ii. 19, 20).

Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth. (Second Series).

Deuteronomy.

#2. Possession East of Jordan. pp. 30 - 35

The first three chapters of Deuteronomy deal with events just before and just after the forty years in the wilderness. The material is abundant, and our purpose is best served by selecting that which illuminates principles rather than by giving an exposition of the book in detail. The structure of Deut. i.-iii. brings into prominence certain salient features, and we will first of all place that structure before the reader.

Deuteronomy i. - iii.

- A | i. 1-3. | a | Moses spake unto all Israel.
 - b | In wilderness over against Red Sea.
 - c | Eleven days by way of Mount Seir.
- B | i. 4-7. | d | Sihon and Og slain.
 - e | Ye have dwelt long enough.
 - f | Turn you, and take your journey.
 - g | Mount of Amorites, all places nigh, land of Canaanites.
- C | i. 8. I have set the land before you possess it.
- D | i. 9-45. | h1 | We will send men before us. Ye rebelled.
 - i1 | Lord wroth with Israel.
 - j1 | Not one of that generation shall go over.
 - k1 | Save Caleb, son of Jephunneh.
 - l1 | Lord angry with me.
 - j1 | Thou shalt not go in thither.
 - k1 | But Joshua the son of Nun.
 - h1 | We will go up and fight. Ye rebelled.
- E | i. 46. Abode in Kadesh.
- A | ii. 1-3. | b | Into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea.
 - a | As the Lord spake unto me.
 - c | Compassed Mount Seir many days.
- B | ii. 3 - iii. 11. | e | Ye have compassed the Mount long enough.
 - f | Turn you northward.
 - g | Edom, Moab, Ammon, etc.
 - d | Sihon and Og slain.
- C | iii. 12-20. God hath given you this land to possess it.
- D | iii. 21-28. | h2 | Joshua commanded.
 - i2 | Lord wroth with me.
 - j2 | Thou shalt not go over.
 - k2 | Joshua—he shall go over.
- E | iii. 29. Abode in valley over against Beth-peor.

Two things stand out in this structure:--

- (1) That God had given Israel the land to possess, which He had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (i. 8 and iii. 18).
- (2) That the people failed to enter in because of unbelief, Joshua and Caleb being the exceptions.

Allied with these facts we have the intimidating presence of the giants, the sons of Anak, the unbelief that suggested the sending of the spies, and the failure even of Moses in the matter of sanctifying the Lord in his high and responsible office. We have dealt with the unbelief that prompted the sending of the spies of Volume XXII, pp. 202-208, and in articles dealing with the Hope and the Prize and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Under other headings we have sought to explain the teaching of Scripture dealing with the failure of Israel to enter into the land of promise, and the typical teaching of that failure in so far as it bears upon the ways of God in all dispensations. We would refer the reader to these articles, and also to I Cor. ix. 24 - x. 13.

Our subject at the moment is the presence of the Canaanites and other enemies that barred the way, when Israel were ready to go up and possess the land. A pronounced difference is made between the attitude that Israel were to adopt toward Esau, Moab and Ammon, and their attitude toward Sihon and Og:--

“Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot-breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession” (Deut. ii. 5).

“Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession” (ii. 9).

“And when thou comest over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession: because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession” (ii. 19).

In contrast with these prohibitions, we read concerning Sihon & Og and their lands:--

“Behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, King of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle” (ii. 24).

“Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og, King of Bashan came out against us thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon King of the Amorites” (iii. 1, 2).

The destruction of Sihon and Og was an utter destruction: “Men, women and children of every city were destroyed; none were left” (ii. 33, 34; iii. 3-6).

The lesson underlying this differentiation is as fundamental to the Church as it was to Israel. Let us seek to understand it.

First, let us observe one difference between these two classes. Esau was the brother of Jacob; Ammon and Moab were both the sons of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Sihon, on the other hand, was an Amorite (ii. 24), and Og one of the remnant of the “Rephaim”; the former was a Canaanite (Gen. x. 16), the latter one of the evil seed whose origin is

indicated in the opening verses of Gen. vi. The first thing, then, to remember is that here are the two seeds—Israel, Esau, Moab and Lot belonging to one line; Sihon, Og, the Canaanite and the Rephaim belonging to the other. In one case God gives possessions and preserves; in the other, He deprives of possessions and destroys.

Before Israel cross over the river Arnon Moses reminds them of a principle already in operation. When God had promised the land to Abraham, he was told, in effect, that his children would not be allowed to enter into possession until the iniquity of the Amorites was full (Gen. xv. 16). Let us observe what Moses said, and its application both to Israel and to ourselves:--

“The Emims dwelt there in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims; which also were accounted giants (*Rephaim*)” (Deut. ii. 10, 11).

“The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime: but the children of Esau succeeded them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did to the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them” (Deut. ii. 12).

“That (i.e., Ammon’s inheritance) also was accounted a land of giants (*Rephaim*); giants dwelt there in old time; and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims. A people great and many, and tall, as the Anakims: but the Lord destroyed them before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead” (Deut. ii. 20, 21).

It will be seen that in each case, the original holders of land were the “giants”, the progeny of evil. In each case, these were destroyed and their land was inherited “in their stead” by descendants of Abraham, Esau, Moab and Ammon. There are also the added words: “As Israel did unto the land of his possession” (ii. 12).

While, however, all these peoples have this in common, Israel itself is always considered separately and alone. Moab and Edom are but household servants in the day of the true David’s triumph: “Moab is my washpot, over Edom will I cast out my shoe” (Psa. cviii. 9). These relative positions indicate that among the one great circle of the true seed, there will be many differences in “glory” and sphere: all receiving a “justification unto life”, but not all “reigning in life” (*see* Rom. v. 12-21). Israel were forbidden to “meddle” with these other nations, linked as they were by ties of blood. The same word is repeated in Deut. ii. 24, where it is translated “contend”. The two passages emphasize the absolute distinction made between these two seeds. Israel were *forbidden* to “contend” with Edom, Moab and Ammon; but *commanded* to “contend” with Sihon.

We notice also that Israel were to pay for all the meat and drink that they consumed while passing through these territories; and they were reminded of the fact that through all their wanderings in the wilderness they had lacked nothing (Deut. ii. 7). A request for a passage “through thy land” was also sent to Sihon, King of Heshbon:--

“Let me pass through thy land: I will go along the highway, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet until I shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord our God giveth us” (Deut. ii. 26-29).

From this it appears that, had Sihon permitted Israel to pass through his territory, and had he supplied them with food and water as requested, Israel would not have destroyed his nation and inherited his land, their true inheritance being strictly beyond Jordan.

Let us now endeavour to express, in terms of church doctrine and dispensational truth, what this means to those whose blessing is defined according to the epistle to the Ephesians.

Israel's inheritance was not enjoyed as soon as it was promised; a period of waiting, of bondage, and of redemption intervened—waiting until the iniquity of the Amorite was full. The inheritance of the church of the mystery was allotted “before the overthrow of the world” (Eph. i. 3, 4) but the members of that church are found in the bondage of sin, needing redemption (Eph. i. 7). Their inheritance is future (Eph. i. 14). The sphere of their inheritance is in “heavenly places” and far above “principalities and powers”. This church is related in the flesh with other companies of God's children, just as Israel was related to Edom, Moab and Ammon; but as many of these are associated with this world, fellowship is restricted. Their endeavour is to live peaceably, not to strive, and to live as those whose primary object is to “pass through” this world, asking for no favours and wanting little more than “meat and drink”. Eph. vi. 12 speaks of this church as not “wrestling” with “flesh and blood”; just as Deut. ii. speaks of Israel not “meddling” or “contending” with Esau, Moab or Ammon. Eph. vi. 12 says that the foes of the church are “spiritual wickednesses”, which are the “world holders of this darkness”. These fallen principalities and powers, whose inheritance in the heavenlies is lost, and in whose realm of glory the church is soon to appear, act as Sihon acted when he would not let Israel “pass by him” (Deut. ii. 30). The result of this is that the church whose real foes are “over the Jordan”, and whose real conflict is depicted at the overthrow of Jericho, have to stand against the opposition of these spiritual Amorites, “the world holders of this darkness”. The interested reader is urged to re-read the articles entitled “Satan and the Church of the Mystery” (Volume XIX, pp. 129, 167, 179), and “The Threefold Conflict” (Volume XVI, page 138).

We conclude this article with a word or two concerning Og, King of Bashan, and his giant cities. Deut. iii. 4 tells us that Israel took “threescore cities” in the kingdom of Og in Bashan; and *The Companion Bible* adds a note: “They can all be seen and counted to-day” (See Dr. Porter's *Giant Cities of Bashan*). As some of our readers may not have access to this book, we feel sure that the following will be of interest:--

“That sixty wall cities, besides unwall'd towns a great many, should be found at such a remote age, far from the sea, with no rivers and little commerce, within a country not larger than an ordinary English county, appeared to me quite inexplicable and mysterious though it appeared it was strictly true. *On the spot with my own eyes I had verified it.* Lists of more than a hundred revived cities and villages in these mountains alone I had tested and found correct, though not complete. More than thirty of these I had myself either visited or observed. Of the high antiquity of these ruins scarce a doubt can be entertained.”

The following summary is from the notes of *Jameson* and *Bickersteth*:--

“The rude architecture and simple structure of the houses, the immense blocks of roughly hewn basaltic stone of which they are built, seemingly hard and as durable as iron, *the prodigious thickness of the walls, the colossal stone doors*, which do not turn on hinges, but on pivots, and some of which are *eighteen inches in thickness*, the ponderous stone flags of the roofs that are laid on massive walls, all indicate their being reared by the hands and for the habitation of a race of greater strength than ours—a mighty nation of giants.

The very names by which these cities and towns were known in the days of Og, are still applied to them by the Arabs; and every circumstances serves to confirm the proof that in the ancient cities of stone that are found still existing in the Haouran there are beheld the identical cities of the giant Rephaim—the cities of Og.”

Deuteronomy.

#3. Deut. xxxii. The song of Jehovah’s Name. pp. 81 - 86

As we have already remarked, much that occupies this fifth book of Moses is a recapitulation of the past, a revision of the law, and an appeal to the people as they are about to enter into their inheritance. In the two preceding articles we have sketched the book as a whole, and considered the opening section with its typical teaching. We now come to the close of the book and consider the great prophetic Song of Moses.

It would have been an attractive line of thought to regard Moses, in this Song, as traversing the history of Israel step by step, and the Song itself as capable of being divided up into sections, each referring to some specific period or dispensation. On examination, however, this view seemed to lack adequate foundation; so that we must approach the Song of Moses afresh, seeking from the Author that guidance, without which all our efforts must fail.

We observe in the opening verses, that the Song is closely related to the publishing of the name of the Lord:--

“Because I will publish the name of the LORD.
Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.
He is the Rock, His work is perfect:
For all His ways are judgment:
A God of truth and without iniquity,
Just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4).

The name “Jehovah” was God’s name and memorial “for the age”. It is given a N.T. expansion in the Revelation: “He Who was, and is, and is to come.” This covenant name spans the age, and carries with it the pledge that the early promise, though temporarily suspended, shall yet be realized. This we can trace in the Song before us, which we have called the Song of Jehovah’s Name.

Heaven and earth are called upon to hear this proclamation, the doctrine of which is likened to rain and dew upon the tender herb, and showers upon the grass (Deut. xxxii. 1, 2). This we learn from Psa. lxxii. 6 is a figure setting forth the restoration of Israel at the coming of the Lord:--

“He shall come down like rain upon the mowings (the grass having been cut and carried away, leaving all parched and apparently dead: as showers that water the earth.”

The Psalm that contains these words “consummates the prayers of David” (Psa. lxxii. 20), just as Deut. xxxii. consummates the desire of Moses.

This Song of Moses has been like a quarry out of which succeeding prophets have been led to take stones for the erection of the great temple of truth.

Isaiah’s prophecy traverses much the same ground as that covered in the Song. We give the following parallels as examples:--

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken” (Isa. i. 2, and Deut. xxxii. 1).

“I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me” (Isa. i. 2, and Deut. xxxii. 6, 13, 14, 15).

“Children that are corrupters” (Isa. i. 4, and Deut. xxxii. 5).

“Ye rulers of Sodom ye people of Gomorrah” (Isa. i. 10, and Deut. xxxii. 32).

“Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” (Isa. v. 4, and Deut. xxxii. 32).

“Thou, Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer”

“But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay” (Isa. lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8, and Deut. xxxii. 6).

“Blessed be Israel Mine inheritance” (Isa. xix. 25, and Deut. xxxii. 9).

“Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth” (Isa. lviii. 14, and Deut. xxxii. 13).

“O Jacob, My Servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen” (Isa. xlv. 2, and Deut. xxxii. 15).

“Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength” (Isa. xvii. 10, and Deut. xxxii. 15, 18).

“The acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God.”

“For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed is come” (Isa. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4, and Deut. xxxii. 35, 41, 43).

A collection of all the citations from and allusions to this Song of Moses would take us through a great deal of Scripture, and would provide a most trustworthy commentary. We cannot do this in the present article. Some readers, however, may be able to pursue the subject, and so check the exposition that we give here. Taking a broad view of the Song, we see that it shows the downward path that Israel trod, lightly esteeming the Lord their Redeemer, abusing His gifts, being set aside by Him for a time, and then, in the fullness of His mercy, being delivered when their power was gone and their helpers proved to be vain. The whole is an exposition of the name Jehovah. He is a God of truth and at the same time without iniquity; a God of truth in that He keeps all His promises, yet a God Who is just and right, in that He does not pass over sin as of no consequence. The key to this Song seems to be the recurring name “Jehovah”. The title comes

eight times—a number that suggests resurrection, when Israel shall indeed be a blessed people, and their land a delight. We will, therefore, set out the structure of the Song, using the eight occurrences of “Jehovah” as our guide. The title is denoted in the structure by the word “LORD”.

The Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii.).

*Being a proclamation of the name Jehovah,
the covenant-keeping God of Israel, in His twofold character:--*

- (1) A God of truth; fulfilling His promises of blessing.
- (2) Without iniquity; not excusing His people’s sins.

- A | 1-4. The name of the LORD proclaimed.
His work perfect. “Work” = Heb. *poal*;
“perfect” = Heb. *tamim* (meaning “complete”).
- B | 5-8. Do ye thus requite the LORD?
“Requite” = Heb. *gamal* (used of fruit-bearing).
Israel looked upon as unclean (“spot”, “corrupters”).
Called a “perverse and crooked generation”.
The number of Israel mentioned.
- C | 9. The LORD the portion of His people,
and Jacob the lot of His inheritance.
- D | 10-14. The LORD alone led Israel.
No strange god with Him.
Israel did eat of the increase of the fields.
Honey, oil, butter, milk, lambs, rams, wheat and wine.

ISRAEL SET ASIDE.

- D | 15-25. The LORD abhorred Israel.
Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.
And lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
Strange gods provoke the Lord.
- A | 26-28. The LORD hath not done this.
“Done” = Heb. *paal* (*see* “A” above).
The scattering of Israel.
“To cease” opposite to “perfect” (in “A” above).
- B | 29-33. The LORD shut up His people
“Shut up” refers to the uncleanness of Israel (*see* “B” above).
Their requital (*see* “B” above). Grapes of gall.
Their perversity (*see* “B” above). Sodom and Gomorrah.
Their numbers (*see* “B” above). How should one chase a thousand?
- C | 34-43. The LORD will vindicate His people,
He fulfils the meaning of His name.
He is righteous as well as faithful.
He is the portion of His people; they are the lot of His inheritance.
He will be merciful unto His land and to His people.

A word or two of explanation with regard to some of the features thrown into prominence by this structure, will enable the reader to appreciate the light that it throws on the general trend of the Song.

The words, “a God of truth”, indicate much more than their ordinary English meaning. The Hebrew word is *emunah* and is translated “faithfulness” 18 times; also as “faith”, “faithful” and “faithfully”. The word occurs just 49 times in the O.T., a significant number indicating perfection or completeness, and especially associated with the Jubilee when all forfeited inheritances were restored. There is a marked contrast here between the faithful Lord and His unfaithful people, for in verse 20 we read: “They are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith” (*emun*).

The word “work” in the statement, “His work is perfect”, is the Hebrew *poal*. Now it is of interest to know that the last occurrence of *emunah*, “truth”, is in Hab. ii. 4; and the last occurrence of *poal*, “work”, is in Hab. iii. 2, where a revival is referred to. This word “work” is in structural correspondence with the verb “to work” (Heb. *paal*) in verse 27. There, the Lord says that He would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men, were He not apprehensive lest their adversaries should become proud, and imagine that by their own prowess they had destroyed Israel. The Lord takes the full responsibility not only of Israel’s blessing, but also of their scattering and punishment. They are His people, even though under judgment; it is His land, even though desolate.

The work of the Lord is declared to be “perfect”. The Hebrew word indicates completeness, something finished; it looks forward, beyond failure and dispersion, to the restoration and blessing with which the Song ends.

A title is given to the Lord in this opening section, which recurs throughout the Song. The references to this title of “the Rock” are as follows:--

- “He is the Rock, His work is perfect” (verse 4).
- “He lightly esteemed the Rock of His salvation” (verse 15).
- “Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful” (verse 18).
- “Except their Rock had sold them” (verse 30).
- “Their rock is not as our Rock” (verse 31).
- “Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted” (verse 37).

We have here five references to the Lord, and two to false gods; making a total of seven occurrences.

Coming to the next section, we have the question, “Do ye requite the Lord?” And in the structure there is a note to the effect that “requite” is connected with fruit-bearing. The corresponding member speaks of their vine being “the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah”; their grapes of gall; and their wine as the poison of asps. This is the strange requital for all the Lord’s goodness to them, and is the burden of the Song of Isa. v. *Gamal*, the word “requite”, comes in Isa. xviii. 5, where it speaks of the sour grape “ripening”. It comes also in Numb. xvii. 8 where it speaks of the rod “yielding” almonds.

Israel are looked upon in this second section as unclean: “A perverse and crooked generation hath corrupted itself: to be no sons of His is their blemish” (Deut. xxxii. 5, *Companion Bible*). (The Septuagint reads: “spotted children”).

In the corresponding member, we read: “The LORD shut up His people.” This word (“shut up”) is used in connection with the cleansing of the leper (*see* Lev. xiii. 4, 5, 11, etc.). The LXX uses the word, translated “to give up” in Rom. i. 24. And the words of the apostle in Rom. xi. 32 (margin) refer directly to this clause in the Song:--

“For God hath shut them all up together in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.”

Israel are called a “perverse and crooked generation” in Deut. xxxii. 5-8, and likened to Sodom and Gomorrah in verses 29-33. In their blessing, the bounds of the nations are set in deference to Israel: “According to the number of the children of Israel.” And in their dispersion, the reference to numbers appears again:--

“How is it possible that one of the nations should chase a thousand of Israel, and two put ten thousand to flight, except it be that their Rock had sold them?” (Deut. xxxii. 30).

Neither Pharaoh nor Nebuchadnezzar with all their hosts could have made bondmen of Israel, unless the Lord had “sold them” and “shut them up”.

The members C | 9 and C | 34-43 speak for themselves. Israel and their land are the Lord’s. However much the nations may be permitted to punish that people and desolate that land, they have at the last to reckon with the Lord; and Israel and their land shall eventually find mercy.

Member D | 10-14 and D | 15-25 have their own story to tell. The first term of the covenant deals with idolatry; and this term was sadly broken by Israel again and again. Prosperity found them out. They waxed fat, but did not gratefully recognize the Lord Who “led” them and Who “fed” them (two words which speak of the Lord as their Shepherd).

D | 15-25, the first member of the second half of the structure, is the first to deal with Israel’s punishment. The LORD abhorred them; the LORD shut up His people, and sold them into captivity.

The last verses (34-43) takes us into the Day of the Lord; and are parallel with the Book of the Revelation.

The Song that we have been considering in this article, with its emphasis upon His perfect work, and His faithfulness and righteousness, is yet to be sung once more:--

“And they sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints” (Rev. xv. 3).

So is sounded out by two songs the history of this people of Israel; for the Song of Moses would never have eventuated in blessing had it not been true that there was to be added to it, in due time, the Song of the Lamb.

Deuteronomy.
#4. The blessing of Moses (xxxiii. 1-29).
pp. 135 - 139

Following the great Song which is recorded in Deut. xxxii., comes the “blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death”.

This blessing opens with a reference to Sinai not so much in its terror as in its covenant character, and closes with Israel dwelling in safety alone, saved by the Lord. Between these two extremes, which occupy verses 2-5 and 26-29, the tribes are enumerated and a blessing apportioned to each. Simeon’s name does not occur in the A.V. text, but this may be partly explained by the fact that Simeon’s inheritance fell “within the inheritance of the children of Judah” (Josh. xix. 1). The Alexandrian manuscript, however, together with the Aldine and Complutensian editions, read:--

“Let Reuben live and not die; and Simeon’s men be few.”

Some think that the repetition of the negative in verse 6 is unjustified. But the matter is obscure, and not of sufficiently vital interest to ourselves to warrant a wider search.

Adhering to the text of the A.V. we may summarize the blessing as follows:--

The blessing of Israel by Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 1-29).

- A | 1-5. The people loved, King in Jeshurun.
“Thy saints are in Thy hand.”
- B | 6-25. | a1 | 6. REUBEN.—Life and prosperity.
a2 | 7. JUDAH.—Royal. Warlike.
a3 | 8-11. LEVI.—Priests. Proven.
a4 | 12. BENJAMIN.—Temple area.
a5 | 13-17. JOSEPH.—The bush. Ephraim and Manasseh.
a6 | 18, 19. ZEBULUN.—Commercial. Seas.
a7 | 18, 19. ISAACHAR.—Domestic. Sand.
a8 | 20, 21. GAD.—Enlarge. Chose part for himself.
a9 | 22. DAN.—A lion’s whelp. Bashan.
a10 | 23. NAPHTALI.—Fertile land.
a11 | 24, 25. ASHER.—Blessing of children.
- A | 26-29. The people loved. None like God of Jeshurun.
“Underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Just a brief note upon any feature that may be obscure is all we can do in the exposition of this blessing of the tribes.

“*He came with ten thousand of His saints*” (verse 2).—Two points of interest may be noted here. First, the Hebrew for “ten thousand of His saints” is *meribbath kadesh*, differing very little from the locality *Meribah Kadesh* mentioned in xxxii. 51. Secondly, the word “saints” must not be limited to human beings. It includes angels; and we know from Scripture that Israel received the law “at the disposition of angels” (Psa. lxxviii. 17; Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2). The word “saints” occurs again in the prophecy of the second coming found in Zech xiv. 5: “The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee.” This is alluded to in I Thess. iii. 13: “At the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.” This passage in I Thess. is sometimes wrongly used to teach the coming of the church “with the Lord”, when He descends from heaven.

The giving of the law from Mount Sinai is looked upon in Deut. xxxiii. as a great blessing. In one sense the law was “against” Israel, as against all mankind, by reason of the weakness of the flesh, but taken as a whole, it is spoken of as an inheritance, a signal favour, and something to love and desire above gold:--

“And they sat down at Thy feet. Every one shall receive of Thy words. Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob” (xxxiii. 3, 4).

When the apostle Paul is speaking of the advantage of being a Jew, he emphasizes in the first place the oracles of God:--

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Rom. iii. 1, 2).

“*He was King in Jeshurun.*”—When Israel asked for an earthly king, it was that they should be “like the nations”; and in this demand they virtually rejected the Lord: “They have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (I Sam. viii. 5-7). These words find an echo in Luke xix. 14.

Passing on to the blessings of the tribes, let us note the following:--

Reuben.—Reuben had lost his birthright (Gen. xlix. 4), yet he was to have a posterity and a place. Their inheritance was on the East of Jordan (Numb. xxxii. 1-5) and they were often exposed to attack. They dwindled to about the ninth in tribal rank.

Simeon.—Whether we read the passage according to the Alexandrian Manuscript, cited above, or whether we consider Simeon to be included in Judah, we know that they were so reduced by plague as to become the smallest of the tribes (Numb. xxvi. 14). This probably accounts for their inclusion with Judah.

Judah.—From Judah sprang David, the warrior king. Moses prays that Judah may be heard and brought back triumphant unto his people, and that his “hands may be sufficient for him”.

Levi.—The conduct of Levi on the occasion of the worship of the golden calf, when he spared neither his own brethren nor children in his zeal for the true worship of God, is here dwelt upon with favour. To this tribe pertained the service of the Lord and the teaching of the people.

Benjamin.—“The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety near Him”—that is, the inheritance of Benjamin included the dwelling-place of the Most High. “He shall dwell between His shoulders” refers possibly to the fact that “He” (that is God) would honour the tribe of Benjamin by dwelling upon the mount of Zion.

Joseph.—Joseph included the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. His sign was Taurus, the Bull, as Judah’s was the Lion. The words of verse 17 ought to be rendered: “His glory is like that of a first-born bull.” “The goodwill of Him that dwell in the bush” refers to Exod. iii. 2 and the purpose of the Lord in Israel’s redemption.

Zebulun and Isaachar are put together. They were sons of the same mother, but different in character. Zebulun carried on a trade in purple dye, a commerce that brought them a great revenue. Isaachar’s inheritance embraced the fertile plains of Jezreel, Esdraelon and Megiddo; and this tribe settled down to its enjoyment. Among the exports that are associated with Zebulun is that of glass, made from the sand at the mouth of the river Belus.

Gad.—

“He appointed the first part for himself, because there, in a portion of the law-giver, was he seated; and he came with the heads of the people” (Deut. xxxiii. 20, 21).

These words have been variously translated. The following paraphrase may be of service:--

“He asked and obtained for himself the first portion of the land which Israel conquered, namely, the territory of Sihon the Amorite, and he was settled there with full possession at the consent of Moses the law-giver. There was a condition attached which Gad fulfilled, by crossing the Jordan and helping his brethren in the other tribes to obtain their own portion of the promised land.”

“In a portion of the law-giver, was he seated” is sometimes translated: “the portion of the hidden lawgiver.” This is supposed to refer to the fact that somewhere in the territory of Gad was buried in an unknown grave Moses the great law-giver.

Dan.—Dan is first of all compared to a lion’s whelp. When he had become full-grown, he leaped from Bashan and secured territory further North, including Laish (Judges xviii. 29).

Naphtali.—"The West." The inheritance of the tribe is clearly defined in Josh. xix. 32-39.

The fact that the Mediterranean Sea was on the West Coast of the land of Canaan led Israel to use the word "Sea" for the direction "West". In this instance, the word so translated refers to the Sea of Galilee.

Asher.—"Let him dip his foot in oil." Asher's inheritance abounded in olive groves. The margin reads, "Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass". The hills of Lebanon abounded in minerals. Iron is still found there, and copper is often spoken of in connection with the Tyrians.

So with an ascription of praise to God—"there is none like unto God of Jeshurun"—and Israel dwelling "in safety alone", and the "land of corn and wine" as the inheritance of a people "saved by the Lord", the blessing of Moses the man of God comes to an end.

The closing chapter of the book records the ascent of the mountain by Moses, and the vision he there received of all the land which the Lord had sworn unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There he died, and was buried by the Lord—an honour accorded to Moses alone. In full vigour the representative of the law died, a symbol of the law itself and its lasting hold upon men until it, too, was removed by death. Moses was mourned by Israel for thirty days. The closing words of Deuteronomy seem a fitting epitaph for that unknown grave. Let us repeat them here, as we bid Moses farewell, and prepare to arise and follow Joshua across Jordan into the land of promise:--

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all that great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel" (Deut. xxxiv. 10-12).

JOSHUA.

#1. The end of the law Newness of life (i. 1, 2). pp. 170 - 174

We have now passed in review the five books of Moses, and although we have devoted nearly one hundred articles to the elucidation of their teaching, every reader is well aware that we have but skimmed the surface, leaving the depths still unsounded. However, it is not our purpose in the series to do more than point out the most obvious features, features that throw light upon the dealings of God with man, that illuminate the purpose of the ages, and that by prophecy, type and doctrine reveal the Being and attributes of the Lord God Himself.

And so we approach the sixth book of the Scriptures, the book of Joshua, in order to learn something more concerning the purposes of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. The book of Joshua stands first in that section of the Hebrew Bible named "The Prophets", and is very definitely related to the closing books of the same section. The following arrangement, which appeared first in *Dispensational Truth*, and with somewhat different notes in the first Appendix of *The Companion Bible*, makes this clear:--

The Structure of the Prophets.

- A | JOSHUA. "The Lord of all the earth."
 - Failure to possess the land (xviii. 3).
 - The Canaanite still in possession (xv. 63).
- B | JUDGES. Failure. Thirteen judges.
 - Israel forsaking and returning to God. "No King" (xxi. 25).
- C | SAMUEL. Saul (type of Antichrist). David (type of Christ).
 - Israel want to be "like the nations".
- D | KINGS. Decline and failure under Kings.
 - Removal from the land.
- D | ISAIAH. Israel's only hope, final blessing, and restoration.
 - Messiah—God's King.
- C | JEREMIAH. Nebuchadnezzar (type of Antichrist).
 - David's "Righteous Branch".
 - "Raised up" the Deliverer.
 - Israel sent into captivity among the nations.
- B | EZEKIEL. The glory of God forsaking and returning to the land and people.
 - Jehovah Shammah. The Lord is there.
- A | MINOR PROPHETS. "The Lord of all the earth."
 - Joshua the High Priest.
 - Restoration of Israel to the land.
 - "No more Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. xiv. 21).

The most superficial study of these eight books shew an unfolding purpose. At either end stands one named Joshua, the first a Captain, the second a High Priest. The name

Joshua and the name Jesus are the same (*see* Heb. iv. 8, margin), and we are immediately aware of the foreshadowing of a greater “Captain” (Heb. ii. 10) and a greater “High Priest” (Heb. iv. 15) who is to lead many sons, not only into the land of Canaan, but to “glory”.

The covenant made by God with Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and Jacob, is concerned with a “Land” and a “Seed”, the Seed including the literal descendants known as Israel, and “Thy seed which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16). The book of Joshua is particularly concerned with the entry into the land promised to the fathers.

Although the land of promise is spoken of in glowing terms in the Scriptures, we must admit that in its largest extent it is by no means a great country, and if we limit our survey to the extent of Palestine itself, its size is small indeed, being not much greater in area than the Principality of Wales. There must be something above and beyond the territory itself that justifies all that is written around those few square miles.

Considered as a single fact of history, the entry into Canaan is insignificant when compared with other migrations and conquests. Nevertheless *this* exodus of people and *this* conquest are accompanied by most wonderful miraculous interventions, not only miracles affecting the immediate surroundings and limited to the earth, but also extending to the sun and the moon (Josh. iii. 14-17; x. 12, 13).

The peopling of the promised land with the chosen race is one of the chief factors in the salvation of the nations of the earth, and it is because this spot of earth is the chosen geographical centre from which light and blessing, rule and law shall flow out to the ends of the earth that it occupies such an important place in the Divine plan. And further, Joshua is pre-eminently a type of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the experiences of Israel as recorded in this book have been “written for our learning”. The whole history foreshadows the present experience of the redeemed, and their entry into the inheritance in God’s own time. While, therefore, we shall give attention to the actual historic facts that are here recorded, we shall be more concerned with the light they throw upon the purpose of the ages and our association with it. Of course the dispensation of the mystery finds no foreshadowing in O.T. types; it was hid in God until revealed through the apostle Paul. But the walk and warfare of the redeemed in all ages have much in common, and though the paths trodden lead to widely different destinies, they are nevertheless in many respects parallel.

The first lesson, and one that is fundamental for us all, is contained in the first two verses of chapter i.:-

“Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ minister, saying, Moses My servant is dead; now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel” (Josh. i. 1, 2).

The word “Now” with which the book opens is in the Hebrew *vav*, and is but one letter, in the form of a hook. It links the book of Joshua to the preceding books of Moses.

On the other hand, while this suggests a link, there is also a most definite division. Joshua cannot lead Israel into the land of promise until it can be said, “Moses My servant is dead”. To those who know the teaching of the epistles to the Romans or the Galatians, the typical teaching of this is obvious. But we must not assume such knowledge on the part of our readers, and the lesson is important enough to warrant careful statement. The following passages set forth in doctrinal language what is set forth in type in Josh. i. 1, 2:--

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21).

“For the law was our pedagogue (tutor or governor, a household slave who had charge of a child until he had grown to years of discretion, *see* Gal. iv. 1-3) to bring us unto Christ but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a pedagogue” (Gal. iii. 24, 25).

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb. vii. 19).

In the death of Moses is typified the death of the law, and death to the law of all who are saved. And so we are not surprised to read the words, “Now therefore arise”, and to discover that the Hebrew word *kum*, translated “arise”, is used of resurrection (Isa. xxvi. 19), and in the words of the Saviour, *Talitha cumi* (Mark v. 41). The LXX uses the word *anastas*, so frequently employed in the N.T. for “resurrection”.

“Moses is *dead*: now therefore *arise*.”—These two phrases together suggests the repeated doctrine of the epistles of Paul that death to law is with a view to life in Christ; that we are not only reckon ourselves indeed “dead unto sin”, but also just as surely “alive unto God” through Jesus Christ our Lord. Newness of life, however, is not the end; it is itself only a means to an end. The command to “arise” is followed by the command to “walk in newness of life”, “to serve in newness of spirit”.

“Moses My servant is DEAD; now therefore ARISE, GO OVER this Jordan.”

We have already seen the insistence upon the death of Moses before Joshua, the type of Christ, could receive the command to “arise”. On a number of occasions Moses made it clear that he could not take the children of Israel over Jordan:--

“Get thee up into the top of Pisgah and behold it with thine eyes; for thou *shalt not go over* this Jordan. But charge Joshua and encourage him, and strengthen him; for *he shall go over* before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” (Deut. iii. 27, 28).

“I must not go over ye shall go over” (Deut. iv. 22).

Further emphasis upon resurrection is found in the words of Josh. i. 11:--

“Within *three days* ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land.”

And when at length Israel did pass over Jordan, it was in many respects a repetition of the earlier experience of the crossing of the Red Sea (Josh. iii. 17). The typical teaching

of this repetition will be better appreciated when we have surveyed the intervening chapters. It can, however, be seen to have a distinct bearing upon the typical teaching we have already noticed. The meaning, too, of Jordan will be better understood when we arrive at chapter iii.

There are one or two things still to be seen in Josh. i. 1, 2, and we therefore return to that passage. We have considered the fact that Moses was *dead*, and the command to *arise* and to *go over*, indicating separation as well as newness of life. We have also the added words: "Thou and all this people." In Deut. xxxi. 3 we read:--

"The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said."

Joshua represents the Lord, and the people are associated with him. This brings before us those great doctrines that are associated with the words "with Christ". Let the reader prayerfully ponder the significance to himself of these words:--

"Moses is *dead*; now therefore *arise, go over* this Jordan, *thou and all this people*, unto the *land*, which I do give to them."

In these words we have foreshadowed the end of the law, and its inability to save or to lead into an inheritance; the new sphere of life and activity opened up by the resurrection of Christ; the repetition of the Red Sea crossing, making the division occasioned by redemption our own experimentally; and the fact that the glory that lies ahead is ours in gift and promise.

May it be ours to follow our true Joshua closely, fully and utterly, so that we shall not only know the bliss of salvation, but also the added joy of His "Well done".

Great and precious promises.

#7. “The hope of the promise made of God” (Acts xxvi. 6). pp. 21 - 23

We have seen that the promises of God are sure because they come to us by the way of faith and grace, not by the way of law and works. They are sure, also, because, however many they many be, and whether to be enjoyed on earth, in the New Jerusalem or at the right hand of God, they all find their Yea in Christ, and their Amen through Him. The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, and every one shall be fulfilled. Together with the promise we have also the divine nature (according to Peter) or the holy promissory Spirit (according to Paul), a seal and earnest of the inheritance yet to be enjoyed.

There is one thing, however, that we have not yet considered, which is so antagonistic (it is called an enemy), so venomous (it has a sting), and so mighty (he who holds its power is the Devil himself) that it writes “Iahbod” over the fairest schemes and covers all in dust. There is no need for us to elaborate; the enemy is death, and if there be no resurrection of the dead our faith is vain, and every promise doomed to failure. It is our joy to know that the promises of God are essentially linked with the resurrection.

Most of our readers are acquainted with the general disposition of subject-matter in Ephesians; and we have considered quite recently the question of the promise in Eph. i. 13, 14. We can start from this point on our new quest, for although the actual word “resurrection” is not used in the passage, resurrection is nevertheless there. The words “an earnest until the redemption of the purchased possession”, indicate a present pledge of a future inheritance. Earlier in the chapter we learn that we have been predestinated unto the adoption, and Rom. viii. speaks of “waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. viii. 23). Here, therefore, is resurrection, both in Eph. i. and in Rom. viii.

Eph. i. 3-14 is threefold, dealing with the *Will* of the Father, the *Work* of the Son, and the *Witness* of the Spirit. This is followed by a threefold prayer, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, the riches of the inheritance, and the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe. This third part of the prayer corresponds with the third division of Eph. i. 3-14, and the phrase, “the holy promissory Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance”, finds its explanation and amplification in that power which is to us-ward who believe, and which is nothing less than the mighty power which was wrought in Christ when He was raised from the dead.

We believe it would be safe to say that there is no reference throughout the N.T. to the promises of God without some aspect of resurrection in the context. Let us turn, for example, to Paul’s defence before Agrippa given in Acts xxvi:--

“And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, *that God should raise the dead?*” (Acts xxvi. 6-8).

There is no need for proof here that in the mind of Paul “the hope of the promise made of God” and the resurrection of the dead were inseparable.

Among the fathers who received the promise of God Abraham stands out pre-eminently. Let us turn to the inspired comment upon his faith given in Rom. iv. In verses 13, 14 and 16 the promise to Abraham is specifically mentioned; and at verse 17 the apostle speaks of Abraham’s own reaction to the promise of God, and reveals the secret spring of all his faith and hope:--

“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him Whom he believed, even God, Who quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform” (Rom. iv. 17-21).

Comment upon such plain speaking is superfluous. The God that stood behind the promise to a man and woman as good as dead, must be the God of resurrection.

We find the same facts presented in a slightly different form and for a different purpose in Heb. xi.:--

“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. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore innumerable” (Heb. xi. 11, 12).

Here the birth of Isaac is again seen to be nothing short of life from the dead.

Heb. xi. takes us forward to that crisis in Abraham’s experience, when he became willing to offer up his son Isaac. Here again we may perceive the strength of his faith in the God of resurrection:--

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. xi. 17-19).

Associated with the promises of God there is His own *power* to raise the dead, there is His own *Son* Who was raised from the dead, and there is His own *purpose* to raise all His

children from the dead. To realize these things will strengthen our faith, still our murmurs, minister to our patience, and enable us to walk worthily:--

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

#8. “According to that which was spoken” (Rom. iv. 18). pp. 75, 76

We have seen much to encourage us regarding the character of the promises of God, and also the character of the God Who has made the promises. How do we know these promises? And what warrant have we to believe them?

Among the passages that have been before us in this series are the following: Rom. iv.; Gal. iii.; II Pet. i. and iii.; II Cor. vii. 1; Eph. i. 13, 14. In each of these passages we shall find an insistence upon the Word of God as the vehicle of the promise and the ground of our faith. Let us consider these passages in the order given above.

In Rom. iv. we do not find that Abraham rested his faith in the Scriptures, for the simple reason that there were no Scriptures at that time. The parallel, however, is clear, for the Scriptures are but the spoken word of God perpetuated for all time, and Abraham believed what God had said:--

“Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: *according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be*” (Rom. iv. 18).

Abraham did not vaguely believe in a benevolent Providence, or in a “destiny that shapes our ends”. There was no fanaticism in believing so strange a promise. As the simple statement of Gen. xv. 6 records: “He believed in the Lord.”

Now it is most essential to us all that we really do recognize that when we believe the testimony of the Scriptures, be they written by Moses or Paul, we are actually “believing in the Lord”. Gen. xv. and Rom. iv. together make this plain:--

“And he believed in the Lord” (Gen. xv. 6).
“He believed according to that which was spoken” (Rom. iv. 17, 18).

Turning next to Gal. iii. we find this same inter-relationship:--

“*He saith* not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of One, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16).

Earlier and later in the chapter, we have the following:--

“And *the Scripture, foreseeing* that God would justify the heathen through faith, *preached before* the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8).

“But *the Scripture hath concluded* all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. iii. 22).

Here again the Scripture is placed upon the same level as that which “He saith”.

Turning now to II Pet. i. and iii. we find the closing verses of chapter i. occupied with the question of the inspiration of Scripture:--

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. i. 19-21).

What confirmation of the promises we have in these words.

It may be remembered that when we considered Peter’s testimony to the “exceeding great and precious promises” we found them closely associated with the “partaking of the divine nature” (II Pet. i. 4). We must now observe that, closely allied with that “divine nature” is “divine power”:--

“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (II Pet. i. 3).

Without this power, the promise would be of none effect. So, in the same chapter, the apostle, speaking of the coming of the Lord, writes:--

“We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you *the power* and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of *His majesty*” (II Pet. i. 16).

Another example of the association of promise and power is II Tim. i. 1-7:--

“According to the *promise* of life God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*”

We glory, therefore, not only in the faithfulness of our God to all His promises, but we glory also in His mighty power whereby all those promises shall be accomplished. He Who is the “Power of God” is also the “Wisdom of God”. In Christ faithfulness, ability and wisdom meet, to the glory of God the Father and for the consolation of His people.

**#9. “He is faithful that promised” (Heb. x. 23).
pp. 108 - 110**

The closing words of the preceding article, which dealt with the close connection between the promises and the Word of God, spoke of glorifying God for His faithfulness. The faithfulness of God to His Word of promise is absolutely essential, that we are apt to treat it as we do other essential things, such as the sun in the sky, or the air we breathe. It is not good, however, to take as a matter of course so glorious a fact, and we will therefore devote this short article to that which must underlie both the Word of God and the work of Christ, namely, the faithfulness of the Lord.

A most precious light upon our faith in God is shed by a recognition of this great basic truth. When Rom. iv. 3 speaks of Abraham’s faith it says:--

“For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

When we turn back to the passage that is quoted we find a slightly different wording:--

“And he believed in the Lord: and He counted it to Him for righteousness” (Gen. xv. 6).

The shallow critic who sees no further than words, may raise a quibble, or consider that such difference nullifies verbal inspiration. To those who love the Word such a difference is worth twenty sermons on faith. When Abraham believed God, he actually believed *in the faithfulness* of the Lord, which is implied in the words; “He believed in the Lord”, and every act of faith on our part must be nothing short of that. If God could be unfaithful at any point or in any thing, our faith would be nothing worth. Faith in God demands as its rock foundation faithfulness on the part of the Lord, and the two statements concerning Abraham illumine the fact. We find it carried forward by the words written concerning Sarah’s faith:--

“Through faith she judged Him faithful Who had promised” (Heb. xi. 11).

Not only are we apt to forget how the whole fabric of God’s Word and purpose hangs upon His faithfulness to His own promises and to the word of His Son, but we are also likely to forget how much hung upon the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ to the undertaking to which He was pledged in love. So, in Gal. iii. we read:--

“For if the inheritance be out of (*ek*) law, it is no more out of (*ek*) promise for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been out of (*ek*) law but the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise out of (*ek*) the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. iii. 18-22).

Now if the expression, “the faith of Jesus Christ”, means the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ, we have in effect this statement:--

“The promise which is out of faith in Jesus Christ is to them that believe in Jesus Christ”,

which is an unnecessary repetition. Moreover, the expression, “out of the faith of Jesus Christ”, is set in contrast with “out of the law” in the preceding verses. Now “out of the law” looks to the law as the source, and “out of the faith of Jesus Christ” looks to that faith as a source, and that faith is none other than His faithfulness unto death.

Rom. iii. 3 and 7 use the word “faith” and “truth” interchangeably:--

“Shall their unbelief make *the faith of God* of none effect?” (Rom. iii. 3).
“For if *the truth of God* hath more abounded” (Rom. iii. 7).

This being the case, Peter’s attitude to those who said, “Where is the promise of His coming?” is a foregone conclusion. He says of such:--

“For this they are willingly ignorant of, that by the Word of God” (II Pet. iii. 5).
“As also in all his epistles the other scriptures” (II Pet. iii. 16).

The exhortation of II Cor. vii. 1, it will be remembered, follows a series of promises collected from different parts of O.T. Scripture, all which deal with the question of the purpose and provision of God for dwelling with His people. It does not simply say, “Let us cleanse ourselves”, but rather, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves”, and these promises are all part of the written Word of God.

With the revelation of the mystery, quotation of the earlier scriptures almost ceased, for the reason that a new revelation is therein made, based upon a phase of God’s purpose not dealt with in the earlier scriptures, but essentially hid in God until the time of its manifestation.

Eph. i. 13, 14 is no exception to the rule that the promises of God are not to be divorced from His Word. In these verses, and used in such a way that it is impossible to separate, is the “hearing” and the “believing” of the Word of truth and the “sealing” and the “earnest” of the “holy promissory spirit”.

There are many great and precious promises, and while we must be careful to divide the Word of truth aright, because the promises made to Abraham or to David do not necessarily belong to the Church of the One Body, it still remains true that whatever may be said of the stability and the certainty of such last mentioned promises and the glorious fact that all of them are found in Christ, may be said with equal truth and equal comfort regarding those promises that belong exclusively to the Mystery. In this series we are not attempting to differentiate, so much as to see what is common to all the promises of God, trusting thereby to minister grace to our readers and to glorify God for His faithfulness.

**#10. “Fully persuaded that what He had promised,
He was able also to perform” (Rom. iv. 21).
pp. 153 - 155**

It is an unspeakable blessing to realize the truth of the fact considered in our last article, that “He is faithful that promised”. Yet there is something more. While faithfulness to one’s purpose is essential to success, yet it may be defeated by lack of power or lack of wisdom. It is therefore necessary for us to see that not only does the Scripture ascribe faithfulness to the Lord as the Promiser, but power also.

In connection with Abraham and the promise made to him, we find references not only to his faith and hope, but to his strength and weakness. And just as we have learned that our faith is but a reflex of His faithfulness, so we shall learn that our strength of patience and faith and hope is but the reflex of His great power to carry out all His word:--

“And being *not weak* in faith he *staggered not* at the promise of God through unbelief, but was *strong* in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was *able* also to perform” (Rom. iv. 19-21).

In Abraham and Sarah we have set forth the complete rest of faith. Sarah judged Him *FAITHFUL* Who had promised, and Abraham was persuaded that He was *ABLE TO PERFORM*. What more do we need?

The word “able” is really “of power”, and the alliteration of verse 21 may be helpful:--

“Abraham was fully *persuaded*, that what God had *promised*, He was of *power* to *perform*.”

In Heb. xi., where Sarah accounts God *faithful*, we shall find that Abraham accounts Him *able*:--

“By faith Abraham offered up Isaac accounting that God was *able* to raise Him even from the dead” (Heb. xi. 17-19).

In an earlier paper we observed the connection between “the holy spirit of promise” of Eph. i. 13, and the prayer of Eph. i. 19: “That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of the power.” When we made the comparison before, it was to show the close relationship that exists between the promise, the earnest, and the resurrection. We turn now to the same passage to show the close connection between the promise and the power. Yet, after all, the only power that is effective in a world held by the bondage of corruption, is the power of resurrection; so that all these things are intimately connected.

In Rom. i. 1-4 we have another combination. In earlier articles we have seen the association of the promise with the Scriptures and with the Person of Christ, and here, in Rom. i. 1-4, we have all three combined with the thought of resurrection power:--

“The gospel of God, which He had *promised* afore by His prophets in the *holy scriptures* concerning *His Son* Jesus Christ our Lord declared to be the Son of God with *power*, according to *the spirit* of holiness by the *resurrection* of the dead.”

When we considered the great and precious promise of II Pet. i. 4 we found that its great source of strength was the partaking of the divine nature. We now draw attention to the fact that this same promise is said to be “according to His divine power” (II Pet. i. 3). It should be understood that most of the occurrences of the word “able” in the N.T. are translations of *dunamai* or *dunatos*, both derived from the same word translated “power”. While the substitution of the word “power” is not recommended as a translation, it is nevertheless suggestive. Let us look at some “promises” that are pledged by this divine ability or power. The restoration of Israel under the figure of the olive tree and its branches is assured by this fact of power, and so with other promises:--

“For God is *of power* to graft them in again” (Rom. xi. 23).

“The blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am of *power* to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, Lord” (Matt. ix. 28).

“Now unto Him who is of *power* (*dunamai*) to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the *power* (*dunamis*) that worketh in us” (Eph. iii. 20).

“That I may know Him and the *power* (*dunamis*) of his resurrection like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is of *power* (*dunamai*) even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii. 10-21).

“Wherefore He is of *power* also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. vii. 25).

With the latter reference, compare Heb. vii. 16, where we find this power is called “the power of an endless life”. Read through the epistle of Jude, get some idea of the corruption that will be manifest in that day, and then appreciate the better the promise:--

“Now unto Him that is of *power* to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

This paragraph is in structural correspondence with verse 1, where these same believers are called “the preserved in Jesus Christ”.

We too can be of Abraham’s persuasion, and rest in the fact that “He is able”.

**#11. “Through faith and patience inherit the promises”
(Heb. vi. 12).
pp. 212 - 214**

There is a further aspect of this subject of the promises of God which must needs be considered if we are to make our presentation of the matter complete.

We have dwelt at some length in this series upon the promises made by God to Abraham, and have emphasized that these promises were by faith and by grace. When, however, we turn to Heb. xi. we meet with a promise that is never mentioned in the Old Testament—the promise of a city “whose builder and maker is God”. The way in which this city is introduced makes it evident that it was something *over and above* the initial promise of the land, with which the book of Genesis is occupied. It was because of this that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were content to be mere tent-dwellers in the land of promise.

Towards the end of Heb. xi., when the time at the disposal of the apostle “would fail to tell” of all the witnesses to overcoming faith that are found in the Scriptures, he gives a summary of some of their activities:--

“Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions” (Heb. xi. 33).

The particular clause that interests us at the moment is that which speaks of “obtaining promises”. *Tugchano*, from which the word “obtain” is derived, is defined by *Dr. Bullinger* in his Lexicon: “to hit, to strike, to reach a mark or object.” In a modified form, it is translated “wrought”, the original being variously rendered “work”, “labour” and “trade”.

We have both Gen. xv. and the apostle’s comment in Rom. iv. to testify that the original promise made by God to Abraham was “by faith without works”. But we must not forget that James speaks of another part of Abraham’s life. Referring, not to the promise of a seed, but to the offering up of Isaac, he says:--

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?” (James ii. 21, 22).

It is to this period of Abraham’s history, and not to the initial phase of Gen. xv., that the apostle alludes in Heb. vi.:--

“That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who *through faith and patience inherit the promises*. For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (Heb. vi. 12-15).

This, then, is the inspired context of the expression “obtained promises”. It takes us back to Mount Moriah and Gen. xxii. The Lord’s command to Abraham in this chapter was in the nature of a test. In verse 12 we read: “Now I know that thou fearest God” (Gen. xxii. 12). This took place after God had said: “I am the almighty God, walk before Me and be thou perfect” (Gen. xvii. 1).

The fourth reference to “promise” in Ephesians, it will be remembered, is conditional:--

“Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise”
(Eph. vi. 12).

Here is law, most definitely; here is reward; and something far removed from grace and faith. While, therefore, we may rightly say that there are promises that are “sure to all the seed” because they are unconditional, by faith, through grace, yet there are also extra promises which having attached to them conditions, and being in the nature of a reward, may, or may not, be “obtained”. The two sets of promises fall under the two heads that we find in II Tim. ii. 11-13:--

(1) *“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him.”*—This, so far as we are concerned, is unconditional and can neither be “obtained” nor forfeited.

(2) *“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.”*—This is additional and conditional, and is of the nature of those promises which are “obtained” through faith and patience.

In the same way, the apostle points the Hebrew believer back to the wilderness experience of Israel. All had been redeemed, but all did not endure. Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were not necessarily unsaved (even Moses and Aaron died before the land was entered); all that was unconditional was theirs, and will be theirs as much as it will be Caleb’s or Joshua’s, but those promises that are “obtained” through faith and patience were lost:--

“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. iv. 1).

We trust that no one will be hindered by confusing those promises which are by grace and unconditional with those that have to be obtained through faith and patience, but rather that many may be stimulated and encouraged on the pilgrim pathway.

In the same category as the promises that may be “obtained” we must place the promise of James i. 12:--

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (as did Abraham; Gen. xxii.); for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.”

The mention of the crown here makes this promise parallel with the crown and reigning of II Tim. ii. & iv., and with the prize of I Cor. ix. and Phil. iii.: “*So run that ye may obtain.*”

**#12. “The promise of life” (II Tim. i. 1).
pp. 227 - 230**

Let us conclude this series of simple studies by noticing the way in which “the promise” is introduced in the pastoral epistles, namely, those to Timothy and Titus:--

“Bodily exercise profiteth a little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having *promise* of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” (I Tim. iv. 8).

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the *promise* of life which is in Christ Jesus” (II Tim. i. 1).

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, *promised* before the world began” (Titus i. 2).

In these three references we shall find life in three aspects as the subject of promise:--

- (1) The life that now is and the life that is to come. The latter includes;
- (2) Life which is in Christ Jesus.
- (3) Aionion or age-abiding life.

One feature must strike every reader, and that is the prominence that life receives in these references to promise. Granted that one has life, all other blessings may be enjoyed, but apart from the possession of life all else is impossible. It is surely a feature not to be despised, that “the life that now is” is a matter of promise and of godly concern:--

“God is the Saviour of all men.”		“The life that now is.”
“Specially of those that believe.”		“The life that is to come.”
(I Tim. iv. 8-10).		

What are we to understand by “bodily exercise”? Paul makes frequent allusions to the athletic games and contests that occupied such an important part in the life of the Greek and Roman world.

Very parallel to the statement that “bodily exercise profiteth for a little”—both as to degree and duration—is the passage dealing with Corinthian athletes in I Cor. ix. 24-26:--

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run 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.”

Here, in the apostle's own terms, we have the difference between "bodily exercise" with its temporary and temporal profiting, and "exercise with a view to godliness" which, while having the promise of this life, includes that which is to come.

As a comment upon the words "profit for a little", Bloomfield cites *Diogenes Laert*, who in speaking of the athletes said:--

"While going through the exercise or training, they sacrifice much, and are at great private expense, and when conquering, occasion loss to the public."

The apostle also had in view the fact that the Romans set apart a special period daily for "bodily exercise" which made for health and fitness. How much more therefore, he urges, should the believer, with an incorruptible crown in view, exercise himself towards godliness.

In the second reference (II Tim. i. 1) we have the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. This stands without qualification or condition, except that it is in Christ Jesus. Seeing that II Timothy is a prison epistle, and is one of the epistles through which the One Body is specially instructed, we must see in this promise of life in Christ Jesus the great inclusive grant which embraces "all spiritual blessings" and the "adoption" unto which that church was predestinated.

In Ephesians, the apostle gives the dread alternative when he says that the Gentiles were "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. iv. 18). In Colossians, he speaks of the life which is in Christ Jesus when he says: "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3).

The life in Christ Jesus is referred to once again in II Tim. i. 9, 10, where its free unconditional character and true endlessness are set forth:--

"Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before age-times, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death and hath brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel."

The third aspect of life in connection with promise is called "eternal life". This, as we probably know, is better translated "*age-abiding* life". True *eternal* life is that which is in Christ Jesus and unconditional, being that which is spoken of in II Tim. i. 10 as "life and incorruption", but *aionion* or age-abiding life is a special aspect of life enjoyed during the ages to come, and associated with blessings and aspects of glory not necessarily the accompaniments of life pure and simple.

Excluding I Tim. vi. 19 where the best Greek texts omits "eternal life" and read "life indeed", we have four references in these epistles to "eternal" or "age-abiding" life, viz.:--

"For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life age-abiding" (I Tim. i. 6).

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on age-abiding life” (I Tim. vi. 12).

“In hope of age-abiding life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before age times”

(Titus i. 2).

“Heirs according to the hope of age-abiding life” (Titus iii. 7).

We have already seen in this series that the promises must be divided into two groups, viz., those which are in grace and unconditional, and those which are “inherited” and “obtained”. The same division is seen here. There is the promise of life in Christ Jesus. There is the promise of age-abiding life, which is associated with “fighting the good fight of faith” and with “laying hold”. Just as the four great prison epistles deal with the two aspects of truth which we may call The Hope, and the Prize, so the references to the promise of life contained in these epistles to Timothy and Titus deal with that which is the unmoveable foundation, and that which is connected with the superstructure.

This must conclude our studies of this nature for the present. We praise God for the great and precious promises of which Christ Himself is the Yea and Amen: we thank Him for the holy promissory Spirit, the earnest of the inheritance, and we are encouraged to persevere by that great cloud of witnesses who “through faith and patience inherited the promises”.

“Blessed be the Lord there hath not failed one word of all His good promise”

(I Kings viii. 56).

The Epistle to the Romans.

#45. Romans vi. 14 - vii. 6.

“Receive not the grace of God in vain” (II Cor. vi. 1). pp. 9 - 13

We have seen in the opening section of Rom. vi. that sanctification operates within a new sphere—“newness of life”, and consequently presupposes justification as an accomplished fact. Justification brings “peace with God” and “access by faith into the grace wherein we stand” (Rom. v. 1, 2). This new sphere necessitates a new condition—“oneness with Christ”. It is, moreover, impossible to think of newness of life and union with Christ, and at the same time of a state of bondage, therefore we have seen that there is a new state—“freedom from bondage”:-

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (Rom. vi. 14).

This is the language of heaven. This must be the atmosphere of the new creation, but what is the possible effect upon believers during this present time of imperfect realization while in this mortal body? Alas! we know only too well.

The next section opens with a question that reveals the need of much correction and careful walk while rejoicing in this blessed liberty. The whole trouble seems to resolve itself into the way in which we translate the word “freedom”. Shall we translate it “liberty” or “licence”? *Liberty* in the scriptural sense recognizes the Lord “Whose we are, and Whom we serve”. *Licence* casts away all restraint, denies all responsibility, and acknowledges no lord but self. To the correction of this fatal error the apostle now addresses himself. The subject is so important that we give the structure here:-

Romans v. 20 - vii. 6.

- A1 | v. 20, 21. STATEMENT.—“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
- B1 | vi. 1. QUESTION.—“Shall we continue in sin that grace abound?”
- C1 | vi. 2. REPUDIATION.—“God forbid” (*me genoito*).
- D1 | vi. 3-14. ANSWER.—
 - | The dominion of sin and death (vi. 9-14).
 - | The body of sin “destroyed” (*katargeo*) (vi. 6).
 - | Newness of life (vi. 4).
- A2 | vi. 14. STATEMENT.—“Ye are not under law, but under grace.”
- B2 | vi. 15. QUESTION.—“Shall we sin because we are not under law, But under grace?”
- C2 | vi. 15. REPUDIATION.—“God forbid” (*me genoito*).
- D2 | vi. 16 - vii. 6. ANSWER.—
 - | The dominion of law (vii. 1).
 - | The law “delivered from” (*katargeo*) (vii. 2-6).
 - | Newness of spirit (vii. 6).

Let us ponder the relation of these two sections. Take the two statements. The first stresses the difference between “sin” and “grace”, the second the difference between being under “law” and under “grace”. There is evidently a close connection between sin and law. This we know to be the fact, and we are to meet the argument in Rom. vii. 7-12 and 13-25. Observe the two questions. The first says:--

“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound” (Rom. vi. 1).

The second says:--

“Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace?” (Rom. vi. 15).

Two errors are here exposed, the first being that we must not misunderstand the grace of God. It has already been stated that this superabounding grace “reigns through righteousness” (Rom. v. 21), which is a complete refutation of the idea of continuing in sin “that grace may abound”. The second error is that freedom from law means freedom to sin. This is countered by the apostle’s argument which includes the words: “Being then made free from sin, ye became the bond slaves of righteousness” (Rom. vi. 18).

In the two answers that occupy the bulk of each section, vi. 3-14 and vi. 16 - vii. 6, we have a parallel development of doctrine. In the first the dominion of sin and death is touched upon, whilst in the second it is the dominion of law that is explained. These are brought together in chapter viii. 2 as “the law of sin and death”.

Both the body of sin and the law are next associated by the use of the word *katargeo* in the following passages:--

“That the body of sin *might be destroyed*” (Rom. vi. 6).

“Now we are *delivered from* the law” (Rom. vii. 6).

These two passages throw light upon each other as we shall see.

Finally, both sections stress “newness”. In the first, where the fact of sanctification is the theme, we learn that it operates in a sphere of newness of “life” (vi. 4). In the second, where liberty contrasted with licence is the theme, we have service in “newness of spirit” (vii. 6). All these features are so inter-related, that we trust no reader will begrudge the time spent in making the relationship manifest. It is apparent to all who will but read the statements and questions of this new section, that the erroneous teaching combated by the apostle largely arises out of a misconception of “grace”.

Our doctrinal attitude has sometimes been explained by others as being somewhat “Calvinistic”. We do not subscribe to any creed or system of theology, but it is evident to most readers that there is much in the attitude of the Reformation to the doctrines of grace that is characteristic of our own. We yield to none in the advocacy of the sovereignty of that grace which has saved us, of its free and unmerited bestowal, of the total incompatibility of a salvation by grace and by works. All this is but expressing the doctrine of Romans itself. Nevertheless, the same scripture that leaves the reader without

a doubt as to the free unmerited favour sovereignly bestowed by “grace”, also plainly warns the reader of the dangers of abusing that grace. We shall therefore devote the remainder of this article to that phase of doctrine which reveals the pitfalls awaiting one who holds an ill-balanced view of the grace of God. Let us note Jude 3, 4:--

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

There is no idea in the words translated “ordained to this condemnation” of a predestination to commit sin. The expression is a legal term meaning: “those cited to trial” by posting up their names. The Scriptures had already indicated that such characters would come, and what their punishment would be. The particular evil was in their “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness”.

The word translated “turning” means “to alter anything from its original purpose”, and so to misuse or abuse. These ungodly men were teachers, who taught licence instead of liberty, and instead of using the grace of God to promote and encourage sanctification of life and walk, they opened the door to all manner of excess.

Peter speaks of the same class as does Jude. He calls them “false teachers who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them” (II Pet. ii. 1). Describing their teaching further, he says:--

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the bond slaves of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (II Pet. ii. 18, 19).

Lest some should object to the intrusion of the teaching of Peter into that of Paul, we would ask such to note the complete harmony of argument of II Pet. ii. 19 with Rom. vi. 16:--

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves bond slaves to obey, his bond slaves ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. vi. 16).

We do well to discount much of the “great swelling words” used in speaking of the “grace of God”, for such may but “allure” and lead to “wantonness”, or—as the word is translated in Jude 4—“lasciviousness”. To quote Peter once more:--

“As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the bond slaves of God” (I Pet. i. 16).

The Corinthians were exhorted to see to it that they “received not the grace of God in vain” (II Cor. vi. 1). The Colossians are referred to not merely as knowing the grace of God, but of knowing it “in truth” (Col. i. 6). We also read in Titus of:--

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live looking for that blessed hope zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 11-14).

Such is the true interpretation of the grace of God. While any attempt to be “justified by the law” is intolerable to the conception of grace (Gal. v. 4), so also is the slightest abuse of the freedom that grace implies and brings. It is to set both matters right that Rom. vi. and vii. were written. May we be apt scholars, neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ, and while we yield to none in our testimony of the fullness, the freeness, and the sovereignty of the grace of God, we must equally testify that this grace which has saved us teaches us to walk in newness of life, and to serve in newness of spirit.

#46. Romans vi. 16 - vii. 6.
Two illustrations: master and husband.
pp. 63 - 66

In our last article we compared the opening section of Rom. vi. with the second section, vi. 15 - vii. 6, and learned something of their relation one with other. We also considered something of the teaching of Scripture as to the possibility of receiving the grace of God in vain.

Before going further into the teaching of this new section, we must stop in order to discover its scope—what it is all about; and this we do by noting its structure, the disposition of its subject-matter, and the correspondence of its parts.

Romans vi. 16 - vii. 6.

Specially to Gentiles. “I speak humanly.” |

A | vi. 16. Know ye not? (*oida*, “perceive”).

B | vi. 16, 17. The Figure. Bond-slave.

C | vi. 18. The Freedom. “Made free from sin.”

D | vi. 19-22. The Fruit. “Unto shame”; “unto holiness”.

E | vi. 23. Wages v. Gift (Death v. Life).

Specially to Jews. “I speak to them that acknowledge the law.” |

A | vii. 1. Know ye not? (*agnoeo*, “acknowledge”).

B | vii. 2, 3. The Figure. A Wife.

C | vii. 3. The Freedom. “Free from the law.”

D | vii. 4, 5. The Fruit. “Unto God”; “unto death”.

E | vii. 6. Newness of spirit v. Oldness of letter
(i.e., the letter *killeth*, the spirit giveth *life*).

All through the epistle to the Romans two classes of believers are in view: the Gentile, who had never been under the law (called “the uncircumcision”), and the Jew who had been under the law (called “the circumcision”). These two companies, although saved by the same great Sacrifice, and by the same faith, through the same grace, nevertheless had their own separate problems. It was no great matter of conscience to the saved Gentile as to whether the food he ate was “clean” or “unclean” in the eyes of the Levitical law, but it was a matter of great concern to the saved Jew, and this matter is dealt with in Rom. xiv.

So with this question of the dominion of sin, death and law. The problems of both Jew and Gentile were much the same when the matter was limited to the dominion of sin and death, and consequently the opening section (Rom. vi. 1-14) which deals with this twofold dominion is not divided into two parts, one for Gentile believers, and one for Jewish believers. The second section, however, deals with the dominion of *law*. This would not be a special matter of conscience for the Gentile, and could be explained along the lines of the setting free of slaves, a matter to them of everyday occurrence; but to the Jew, though a believer, anything which appeared to set aside the law of God was looked upon with suspicion and considered almost blasphemy. Consequently this second section is divided into two parts. To the Gentile he speaks after the manner of men; to the Jew he speaks to those who acknowledge the law. To the Gentile he uses the figure of master and slave; to the Jew the figure of husband and wife. In both cases he brings the fact of death to bear upon the claims of the master or husband, and to both he reveals the glorious possibilities of life.

To appreciate the apostle’s line of teaching here we must acquaint ourselves with the law that governed these two classes—slaves and wives. The law of Moses legislated for the slave and his freedom, but to those addressed in Rom. vi. there is a more particular appeal to the manners and customs of their own day. This matter is so important that we propose breaking off the exposition of the passage here, in order to give a series of quotations on the question of the manumission (the “setting free by a legal process”) of slaves, from *Deissman’s* “Light from the Ancient East”:

“I refer to the metaphor of our redemption by Christ from the slavery of sin, the law, and idols—a metaphor influenced by the customs and technical formulæ of sacred manumissions in antiquity.”

“Inscriptions at Delphi have been the principal means of enlightening us concerning the nature and ritual of manumission with a religious object in ancient times.”

“Between the Greek usage and the practice of the early Church there stands St. Paul, who made the ancient custom the basis of his profoundest contemplations about Christ. What was this custom? Among the various ways in which the manumission of a slave could take place by ancient law, we find the solemn rite of fictitious purchase of the slave by some divinity. The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives the purchase money from the temple treasury, the slave having previously paid it there out of his savings. The slave is now the property of the god; not, however, a slave of the temple, but a protégé of the god. Against all the world, especially his former master, he is a completely free man; at the utmost a few pious obligations to

his old master are imposed upon him. The rite takes place before witnesses; a record is taken, and often perpetuated on stone.”

“Another form, which does not occur elsewhere, but which makes the nature of the rite particularly plain, is furnished by an inscription of 200-199B.C. on the polygonal wall at Delphi: Date. Apollo the Pythian *bought* from Sosibius of Amphissa, *for freedom*, a female slave* (The word used is actually *Soma*, “body” and further illuminates the references to “the body”, e.g., Rom. vi. 6) whose name is Nicæa, by race a Roman, *with a price* of three minæ of silver and a half mina. Former seller according to the law; Eumastus of Amphissa. The *price* he hath received. The purchase, however, Nicæa hath committed unto Apollo *for freedom*. Names of witnesses, etc., follow.”

It will be seen at once that the apostle has actually used the words of this legal formula in the epistles, in such passages as:--

“Ye were bought with a price” (I Cor. vi. 20; vii. 23).

“For freedom did Christ set us free ye were called for freedom” (Gal. v. 1-13).

In numerous records of manumission the nature of the newly-obtained liberty is illustrated by the enfranchised person being expressly allowed henceforth to “do the things that he will”. Paul, therefore, is referring to the danger of a relapse into servitude when he points to the possible result of the conflict between flesh and spirit: “That ye may not do the things that ye would” (Gal. v. 17).

Numerous manumissions, again, expressly forbid, sometimes under heavy penalties, that the enfranchised shall ever “*be made a slave*” again. This throws light on the evil intentions of those “who spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal. ii. 4). And we understand warnings like this in the letters:--

“For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage” (Gal. v. 1).

And the still more moving exhortation:--

“Ye were bought with a price; become not slaves of men” (I Cor. vii. 23).

When, in numerous documents, the obligation is imposed upon the enfranchised slave to “remain with N.N.” (his former master), or, for instance, to abide with Euphronius behaving decently”, we are reminded of the apostle’s words in Corinthians:--

“Let him abide with God” (I Cor. vii. 24).

“That which is decent, and attending on the Lord without distraction” (I Cor. vii. 35).

We trust these references to the actual practice of the times will be of help in illuminating the argument of Rom. vi. We will not attempt any further amplification here, but hope to take up the teaching of Rom. vi. 16-23 without further preface in our next article.

#47. Law and grace (vi. 15-23).
pp. 104 - 108

The subject now before us is so vital that no pains must be spared to see it in as clear a light as possible. Before going further, therefore, with the theme of Rom. vi., let us again step back and survey the whole inner section:--

Romans v. 12 - viii. 39.

- A | v. 12-21. The law of sin and death in Adam.
- B | vi. 1-14. The relation of justification and sin. Dead to it.
- B | vi. 15 - vii. 25. The relation of justification and law. Dead to it.
- A | viii. 1-39. The law of the spirit of life in Christ.

The main line of the teaching is found in the first and last sections (A, A); in the first section the law of sin and death, leading up to condemnation, with the glorious interposition by God of the gift of His Son—"because of the weakness of the flesh" and, in the second section, the law of the spirit of life, leading up to: "No condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The intervening chapters (vi. and vii.) reveal the utter powerlessness of any act of the old man, either by the law or in the flesh, to accomplish this emancipation. In both cases, the only answer is death: "death to sin" and "dead to the law", or, if the service of sin be persisted in, death as its "end" and its "wages".

In the section of Rom. vi. now before us, we are dealing with the question of the law. In the preceding articles we have shown how the apostle has divided his argument into two parts, speaking after the manner of men to the Gentiles, and after the manner of the law to the Jews. We now consider the first of these two parts, the argument based upon slavery addressed particularly to the Gentile, to whom the obligations of slavery, the character of its service, its fruits and wages, were all matters of everyday knowledge.

We must first see the passage as a whole:--

Romans vi. 15-23.

- A | 15. | a | Not under law.
 - b | But under grace.
- B1 | 16-18. Freedom from sin.
 - c1 | All are either servants to sin or to righteousness.
 - d1 | The deciding factor. Obedience.
 - c2 | Ye were the servants of sin.
 - d2 | Ye obeyed from the heart.
 - c3 | Being freed from sin.
 - d3 | Ye became servants unto righteousness.
- B2 | 19, 20. Freedom unto righteousness.
 - e | Just as.
 - f | Members yielded to uncleanness.
 - g | Unto iniquity.
 - e | So.
 - f | Members yielded to righteousness.
 - g | Unto holiness.
- B3 | 21, 22. Freedom from sin.
 - h | Fruit—shame.
 - i | End—death.
 - j | Freed from sin.
 - k | Servants unto God.
 - h | Fruit—holiness.
 - i | End—life.
- A | 23. | a | Wages—death (law).
 - b | Gift—life (grace).

There is so much teaching in the small compass of these few verses, that unless we follow some definite plan our space will be insufficient. The disposition of the subject-matter in the structure is a safe guide to our investigations, and we will therefore endeavour to open up the apostle's teaching under the several heads indicated above. The whole section is bounded by the distinction between law and grace:--

- A | 15. | a | Not under law.
 - b | But under grace.
- A | 23. | a | Wages—death (law).
 - b | Gift—life (grace).

What is stated by the apostle in verse 15 is brought to a logical conclusion in verse 23 by a reference to the ends of the two systems. In the intervening verses (16-22) the subject is reasoned out with particular reference to the nature of service.

It should be noted that there is no article before the word "law" in the original; it simply reads "Not under law".

Generally speaking, *ho nomos* ("the law") indicates the law of Moses: while *nomos* ("law") indicates legalism of any kind. Rom. vi. confines itself to "law" without the article, which, while including the law of Moses, embraces law of any and every kind.

There are some who would limit the reference here to the ceremonial law, but who would imagine that exemption from ceremonials could lead to continuing in sin? The objection shows that the *moral* law is in view, for freedom from law of this kind may seem at first to open the door of licence. At this point of the argument the apostle is not concerned to hedge his teaching about; he is dealing primarily with the absolute emancipation of the believer from legalism in every form. When we reach the practical section (chapters xiii. and xiv.), we shall find that there he has no hesitation in speaking of the emancipated believer as fulfilling the law (xiii. 8, 9). But here the doctrine he seeks to establish is too crucial to permit of side issues, even though they affect the very foundations of moral living.

The great truth here made known is that the believer is not under law as a covenant of works. There were “believers” even during the legal dispensation, but though “in the law” they were not “of it”. It is not the teaching of the apostle that the believer is not under law because the law cannot sanctify—that would merely lead to condemnation, rather than emancipation. The wonderful truth is that we are not under law because Christ died for us, and we have died with Him to the whole of law’s dominion. We are under grace.

To be under grace, however, is not to be “lawless”. Grace has dealt with our sins, but not at the expense of righteousness. “Grace reigns *through righteousness*” (Rom. v. 21). Grace has made us nigh, but it is “by the blood of Christ”. We are forgiven, but we are also justified, and no part of the law of Moses that is a transcript of the immutable truth of God can be broken simply because the one who breaks it is now “saved”. The whole point is that by the death of Christ the law is entirely set aside as a means of justification, of sanctification or of life:--

“If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. ii. 22).

“If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21).

Just as no one can continue in sin that grace may abound, for being under grace indicates that one has died to sin (Rom. vi. 1, 2), so no one can continue under law when once they have been set free, because in Christ they have died to the law (Gal. ii. 19).

In the opening verse (vi. 15), the two great systems of “law” and “grace” are spoken of. The reader could, no doubt, easily compile a double list of things that come under the two headings. Some of them will be found in the argument of verses 16-22; but the balancing member of the structure (verse 23) gives the most important point of the whole of the apostle’s argument—“life” and “death” (*see* Rom. vi. 2).

As we see from the structure “law” is associated with “wages”. The word “wages” indicates that something has been “earned”, and this is entirely outside the sphere of grace. To leave the reader without any doubt on this point we will quote the apostle’s own definition of grace from this same epistle:--

The word translated “wages” is *opsonion*, and is derived from *opsarion* which originally meant anything that is eaten with bread, and then, in particular, fish (Numb. xi. 22; John vi. 9, 11; xxi. 9, 10, 13). We must, however, be careful not to limit ourselves to etymology. Take, for instance, the word “pecuniary”. If a commentator in English literature followed the idea of arriving at the truth by etymology alone, we should get some strange results. “Pecuniary” to-day signifies anything relating to or consisting of money. Yet it comes from the Latin *pecus*, meaning “cattle”. While, therefore, it is interesting to know that bartering by means of cattle has left its mark, when bartering itself has practically ceased, it would be quite false to intrude the idea of cattle into the present-day meaning of the word “pecuniary”. So with the related words “bank”, “finance”, and “cash”; these have ceased to have any real connection with “a table”, “finish” or “case”.

To return to the word “wages”. It originally meant food of some kind, and then, because the Roman soldiers received some of their wages in the form of food, it lost its primary meaning and took on the meaning of wages. Josephus uses the word in his *Antiquities*:--

“He gave order, that when they paid the soldiers their wages, they should lay down twenty drachmæ for every one of the slaves” (*Ant.* xii. ii. 3).

Opsonion is also included in the list of words that the recently discovered papyrus of Egypt has illuminated.

The “wages” of sin (sin is personified here, and throughout the argument, as the master) is death. That is the “end” and “fruit” of sin. In contrast with these “wages” is the “grace gift” (*charisma*) of God (cf. “free gift”, Rom. v. 15, 16).

In a sense, the apostle has but developed in the argument of Rom. vi. what is latent in Rom. v. 21:--

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto *aionion* life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. v. 21).

In the first clause—“That as sin hath reigned unto death”—we get the close association of sin and death that is expressed in the words of Rom. vi., “The wages of sin is death”. Also the use of the word “reign” covers the references to “dominion” in the argument of chapter vi.:--

“Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto *aionion* life by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. v. 21).

This second clause shews that grace, though free from law, is allied to righteousness and leads to life.

We must now devote attention to the intervening argument of verses 16-22, and this we reserve for another article.

**#48. “Servants to righteousness unto holiness” (vi. 15-23).
pp. 141 - 144**

We have considered the opening and closing members of the structure of Rom. vi. 15-23, and now turn our attention to the apostle’s argument contained in verses 16-22. This argument is divided into three parts by the word “Freedom”.

(1) *Freedom from sin* (16-18).—Argument as to the nature of service, expressed in the word “obey”.

(2) *Freedom from righteousness* (19, 20).—The double use of this idea of freedom suggests two spheres of service which are here elaborated.

(3) *Freedom from sin* (21, 22).—This brings us back once more to the opening argument, but concentrates the attention this time on the “end” and “fruit” rather than upon the nature of such service.

We must allow these divisions to guide us in the exposition of the argument. And first, we come to verse 16:--

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. vi. 16).

Under the heading of “Freedom from sin” we find an emphasis upon “service”. Is service incompatible with freedom? Galatians supplies an answer:--

“Brethren, ye are called unto LIBERTY: Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love SERVE one another” (Gal. v. 13).

The fact is that man is never without a master; he is never in that sense “free”. Just as in the case of the manumission of a slave, there was the exchange of one master for another, so the believer, redeemed from the bondage of sin, is, nevertheless, reminded that he is not his own, but has been “bought with a price”. Israel in Egypt “served with rigour”, but their deliverance did not exempt them from service; it merely change their master:--

“Let My people go, *that they may serve Me*” (Exod. viii. 1).

The apostle brushes aside all arguments that might be put forward to excuse sin in the believer, and goes straight to the point—“His servants ye are to whom ye obey.” Service is decided by obedience. It matters not how much one may profess. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John viii. 34). Peter, in his second epistle, writes:--

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage” (II Pet. ii. 19).

If we follow the marginal rendering of Rom. vi. 17, we find obedience stressed as the evidence of the new life and service:--

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that mould of doctrine whereunto ye were delivered.”

Service is shewn by obedience; and so the apostle thanks God for this evidence that these believers had been redeemed and had known a change of master: “They obeyed from the heart.” Strictly speaking there can be no obedience that is not willing and from the heart:--

“The pretence of love without obedience is hypocrisy, and obedience without love is real slavery.”

The obedience that marks the believer is, moreover, an obedience from the heart to “that mould of doctrine whereunto they were delivered”. The word *tupos*, which becomes in English the word *type*, is translated “ensample”, “example”, “fashion”, “figure”, “form”, “manner”, “pattern” and “print”. Josephus, speaking of the Essenes, says that, taking children of tender age, “they would model or mould them (*entupousi*) according to their own manners” (Wars. ii. 8, 2). The believer has, as it were, been run into a mould, and the original of that mould is not far to seek, for in Rom. viii. 29 it is revealed that every predestinated, called and justified believer is to be “conformed to the image of His Son”.

Science uses the expression “conformity to type”, and the expression represents scriptural truth. “Sanctification” and “sin” are nothing more than “conformity to type”. There are two “types” in the epistle to the Romans, Adam and Christ (Rom. v. 14). Adam stand for sin, and Christ stands for righteousness. Obedience to either as master, and conformity to either as type are parallel terms. In Rom. xii. practical sanctification is expressed by “presenting the body” (the word “present” is the same as that translated “yield” in Rom. vi.), and by not being “conformed to this world”. The word in the last expression is not *summorphos* as in Rom. viii. 29, but *suschematizo* which suggests the “fashion” rather than the “type”.

Obedience, then, lies at the root of practical sanctification. First of all, the apostle impresses us with the fact that it must be “the obedience of faith” (Rom. i. 5). For this the apostle received “grace and apostleship”, so that this term rightly understood must represent all that the glorious message of Romans stands for. The association of this obedience with faith and the gospel is seen in Rom. x. 16:--

“But they have not all *obeyed* the gospel: for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath *believed* our report?”

The two great moulds or types are Adam and Christ, and so in Rom. v. 19 we read:--

“For as by one man’s *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous.”

Obedience reveals the master and the mould.

In the earlier section of Rom. vi. we read:--

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (vi. 12).

Obedience, therefore, is the outward sign of a dominion, its mainspring is desire (lust), and its medium the members of the mortal body. This is true whether we speak of sin or of sanctification. If we are under the dominion of sin, we shall show it; and if we are under the dominion of grace, we shall show it: “His servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Rom. vi. 16).

The word translated “lust” really means “desire”. There are “worldly desires” (Titus ii. 12), “ungodly desires” (Jude 18) and “fleshly desires” (I Pet. ii. 11); but there are also commendable desires as in Matt. xiii. 17, Luke xxii. 15, I Tim. iii. 1, Heb. vi. 11, I Pet. i. 12. If it is true that “the flesh lusteth against the spirit”, let it not be forgotten that “the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. v. 17). Without desire, the hand falls limp, the feet grow slack, the pulse is sluggish, and when it can be said that “desire shall fail” (Eccles. xii. 5) the end of life and activity is near. Desire was the active agent in the garden of Eden (Gen. iii. 6), but desire is not necessarily absent from the realm of the spirit and holiness.

Moreover, there is no coercion in either sphere:--

“Neither YIELD ye your members unto sin, but YIELD yourselves unto God to whom ye YIELD yourselves servants to obey as ye have YIELDED your members servants to uncleanness even so now YIELD your members servants to righteousness” (Rom. vi. 13-19).

Man was not forced to disobey God in the beginning, neither is he forced to obey Him now. The introduction of coercion or compulsion into the realm of either sin or sanctification would rob both of their moral character, and the whole scheme of redemption would become unreal and meaningless. In Rom. xii., where this thought of yielding the body to God is again uppermost, the apostle calls it our “reasonable” or “logical” service:--

“Even now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom. vi. 19).

The above sentence seems to sum up the main contention of the apostle in this section. The phrase “righteousness unto holiness” seems to link up Rom. i. - v. 11 (whose theme is justification) with Rom. v. 12 - viii. (whose theme is sanctification). It is a wonderful thought that the very members of our mortal body which once were yielded as servants to sin may be as readily and really yielded as servants to righteousness. This is “unto holiness” and is indeed “practical sanctification”.

Finally, the Lord has said in more than one connection that “by their fruits ye shall know them”. Looking back to the days before salvation, we view our deeds then with nothing but shame, and we learn, moreover, that their end is death. Shame and death belong to Eden and the fall, for we are still dealing with the two types or heads, Adam and Christ. But now, says the apostle, being made free from sin and becoming servants to God, the fruit is unto holiness, and the end, life, life *aionion*.

Such is a summary of the apostle’s argument concerning the dominion of law, as put to the Gentile believer. The Jewish believer, however, had many more problems and scruples, and to meet these, the apostle writes the second section, Rom. vii. 1-6. To this we must devote a separate article.

#49. Death ends the dominion of law (vii. 1-6). pp. 186 - 189

Although we pass from Rom. vi. to Rom. vii., we do not commence a new subject. The question which the apostle answers is raised in Rom. vi. 15:--

“What then? shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace.”

He divides his answer into two parts, to suit his two classes of hearers. He first deals with the question with respect to all men. Here the case of the Gentile is dealt with, and the figure of the slave is used. The second part of the apostle’s answer, which is now before us, is addressed particularly to the Jewish believer, and has reference to the very great and serious objection that every Jew had to giving up the law of Moses, which had been given with such solemnity at Sinai.

“Brethren”, says the apostle in effect, “Your objection would be quite valid if my gospel meant nothing more than a change of opinion or of creed. You would have every right to resist even unto death any attempt to tamper with your allegiance to the holy law of God. I quite agree that the law given at Sinai is in the nature of a marriage covenant in the light of adultery. You are in all this quite right—only you have omitted the vital feature of my gospel that alters the whole state of affairs. I readily admit that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives, or, to continue the analogy of marriage, that a woman who is married is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. Should she leave him during his lifetime and marry another she is rightly called an adulteress. So far we are in agreement. But my gospel is nothing if it is not a message that the believer is dead to sin (and so dead to its dominion) and also dead to law (and so dead to *its* dominion). You will agree that, should the husband die, the woman is at once loosed from the law of her husband, and should she marry again, her action is perfectly legitimate and honourable. That, brethren, is the real fact of the case.

Every one that believes the gospel of God concerning His Son is reckoned to have died with him, and death breaks all the bonds of law. The new husband, who represents Christ, and the new marriage, which represents union with Him, is on an entirely new plane, that of resurrection—‘even to Him Who was raised from the dead’. The issue of that new marriage is entirely new and acceptable to God. Instead of bringing forth ‘fruit unto death’ as you did while under the law (here in Rom. vii. 5 the apostle establishes a link with the earlier argument of Rom. vi. 21, 22), you now bring forth ‘fruit unto God’. This then is the true state of affairs; and the objection that obedience to the gospel involves spiritual adultery is without foundation.”

With this paraphrase in mind, let us obtain a view of the section as a whole:--

Romans vii. 1-6.

- A | 1. Know ye not, brethren.
- B | 2-3. “Loosed (*katergetai*) from the law of her husband” (2).
 - a1 | Woman *bound* by law of her husband.
 - b1 | So long as he *liveth*.
 - b1 | If husband be *dead*.
 - a1 | Woman *loosed* from the law of her husband.
 - b2 | If husband *liveth*.
 - a2 | She shall be called an *adulteress*.
 - b2 | If husband be *dead*.
 - a2 | She is no *adulteress*.
- A | 4. Wherefore, my brethren.
- B | 4-6. “Delivered (*katergethemen*) from the law” (6).
 - c | Ye also are *dead* to the law.
 - d | Married to Him Who is *raised* from dead.
 - e | Fruit unto *God*.
 - e | Fruit unto *death*.
 - c | Having *died* to that wherein we were held.
 - d | Serve in newness in spirit.

The first point that demands attention is the recurrence of the word *katargeo*, translated “loosed” in vii. 2, “delivered” in vii. 6, and “destroyed” in vi. 6. This word should not be translated “free”, a rendering that should be reserved for the verb *eleutheroo*, which is found in Rom. vii. 3: “She is free from that law.” *Eleutheroo* also occurs in Rom. vi. 18 and 22: “*Free* from sin.”

The lesson here is important, and we earnestly ask the reader’s attention. In both chapter vi. and chapter vii., we have *katargeo* followed by *eleutheroo*. In Rom. viii. 21-23 we get some light on the connection between these two words:--

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered (*eleutheroo*) from the bondage of corruption the redemption of our body.”

The point is that freedom presupposes the nullifying of whatever caused the initial bondage. In Rom. vi., before the apostle uses the word *free* in verses 18-22—“*free* from

sin”—he uses in verse 6 the word which means to “destroy”, nullify”, render “inoperative”. The cross of Christ “rendered sin inoperative”; the bonds were broken, the fetters snapped, the dominion overthrown:--

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin *might be rendered inoperative*, that henceforth we should not serve sin we died we shall live being made *free from sin*, ye became servants of righteousness” (Rom. vi. 6-18).

In chapter vii. the cross is not in view, neither does it speak of crucifixion with Him. In the matter of sin and its dominion it is the cross that is prominent; but with regard to the law and its dominion we read, “We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ”.

In Rom. viii. it is neither the cross of Christ as in Rom. vi., nor the death of Christ as in Rom. vii., but:--

“If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. viii. 11-21).

While there is this progress to be noted, we must not, on the other hand, fail to notice that resurrection is prominent in each of the three chapters (vi., vii., viii.). The crucifixion of the old man nullifies the power of the body of sin, but the positive power for the emancipated believer is “newness of life”. We are not only to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but also alive unto God (Rom. vi. 11). This double reckoning is vital. We too often meet with those who continually “reckon” themselves dead, but forget to “reckon” themselves also alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Resurrection follows the nullifying of the dominion of law in Rom. vii.; the death of the husband is followed by a union with “Him Who is raised from the dead”. The new conditions can be expressed in Rom. vi. by the word “newness of life”; and in Rom. vii. by the words “newness of spirit”.

We must now turn our attention to Rom. vii. 6, which is the doctrinal sequel to the analogy that has occupied the earlier verses. We give the R.V. of the verse:--

“But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were holden: so that we serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter.”

The change from the A.V. which reads: “That being dead wherein we were held”, is important. The complete fact, however, is only realized if we remember that both versions present the truth. If the law dies to me, I am dead to it. If a woman’s husband dies, she, *as a wife*, dies at the same moment. There is only one way in which the sinner can be discharged and delivered from the law. He cannot escape it by his prayers or his promises. He is utterly unable to keep it. There is but one way of escape. He must die to it. The law ceases to have any jurisdiction the moment a man is dead. But this in itself is

cold comfort. To escape from the further dominion of the law by being executed is not “good news”. The apostle has something more to say than that:--

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law BY THE BODY OF CHRIST” (Rom. vii. 4).

Herein is the power of the gospel. Sin and law *have* issued in death, and their dominion *has* thereby been nullified. The believer has died in the death of Christ. And he can say: “I have been crucified with Christ; nevertheless I *live*.” Because he has been united with the risen life of Christ as well as with His death, he can contemplate with some measure of hope and assurance the possibility of newness of life and service, and fruit unto God:--

“Nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20).

We have now considered two out of the four questions propounded by the apostle. The concluding pair occupy the rest of chapter vii., and must be considered separately.

#50. Light on the relation of law and sin (vii. 7-12). pp. 230 - 235

In the foregoing argument (Rom. vii. 1-6) the apostle has dealt with that aspect of the dominion of the law, and deliverance from it by death, that met the peculiar susceptibilities and problems of those of the circumcision. There is, however, one essential difference between deliverance from the dominion of *sin* (Rom. vi. 1-14) and deliverance from the dominion of *law*. Deliverance from sin and death is expressed in the words of Rom. vi.:--

“That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Rom. vi. 4-6).

We see here that newness of life and the service of sin are incompatible. Deliverance from the dominion of law just as surely necessitates union with the risen Christ:--

“Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ now, being delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held: that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. vii. 4-6).

This is, however, a vital difference. So far as *sin* is concerned, no service of any kind is to be recognized. So far as the *law* is concerned, it is true that service connected with the letter that killeth is for ever abolished. But since the law, unlike sin, is “holy and just and good”, those who are no longer under its condemnation, and who no longer look to

it as a means of justification or sanctification, can nevertheless serve in the spirit of that holy law, even though free from its dominion. This we shall see definitely stated in Rom. vii. 4.

We might perhaps be pardoned for thinking that the way is now cleared for the theme of Rom. v. to be continued, and for the triumphant notes of Rom. viii. to sound out. But it is not so. The apostle has been incisive regarding the utter failure of the flesh to find in the law anything but condemnation and death; and he has not hesitated to link the dominion of sin with the dominion of law, and to show that a common deliverance was necessary from both. At this point some further explanation is necessary before the apostle can conscientiously pass on to the triumphs of Rom. viii. There was the possibility that, just as some might misunderstand the fullness of grace and think that it excused sin, so some might think that the holiness of God was compromised, and that the law by its inability to save or sanctify was at fault. This possible mistake the apostle now seeks to rectify, and he does so by continuing the method of hypothetical questioning: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin?" (Rom. vii. 7). He repudiates the idea immediately, and then by a series of arguments leads to the conclusion: "Wherefore the law is holy" (Rom. vii. 12). The explanation which leads up to this conclusion deals particularly with one of the great offices of law in its relation to sin. This particular office of the law has already been emphasized in the sphere of *justification*: it must now be restated in the sphere of *sanctification*:--

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*" (Rom. iii. 20).

Further, the provoking effect of the law has already been expressed in Rom. iv. 15: "The law worketh wrath: for where no law is there is no transgression." A glance at the context will show the purpose of this statement. The argument of Rom. iv. is that the promise is by grace, and that the law was not given to implement the promise, but to reveal the utter need of the grace of God, so that the promise should be sure. If we could conceive of a time when there was *absolutely* no law, then at that time there would have been *absolutely* no transgression. There has always, however, been some law of God, as Rom. ii. makes clear, and the fuller the law the greater the transgression. The teaching of Rom. vii., however, goes deeper than "transgression"; it uncovers unsuspected and dormant sin. The link between the two aspects of truth—one presented in Rom. iv. 15, and the other in Rom. vii. 7-25—is found in Rom. v. 14:--

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" (Rom. v. 14).

This passage does not state that "death reigned even over them that had not sinned", for that would be a monstrous injustice. It speaks of a period and of an aspect—the period "from Adam to Moses" before the giving of the law from Sinai; and that character of sin that was not "after the similitude of Adam's transgression". It does not speak of exemption from guilt, but of the degree of guilt. All have sinned; but not all have sinned as Adam did, by transgressing a positive and revealed command. It is the relation of this "law" and the more explicit "command", to "indwelling sin" and manifest transgression"

that forms part of the argument of the section now before us. The structure shows that the argument is conducted to its conclusion by a series of five couplets:--

Romans vii. 7-12.

- A | 7. QUESTION.—Is the law sin?
B | 7-11. ARGUMENT.—
a | I had not known sin, but by the law.
I had not known lust except not covet.
b | Sin, taking occasion by the commandment,
Wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.
c | Without law, sin was dead.
Without law, I was alive.
a | Commandment came, sin revived, and I died.
Commandment ordained to life, found unto death.
b | Sin, taking occasion by the commandment,
Deceived me, and by it slew me.
A | 12. ANSWER: Wherefore the law is holy.

It will be seen that the chief feature of the argument is the statement that “sin took occasion” by the commandment. If this be so, the law could still remain holy, just and good, even though by its abuse it became the instrument of death.

The first phase of the apostle’s argument is that the law illuminates the nature of sin:--

“I had not known (realized, known as such) sin, but by the law; for (to give a concrete example) I should not have perceived lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom. vii. 7).

The apostle does not say, “I had not committed any sin”, but “Without the law I had not realized sin; nor that specific transgression ‘lust’, had the law not forbidden coveting”. Sin is here the *genus*, lust the *species*.

The next step in the argument is to show the way in which sin took occasion by the commandment. The word “occasion” is *aphorme*, composed of *apo*, away, and *hormao*, to set in motion, urge, spur on, rush. It is used to describe a “base of operations” as in war; and also has the meaning “the *means* of war” as money, men, ships, etc. Sin, then, is here depicted as using the prohibition of the law as a “base of operations” and “a means of war”. Just as the human heart can turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, so it can use the very prohibition to stir up intense desire. We have only to read Gen. iii. to see the truth of this demonstrated:--

“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. iii. 1).
“When the woman saw . . . a tree to be desired . . . she took of the fruit” (Gen. iii. 6).

“A most striking and melancholy example in point is that prohibition and penalty were not sufficient, even in paradise, to prevent our first parents from ruining themselves and all their posterity” (*Moses Stuart*).

Sin, that took occasion by the commandment, is said by the apostle to have “wrought” in him all manner of concupiscence. The word “wrought” is *katergazomai*; and the connection of this part of the argument with that which is developed in Rom. vii. 13-25 is blurred by the fact that the word is not consistently translated in the A.V. We must defer comment upon this connection until we are actually dealing with the closing section, but we give all the references here, so that the reader may realize the far-reaching nature of this “working”:

- “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, *worked* in me all manner of desire” (Rom. vii. 8).
- “Sin, that it might appear sin, *working* death in me by that which is good” (Rom. vii. 13).
- “For what I *work*, I know not” (Rom. vii. 15).
- “It is no longer I that *work*, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom. vii. 17).
- “To will is present with me, but *to work* that which is good I find not” (Rom. vii. 20).
- “I no longer *work it*, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Rom. vii. 20).

We learn from I Cor. xv. 56 that the strength of sin is the law. So the apostle proceeds:

- “For without the law, sin was dead” (Rom. vii. 8).
- “For I was alive without the law once” (Rom. vii. 9).

It is evident that these statements are relative. Just as we must read verse 7 relatively, so here. For even had the law never been given from Sinai, the Jews would still have had the law of nature and of conscience (Rom. ii. 14, 15). But they would never have known sin as they did know it, except by the law. The apostle’s meaning can be clearly seen by referring back to a parallel passage, Rom. v. 20: “The law entered, that sin might abound.” It is the *unabounding* state of sin that is intended by the apostle in Rom. vii. 8, 9.

We now return to the opening argument. The structure places verse 7 in correspondence with verses 9 and 10. What does the apostle mean by the words “When the commandment came?” All his life, as a Pharisee, he had known the law of God. Over and over again he had repeated the ten commandments. We have it from his own pen that, “touching the righteousness which is in the law”, he was “blameless” (Phil. iii. 6).

But the commandment “Thou shalt not covet” (or, “Thou shalt not desire”) goes deeper than the external act. In so far as the Pharisee considered only external conformity with the law, he felt fairly satisfied with himself, but when the fact broke in upon his conscience that the law also had to do with “desires” before they had become manifest as “deeds”, the spirituality of the law and the carnality of the person became intensely evident. The command at last “came” as never before, “sin revived” and, the apostle says, “I died”. All his boasted righteousness was found to be vanity. The commandment which, if obeyed, would have led to life, he now found to be too searching and deep—it led but to death. No man living could ever hope from such a law anything but condemnation. Sin not only deceived him, as it had deceived his first parents, but it slew him, as it had them.

The apostle now reverts to the question, "Is the law sin?" His answer is, No; and his reasoning is as follows.

While it is perfectly true that the believer must die to the law, even as he must die to sin if he is to possess life and liberty and sanctification, it must be most clearly understood that there is no other relation between sin and law, except that through the flesh both tend to death. The apostle had insisted upon the necessity of deliverance from law, not because it was evil, but because it could not produce holiness in man. What it did produce was an intensified knowledge of sin and of inward corruption.

The prohibitions of the law were for the protection and blessing of man, but he needed something more than prohibition and penalty. What the law actually did was to stir up the latent rebellion that lies dormant in every heart. But this, while it for ever sets aside the law as a possible means of life and holiness, in no sense reflects upon the holiness of the law itself:--

"Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment (i.e. the one under discussion) holy, and just, and good" (Rom. vii. 12).

A review, and sign of the times.

Darwinian Theory a “Dream”.

Lesson of the Microscope

p. 20

“The Missing Link problem and the theory of man’s evolution from the ape stage were criticized in a paper read last night to the Victoria Institute, London, by *Dr. Albert Fleischmann*, Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy in the University of Erlangen (Bavaria).

Darwin, he said, would have abandoned his dream of a single great genealogical tree for all species of animals, if he had lived to see the later advances in animal anatomy.

Darwin’s theory had not been confirmed by the discoveries of anatomical research, yet evolutionists still search for ‘ancestors’ in the graveyards of the past, and arranged fossil fragments—leg bones, teeth or skulls—of various extinct species of horse into the hypothetical series” (*The News Chronicle*, 23rd May, 1933).

The Chester Beatty Papyri. **pp. 79, 80**

Until recently the oldest manuscripts of either the N.T. or the O.T. that were known were those written on vellum—a material that superseded the use of papyrus in the fourth century A.D. There has just come to light, however, a group of Greek manuscripts written upon papyrus, and known as the Chester Beatty Papyri, which are more ancient than any yet discovered. The collection comprises 44 leaves of Genesis and portions of other parts of the Law and the Prophets, the Gospels, Acts, epistles of Paul, and the book of the Revelation. One apocryphal work is included, namely, the book of Enoch. Among other items that can be appreciated by the non-expert is the fact that the four Gospels, together as a unit, and distinguished from the many apocryphal Gospels, are proved to have been already in use, and that the epistle to the Hebrews was included among the epistles of Paul.

The most important question that is raised in connection with a “find” like this is, How does the text of these papyri compare with that in use to-day? It is reassuring to learn that no doctrine of the N.T. is altered in the slightest by any new reading, and the evidence that we have substantially the text of the originals grows with every discovery.

In our articles entitled “The Volume of the Book” we discuss the pre-eminence given by Westcott and Hort to the Vatican MSS, and give evidence that the Revisers were not justified in setting aside the voice of antiquity or for giving unwarranted weight to manuscripts that accorded with the theory of Westcott and Hort. This theory, namely, that the *Vaticanus* and the *Sinaiticus* give us what Westcott and Hort called the Neutral text, is by no means substantiated by these earlier manuscripts. This is not the place to discuss the matter of the text, but we do suggest that readers would be wise, when using the R.V., to be on their guard when alterations, additions or subtractions of the Greek text are made or suggested. Sir Frederick Kenyon, G.B.E., K.C.B., says:--

“All in all, the Chester Beatty papyri make the most important contribution to the textual criticism of the Greek Bible since the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus, now nearly ninety years ago” (*John O’ London’s Weekly*, 16th Sept., 1933).

**“Learn a parable of the fig tree” (Matt. xxiv. 32).
p. 120**

Extract from the *News Chronicle* of 8th December, 1933.

**“SHIP FLIES FLAG OF PALESTINE; FIRST FOR 2,000 YEARS.
SOUTHAMPTON, Thursday.**

The trading schooner Emanuel, which arrived at Southampton to-day to discharge a grain cargo, comprises the entire mercantile marine of Palestine.

Every member of her crew is a Jew.

Purchased by her commander, Capt. A. Grevnow, in Denmark, nearly three months ago, the Emanuel will engage in coastwise trade in Palestine.

Capt. Grevnow said to-day: ‘It is the first time for two thousand years that a vessel with an all-Jewish crew and flying the Palestine flag has sailed the seas’.

“This God is our God.”

#9. The sovereignty of God.

**“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psa. xlvii. 10).
pp. 55 - 59**

When God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness”, He did not add: “and let them be immortal, be holy, be omniscient”, but said: “and let them have dominion”. It is this special feature that excites the wonder of the Psalmist, when he says:--

“What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands” (Psa. viii. 4-6).

There are six Hebrew words that denote “dominion”:--

- (1) *Radah*.—To tread down, to domineer.
- (2) *Mashal*.—To rule, reign, govern.
- (3) *Baal*.—To have authority as lord or proprietor.
- (4) *Yad*.—Literally “The hand”.
- (5) *Mishtar*.—A magistrate or overseer. The English “Master”.
- (6) *Shalat*.—Act as Sultan. Overpower.

Of these, *radah* and *mashal* are of most frequent occurrence, and bear most upon our theme. *Radah* in its primitive sense means “to tread”, and is most translated by “rule” and “have dominion”. This is the word used in Gen. i. 26. *Mashal* also means “to rule” and “to have dominion”, but with the added sense of “reigning”. This is the word used in Psa. viii. 6, thereby linking the two conceptions together. The two examples that follow use the word *Mashal*:--

“The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His Kingdom *ruleth* over all” (Psa. ciii. 19).

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou *reignest* over all; and in Thy hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all” (I Chron. xxix. 11, 12).

Let us learn from these two passages something of the sovereignty of God. First we observe that it is used in connection with the preparation of his “throne” where He must be regarded as King. The Scriptures abound with reference to the Lord as King:--

“The King of glory” (Psa. xxiv. 7).

“A great King over all the earth” (Psa. xlvii. 2, 7).

“The Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psa. xi. 4).

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest?” (Isa. lxvi. 1).

The fact that the throne of God is heaven adds to the idea of His sovereignty:--

“For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him” (Psa. ciii. 11).

“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision” (Psa. ii. 4).

Nebuchadnezzar had to be taught a drastic lesson in order that he might learn that “the heavens do rule” (Dan. iv. 26), which is interpreted in the same chapter as:--

“Till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will” (Dan. iv. 25).

“And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever and ever, Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. iv. 34, 35).

“The Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass: and as I have purposed, so shall it stand” (Isa. xiv. 24).

Here we have sovereignty, His pleasure, His will, His counsel, His purpose, His thoughts, all shall stand, all be accomplished.

The sovereignty of God is seen in the irresistible character of His actions.—Nebuchadnezzar, the autocratic King and head of gold, learned at last to confess that “none can stay His hand”. Elihu testified of God that

“When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him?” (Job xxxiv. 29).

And Job at last confessed:--

“I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought of Thine can be hindered” (Job xlii. 2).

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion” (Psa. ii. 1-6).

The sovereignty of God is seen in His unaccountability to any of His creatures.

“None can say What doest Thou?” (Dan. iv. 35).

“Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters” (Job xxxiii. 13).

“Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou?” (Eccles. viii. 4).

“Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to Him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they are all the work of His hands” (Job xxxiv. 18, 19).

Coupled with this testimony to the Lord's sovereignty is that contained in Psa. cxv. 3:--

"But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased."

Look at the elements of sovereignty that have been brought before us in these passages of Scripture.

The sovereignty of God is seen in the irresistible character of His will:--

"He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Psa. cxv. 3).

"He doeth according to His will" (Dan. iv. 35).

These but herald a number of references that declare most emphatically that the purpose of the Lord must be accomplished:--

"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. xlvi. 10).

"He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. xxxiii. 9).

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to Him that fashioned it, What makest Thou? or Thy work, He hath no hands?" (Isa. xlv. 9).

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath He mercy on Whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. ix. 14-19).

Few commentators can resist the temptation to embark upon some attempt to justify God in the matter of Pharaoh. Appeal is made to the fact that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, or to the idea that Pharaoh is yet to be saved and blessed. If any living man could have thus reasoned, surely it was the apostle Paul himself. He did not put out his hand, however, to stay the ark of God. To all such attempts, whatever they may be, and by whatever spirit they may be prompted, or with whatever doctrine they may be associated, the apostle has but one reply, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20). If God is sovereign, He cannot be brought to account by any creature. True, absolute dominion in the hands of any but the Lord God would be terrible to contemplate. But God is holy, righteous, good, true and wise, and it is for us so to believe these revealed facts concerning Himself as gladly to recognize His sovereignty in all things.

In an earlier paper we spoke of the name *Elohim* as being derived from the making of an oath. The oath sworn by God, that is the goal of the ages, is one that suggests that Satanic sin challenged His sovereignty, a fact that we gather from several passages of Scripture:--

“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” (Isa. xlv. 23).

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him *the name which is above every name*; that in 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” (Phil. ii. 9-11).

The Lord is Sovereign. “This God is our God.”

#10. The righteousness of God. pp. 86 - 89

We have learned that God is sovereign and unaccountable to any for His actions. Unless we were also assured from His Word that He is wise, holy, righteous and kind, such absolute sovereignty would be terrible to contemplate. God, the Sovereign Ruler of all, though unaccountable to any creature, is so right and true in Himself, that it is revealed that there are some things that even He “cannot” do, though the highest archangel would not dare to say, “What doest Thou?” He “cannot lie” (Titus i. 2); He “cannot deny Himself” (II Tim. ii. 13); He “cannot look upon iniquity” (Hab. i. 13). It is impossible for God to be wrong, or to do wrong. “A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4*). He is “just and right”.

Let us consider for a moment this fact and its implications—that God is righteous. We must first get some understanding of the terms used. “Right” in Deut. xxxii. 4 is the rendering of the Hebrew word *yashar*. This word is part of the name given to Israel in Deut. xxxii. 15, the name meaning, if the termination is a diminutive, “The little righteous people”. We have also “the book of Jasher” (Josh. x. 13). This is probably more correctly rendered by the LXX (Complutensian Edition) *Tou Bibliou Tou Euthous*, “The right or correct book”. It is further explained by Josephus as “The writings laid up in the Temple”.

The primary meaning of *yashar* is “straight”:

“I will make the crooked places *straight*” (Isa. xlv. 2).

“The kine took the *straight* way and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left” (I Sam. vi. 12).

Notice that *yashar*, “straight”, is used in opposition to “crooked” and “turn aside”. This is its essential meaning.

[NOTE: * - For the place of this verse in Deut. xxxii. the reader is referred to article #3 in the series “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” dealing with this great chapter.]

The word is many times translated “upright”; and from Eccles vii. 29 we learn that this is how God made man, his departure from the straight or upright way being sin. Other passages beside Deut. xxxii. ascribe uprightness to the Lord:--

“Good and *upright* is the Lord” (Psa. xxv. 8).

“To show that the Lord is *upright*: He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him” (Psa. xcii. 15).

“The way of the just is *uprightness*: Thou, Most *Upright*, dost weigh the path of the just” (Isa. xxvi. 7).

The symbol of this “rightness” and “straightness” is the plumb line. The symbol of “righteousness” is the balance and the weight:--

“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet” (Isa. xxviii. 17).

The word “plummet” is *mishgeleth*, from *shagal* “to weigh”, and *shekel*, a weight. Even the test of the perpendicular is really by “weight”, for the same force that operates in the process of weighing, operates on the plumb line.

The Scripture emphasize this aspect of truth, and help us to see that, primarily, righteousness or justice is something even, equal and balanced:--

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have” (Lev. xix. 35, 36).

“Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measure, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure” (Deut. xxv. 13-15).

Here we have vividly brought before us the underlying meaning of *tsadik*, “righteousness”. It is something that when weighed in the balance is found accurate, just, correct. When, therefore, the Scriptures declare of God that “just and right is He”, we have the idea of unswerving uprightness, a state in which “crookedness” cannot exist, an idea of perfect equity, even balance, accurate weight. If God be like this, there can be no respect of persons with Him.

We should never forget, in thinking of the doctrine of justification as taught in the epistle to the Romans, that there is as much insistence upon the “justification” of God in His work of salvation, as there is upon the “justification” of the sinner who is saved:--

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS for the passing over of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; that HE MIGHT BE JUST, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

To this same truth Isaiah bore testimony centuries before:--

“There is no God else beside Me; a JUST God and a SAVIOUR” (Isa. xlv. 21).

Whether it be the throne of judgment, or the throne of grace, righteousness must be its basis:--

“Righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne” (Psa. xcii. 2).

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom” (Heb. i. 8).

“He hath appointed a day when He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts xvii. 31).

When, therefore we think of God, we think of One Who is inflexibly just, uncompromisingly upright, unalterably “balanced”. As Creator, as Judge, as Redeemer, He is right and He does right. “A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.”

“This God is our God.”

#11. The power of God (Psa. xlviii. 14). pp. 123 - 126

The first recorded statement of Scripture speaks of power:--

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

While subsequent passages descant upon the wisdom and the goodness of God manifested in creation, the first note struck is simply that of power. The title of God by which He was known in the earliest days was “God *Almighty*”, a title emphasizing His power. By this name He was known to Abraham (Exod. vi. 3) and to the Patriarchs. The Book of Job speaks of the Almighty 31 times, another testimony to the fact that the thought of power was early impressed upon the mind of man.

When the apostle speaks of the failure of the Gentile world and its rapid degeneration, he says:--

“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Rom. i. 20).

When he explains what these “invisible things” are, he refers to “His eternal power and Godhead” and states that as a result of this universal witness the heathen world was without excuse (Rom. i. 20).

“God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that *power* belongeth unto God” (Psa. lxii. 11).

The margin draws the reader’s attention to the fact that the word “power” here is “strength”. This is not unimportant, as it throws light upon the nature of God’s power. As used by man of men, power may mean nothing more than authority, and power and

authority differ essentially. Many a conqueror has invaded a country simply because of superior strength, not because he had authority for his action; and many a person in whom authority was vested has been powerless to exercise it owing to the rise of rebellious forces. "Power", when used of God, indicates, in the first place, strength. While philosophy may speak of God's power as being absolute and assume that He might have done many things that He has not done, as for example, that He might have prevented the sin of angels, or the fall of man—the Scriptures speak of the power of God correlated with His will, or as it is sometimes called, His "ordinate power".

As an example of the two aspects of power, reference may be made to Matt. xxvi. 53, 54. The Father had "absolute power" to send twelve legions of angels, but, as the Saviour said, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" This is the "ordinate power" of God, that power which carries out His purposes and good pleasure. There are many unprofitable and dangerous doctrines that owe their origin to the specious question, "Cannot God do this or that?" We do not question the ability of God to do anything, but if we are guided by the Scriptures we shall not raise the question, nor attempt an answer. We shall rather say with the prophet and the apostle:--

"His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure" (Isa. xlvi. 10).

"He worketh all things according to the counsel of His Own will" (Eph. i. 11).

"The knowledge of God regards a thing as possible, and as it may be done; the wisdom of God regards a thing as fit, and convenient to be done; the will of God resolves that it shall be done. The power of God is the application of His will to effect what it hath resolved His will orders, His wisdom guides, and His power effects" (*Charnock*).

Not only do the works of creation provide an exhibition of the almighty power of God so that the heathen are inexcusable, but the believer also may draw encouragement from the same source:--

"Ah Lord God! behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and *there is nothing too hard for Thee*" (Jer. xxxii. 17).

This infinity of power is recognized in Job xxxvii. 23:--

"Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power."

Not only is this power infinite; it is also incomparable:--

"To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold Who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. xl. 25, 26).

The power of God is infinite, incomparable, directed by wisdom and righteousness; and the passage from Isaiah just quoted proceeds to show that it knows no failure or falling off:--

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Isa. xl. 28).

Again, the power of God is unique in that it depends upon no instrument. True, in the wonder of His providence and His grace, the Most High stoops to use the humblest of instruments, but this is not of necessity. With man, the possession of power is not sufficient; it is useless without material and without instruments. Again and again, God declares His independence in the exercise of His power:--

“Thus saith the Lord I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE; that spreadeth forth the earth BY MYSELF” (Isa. xlv. 24).

Job’s self-righteousness is beaten to the dust, as the Lord challenges him in the words of chapter xxxviii.:--

“Where wast thou, when I laid the foundation of the earth?” (Job xxxviii. 4).

Another noticeable feature in the exercise of God’s almighty power is the apparent ease with which everything is accomplished:--

“He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast” (Psa. xxxiii. 9).

If we examine the Hebrew sentence: “Let there be light and there was light”, we shall find that the words: “Let there be light” and “There was light” are identical, apart from the change of tense in the verb “to be”. The passage, set out as follows, gives a more exact idea of the original: “And God said, Light *be*, and light *was*” (Even here the close parallel of the Hebrew is not quite preserved as the English words “be” and “was” have no similarity in appearance).

What a testimony to the majestic power of God are those recurring words of Gen. i.: “And it was so.” Sun, moon, stars, fish, flesh, fowl, all spring to life and being at His word. We might pursue this theme for pages. Without the power of God His providence would be ineffective; without omnipotence the fruitful seasons would lapse, the sea would not keep its bounds, the sun would fail, the stars would fall. The Lord Jesus Christ, as the Image of the invisible God, is the One in Whom all power is focused. “By Him all things consists” (or are held together), and He it is Who “upholds all things by the word of His power” (Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 3).

Power as related to the purpose of redemption is a wonderful theme. It begins with the birth of the Redeemer:--

“The *power* of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (Luke i. 35).

It is manifested in the cross of Christ:--

“Unto us which are saved it is the *power* of God” (I Cor. i. 18).

At His resurrection, the Lord Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with *power*, and the gospel of Christ became the *power* of God unto salvation to every one that believeth

(Rom. i. 4, 16). The same power that saves us, keeps us; and we are directed to the right hand of God where Christ sitteth, for the source of all power at the present time (Eph. i. 19; II Cor. xiii. 4; Phil. iii. 10).

When at last the time comes for the Lord to return, His return will be with power:--

“The Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with *power* and great glory”
(Matt. xxiv. 30).

“The *power* and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pet. i. 16).

“We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great *power*, and hast reigned” (Rev. xi. 17).

“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH” (Rev. xix. 6).

“This God is our God.”

#12. The immensity of God. pp. 183 - 186

It is of the utmost importance when we study the Scriptures and their teaching concerning the being and attributes of God, that we keep constantly before the mind, that unless God stoops down to our low estate, no explanation or description of Himself is possible. Let us never forget the graciousness of the Lord, Whose immensity baffles human speech to describe and the human mind to conceive, that He has condescended to speak of Himself after the manner of men. To us time and space are fundamental conceptions. Without them we should be dumb, unable to make a single proposition. Yet what has been revealed to us of God, although couched in human terms, makes it very clear that so far as God is concerned, time and space do not exist. In our own days the theory of relativity has revolutionized much that was held as true regarding time and space. While it is true that, so far as we are concerned, time and space must be postulated, we must remember that when dealing with the Absolute, such conceptions do not inhere. It is not our intention here to attempt an outline of philosophy or even to speak of the theory of relativity; we just throw out these reminders, so that the language of Scripture shall not be made misleading through faulty application:--

“He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?”
(Psa. xciv. 9).

It is thus that the Lord reasons with us, and the argument is irresistible. Following upon this comes the statement that not only must we believe that the Lord “sees” but also that He is not limited by distance or by the presence of light:--

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. xv. 3).

“Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee” (Psa. cxxxix. 7-12).

It is not merely that God knows and understands everything. The Lord is omnipresent not merely by His knowledge, but by virtue of the fact that He “fills” heaven and earth:--

“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord” (Jer. xxiii. 24).

The Companion Bible draws attention to the presence of the Hebrew accent here which emphasizes the word “fill”: “Denoting the Divine Presence which no ‘place’ can include or exclude.” Another note, found in the writings of *Charnock*, is as follows:--

“As *Eternity* is the perfection whereby He hath under neither beginning nor end; *Immortality* is the perfection whereby He hath neither increase nor diminution; so *Immensity* or *Omnipresence* is that whereby He hath neither bounds, nor limitations.”

Familiar usage has diminished the original meaning of the word “immense”. Primarily it signified something so great as to be incapable of measurement:--

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. lvii. 15).

This verse certainly includes the thought of immensity in the modern use of the word. The conception of “inhabiting eternity” is tremendous. But it is not mere size, for the same verse tells us that the Lord dwells with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit.

The same thing is true with regard to time: “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (II Pet. iii. 8). It is of course utterly false to conclude that there is any proportion here. God is not to be conceived as 365,000 times greater than man, for the same verse supplies an argument that would also prove that He was 365,000 times smaller. Who shall say which is the greater exhibition of the almighty power of God, the world revealed by the telescope, or that of the microscope? Is not God as much at home in the appalling expanses of the Milky Way, as He is in the invisible electron? Let us be grateful that, in terms that are understandable, He the Infinite One has told us all that we need to know for our faith and comfort. If the Lord God be omnipresent, we are never out of His sight, out of His mind, beyond His protection, or beyond His care. Sin and all the uprisings of the flesh would die if we constantly remembered that the Lord was near.

This doctrine should also prove a help in worship. Even in the days of Solomon, after the temple had been built according to God's own plan, it was recognized that there could be no localizing of the Deity:--

“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee: how much less this house that I have builded?”
(I Kings. viii. 27).

God is not confined to the heavens. A recent critic ridiculed the idea expressed by the words, “Far above all heavens”. But even Gen. i. 1 implies three spheres: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” In addition to heaven and earth this verse necessitates a third sphere—that which is associated with God before the heaven and the earth were created. With this third sphere the Mystery and its blessings are concerned, although even here there are limitations beyond our fathoming, for none can compare with God.

He is from everlasting to everlasting; He is the Ancient of days, He is everywhere and always; and so far as we and our experiences are concerned, this is the assurance to us of His abiding presence. “I AM THAT I AM.” *This God is our God.*

“Ultra dispensationalism.” A criticism examined.

#1. The place of Acts xxviii. pp. 175 - 179

The intelligent reader will not need informing that a magazine which stands for such a provoking course of teaching as does *The Berean Expositor* must always be under the fire of criticism. How can the charge “ultra dispensationalism” be dealt with? Is any useful purpose served by dealing with the charge that we have no use for the epistle to the Romans? Yet if any criticism sends us back to “The Book” we are thankful. What we are still awaiting, is a scriptural exposure of our attitude to Acts xxviii.

Comparatively recently some notes written in a good spirit have been passed on to us, and as some readers may be desirous of having the points raised dealt with, we will endeavour to do so in a short series of articles, praying that the cause of truth will be furthered thereby. We will refer to the writer who has criticized our position as “B”. He writes:--

“The chief point of difference with *Mr. Welch* seems to be in his discovery that in Acts 28 we have the founding of a new ‘dispensation’, though the word is not used there, nor is there, to my mind, any clear indication of this most important fact.”

It is often said that *Luther* discovered the great doctrine of justification by faith, but what is nearer the truth is that *Luther* gave that doctrine prominence. The need of the time called forth, under God, the man, and the Reformation followed.

We have certainly made Acts xxviii. the keynote of our ministry, seeing in it a dispensational boundary that influences the whole course of the outworking of the revealed purpose of the ages, and bringing into the light that position which had hitherto been hid in God. The Lord, however, Who knows the hearts of all men will not allow many of His servants an exclusive claim to knowledge, lest pride and boasting spoil the testimony. We gratefully acknowledge the pioneer work done by others before us, who in their turn were quickened and directed by other witnesses. In the end, we all shall appear in a twofold capacity, viz., sowers and reapers—sowers of seed garnered from the harvest prepared before by others.

This matter, however, is scarcely a point in the criticism, although in a part, which we do not quote, there is the thought that the exposition of the Scriptures along the lines of *The Berean Expositor* is somewhat of a presumption, seeing that for nineteen centuries the church as a whole has taught on other lines. There is, however, but one test for all truth—not its antiquity, nor its popularity, but whether it is in harmony with all that God has written. And this we claim for “dispensational truth”. We can well imagine that “B” will interject here: “But surely you will give me credit for believing all that God has written too?” Our answer must be qualified. Yes, in all sincerity you believe that you do

accept without alteration all that God has written, but unless you divide rightly the Word of truth, you will discover this to be impossible. Let an example suffice.

We believe that in promising, in the Sermon on the Mount, that “The meek shall inherit the *earth*”, that the Lord means what He said. We also believe that Abraham—and those blessed with faithful Abraham—will be blessed in the *heavenly Jerusalem*. We believe, further, that the church of the mystery will be blessed “in heavenly places *far above all*”.

If “B” believes that the church in the Gospel according to Matthew is not to be distinguished from the church in Ephesians (and he has practically said so, as will appear), then he cannot, even though he would, accept each of these three distinct spheres of blessing *as written*. We, on our part, would say, that realizing there are three spheres of blessing (i) The earth, (ii) The heavenly Jerusalem, and (iii) heavenly places far above all, we leave each company where God has placed them without confusion and without alteration.

The chief item, however, in the criticism is found in the statement that the word “dispensation” is not used in Acts xxviii., but we certainly believe that there is a “clear indication” that a dispensational change had come, and this from two sources, viz., (1) the last chapter of Acts itself, and (2) from the epistles written during the two years of imprisonment with which Acts closes.

A dispensation is marked by certain characteristics, and if these be set aside, we have *negative* evidence of a change. If, further, this be supplemented by *positive* testimony, as we find in Eph. iii. and Col. i., then we have all that can be reasonably asked for.

We open the last chapter of Acts, and observe that the miraculous gifts of Mark xvi. are still in force. We are certain that “B” is no quibbler, and the fact that after Paul in Acts xxviii. 3-6 fulfilled the reference to “taking up serpents”, he did not supplement it by drinking something poisonous, will not be used by him to invalidate our claim that Mark xvi. 17-20 was in force. The deadly disease of dysentery was healed by the apostle, and then other diseased persons in the islands were healed in the same way. Here, then, is one feature, characteristic of the Pentecostal dispensation. We believe the “shall follow” of Mark xvi. 17 to be as true as the “shall be saved” of Mark xvi. 16. We have never had “these signs” following, yet we are not perturbed. On the other hand, he who claims the Gospel of Mark as true *for himself*, has no evidence of salvation unless he has Pentecostal gifts. The modern exhibition of “gifts” and “healing” we do not deal with here. Sufficient, for the moment, to say that never have we heard of a “Healing Campaign” being advertised with the assuring statement that the Healer or Preacher would drink poison or be bitten by a serpent to prove to the world his *bona fides*.

The next dispensational feature is found in the fact, that while Paul had expressed his longing to see the believers of the church at Rome, there is no record that he visited them; on the contrary, the close of the Acts gives prominence to his calling together the chief of the Jews. “The Jew first”, means just what it says—“First in time, and first in all things.”

To limit the word “first” to time, and deny any reason or meaning to it, is to allow little credit to the apostle’s ability, quite apart from the question of inspiration. We can however best consider this feature later.

A third feature of dispensational importance is the saying of the apostle in Acts xxviii. 20:--

“For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”

The hope of Israel is expressed in Acts i. 6, it is repeated in Acts xxvi. 6, 7, and it is still prominent in Acts xxviii. Can this hope of Israel, the fulfillment of the promises made unto the fathers, the fulfillment of Isa. xi. (see Rom. xv. 12, 13), can that hope be at the same time the hope of the church called under new terms, into a new sphere, and entirely dissociated from the “covenants of promise”, “the commonwealth of Israel”, the promises to Abraham, Isaac or Jacob?

When the apostle met the chief of the Jews, he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening, but after the setting aside of Israel, he preached the kingdom of God, but taught those things which concern “the Lord Jesus Christ” (not “Jesus” now), with all confidence, no man forbidding him: no longer “expounding” and no longer drawing from Moses and the Prophets, for the simple reason that the “secret” was never disclosed in Moses or the Prophets, but had been “revealed” to him as the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, the quotation of Isa. vi. 9, 10 affected Israel of the dispersion, in the same way as the quotation of the same passage in Matt. xiii. affect Israel in the land. Matt xi. and xii. reveal the rejection of Christ and the failure of Israel to repent, even though they had seen so many miracles. This rejection is followed by “mystery”, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. In Acts xxviii. Israel again reject their Messiah, and the rejection this time being complete, miraculous gifts cease, the hope of Israel is deferred, and for the first time since the call of Abraham in Gen. xii. the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles in independence of Israel, a feature unique in the testimony of Scripture, and not appreciated as it should be. We submit that there are abundant signs of a change of dispensation consequent upon Israel entering into their “lo-ammi” state.

For positive testimony we have but to read Eph. iii. 1-3:--

“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles*, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to *you-ward*, How that by revelation He made known unto me *the mystery*.”

And again in Col. i. 24-27:--

“. . . . for His body’s sake which is the church, whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me *for you*, to fulfil the word of God: even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints Christ among you (sent to the Gentiles) the hope of glory.”

Here we must pause. Further items of importance come before us in the next criticism. We believe that no one can ponder the teaching of the Word as written in Acts xxviii., Eph. iii. and Col. i. without realizing that a great and drastic dispensational change took place. We believe that “B” will be most ready to acknowledge that closer acquaintance with Acts xxviii. does give “a clear indication” of a dispensational crisis.

#2. A dispensational “secret”. A dispensational hope. pp. 193 - 197

After a consideration of the question of Acts xxviii. as a dispensational boundary, our brother continues:--

“One other *prima facie* difficulty in accepting it is this. St. Luke was the intimate friend and companion of St. Paul: he must have known of this great Dispensational Church. Surely he might have put in a clear warning as he describes the growth of the Church in Acts, that this was not “the Church” of the epistle to the Ephesians. Surely also St. Matthew might have quoted in xvi. 18 that Christ is not referring to the Church according to Paul, but to the Church according to Peter and surely he should have told us whether our Lord’s words in xviii. 17 (words that I think have been sadly neglected in our Church life) refer to the Pentecostal or to the Dispensational Church.”

“B” has used the word “surely” three times. This, of course, merely expresses opinion, and is entirely outside the realm of valid argument. The above criticism can be reduced to the three following statements:--

- (1) Luke must have known of the dispensational change which we see in Acts xxviii., because he was an intimate friend of Paul.
- (2) He ought therefore to have warned the Church in the Acts period of its dispensational position.
- (3) Matthew also should have told us, when he was writing xvi. 18, whether this Church refers to Paul or to Peter, and whether the words of xviii. 17 refer to a Pentecostal Church or the Church of the mystery.

We must not forget that Luke’s confessed object in writing the Acts was to continue the treatise begun in his Gospel, of all that Jesus began to do and teach, by a supplemental account of what the risen Lord did and taught through His apostles. When Paul was commissioned on the road to Damascus, Luke knew that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord “before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”, and he plainly states it. What he did not know (or if he knew, was not permitted to record) was that at the same time that Paul received this commission, the Lord promises that He would appear to him once more, and give him a second commission. This is made known to us for the first time in Acts xxvi. 16-18, when Paul’s evangelizing is at an end, and the prison is his sphere. We must go into the question of Paul’s twofold ministry later. But we have seen enough to realize that Luke does indicate

the coming change, although he is held back until near the end of the narrative before making it known. The reason for this is obvious; and finds a parallel in the Lord's own attitude. In Acts i. 6 the disciples asked:--

“Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?”

Had the Lord told them that in spite of Pentecost Israel would still continue in their state of unrepentance until they had filled up the measure of their iniquity and been set aside, such knowledge would have paralyzed their witness, and might have been taken by Israel as an excuse for failure to repent. Had Peter known that Israel would not repent, he could not truthfully have quoted from Joel as he did in Acts ii. 17-21; for there is an interval of 1900 years between verses 18 and 19, but this was not known to Peter at the time. The Lord simply deals with the question of time, and follows with the injunction: “But ye shall receive power ye shall be witnesses” (Acts i. 8). Had Luke made known in the early Acts that Israel were to pass into their *lo-ammi* condition in about forty years, then, humanly speaking, there would have been no “Acts” to record. Paul unhesitatingly links himself with the “hope” of the Church at that time, saying: “We which are alive and remain” (I Thess. iv. 17). There are some who consider that Paul was deceiving the Church here, by saying “we”. There are others who think he deceived himself. We are in the happy position of accepting his words as perfectly true, for at the time of writing I Thessalonians no revelation had been given concerning the secret administration.

If what we have said above is true, there is no need to answer the second item of criticism. We pass on therefore to the third.

Here we confess that we are somewhat at a loss to understand the objection. We have always felt that Matthew *did* make plain that *Peter* was addressed both in connection with the Church and with reference to the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. xvi. 16-19). Matthew could hardly be expected to say anything about Paul who was at that time an unconverted Pharisee. That Peter and Paul had distinctive ministries is made clear in Gal. ii. 6-10.

While we might agree with our brother that the principle of Matt. xviii. 17 could be profitably employed to-day, we cannot see the slightest ground for supposing that our Lord referred to a Church other than the Pentecostal Church. In the first place in both Matt. x. 5 and in xv. 24, Gentiles are most definitely set aside as forming no part of our Lord's ministry up to that time, and this is confirmed by Rom. xv. 8. Secondly, the rejected brother was to be regarded as “a heathen man”, or “a Gentile” (*see* Gal. ii. 14), which is added testimony to the Jewish constitution of this Church spoken of in Matt. xviii. Once again we have “searched to see” and we find nothing in the objections that is valid, or that in any sense modifies our belief that the present dispensation was a “secret”, unknown to Luke or Peter, or to Paul himself until he became the prisoner of Jesus Christ. The very silence of all three on the matter is but added proof of the rightness of our position:--

“What are we to make of that inspired word ‘Till He come’, written to the Corinthians, a Church of mixed Jews and Greeks till our Lord’s second coming: to whom do these words refer?”

We are to make no more or less of the words “Till He come” than the hope revealed in the Acts and epistles of that period will allow. If we discover that the hope before the Church at that period is called “the hope of Israel”, and if we further discover that Israel were set aside, and still further, if the new dispensation, that came in consequent upon the setting aside, speaks of the “one hope” of the calling, and uses a new set of terms to speak of it, we shall have to conclude that “Till He come”, and any commandment connected with it, is binding until a change of dispensation come in, just as the law of Moses carries statements to the effect that certain ceremonies like Passover, etc., were “statutes for ever”. The same reason which our brother would rightly give, namely, a change of dispensation, to exempt himself from any necessity to abide by these commands of the law, is the selfsame reason that we give for our own exemption from anything that belonged to the Pentecostal dispensation.

Two passages of Scripture suffice to indicate the hope that was before the Corinthian Church, and all the Churches of that period. One is in the Acts itself, and one is in the epistle to the Romans. The Acts of the Apostles gives clear testimony that but one hope runs throughout the period covered, namely, “the hope of Israel”. The apostles’ question in Acts i. 6, arising, let it be noted, out of our Lord’s opening up of the O.T. Scriptures, makes that clear at the beginning. Paul’s reference in Acts xxvi. 6, 7 to “the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers” is equally clear, while his statement in Acts xxviii. 20, that he was bound “for the hope of Israel” needs no explanation. This is most certainly the one hope of the Acts.

What of the epistles of the period? We propose taking the testimony of Romans for two reasons:--

- (1) It was the last epistle written *before* Paul’s imprisonment, and will give the final aspect of the hope entertained by the then Church.
- (2) Romans is considered by all students to be the most basic of all the epistles written during the Acts, and therefore should be given most attentive hearing.

In Rom. xv. 8 we learn that the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus was limited to “the circumcision”, and that He came to “confirm the promises made unto the fathers”, while in Rom. xv. 12, 13 the hope is that:--

“There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles hope. Now the God of that hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.”

Our brother will not need proof that “trust” (*elpizo*) and “hope” (*elpis*) must both be translated “hope”, as we have done, or that the article before *elpis* marks it out as “that” hope which is in view. The hope then before the Church was associated with the reign of Christ over the Gentiles, the passage quoted being from Isa. xi., where the reference to the lion and the lamb makes it clear that the Millennium is the subject. The hope before

the Church during the Acts was the second coming of Christ in connection with the thousand years reign—Israel’s great day. This hope is entirely foreign to “the mystery” which looks “far above all” for the realization of its hope. The hope that is expressed in I Thess. iv. must never be read without the consciousness that II Thess. ii., with its reference to the “Man of Sin”, was written to correct false ideas about the time of the second coming. If I Thess. iv. be my hope, then II Thess. ii. reveals that it will not be realized until the Day of the Lord. Moreover, the Archangel links I Thess. iv. with Daniel’s prophecy and with the hope of Israel (Dan. x. and xii.). The words used throughout Acts and its epistles, together with the epistles of Peter and James, are *parousia*, *apokalupto*, and *apokalupsis*. These are not used by Paul when speaking of the blessed hope of the mystery. The one hope of the calling of the dispensation of the mystery has nothing to do with reigning over the Gentiles, or the state of peace in God’s holy mountain. It belongs to heavenly places and the right hand of God, and refers to a phase of the Lord’s second coming unknown before Acts xxviii.

In answer to the question therefore, “To whom do the words ‘Till He come’ refer?” we say, that they referred to that Church of Jew and Gentile that had been called into being during the Acts while the longsuffering of God waited on Israel’s repentance: that they who thus waited were marked off from the present time by the possession of miraculous gifts, which, together with Israel and its hope, have been set aside until the Church of the one body is complete.

#3. The written testimony to the Mystery, and “Things that differ”. pp. 217 - 220

Continuing the criticism which we have partly examined, “B” passes from the question of the dispensational boundary of Acts xxviii. to the equally important question of the written testimony concerning this new dispensation:--

“I find another difficulty in the assumption that of the Pauline epistles only four should have validity for us, and that *this fact is nowhere mentioned*, nor are these epistles in any way distinguished from the others by a special position in the New Testament: indeed they are deceptively placed in the very middle of the other epistles that are not supposed to be applicable to us. Though I find *Mr. Welch* a little inconsistent, and quoting Romans and Corinthians with great cogency as undoubtedly authoritative.”

“B” makes it clear in the above criticism that he is not very well acquainted with what we actually teach. He seems to think that we have confined ourselves to but four epistles, and that it is an act inconsistent with our position to refer, for example, to Romans. The opening paragraph of our studies (which commenced in March 1926 and have now in 1934 reached chapter vii.) runs like this:--

“Perhaps no one book in the whole of the Scriptures may be considered to have a claim upon all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ more than the Epistle to the Romans.”

Romans is “undoubtedly authoritative” where doctrine is concerned, but where we see a difference between Romans and the epistles of the Mystery is in their *dispensational* teaching. Both Romans and Ephesians teach the same truths concerning sin, salvation, redemption, life, but they are diametrically opposed when it is a question of the constitution of the Church. This aspect of truth will come before us again, as “B” has raised the question of the meaning of the phrase “the Jew first”; so we pass on to the matter of the four prison epistles. To be exact there are five epistles marked as from “prison”, but as Philemon is so personal, we usually leave it out when speaking of the revelation of the Mystery.

The four prison epistles are the only source of instruction on the distinctive character of the Church of the Mystery. No other company was chosen *before* the foundation of the world. No other company is *seated* together at the right hand of God. So while we believe *all* scripture is *for* us, we do not believe that all scripture is *about* us. We recognize that in the epistle to the Romans there is that which is permanent, e.g., the doctrine of redemption, and also that which is passing, e.g., the teaching concerning the wild olive graft. We believe that unless the Church of the Mystery had had beneath it the solid rock of Romans, it would have needed a special revelation concerning these basic things. These things are accepted and assumed in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, and the time is occupied in making all men see what is the dispensation of the Mystery, with its own peculiar constitution, hope and sphere:--

“It is claimed that Paul’s words in Acts xxviii. 28 are the announcement of the new order. Please compare with them his words in Acts xiii. 46, 47 and Acts xviii. 6 which to me seem absolutely identical. On page 37 of ‘*Things most surely believed*’, we read that ‘in this new company there is an equality of membership never known before’. Why, it is stated by Peter in Acts xi. 15, etc., xv. 9, And He put no difference between them, the Gentiles, and us.”

We have compared Acts xxviii. 28 with Acts xiii. 46, 47, and we find in Acts xxviii., “The salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles”, and in Acts xiii., “Lo, we turn to the Gentiles”. If our brother’s intention is to suggest that both passages teach the same thing, a reference to Acts xiv. 1 will show that the apostles themselves had no such thought. Paul did not set aside the Jew in Acts xiii.; he merely set aside that one synagogue. As far on as Acts xvii. 1, 2 we read that, “as his manner was”, he went to the synagogue of the Jews. It is strange that we may even compare scripture with scripture and yet miss the meaning of the comparison.

Acts xiii. and Acts xxviii. answer to one another as type does to antitype or prophecy to fulfillment. In Acts xiii. Paul brings about the blindness of one Jew (verse 11); in Acts xxviii., he pronounces the same doom on the nation. In Acts xiii. one Gentile and his house are saved, as a consequence of the judgment upon the Jew, and both the saved Gentile and the apostle are of the same name, *Paulus*. In Acts xxviii., consequent upon the judgment of the Jews, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles.

In Acts xiii. the apostle says, “Beware lest that come upon you” (verse 40); in Acts xxviii. we see the threatened judgment fall. How could the apostle say that he was bound for the hope of Israel in Acts xxviii., if he had set aside Israel in Acts xiii.?

Acts xviii. 6 is said to be “absolutely identical” with Acts xxviii. 28. The term “absolutely” is not to be taken seriously. We find, however, that the apostle took the earliest opportunity of “entering a synagogue and reasoning with the Jews” (Acts xviii. 19), which shows that he at least had no idea that his words in xviii. 6 were “identical” with those of Acts xxviii. 28. Still further, he was anxious to keep the feast that was due at Jerusalem (xviii. 21), and spoke boldly in the synagogue at Ephesus (Acts xix. 8). Paul had no scruples against associating himself, in the temple at Jerusalem, with men who had a vow, and there is no suggestion that he was wrong in so doing. So that we cannot accept the statement of “identity” in these two passages, much less that of “absolute identity”.

Exception is taken to our statement that at Acts xxviii. an equality never known before is introduced; and we are told that this same equality is stated in Acts xi. 15. We must remember that Peter called himself a Jew under law, and did not hesitate to tell Cornelius that but for the vision of the sheet he would have regarded him as common and unclean (Acts x. 28). His words in xi. 15 refer to the fact that the spirit came upon Cornelius as it did at Pentecost upon the Jewish believers. We have never taught that the “equality” of Ephesians had anything to do with Pentecost. And we cannot see how the admission of the Gentile to Pentecostal baptism can be the same thing as equality of membership in a unity then unknown and unrevealed. That no such conception was in the mind of Peter and those with him is evident from Acts xi. 19 where the word was still preached to “Jews only”.

Moreover, the question comes up again in Acts xv., the result being that a distinct difference is perpetuated between the Gentiles who believed and the believers of the circumcision (Acts xv. 19-21). This difference constituted a “middle wall of partition” (Eph. ii. 14), the “ordinances” of Eph. ii. 15 being the “decrees” of Acts xvi. 4.

The equality of Eph. ii. is that “the both are created one new man”, but one looks in vain for such a creation in Acts xi. or xv. The equality of Eph. iii. 6 is unique. Never before was there a unity which, while containing Jewish and Gentile believers, was a “joint body”.

We are afraid that “B” will have to revise his statements, both as to the absolute identity of Acts xviii. 6 with Acts xxviii. 28, and as to the connection between Peter’s reference to Pentecostal baptism and Paul’s revelation of the newly-created new man. If these things can be called identical, it is vain to attempt to “try the things that differ”. Positive teaching, under these conditions, would be impossible, for no weight could be given to any word of Scripture, and the truth would sink under a mass of generalities.

#4. The Jew first. Body and Bride.
Paul's twofold ministry.
pp. 235 - 240

Passing from the distinctive epistles of the mystery, and the peculiar features of the new dispensation, we come to the question of the relative place of Jew and Gentile before Acts xxviii.:--

“Mr. Welch writes, ‘In Romans, Paul speaks of the Jew first’. Ah, but let us turn to his words, and perhaps we shall find that he means first in order of having the gospel preached unto them, first in time, not first in superiority. So look up Rom. i. 16; ii. 9, 10; and iii. 9. ‘Are we better than they? *No, in no wise.*’ Surely words cannot be plainer; surely, too, such an assumption of racial distinction in the Pentecostal church is not consistent with the attitude of Christ towards the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well and His words in John x. 16 and xvii. 20, 21.”

Even if we agree that “first in order” is what the apostle means when, in Rom. i. 16, he says, “To the Jew first”, the question as to why this should be stated still requires an answer. If we were to write, “The power of God unto salvation, to the Corinthians first, and also to the Chinese”, our readers would naturally want to know why such a statement was written. It certainly would not satisfy them to say, “Well, wasn’t that the historical order?” Further, does Rom. ii. 9, 10 mean that the Jew will be judged “first” in time? Are we to understand that in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Rom. ii. 16), the Jew will be judged some time before the Gentile? To take another passage, Is there no special significance, beyond that of mere historic sequence, behind Peter’s words when he said:--

“Unto you *first* God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you” (Acts iii. 26).

If we read the previous verse, we shall see that there was a definite reason for this priority:--

“Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all kindreds of the earth be blessed. *Unto you first*” (Acts iii. 25, 26).

The fact that the Saviour came to the Jew first (Rom. xv. 8), and the fact that the gospel was preached to the Jew first, was because Israel was the appointed channel of blessing to the nations of the earth. A saved Israel is necessary for the functioning of the promise made to Abraham. A saved remnant of Israel enabled the fulfillment of the promise to commence, but with the setting aside of the channel, the blessing of the nations was also postponed and awaits the day of Israel’s restoration.

The teaching of Rom. xi. 17-25 shows that Israel were “first” as to position, being the “natural branches”. The believing Gentiles were reminded that they were but a wild graft.

With reference to Rom. iii. 9, 10, we remind our readers that we have many times taken this passage to demonstrate the difference between the doctrinal teaching of Romans that remains, and the dispensational teaching that has ceased to be true for the present time:--

Dispensational teaching.—"What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way"
(Rom. iii. 1, 2).

This was true then, but is no longer true to-day:--

Doctrinal teaching.—"Are we better than they? No, in no wise" (Rom. iii. 9).

This was true then, and is still true as ever.

We are next referred to our Lord's attitude to the Samaritan woman. Our Lord said several things on this occasion; and our brother leaves us to guess as to which of these he has in mind. If we are to include John iv. 21, 23 in our consideration, we would remind our brother that the day had not then come when the Father should be worshipped "neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem", and that that time did not come until the book of the Acts was finished and Jerusalem destroyed. Further, the Lord told the woman that "salvation is of the Jews", and that remained true until, with the setting aside of the Jew, the salvation of God was sent to the Gentiles. We see nothing in John iv. that contradicts our teaching, but much that supports it.

The statement concerning "the other sheep" in John x. 16, and that concerning unity in John xvii. 20, 21, while they were uttered by Christ during His earthly ministry, were not made public until after Paul's ministry had ceased (John outlived the rest of the apostles, and the consistent testimony of antiquity is that he wrote his Gospel last of all). The Gospel of John, unlike the Synoptic Gospels, starts with the assumption that Christ has been rejected. It explains the meaning of Jewish observances and Jewish words. It is intended for the world, and is the message for the great outer circle to-day, while Paul's testimony is running its elective course.

Wherever Israel appear in Scripture, recognized as the chosen people of God, they must be first. There can be no equality among believers until "the twain" are created one new man, and that does not occur before Acts xxviii.:--

"All the scriptural promises and allusions which are supposed to refer to this so-called dispensational church may equally well refer to the whole body of believers in Christ, whether pre- or post- Acts xxviii. Indeed, I find it difficult to accept this division of Christ's body, Christ's bride, into two. Are there two brides? Or is Stephen, the first martyr, not a fellow-member with us in the 'one church' (Rom. xii. 5; I Cor. x. 17; Eph. iv. 4 and v. 30)?"

Our brother's first statement is a very wide one; but we can only assume that he means what he says. Among the "scriptural promises and allusions", then, to which he refers we may include Eph. i. 3, 4. We challenge him to bring forward proofs from

Scripture that the phrases, “all spiritual blessings”, “in heavenly places” and “before the foundation of the world” apply equally to the church before and after Acts xxviii. We could almost venture the whole argument upon one unique fact, namely, that *this* church and no other throughout the whole range of Scripture is said to be “seated” in the heavenly places, far above all. Nowhere else is there a “joint-body”; no other company is “far above all principality”. What, then, becomes of our brother’s sweeping statement? It is incorrect, and, as criticism, it is valueless.

We also repudiate the term “so-called dispensational church”; it is a meaningless phrase. Every church must be “dispensational”. It may be the church of the Acts period, or the mystery, or the churches of the Revelation. “So-called” suggests that this is our own term. We hope no one will think that we have been careless enough to use so meaningless an expression.

Our brother, moreover, speaks of the “Body” and the “Bride” as synonymous titles of the one company. But this is not the case. The Bride is clearly associated with the New Jerusalem, with its gates of pearl and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The church of the mystery is far above even this sphere of blessing. We read that the standard of the church of the mystery is the “perfect man” (Eph. iv. 13), and our brother will know that *aner* (the word for “man” here) is never used except of a male. It is translated in Eph. v. several times by the word “husband”. And we suppose our brother would not attempt to teach that the perfect “husband” can be the “bride”. Eph. v. with its instructions to husbands and wives is not the place in which to seek to establish a doctrine.

We are also referred to Rom. xii. 5 and I Cor. x. 17, but these passages speak of a church where every “member” is a “spiritual gift” (I Cor. xii. 18, 28), whereas spiritual gifts are absent from the dispensation of the mystery.

The reference to Stephen, the first martyr, is an appeal to our sentiments. Why not John the Baptist, or David or Moses? For all were saved by the same Christ, What we teach, is that while salvation is common to all the Lord’s people, the *spheres* of blessing differ. As the church of the one body was a secret, hid in God, when Stephen died, we cannot believe that he was a member of that church. We believe that it can be proved from Scripture that Stephen will be amongst that company designated “the Bride”, and as these dispositions of grace are at the sovereign disposal of the Lord, we cannot discuss them. They make no difference to our teaching and are outside our province:--

“This word ‘dispensation’ is one that Mr. Welch does not give in the original. And really, it is one that hardly bears the interpretation he would put upon it. For it means really ‘stewardship’, and in three places out of four (only four in the whole Bible) it is said to have been given to Paul (See I Cor. ix. 17; Col. i. 25; Eph. iii. 2). In the one other place, viz., Eph. i. 10, it is used of God’s ordering of the course of history.”

Yet the booklet under criticism, viz., “Things most surely believed”, itself contains the following passage directly bearing on the point:--

“The ways of God with men are differentiated into dispensations. This word, used by Paul of the present dispensation of the grace of God to the Gentiles (Eph. iii. 1, 2) means

'the administration of a household' or as it is translated in Luke xvi. 2, 'stewardship'. The church at Jerusalem was compelled to recognize the distinctive 'stewardships' or 'dispensations' given to Peter and Paul (Gal. ii. 6-10), and saw that the distinction involved not only 'apostleship' but 'gospel'." (page 11).

It would, surely, be difficult for a reader of the criticism to believe that the booklet criticized contained the passage we have just quoted. We can only add that, as the criticism contains no point wherein it is considered we have erred, we but restate, as above, what we have already taught:--

"Yet another point. Page 36 of 'Things most surely believed' says of the eventful scene in Acts xxviii.; 'A *new* dispensation with *new* terms is ushered in—this dispensation of the grace of God for the Gentiles committed to Paul'. But was this new? Was it not rather God's revelation to Paul from his prior calling on the road to Damascus? Well, let us see what Paul himself says (Acts xxvi. 17 & 18, and again Acts xxii. 21)."

Here we find ourselves echoing our brother's words, "Well, let us see what Paul himself says (Acts xxvi. 17, 18 and Acts xxii. 21)", only we suggest that a commencement be made, not at verse 17, but at verse 16 of Acts xxvi., particularly noticing the word "*both*", which indicates Paul's *two-fold* ministry, and the words "in the which *I will appear* unto thee", which makes clear the fact that when Paul received the commission on the road to Damascus he also received intimation of another commission which would be given when it should please the Lord to reveal it.

In Acts xx. this new commission is associated with "bonds and afflictions". It indicated that Paul's earlier ministry had come to an end, and that the Ephesian believers should see his face no more. He looks forward to "finishing his course" (Acts xx. 24), and, as recorded in II Tim. iv. 7, he does finish that course.

No careful reader of Acts xx. 17-38 could fail to see that Paul is summing up one ministry and looking forward to another, but this new ministry is directly associated with "bonds"; in other words, it is "a prison ministry", with its new revelation and dispensation. Acts xxii. 21, like Acts xx. and Acts xxvi., make known, *for the first time* what the Lord said to Paul. The words of Acts xxvi. 16-18 were kept secret until Paul was a prisoner. In face of these scriptures, then, our brother's suggestion: "Was it not rather God's revelation to Paul from his first calling on the road to Damascus?" is flatly negated. It was not the first revelation. Paul himself says so, and the very passages to which our brother refers us entirely overthrow his contention.

We believe that those of our readers who have followed this criticism will feel that if that is all that can be brought forward against our position, those responsible for *The Berean Expositor* are justified in the general pursuit of their policy of expounding positive truth, for very occasionally only would the devotion of precious space and time to the type of criticism here dealt with be to edification. Every reader should take each of our critic's points, as though they were personal to themselves, and then, as true Bereans, "search and see". We should then have no fears as to the result.

The volume of the Book.

#24. The Revised Version.

The consistent translation of identical words.

pp. 23 - 28

The Translators of 1611 who produced our Authorized Version knew quite well that a literal rendering of the Greek original demanded that one English equivalent should, as far as possible, be used for each important word in the Greek. They adopted, however, a quite different principle, which they have expressed in unmistakable language:--

“Another thing we think good to admonish thee of, gentle reader, that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done Truly we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before we were specially careful But that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as, for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by *purpose*, never call it *intent*; if one were *joy*, never call it *gladness*, etc., thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of curiosity than wisdom.”

It is easy to sweep aside these arguments, but there is one incontrovertible fact to be remembered—that no language exists that is capable of providing a word-for-word equivalent for either the Hebrew or the Greek. At the best, the most severely literal rendering is a compromise. What the reader gains in one direction he loses in another. No version in English or in any other tongue can ever take the place of the inspired original. The translator, therefore, must himself make the decision, as before God, as to whether he shall adhere to the letter as much as possible, or whether he shall provide his reader with a version as near to the spirit of the original as his mother-tongue will permit without making the rendering stilted or too scholastic. The Revisers have explained their attitude to the inconsistent renderings of the A.V. as follows:--

“The frequent inconsistencies in the Authorized Version have caused as much embarrassment from the fact already referred to, namely, that a studied variety of rendering, even in chapter and context, was a kind of principle with our predecessors There are, however, numerous passages in the Authorized Version in which, whether regard be had to the recurrence (as in the first three gospels) of identical clauses and sentences, to the repetition of the same word in the same passage, or to the characteristic use of particular words by the same writer, the studied variety, adopted by the Translators of 1611 has produced a degree of inconsistency that cannot be reconciled with the principle of faithfulness. In such cases we have not hesitated to introduce alterations, even though the sense might not seem to the general reader to be materially affected.”

With these considerations before us, that will perhaps prevent us from entertaining hard thoughts of those who laboured in the Word years ago, we may turn to the Revised Version and notice where the A.V. has been altered so that the renderings shall be more uniform.

This restoring of uniformity is shown in two ways:--

- (1) The rendering of the same Greek word by one English equivalent, as far as the English idiom would permit;
- (2) The distinguishing of words which in the A.V. were liable to be confused with other words in the original.

Let us take as an example the recurrence of the word *katargeo* in I Cor. xiii.:--

A. V.	R. V.
“Whether there be prophecies, they shall <i>fail</i> ” (8).	“Whether there be prophecies, they shall <i>be done away</i> .”
“Whether there be knowledge, it shall <i>vanish away</i> ” (8).	“Whether there be knowledge, it shall <i>be done away</i> .”
“That which is in part shall be <i>done away</i> ” (10).	“That which is in part shall <i>be done away</i> .”
“When I became a man, I <i>put away</i> childish things” (11).	“Now that I am become a man, I <i>have put away</i> childish things.”

Here it will be seen that the R.V. seeks to give the English reader the insistent connection is so obvious to the reader of the Greek. Moreover, the A.V. makes a false connection, by translating two different words by “fail” in verse 8.

The Revisers seem to have failed in the last reference. The whole argument of I Cor. xiii. 8-13 is to show that the supernatural gifts of the early church were to be considered as pertaining to the “partial” and not to the “perfect”; in other words, gifts belong to the “childhood” of the church and not to its “manhood”. This should be allowed its full force, and the same word should be repeated four times. The R.V. has gone some way in this direction, but has just failed of completeness.

Both Mark and Luke record the healing of blind Bartimæus (Mark x. 53 and Luke xviii. 42). The language in the original is the same in both cases, but the A.V. translates Mark’s account: “Thy faith hath made thee whole”; and Luke’s account: “Thy faith hath saved thee.” Now it is easy to condemn, but we are enjoined in Philippians “to take account” of the smallest virtue (Phil. iv. 8, R.V. margin); and on examination we shall find that this lack of verbal agreement has some degree of justification. The fact is that neither of the translations offered is adequate. The original says both things, for the word “to save” includes the conception of “healing”. The A.V. informed the reader of this by a marginal note. The Revisers adopted the other plan, of keeping the translation of the two passages identical and supplying the reader with the necessary information in the margin. Of the two the R.V. is the better. This is but one instance out of many where these small but important adjustments have been made.

As a further example of the better course adopted by the Revisers, we may take two other parallel passages in the Gospels:--

- “There was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour” (Mark xv. 33, A.V.).
 “There was a darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour” (Luke xxiii. 44, A.V. margin—“or land”).

The R.V. reads “land” in both passages, but in each case gives the marginal note—“or earth”.

Some of the alterations made by the Revisers have been hastily condemned, but it is surely wise to investigate carefully before passing judgment on such a work as this, produced under the conditions we have already described.

At first sight it may seem to be the intrusion of pedantry to alter the words of the A.V.—“There were two *thieves* crucified with Him”—To “There were two *robbers*”. A thief acts by stealth, a robber by violence; and Barabbas, says the A.V., was a “robber”. This change re-establishes one connection which would otherwise be lost. The Lord speaks of “a thief and a robber” (John x. 1). And Matt. xxi. 13 gains in force and truth when we read that the rulers of Israel had turned the house of God into a den of “robbers”. This agrees with Jer. vii. 11, and indicates the brazen openness of their extortionate plundering of those who came up to the temple worship. So again, in Luke x. 30, the man going down to Jericho fell among “robbers”, not thieves; and this throws light upon the “perils of robbers” of which Paul speaks (II Cor. xi. 26). The wild state of the times, and the mixed motives of patriotism and private greed, are further illuminated by the statement that Barabbas was connected not only with robbery, but with “insurrection” and “murder”. The dying “robber” may have been one who had thus entertained hopes of re-establishing the Kingdom; he was blessedly enlightened before he died. Again, men do not usually employ an armed force with swords and staves to take a “thief”, though they may to apprehend a “robber”, especially in days when robbery was associated with political motives (Mat.. xxvi. 55).

We wish to express our indebtedness for many examples brought forward in this series, to the careful collation made by *Dr. Brooke Foss Westcott*, whose labours have much facilitated our study in this direction.

We are often rather shy of repetition in writing, and usually try to find some convenient synonym to avoid repeating the same term. In some cases, however, there is great force in exact repetition, as for example, the following: The A.V. of John iii. 31 reads:--

“He that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth.”

This not only makes a difference to the sense of the passage, but also suggests a false connection with the word “earthly” in verse 12. As we read the R.V. rendering, we are impressed by its simple majesty:--

“He that is of the earth, is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh.”

As another example, we may take the occurrences of the word *logizomai* in Rom. iv. The word occurs eleven times (verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24) and is translated in the A.V. “counted”, “reckoned” and “imputed”. The Revised Version uses

throughout the chapter the one word “reckon”, and so gives the argument its scriptural import and insistence. This is a decided gain to the English reader.

Let the reader now turn to I Cor. xv. 27 and 28 in both Versions. We give the R.V. only, as most readers will have the A.V. available. The repetition of the word “subject” and its variations is too important to sacrifice for mere euphony:--

“For He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, all things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted Who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.”

No real distinction is made in the A.V. between those who are “abolished” and those who are “subjected”. The English reader is apt to see no distinction between the “enemies” that are “put under His feet” (verses 25, A.V.) and those who are also “put under His feet” in verse 27, A.V. The differences are retained in the R.V., and false connections, and, more important still, false deductions are not so likely.

The reader of *The Berean Expositor* does not need to be reminded of the place that the ministry of Paul occupies in our teaching. But we must avoid any inferences which are not justified by the original. On one occasion we remember hearing a zealous supporter of dispensational truth endeavouring to magnify Paul at the expense of Peter by stressing the A.V. of Gal. ii. 8:--

“For He that *wrought effectually in Peter* to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same *was mighty in me* towards the Gentiles.”

The R.V. restores the balance:--

“For He that *wrought for Peter* unto the apostleship of the circumcision, *wrought for me also* unto the Gentiles.”

With these examples we must rest content. We hope that the reader will be stirred up to make a complete survey of these alterations, for consistency of translation goes a long way towards the realization of the teaching of the Spirit. We must next turn our attention to other aspects of the Revised Version.

#25. The Revised Version.
“Things that differ.”
pp. 66 - 69

There are two verbs in constant use throughout the N.T. which the R.V. has distinguished, but which are often confused in the A.V. These two verbs are *eimi*, “to be”, and *ginomai*, “to become”.

For example, in the epistles to the Corinthians:--

“Ye were bought with a price; *become* not bondservants of men” (I Cor. vii. 23).
“If the ministration of death *came with* glory how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit *be* with glory” (II Cor. iii. 7, 8).

Here the change of verb is registered and the essential difference between the two covenants enforced.

Again, in Luke:--

“Which of these three, thinkest thou, *proved* (not ‘was’) neighbour unto him?”
(Luke x. 36, R.V.).

The question was not so much what the man *was*, but how he responded when the time came; and to convey this the Revisers have used the word “proved”.

Again, the A.V. of John ix. 39 is harsh and misleading. The Lord did not say that He came “into this world that they which see might be made blind”, but that they might “become” blind, as a result of their added responsibility.

In John i. 14, instead of the “The word was made flesh”, the R.V. reads: “The Word *became* flesh”, a rendering which is more in agreement with the intention of the writer.

Again, in I Cor. xv. 45, the R.V. reads:--

“The first man Adam *became* a living soul. The last man Adam *became* a life-giving Spirit.”

In II Cor. v. 21, the contrast in the original between the words, “to be made” and “to become” is obscured in the A.V. The R.V. restores it:--

“Him who knew no sin He *made* to be sin on our behalf; that we might *become* the righteousness of God in Him.”

In Rom. vii. 13, the A.V. reads as though there were two verbs used—“*made* death” and “*become* exceeding sinful”. The R.V. restores the sense of the original, reading “become” in both cases. For some reason, however, the Revisers seem at times to have

departed from this consistent rendering, as for example in Matt. v. 45: “That ye *may be* sons of your Father” (R.V.); The Revisers have rightly substituted “sons” for the A.V. rendering “children”, but have failed to make the other necessary change.

The N.T. uses two distinct terms to set forth the believer’s filial relationship with the Lord—“children” and “sons”. Sonship, which is prominent in the writings of Paul, conveys the ideas of inheritance, privilege and dignity. Childship, which is characteristic of the teaching of John, suggests the thought of tender relationship. Sons may be adopted; children can only be born. The two conceptions are evidently complementary: but they must be realized separately before the full force of the whole idea which they combine to give can be understood. It was, however, felt to be impossible to change the phrase “the children of Israel” to “the sons of Israel”. With this exception (and one accidental omission of the mark of reference in Matt. xxi. 28) we believe that the use of the word “child” (and “children”) is always marked in the Revised Version; and that with the clearest gain to the peculiar force of the narrative (Mark ii. 5; Matt. ix. 2; Luke xv. 31; xvi. 25; Matt. xxi. 28), and of the address (I Cor. iv. 14; I Tim. i. 2-18; Titus i. 4, etc.), no less than to the exact definition of spiritual relations. On the other hand, the wonderful title “sons of God” holds its true place, according to the exact usage of the original. Where the A.V. reads “sons” in John i. 12, the R.V. correctly reads “children” (so also in I John iii. 1, 2). Conversely, the A.V. incorrectly reads “children” where “sons” is the true rendering (*see* Luke xx. 34 and Rom. ix. 26 where the R.V. has made the necessary correction). Again the true rendering of Matt. v. 9 is given in the R.V.:--

“Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the *sons* of God.”

This brings the passage into line with the correction of Matt. v. 45, where “sons” is again the true rendering.

The whole context of Gal. iii. 26 is concerned with adoption, the emancipation of the full-grown “son” from the tutors and governors of his childhood (Gal. iv. 1, 2). The R.V. makes the very necessary alteration:--

“We are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all *sons* of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. iii. 26).

Much of the above is quoted from *Dr. Westcott*, but it is difficult to indicate the quotations as they are so interwoven with our own remarks. Where possible we use quotation marks in the remainder of this article.

Another example of the usefulness of the R.V. is found in its rendering of Rom. iii. 25. The A.V. speaks of the “remission of sins that are past” with a marginal note: “or passing over.” The confusion of the two words *aphesis* and *paresis*

“has led to the complete inversion of St. Paul’s meaning. The sins of former times were neither forgiven nor punished: they were simply passed over; and for this reason there was need of the vindication of the righteousness of God, *because of the passing over of the sins done aforesaid, in the forbearance of God.*”

Further examples selected from the Student's Concordance to the New Testament (Revised Version, London, 1884), will repay investigation. Some of them we give here.

Instead of "spirit" in Matt. xiv. 26 and Mark vi. 49, the R.V. gives "apparition"; which leaves the word "spirit" as the correct translation of *pneuma*. Instead of "hidden" in Luke ix. 45 the R.V. gives "concealed"; this is an attempt to recognize the preposition *para* that is used in combination with the verb "to hide". The translation of *hieros* by "sacred" in I Cor. ix. 13 and II Tim. iii. 15 is an advantage, as it leaves the word "holy" to translate *hagios*. The added force of the translation "shudder" in James ii. 19 is suggestive. "Stupor" is found in Rom. xi. 8; "to train" in Titus ii. 4; "without self-control" in II Tim. iii. 3:--

"There is again a most significant progress in man's opposition to the truth, which is greatly obscured in the Authorized Version. First comes the simple absence of belief (*ou pisteuein*); this is followed by disbelief (*apistein*); and at last unbelief issues practically in disobedience (*apeithein*). Thus we are able to follow a natural moral movement when we read in the record of the appearances of the risen Lord, that the disciples 'disbelieved' the great tidings of Mary Magdalene, and 'believed not' the later statements which came to them (Mark xvi. 11, 13). So also 'disbelief' and not absence of belief is the ground of man's condemnation (Mark xvi. 16; comp. Acts xxviii. 24); and the English reader can enter now more fully than before into the meaning of St. John's words when he reads, *He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not (not believeth not) the son shall not see life.* John iii. 26" (*Dr. Westcott*).

Further examples of this important rectification will be found in Acts xix. 9 ("hardened and disobedient"); Rom. xv. 31; Rom. xi. 30-32; Heb. iii. 18; iv. 6-11 and xi. 31. The alterations in Hebrews are vital. It would take an article to point out the extreme value of the R.V. in this epistle. Perhaps enough for the time will be said if we draw attention to the stress on "obedience" and "obey" in Heb. v. 8, 9.

We trust that these studies will lead many readers who have hitherto neglected the Revised Version, to consult it before coming to conclusions arrived at apart from the original itself.

**#26. The Revised Version.
The prepositions.
pp. 114 - 117**

It has been said that “prepositions alter prepositions”; and all will agree that issues as diverse as life and death may hang upon the words “in” and “out of”.

The Revisers have in many instances given accurate renderings of the various prepositions. Their note with regard to this question is as follows:--

“Many changes have been introduced in the rendering of the prepositions, especially where ideas of instrumentality or of mediate agency, distinctly marked in the original, had been confused or obscured in the translation. We have, however, borne in mind the comprehensive character of such prepositions as ‘of’ and ‘by’, the one in reference to agency and the other in reference to means, especially in the English of the seventeenth century; and have rarely made any change where the true meaning of the original as expressed in the Authorized Version would be apparent to a reader of ordinary intelligence.”

Compare the A.V. rendering of Matt. i. 22 with that of the R.V., noting the changed prepositions:--

“Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *of the Lord by the prophet, saying*” (A.V.).

“Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *by the Lord through the prophet, saying*” (R.V.).

The nice distinction between *apo*, “from”, and *ek*, “out of” (indicating the source from which anything flows) is almost impossible in idiomatic English, but an attempt is made in the R.V. of II Cor. iii. 5 to show the difference:--

“Not that we are sufficient *of (apo)* ourselves, to account anything as from *(ek)* ourselves, but our sufficiency is from *(ek)* God.”

In this the more usual renderings of *apo* by “from” and *ek* by “of” are reversed, but the contrasted “from ourselves” and “from God” are retained. The A.V. renders both *apo* and *ek* by the same preposition “of”:--

“A variation in the use of prepositions often suggests instructive lines of thought Here, in I Cor. xii. 8, 9, in the description of the manifestation of the Spirit we read in the Authorized Version, ‘To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit’.

Thus ‘the word of wisdom’, ‘the word of knowledge’ and ‘faith’ are presented in exactly the same connection with the Spirit, as simply given ‘by’ Him. But in the original three different prepositions are used to describe the relation of these three gifts to the Spirit, represented exactly in the Revised Version by ‘*through* the Spirit’, ‘*according to* the Spirit’ and ‘*in* the Spirit’. The English reader is necessarily led to consider

whether this unexpected variation does not throw some light upon the gifts themselves He will feel that perhaps 'wisdom' is absolute, unchangeable, belonging to things eternal; that 'knowledge' is progressive and 'grows from more to more'. If this be so, he will understand that, in one case, the Spirit is, as it were, the Speaker of the word in the soul; that in the other case, He is the Guide Who directs and rules and regulates the observation which finds expression through man. And when he has realized this twofold action of the Spirit, He will be prepared to consider that there is yet a third relation in which we may stand to Him. We may be, as it were, lost in Him, enwrapped in His transfiguring influence. Then faith which wields the power of the world to come has its scope. Now even if this particular interpretation be faulty or imperfect, still it will not have been without use that the English reader has been constrained, as the Greek reader, to take account of the manifold action no less than the manifold gifts of the Spirit" (*Bishop Westcott*).

As *Bishop Westcott* has himself expressed some doubts as to the interpretation of this passage, we are under no necessity to criticize. Quite apart from the interpretation itself, his words will perhaps quicken the reader's interest in the correct translation of the Greek prepositions.

Another passage dealing with gifts of ministry that is intimately connected with our own calling and dispensation, is Eph. iv. 12. The A.V. rendering is:--

"For the perfecting of the saints, *for* the work of the ministry, *for* the edifying of the body of Christ."

The R.V. reads:--

"For the perfecting of the saints, *unto* the work of ministering, *unto* the building up of the body of Christ."

The preposition here are *pros* (R.V. "for") and *eis* (R.V. "unto"). Instead of three succeeding items as suggested by the A.V. "For for for", we have one phrase introduced by "for" branching out into two parallel phrases introduced by the second preposition "unto".

While the R.V. had made many useful alterations in the prepositions, it still remains an almost insoluble problem as to how the various prepositions with their niceties of meaning can be rendered into intelligible English.

Take for example John xvi. 27, 28 and 30. Where the A.V., in verse 27, says "came out from", the R.V. reads "came forth from"; where the A.V., in verse 28, reads "came forth from", the R.V. goes back to "came out from"; while in verse 30, both versions have to use the words "camest forth from" for a different preposition. In verse 27 we have *para* (beside) and *ek* (out of), *para ton theou exelthou*. In verse 28, we have *exelthou para*. The reader naturally wonders why the A.V. and the R.V. did not use the same expression twice over, and also why the R.V. went to the trouble to reverse the order. When we know that this alteration necessitated a two-thirds majority at the second revision, we cannot contemptuously dismiss it as trifling. But we realize what a confession this is of sheer inability to give the English reader an *equivalent* for the Greek

original. To add to the problem, although verse 30 introduces another preposition, *apo theou exelthes*, yet both the A.V. and the R.V. translate this preposition as they translate *para* in verses 27 and 28. None but those who have attempted translation know the problems and the pitfalls that beset the translator's path, and they who are loudest in condemnation of their proposals, are generally (like the street-corner politician) those most unfitted for the work.

The phrase "in Christ" stands for that which is so vital, that its restoration in many passages obscured by the A.V. would alone justify the use of the R.V. Thus in Rom. vi. 23 we read, "The gift of God is eternal life, *through* Jesus Christ our Lord". The R.V. shows that this should read, "*in* Christ Jesus our Lord". So in Rom. vi. 11, we are alive unto God "*in* Christ Jesus"; and we are justified not merely "by Christ" but "*in* Christ" (Gal. ii. 17). The peace of God not only guards our hearts and thoughts "through" but "*in* Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7). The R.V. of Phil. iv. 13 reads, "I can do all things *in* Him that strengthened me". And again, in Phil. iv. 19:--

"My God shall fulfil every need of yours according to His riches in glory *in* Christ Jesus" (not simply "by Christ Jesus").

These are important examples of the restored force of the original Greek prepositions, and emphasize that "all our springs are in Thee".

In our next article we must consider the problem of the Greek verb and how it has been dealt with by the Revisers.

#27. The Revised Version. The verb and its tenses. pp. 156 - 158

The English word "verb" is the Latin *verbum*, meaning a word, because the "verb" is *the* word in a sentence. Hitherto we have been concerned with questions of vocabulary, and even then we found some words almost impossible of exact translation. When we come to the Greek verb, and especially its tenses, we have something which finds no equivalent in English or in modern languages. Let us take a view of some of the tenses of the Greek verb and see how the R.V. has made alterations for the better.

The imperfect tense is one that is recognized by most scholars. "The idea of purpose, or of beginning, or of repetition" is conveyed by the imperfect, and has been expressed in the R.V. in many places. Note the following:--

"Their nets *were breaking*" is a truer rendering of the imperfect than the A.V. "their net brake" (Luke v. 6).

"The boat was now *filling*" (Mark iv. 37).

"John *would have hindered Him*" (Matt. iii. 14).

"He *continued making* signs" (Luke i. 22).

The present tense is often veiled by the A.V. Note the vividness of the following revisions:--

“All *are seeking* thee” for “All men seek for thee” (Mark i. 37).

“The darkness *is passing* away” (I John ii. 8).

“*Are perishing* are being saved” (I Cor. i. 18).

“*Is being renewed*” (Col. iii. 10).

Note also this tense in these passages of I Thessalonians:--

“Jesus, which *delivereth* us from the wrath to come” (I Thess. i. 10).

“Walk worthy of God, Who *calleth* you unto His own kingdom and glory” (I Thess. ii. 12).

Take again the great difference—to be seen and remembered—between the command, “Be strong”, of II Tim. ii. 1, A.V. and the “Be strengthened” of the R.V. The same idea underlies the change in Rom. iv. 20. Abraham was not only “strong in faith” (A.V.), but “waxed strong in faith” (R.V.). So also the familiar “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Eph. vi. 10) becomes “Be made strong” in the R.V. margin.

The most difficult tense to translate into English is the aorist. Its very name means “indefinite or without bounds”. Of this tense the Revisers have given a word in their preface:--

“We have often ventured to represent the Greek aorist by the English preterite, even where the reader may find some passing difficulty in such a rendering because we have felt convinced that the true meaning of the original has been obscured by the presence of the familiar auxiliary. A remarkable illustration may be found in the seventeenth chapter of St. John’s Gospel, where the combination of the aorist and the perfect shews, beyond all reasonable doubt, that different relations of time were intended to be expressed.”

It would occupy too much space to set out the A.V. and the R.V. of John xvii., but perhaps one or two verses will suffice to display the difference. For the benefit of any reader to whom the terms perfect and aorist may be foreign, the auxiliary “have”, as “I *have* glorified”, is the sign in English of the perfect, while “I glorified” would, in contrast, represent the aorist:--

John xvii. 4-8.	
A. V.	R. V.
<p>"I <i>have glorified</i> Thee on the earth: I <i>have finished</i> the work which <i>Thou gavest</i> me to do."</p> <p>"I <i>have manifested</i> thy Name unto the men which <i>Thou gavest</i> me out of the world: Thine they were; and <i>Thou gavest</i> them me; and they <i>have kept</i> Thy word."</p> <p>"Now they <i>have known</i> that all things whatsoever <i>Thou hast given</i> me, are of Thee."</p> <p>"For I <i>have given</i> unto them the words which <i>Thou gavest</i> me, and they <i>have received</i> them, and <i>have known</i> surely that I came out from Thee, and they <i>have believed</i> that <i>Thou didst send</i> me."</p>	<p>"I <i>glorified</i> Thee on the earth, <i>having accomplished</i> the work which <i>Thou hast given</i> me to do."</p> <p>"I <i>manifested</i> Thy name unto the men whom <i>Thou gavest</i> me out of the world: Thine they were, and <i>Thou gavest</i> them to me; and they <i>have kept</i> Thy word."</p> <p>"Now <i>they know</i> that all things whatsoever <i>Thou hast given</i> me are from Thee."</p> <p>"For the words which <i>Thou gavest</i> me I <i>have given</i> unto them, and they <i>have received</i> them, and <i>knew</i> of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they <i>have believed</i> that <i>Thou didst send</i> me."</p>

The A.V. rendering of II Cor. v. 14 by "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" is misleading. "We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died" of the R.V. is the truer translation. The A.V. directs attention to their previous death in sin, the R.V. to their death to sin with Christ. Compare also the following rectifications in the great doctrinal portion of the epistle to the Romans and elsewhere:--

A. V.	R. V.
<p>"For that all have sinned." "We that are dead to sin." "We are buried with Him." "Our old man is crucified with Him."</p> <p>"If we be dead with Christ." "Ye have obeyed." "As ye have yielded." "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." "If ye then be risen with Christ."</p>	<p>"For that all sinned" (Rom. v. 12). "We who died to sin" (Rom. vi. 2). "We were buried with Him" (Rom. vi. 4). "Our old man was crucified with Him" (Rom. vi. 6). "If we died with Christ" (Rom. vi. 8). "Ye became obedient" (Rom. vi. 17). "As ye presented" (Rom. vi. 19). "As many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3) "If then ye were raised together with Christ" (Col. iii. 1).</p>

We are not unmindful of the fact that, as the Revisers themselves admit, circumstances were too strong for them, and many anomalies still exist. We are not advocating an unquestioning acceptance of the R.V., but we do believe that many earnest students of the Word (whose knowledge of the original is either scanty or nil) would do well to adopt the practice of comparing the two versions before coming to any decision.

We hope to give one paper more upon the R.V., but feel that in a series of this character we have written sufficient on the subject of the verb and its intricate tenses.

#28. The Revised Version.
The marginal notes, and the American Readings.
pp. 214 - 217

We are apt to look upon the marginal references of the R.V. as of slight importance, but we must remember that unless of two-thirds' majority was obtained for any alteration, the reading of the A.V. was retained. Matter placed in the margin of the R.V., therefore, indicates that it came up for serious consideration, but, failing to command the stipulated majority, could not be placed in the text, though it was of sufficient importance not to be passed undiscussed. It follows that in many instances, more votes must have been cast for the marginal note than for the text itself, as it now stands. The margin must therefore be considered as an integral part of the Revision of 1881.

The first use of the margin is to observe where there is an *absence* of notes. This may appear a strange remark, but it is nevertheless worthy of consideration.

Take for example the omission of the words, "Who is preferred before me" in John i. 27. The fact that the Revisers here felt themselves under no necessity to give a marginal note shows that the general consent of the Revisers went with this emendation. In verse 28, however, the A.V. "Bethabara" is altered to "Bethany", but, as there was considerable debate over the alteration, the statement is made in the margin that "Many ancient authorities read Beth-abarah, some Beth-arabah".

Or again, look at verse 18 of the same chapter. The text is identical with the A.V., "The only begotten Son", but the margin informs us that "Many very ancient authorities read *God only begotten*". Thus we know that at least one third of those who voted, if not more, were in favour of retaining the A.V. reading, but that the majority of the English Revisers were in favour of the alteration. To reiterate, many times the marginal note received more votes than did the text as it now appears, but so conservative were the rules, that while the votes of one-third were sufficient to secure the retention of the A.V. reading, the votes of two-thirds were necessary to alter it.

The whole of I John v. 7 is omitted from the R.V. without marginal comment. This indicates unanimity and should not be treated lightly. Verse 37 is omitted from the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts viii., but the margin says, "Some ancient authorities insert wholly or in part verse 37". The words "and in your spirit, which are God's" are omitted from I Cor. vi. 20 without marginal note: so also are the words "of his flesh, and of his bones" from Eph. v. 30. There is evident unanimity in omitting from Rom. viii. 1 the words, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit".

While the omissions may outnumber the additions to the Received Greek Text, it is well to remember and to look out for any additions that have been made by the Revisers. The gracious words "even as ye do walk" of I Thess. iv. 1 are a precious reflection

both upon the character of the Thessalonians. The exultant note struck by the addition to I John iii. 1 is also too good to pass unnoticed:--

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; *and such we are.*”

Suggestive thoughts are started in the mind of the English reader by marginal notes such as is given to John i. 14, where it is noticed that the word “dwelt” is in the Greek, “tabernacled”. In John viii. a more intensive contrast between Abraham and Christ is seen by observing the marginal note. Instead of “Before Abraham *was*, I am” the margin suggests “Before Abraham *was born*, I am”.

The R.V. retains in many places the words, “The Holy Ghost”, but in the margin of Matt. i. 18 we read, “Or Holy Spirit, and so throughout this book”. Again, the word “devils” is retained, but the margin of Matt. vii. 22 and elsewhere reads, “Gr. demons”. There is a wonderful progression in Matt. xx. 26 and 27 which is brought out by the margin of the R.V.:--

“Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister (margin, servant); and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant” (margin, bond-servant).

Another light upon Christian ministry is found in the margin of Rom. xvi. 1 where Phoebe is called, “a *deaconess* of the church that is at Cenchrea”.

In a few cases the reader is directed by the marginal note to a parallel passage, where the word may not be rendered the same. For example, the Greek word *paraclete* is translated “Comforter” in John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7 and “Advocate” in I John ii. 1, exactly as in the A.V. But the Revised Version, in each case, has this marginal note:--

“Or Advocate or Helper. Gr. *Paraclete.*”
“Or Comforter or Helper. Gr. *Paraclete.*”

While the text of the Revised Version retains the translations “eternal”, “everlasting”, “world”, etc., there are plentiful marginal notes that draw attention to the fact that the Greek word so translated is, strictly speaking, the “age”. See Eph. i. 21; ii. 2; iii. 11 and 21; Heb. i. 2; xi. 3 and I Tim. i. 17, where the marginal notes fully endorse the teaching given in *The Berean Expositor* as to the correct translation of the word *aion*.

We trust these illustrations will suffice to ensure that the reader of the R.V. will realize that the marginal notes are a real part of the Reviser’s contribution, and use them accordingly.

We conclude this survey of the R.V. in this series by a reference to the American Notes, which are to be found at the end of the R.V.

Shortly after work upon the revision of the A.V. was commenced in June 1870 “steps were taken, under a resolution passed by both Houses of Convocation, for inviting the co-operation of American Scholars; and eventually two committees were formed in America, for the purpose of acting with the two English companies on the basis of the Principles and Rules drawn up by the Committee of Convocation. The English Revisers in their preface say: “We gratefully acknowledge their care, vigilance, and accuracy; and we humbly pray that their labours and our own, thus happily united, may be permitted to bear a blessing to both countries, and to all English speaking people throughout the world.”

#28. The Revised Version. (*concluded*).
p. 240

In this series we have endeavoured to let the Revised Version speak for itself, and its merits have been evident to all who have any ability to judge. We must however not leave the subject without an added word. We do not advocate that any should abandon the A.V. for ordinary reading or for public ministry, and we do not do so ourselves. We do however advocate the consultation of the Revised Version whenever the Word is studied, but there are serious objections to the exclusive use of the R.V. that outweigh its admitted merits.

We hope, in a subsequent series, to give the A.V. an opportunity of demonstrating its value and worth. Moreover, there are one or two passages in the R.V. that raise serious doubts in the mind of the reader. These we shall have to consider when dealing with the special features and merits of the Authorized Version.

“What manner of persons ought ye to be.”

#7. Symbols of Service. Debtors and Disciples. pp. 13 - 15

The first symbol of service that we consider in this article is that of a *debtor*:--

“Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (Rom. i. 13-15).

Paul’s conception of his responsibility is expressed by the symbol of a debtor. It was something he “owed”, something that was not a matter of feeling or fancy, but a definite debt to saved and unsaved. In the light of Rom. xiii. 8 we can see moreover that this debt was a debt of love: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” Paul felt this sense of obligation when he twice asked prayer for himself:--

“That I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. vi. 20).

“That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Col. iv. 4).

All true service is the discharging of a tremendous debt. A debt to preach the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, whether wise or foolish, Jew or Gentile, Roman or Barbarian: And a debt to teach the truth in such terms that neither through fear (“speaks boldly”), nor through lack of clearness and plainness of speech (“make it manifest”), shall any miss the truth. Something of the same feeling of responsibility is expressed by the apostle when he wrote:--

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (I Cor. ix. 16).

For the apostle to call himself a debtor in connection with the discharge of his ministry indicates a lowliness of heart that we should emulate.

The second symbol of service before us (a disciple) also demands lowliness of heart and meekness of spirit. In Matt. xvi. we find one or two primary conditions that must be fulfilled if one would be a disciple:--

“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. xvi. 24).

“*Come after Me follow Me.*”—These two essential conditions are accompanied by others that arise out of the nature of things. To follow Christ through a world of sin and darkness must of necessity arouse hostility and opposition; consequently the Lord

adds: “deny himself and take up his cross.” Matt. x. has already made it plain that this association with Christ will be attended by painful consequences:--

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household” (Matt. x. 24, 25).

It is evident that discipleship is something more than believing unto salvation, an element of endurance and continuance being implied in the title:--

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed” (John viii. 31).

A continuation of the quotation from Matt. xvi. given above would have brought us to the subject of “reward”, this also being associated in several passages with continuance and endurance.

Two more features characteristic of discipleship are given by the Lord:--

“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John xiii. 35).

This administers a wholesome corrective to a false deduction from the Lord’s earlier words. While a *true* disciple cannot avoid being called the same hard names as his Master was called, the fact that the world hated a man and called him a devil would not necessarily constitute such a disciple of Christ. Hatred outside must be accompanied by love within: we have then the two sides of the question, and should be safe.

Finally, discipleship is not an empty profession:--

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples” (John xv. 8).

Discipleship, therefore, covers practically the whole of Christian service from the God-ward aspect, while the conception of service in terms of a “debtor” covers a great deal of service as seen from the man-ward point of view.

#8. Symbols of Service.
The ear and the eye.
pp. 48 - 50

The reader who has followed this series will by now have realized that we are lifting out from the Word a number of symbols of service, and presenting them alphabetically. We have considered up to the present the following symbols of service:--

AMBASSADORS, APOSTLES and ANGELS.
BONDSERVANTS, BUILDERS and BURDEN-BEARERS.
CALLING, CLEANSING and COMMITTING.
DEBTORS and DISCIPLES.

We do not suggest that every letter of the alphabet will prove of service, but as far as is possible we hope to pursue this course, so that we may in more senses than one learn the "A B C" of service. Should any reader feel that this method savours of levity or is fitted only for children, we would point to the inspired alphabetical Psalms and other passages of an acrostic nature in the Word. Our memories are not so good but they will be all the better for a little help, and an alphabetical arrangement is an aid to memory.

The two symbols of service that are before us to-day are the *ear* and the *eye* as used in Scripture with reference to service.

The bored ear.

"If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing and if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever" (Exod. xxi. 2-6).

One cannot read these words without immediately thinking of Psa. xl. 6-8:--

"Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened (margin *Heb.* digged): then said I, Lo, I come: I delight to do Thy will, O my God",

and of their fulfillment in Heb. x. 5, where the words "mine ear hast Thou digged" are interpreted by: "a body hast Thou prepared me."

As we have discussed these passages elsewhere, we merely present them here as beautiful symbols of service. Let us not miss the spirit of it all as expressed by the words "I love" of the Hebrew servant. His six years' service may have been of necessity, but his seventh and onward could only be entered if he could *plainly say*: "I love."

The service of love, symbolized by the bored ear, finds much exposition in the N.T., and the reader is urged to acquaint himself with those passages which are written in connection with the words of Gal. v. 13—"By love serve".

The consecrated ear.

"Take Aaron and his sons and sanctify them and he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration and he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear" (Lev. viii. 2-23).

"And the priest that maketh him clean shall slay the lamb and shall take some of the blood and put it upon the tip of the right ear and the priest shall put of the oil upon the tip of the right ear upon the place of the blood of the trespass-offering" (Lev. xiv. 11-28).

As a matter of exposition, the above passages present two very different aspects of the truth, but for the present purpose they may be considered together. Whether priests who need consecration for service, or lepers who need cleansing and anointing before service is possible, we perceive the *consecration*, both by blood and oil, of the servant's ear. These figures are readily resolved into their spiritual realities. The precious blood of Christ, the sanctification of the Spirit, the application of both by the Word—these are essential to service. A *bored* ear for willing, loving service; an *anointed* ear for acceptable, consecrated service, and thirdly, an *opened* ear that one may minister words in season.

The opened ear.

"The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned (*learner, a disciple*), that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned (*learner, a disciple*). The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (Isa. l. 4, 5).

This passage, like Psa. xl., is Messianic, setting forth the true Servant of the Lord. To be able to speak, the servant must hear. To hear, he needs to be awakened, and his ear to be opened. If we covet that most gracious of ministries—"to be able to speak a word in season to him that is weary"—book learning will not avail, the ear must be bored, anointed and awakened, for we can only speak as we hear, if we are not to speak vain words out of our own hearts.

The second symbol of service before us is the *eye*:--

"As the *eyes* of servants look unto the hand of their masters" (Psa. cxxiii. 2).

"Deal bountifully with Thy servant, that I may live, and keep Thy Word. Open Thou mine *eyes*, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Psa. cxix. 17, 18).

"Turn away mine *eyes* from beholding vanity" (Psa. cxix. 37).

"Rivers of waters run down mine *eyes*, because they keep not Thy law" (Psa. cxix. 136).

"Mine *eyes* prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in Thy Word" (Psa. cxix. 148).

What a variety of uses the eye of the servant has. First he watches for the signal of his master that he may render prompt obedience. Then he desires to behold the wondrous things hidden in the Word, and at the same time prays that he may have his eyes turned away from vanity. His eyes, too, shed tears, because men do not keep the Word, and often cut short the hours of sleep that the Word of God may be better understood.

Coming to the N.T., we learn the value of the “single eye” (Matt. vi. 22), the relative importance of the “mote” and the “beam” (Matt. vii. 3-5), a lesson none can learn too well. To the Church of the Laodiceans the Lord speaks of the anointed eye (Rev. iii. 18), which makes us think of the anointed ear.

Service must not be so construed in terms of activity, of business, of doing, that it leaves no time for hearing and for seeing. Service that is not regulated by the anointed ear and the anointed eye remains unblessed.

#9. Symbols of Service.
Fishers, forsakers and followers.
pp. 101 - 103

The first disciples called by the Lord were fishers:--

“And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father and followed Him” (Matt. iv. 18-22).

In this passage we have two of the symbols that we are to consider in this article: the “fisher” and the “follower”.

The Lord found these men “by the sea”, where one would expect to find men of their calling. He did not look for them in the market-place, or in the field, or in the town. This at least is one good qualification for higher service. These men were diligent in their business, and not wasting time in vain efforts to do some other kind of work. While it is commendable to seek to advance and improve one’s position, it is possible for there to be a restlessness and false pride which is very harmful. Those who have any responsibility in the choice of candidates for Christian service would do well to bear this in mind. It is recorded that one of the qualifications of a young man who applied to C. H. Spurgeon for admission into the Pastor’s College was that he had made a failure of every job he had undertaken; hence he felt called to the ministry. We can readily understand Spurgeon refusing such an application. In Christian service, most of us find that our own peculiar temperament and manner of approach to things is not suppressed by the Lord when we

enter His service. What the Lord said to Moses, he says to us all—"What is that in thine hand?" (Exod. iv. 2). The fiery zeal of Saul the persecutor was not quenched at his conversion, but sanctified and used in the service of his Lord. An art training that at first seemed wasted has enabled the writer to prepare numerous charts for us at meetings; and a knowledge of ornament and design has played some part in the perception of the balance and underlying pattern of the structures of Scripture.

We note next that, whereas Peter and Andrew were "casting a net into the sea", James and John with their father were "mending their nets". These operations represent two necessary and interdependent pieces of work. A net, however well mended, is valueless if it is never cast into the sea, while a net, however, vigorously cast into the sea, is valueless if it is badly broken. The same Lord calls some to be "casters", and some "menders". They are "fishers", not singly, but jointly. Some are called to preach; some to teach. Some are called to gather in; others to build up. The Lord has need of all.

The word translated "mend" in Matt. iv. 21 is used by Paul of the ministry given by the ascended Christ in connection with the dispensation of the mystery:--

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the *perfecting* of the saints" (Eph. iv. 11, 12).

It is also used of the very valuable ministry detailed in Gal. vi. 1:--

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, *restore* such an one, in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Another important thing which must not be ignored is the evident fellowship of all concerned. Andrew working amicably with Peter his brother; James and John together with their father Zebedee. Unity in service is not always easy to attain. There is nearly always some part of the service that is coveted by the fleshly mind, some office that is apparent and will receive public recognition; while there are other essential acts of service that can never be seen or assessed by man. Think of the many who must serve unknown and unrecognized in order that the pen-written article now in progress may be delivered in printed form to the home of the reader. The manuscript is passed on to friends who, as a labour of love, turn the rapidly-written words into clear typewritten characters. The type-script is then reviewed by other friends (who check all references), so that nothing shall pass into print without being checked, to some degree. It is then carefully made ready for the printer, punctuation marks, paragraphs and headings examined and style of type decided. Then there is the printing and proof-reading, the addressing of envelopes, the making up of parcels and the actual posting. And yet in most cases the only person actually thought of by the reader, if thought of at all, is the original writer, whose work would be useless without this co-operation.

Another important point in the passage under consideration is the unquestioning obedience of the four men. "They straightway left their nets." "They immediately left the ship and their father." Their nets represented their trade; their ship, the whole of

their business and invested capital; their father, the claims of home and loved ones. It is well to count the cost, and to impress upon enthusiastic volunteers that there *is* a cost:--

“He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me” (Matt. x. 37, 38).

These four disciples left their all and followed Him. This leads us to the second symbol—that of the “follower”. These men were ordinary fishers, putting into practice the age-old lore of their craft, handed down from father to son, and supplemented by experience. But to become “fishers of men”, they must first be “followers of Christ”. Moses had to leave Egypt and all its learning, and exchange it for the life of a desert shepherd before he was fit to be entrusted with the leading of Israel.

Earlier in this article we suggested, and we believe with truth, that much that belonged to our previous mode of life, our upbringing, temperament, opportunities and training, can be laid upon the altar of service, consecrated to the Lord, and remodeled for His use. We must not, however, forget that there is also much of the old that we must leave behind as we follow Him. We must be prepared to find our knowledge and experience of no value, and must sometimes, contrary to all our instincts, “Launch out into the deep”. Let us conclude by recording this incident as a supplement and corrective to that of Matt. iv.:--

“Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed Him” (Luke v. 4-11).

**#10. Symbols of Service.
Gatherers and Guides.
pp. 147 - 149**

It is a solemn thing to realize that we are all either gatherers or scatterers, even though we may consider our attitude to be one of neutrality. The Lord has declared that there is no mid-way position that is neither for, nor against Him. It is a solemn fact that for any one not to be for Him means that he is against Him:--

“He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad” (Matt. xii. 30).

Without attempting to soften or mitigate this serious statement which touches us all whether we will or no, we would add to it another of the Lord’s utterances, so that we may not wrongly interpret the first statement in any sectarian spirit:--

“Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us” (Luke ix. 49, 50).

Although this man was not in manifest fellowship with the disciples (they could say, “He followeth not *with us*”) the Lord revealed that there was a deeper unity than this; and we must ever be on our guard lest a mere party spirit should take the place of loyalty to the Lord and His truth.

The work of the scatterer is the work of the Evil One, and is assisted by the hireling:--

“He that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (John x. 12).

The work of the gatherer, therefore, is the work of the shepherd. The figure of a shepherd is used freely in the Scriptures as a symbol of service, and will be considered in its own place. We here deal with the general significance of the gatherer. It was the desire of the Lord that He might gather the children of Jerusalem together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings (Matt. xxiii. 37). And He is yet to send out His angels and gather together His elect from the four winds of heaven, as men gather in the sheaves into the barn at harvest home (Matt. xxiv. 31; xiii. 30, 39-43). The word is also used for the gathering of grapes (Matt. vii. 16).

Let us take stock of ourselves. How far can we honestly say that we are gatherers? Is it our tendency to bring together, or to scatter? Do we spend our strength in building up or in pulling down? Do we manifest the characteristics of the true shepherd or of the hireling?

The second symbol to be considered in this article is that of the guide. While a guide does not necessarily gather, he certainly leads on to the desired haven. The Jew, because of the special position he occupied in the plan of redemption, was peculiarly fitted to be a guide:--

“Behold thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in God, and knowest His will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind” (Rom. ii. 17-19).

The Jew had every qualification for being a guide to the blind except one—*he was blind himself*. Among the reiterated “woes” of Matt. xxiii. the Lord refers to the blindness five times:--

“Woe unto you, ye *blind* guides” (16).

“Ye fools and *blind*” (17, 19).

“Ye *blind* guides, which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel” (24).

“Thou *blind* Pharisee” (26).

Upon examination it will be found that on each occasion when the Lord called these men “blind”, He referred to ritualism being substituted for reality. To follow such leaders must end in destruction. If a guide mistakes the mirage for the real, must not all who follow him perish? If he feeds his followers upon the husks in mistake for the true wheat, shall they not starve? If he leads them to put their trust in the observance of days, months, weeks, years, sabbath days, meats and drinks (which are but shadows of the true), must they not go astray? “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” So important is keenness of vision for the eastern guide, that no one is permitted by the Arabs to be a guide who cannot discern certain double stars, which to the ordinary town-dweller appear as one. As guides we need to see our path clearly, to discern the leading of the Lord, and to distinguish the shadows from the substance.

The gatherer, we found, was a title that could be borne by a shepherd. So also a shepherd can be a guide:--

“But made His own people to go forth as sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock” (Psa. lxxviii. 52).

Looking to the Lord for guidance as we seek to guide others, we observe that He “guides the feet into the way of peace” (Luke i. 79).

If we read the cry of the Ethiopian Eunuch, and Philip’s response to it, we shall not be in doubt as to the character of the true guide:--

“Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I except some man should *guide* me? Then Philip opened his mouth and *began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus*” (Acts viii. 30-35).

This, then, is the essential difference between the blind guides and the true. The blind guides cannot see that all Scripture points to Christ, and so they lose themselves in shadows. The true guide will always “begin at the same Scripture” and preached *Jesus*.

#11. Symbols of Service. Helpers and Husbandmen. pp. 190 - 193

What is the earliest title of service recorded in the Scriptures? Surely it is the word “help”:

“And the Lord God said, it is good that man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him” (Gen. ii. 18).

Helper.

In Eve we have our first symbol of service, “the helper”. And in Adam we have the second, for although the word “husbandman” is not actually used of him, we know that this was what, out of sheer necessity, he became after his expulsion from the garden: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Gen. iii. 19). So, at the very beginning of the Scriptures, we find the “helper” and the “husbandman” linked together.

In I Cor. xii. the apostle enumerates a number of spiritual gifts:

“God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, *helps*, governments, diversities of tongues” (I Cor. xii. 28).

The gift of “helps” to the church is seen from this passage to be a comparatively lowly one, but the apostle has already warned us against lightly esteeming the lowly members of the body. Miracles may be more impressive, but in their absence how grateful we should be for a little help. We cannot all have the highest and most important gifts. Shall we do nothing because we cannot be apostles? Shall we fail to teach because we cannot prophesy? Shall we refuse help because we cannot work miracles?

The first gospel ministry of the apostle Paul in Europe is associated with this humble office of “help”:

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over and *help* us” (Acts xvi. 9).

Paul’s interpretation of the cry for “help” is: “assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them” (Acts xvi. 10).

Apollos was a “helper” of the saints, for we read: “When he was come he *helped* them much which had believed through grace.” Of what did this “help” consist? We read on to the next verse: “For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ” (Acts xviii. 27, 28). This brings the “help” of Apollos very much into line with the “guidance” of Philip (Acts viii. 30-35) which we have considered earlier.

Help is not confined, however, to preaching, teaching or doing, for the apostle writes: “Ye also *helping* together by prayer” (II Cor. i. 11). This is a ministry in which many may share who would otherwise be excluded from service. Furthermore, we must not allow the idea of helping in dire necessity, or under strenuous conditions, to exclude the gentler but no less important service indicated by the apostle in II Cor. i. 24:--

“Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are *helpers* of your joy; for by faith ye stand.”

There were perhaps few intimate friends of the apostle Paul who were more dearly loved or held in higher esteem than Priscilla and Aquila. Of these the apostle records:--

“Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles” (Rom. xvi. 4).

Priscilla and Aquila provided hospitality for the apostle and a means of livelihood upon his arrival at Corinth (Acts xviii. 2). And they took Apollos to their home and showed him the way of God more perfectly, thus rendering him a great help to the believers (Acts xviii. 24-28). The depth of affection felt by Paul may be seen in the last salutation he sent to them: “Salute Prisca and Aquila” (II Tim. iv. 19). These stand firm, where others had failed (II Tim. iv. 10, 16), and the apostle indulges at the last in a little display of affection, calling Priscilla by the diminutive Prisca. Of these two believers Paul writes:--

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my *helpers* in Christ Jesus” (Rom. xvi. 3).

Who would not value the title of “*helper*” after seeing the record of two at least who bore it?

At some future point in this series we must consider the teaching of Scripture regarding the ministry of women. At the moment we simply draw attention to the fact that Eve, the first woman, was given to Adam, and was the first to be called a “help”. That was her peculiar office, specially given by God Himself. She was a help “meet” for Adam, and therefore in no sense inferior to him. There is no suggestion in Gen. ii. 18-25 that Adam was created imperfect. The passage teaches us rather that God had no intention of endowing one person with all the gifts, for such independence would be his ruin. The church to-day needs its Priscillas quite as much as its Aquilas. May the sisters in Christ who read these words be encouraged to take their place in God’s perfect plan, rejoicing in the privilege of being permitted to have a place in that service for which neither man nor woman is worthy apart from grace.

Husbandman.

The second symbol of service that we are to consider is that of the husbandman. There are at least three features that we may profitably consider under this head, although obviously there is scope in the subject for a much more extensive study. An occupation such as this—with all its associations of seed-time and harvest, ploughing, sowing, reaping, wheat and tares and fowls of the air, and all the interesting and typical operations of farming—would not only fill a long article, but could itself be taken as the subject of a lengthy series of articles. We have restricted ourselves to these three aspects of the subject by reason of the three separate references to service as husbandry that occur in the N.T.

(1) *Husbandry calls for the exercise of much patience.*

“Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James v. 7, 8).

(2) *Husbandry calls for patient labour, if the fruits are to be enjoyed.*

“The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.” Or, according to the margin: “The husbandman labouring first, must be partaker of the fruits” (II Tim. ii. 6).

(3) *Husbandry implies a responsibility.*—The parable of the wicked husbandmen makes this point clear. Instead of rendering to their Lord the fruits that were His, they conspire against His servants and His Son that they may keep them for themselves (*see* Matt. xxi. 33-41, Mark xii. 1-9 and Luke xx. 9-16).

There is a reward for faithful service—both James and II Timothy quoted above make this clear—but service *for the sake of reward* is another matter, and is fatal. This is a thing that should exercise us all, for the flesh is the same all the world over.

Helpers and husbandmen; these two symbols of service include us all, from the lowest to the highest, and both are titles of the Lord Himself (Heb. xiii. 6; John xv. 1; I Cor. iii. 9).

“When the commandment came”

(Being a series of articles based upon the testimony of readers as to the particular passage of Scripture that was used to enlighten them as to the unique character of the Dispensation of the Mystery).

#3. Genesis xv. 16 and its typical teaching. pp. 7 - 9

One of the results of this enquiry is that it brings to light the fact that conviction as to the unique character of the mystery was not always brought about by “proof texts” on the subject, but often some out-of-the-way passage would be used to seal the truth to the heart. Such is the testimony we now reproduce:--

“While the right division of the Word and the fixing of the dispensational boundary at the end of the Acts of the Apostles had cleared the way, the passage that flashed a light of understanding was the verse from Gen. xv. 16: ‘for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full’.”

This passage alone would hardly be intelligible without the clarifying work of right division, which our reader places first. According to his testimony the steps that led to conviction were:--

- I. The recognition of the principle of “right division”.
- II. Its application to the question of the starting point of the present dispensation.
- III. The illumination of the peculiar nature of this dispensation of the mystery by the strange reference to the Amorites in Gen. xv.

The principle of “right division” underlies all our ministry, both spoken and written, and does not call for special comment here. The importance of Acts xxviii. as a dispensational boundary likewise is ever in view. It colours the interpretation of every passage. The first question that we always ask in regard to any passage is: On which side of Acts xxviii. does it appear? The reference to Gen. xv., however, may not be so obvious. Let us first see the passage in which the Amorite is referred to:--

“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their’s, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen. xv. 13-16).

Here is a strange revelation. God had called Abram and he had responded. The land of promise had been entered and claimed (Gen. xiii. 14-18) and yet, here, in Gen. xv., the Lord speaks of a period of 400 years in which the seed of Abram, instead of entering

the land, should be strangers in Egypt and in addition be afflicted there. When the fourth generation had come, however, Israel were to be delivered, and come again to the land of their inheritance, the reason for this strange interval being: “for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”

The Amorites were a Canaanitish people, and devoted to destruction. They were, moreover, part of that awful seed associated with the Nephilim and the Giants. Og, king of Bashan, was one of their number. They were proverbial for their great stature (Amos ii. 9, 10). When Israel did at last receive command to enter into their inheritance, the dispossession of the Amorite was an essential condition. Deut. ii. 1-25 should be read, and the following features noted. Before the Lord speaks of Israel’s inheritance, He draws attention to a peculiar feature that characterized the inheritance of Moab (9-11), Esau (12), and Ammon (19-22). In each case we find that the Canaanite is dispossessed and destroyed as a condition of entering into the inheritance. Take verse 12 as an illustration:--

“The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime, but the children of Esau succeeded (margin, *inherited*) them, when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; AS ISRAEL DID unto the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them.”

“As Israel did” indicate that here we have a principle at work. What did all this mean to the reader whose testimony we are here giving? It meant that he realized that just as the earthly inheritance of Israel was temporarily held by the wrong seed, so heavenly places have been held by “spiritual wickednesses” (Eph. vi. 12). Satan as leader is the one who showed the false seed (called “the tares”) in Matt. xiii. 24-30, and these—though destined to be rooted out and destroyed—are permitted to grow until the harvest.

The church of the mystery, though chosen “before the overthrow of the world”, must patiently await the time when their spiritual Amorite fills up the measure of his iniquity, just as Israel had to be in bondage in Egypt until the iniquity of the actual Amorite was complete. The church of the mystery will enter its inheritance in heavenly places when the present occupants have been dispossessed and destroyed. This assists us to realize that the present dispensation is linked with a period that antedates the promises that belong to the earth, and is associated with the fall of Satan “before the overthrow of the world”. No one would attempt to prove or teach the basic facts of the dispensation of the mystery from such a passage as Gen. xv. 13-16, but, as our reader says, the way having been cleared by right division, and the boundary already seen in Acts xxviii., the typical teaching of this passage might well flash into the mind, bringing a conviction to the individual that may not find a response in the heart of another not so prepared.

It is important to the teaching of the mystery that “heavenly places” are associated with a period “before the overthrow of the world”, and with “principalities and powers”, some of whom have fallen from this high estate. The Canaanites were usurpers. They were used by Satan to forestall the purpose of the ages. Israel were the true seed and the true heirs, even though they waited long for their inheritance. In like manner, the church was chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the world, but Satan was permitted to make

manifest the instability of the creature. The true heirs of heavenly glory must therefore wait until the time appointed for the complete dispossession of the spiritual Amorite, for the day when they shall possess their possessions.

In these articles we are not advancing positive teaching, but giving the testimony of a number of readers. We have no right or authority to decide which testimony shall be deemed good or which shall be deemed indifferent; the very variety will show how the Lord still speaks “in sundry times and in diverse manners” in making all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery (Eph. iii. 9, R.V.).

#4. The testimony of the three spheres. pp. 39, 40

The testimonies that we have cited hitherto have not taken us to obvious passages like Eph. iii., but have shown how passages that are somewhat removed from the actual revelation of the mystery can be used to illumine the subject. We come, however, in this testimony to one aspect of the subject that is positive in its teaching.

This friend (who is an active worker for Christ) has had a long and varied experience. Interest in the teaching of the epistles was first quickened by the suggestion of a friend that the occurrence and usage therein of prepositions and personal pronouns should be studied. This in its turn led to a more careful reading of the epistles, and at length

“ the three hopes, Abraham’s *land*, and *city* (Heb. xi.), and the hope laid up for *you in heaven* (Col. i. 5) led to a recognition of the mystery.”

Anyone who has approached the revelation of the mystery in this way, will have seen it from the comprehensive standpoint, and will not be easily tripped up by details and seeming contradictions. After Acts xxviii. has been seen as the dispensational boundary, the three spheres of blessing into which the blessed hope is subdivided becomes obvious and most necessary if all Scripture is to be accepted without reserve. The three spheres of blessing are as follows:--

- (3).
FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY.
SUPER-HEAVENS.
THE BODY.
FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SAINTS.
- (2).
THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM AND ITS CITIZENSHIP.
THE BRIDE.
ABRAHAM’S SEED: JEW AND GREEK.
- (1).
THE EARTH.
ISRAEL THE NATION.

SION AND ITS CITIZENSHIP.

It is most evident that no one person can be blessed in all three spheres, or even in two at one and the same time. One cannot be numbered among “the meek that shall inherit the earth”, and at the same time be “seated together in the super-heavens”. One cannot be the bride, and, at the same time, a member of the perfect man.

The one word that makes three spheres of blessing necessary to the fulfillment of Scripture is the word “adoption”. This word is in some ways equivalent to the idea of the “Firstborn”, and if we find three distinct companies to whom pertain the “adoption”, three families would appear to be in view.

In the earthly sphere adoption belongs to Israel (Rom. ix. 1-6), with pre-eminence over the surrounding nations.

In the heavenly sphere adoption belongs to the seed of Abraham who inherit the heavenly city. This adoption is found in Gal. iv. together with the reference to “Jerusalem that is above”. Parallel with this is Heb. xii., where the “birthright” and “church of the firstborn” are equivalent to the idea of adoption, and where the heavenly Jerusalem is again before us. This calling gives this church pre-eminence over angels.

In the super-heavenly sphere we have adoption (Eph. i. 3-5), and a citizenship of the saints. This calling gives this church pre-eminence over principalities and powers.

When once these three spheres are perceived, all Paul’s epistles fall into their two spheres, the epistles of the circumcision are understood, and confusion is avoided.

We commend this testimony to any who may have been bewildered by the amount of detail that confronts the beginner. Leave for the time being the question of the correct interpretation of “before the foundation of the world”. Leave the question as to how we must understand “in heavenly places”. Leave the matter of Paul’s claim in Eph. iii. 1-13, and look at Scripture as a whole, take the three distinct “adoptions” as your guide, and light will dawn. We commend this approach to the subject to all who seek to have the joy of making men see “what is the dispensation of the mystery” (Eph. iii. 9, R.V.).

#5. The testimony of the time appointed. **pp. 46, 47**

In the last article the testimony was concerned with the “place where”; in the one before us it is concerned with the “time when”, and both are of great importance.

The reader whose testimony is before us was for several years a member of what he calls, “the straitest of any sect”, although we do not feel called upon to actually name the company in these pages. During this period a great amount of Bible study went on, not only in the meetings, but particularly in private. In due time a word was dropped concerning the mystical body of Christ, accompanied by the loan of the books *How to enjoy the Bible* and *Dispensational Truth*. Thereafter light began to dawn, but was temporarily checked by the perusal of Philip Mauro’s *The Gospel of the Kingdom*. The seed, however, had been sown, and the “commandment came” with the reading of Col. i. 26. The fact that something once hidden by God was *now* made manifest to His saints, set our reader once more upon the quest, this time to be satisfied, even to the loss of all other fellowship for the Lord’s sake. The verse that constitutes his testimony reads:--

“Even the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest to His saints” (Col. i. 26).

“NOW.”—This was the arresting word. There is, therefore, some doctrine which appertains to the present time, which suits its requirements, and does not pretend to exhibit the accompaniments of other and different times.

This element of time and fitness is really an integral part in every message of God. Unless we can be assured that the word quoted applies *now* we remain unmoved. The whole teaching of the epistle to the Romans may be said to turn on the word “now” in chapter iii. 21, for the apostle had so reduced all men to the level of complete unrighteousness, that were no ground of righteousness possible now, no gospel could be preached. Further, the practical nature of union with Christ is enforced by the words of the apostle in Gal. ii. 20 where he says: “the life I *now* live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God.” Not only was the future assured, but even the present with all its possibilities of failure could be interpenetrated by this new life and power.

What marvels of grace are resident in the “But now” of Eph. ii. 13. At one time so far off, so hopeless, Godless, Christless, and now, so near, so dear, so completely blessed.

The time “when” a message was received and delivered is an important item in its interpretation. In the Preface to *Dispensational Truth* we quoted the following words by *Miles Coverdale*:--

“It shall greatly helpe ye to understande Scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken, or wrytten, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, considering what goeth before, and what followeth.”

This is “right division”, and the moment the principle of II Tim. ii. 15 is applied to the ministry of Paul light dawns. The whole truth will not be seen at once, and as our brother experienced there will be some misgivings and some retrogression, but the dawn cannot be hidden long by the clouds of man’s making.

We commend this aspect of truth to all our readers, particularly to those who may be teaching others. If only hearers can be made to face the characteristics of the present time, e.g., the absence of Israel, and the cessation of gifts among the negative features, and among the positive features, the new sphere, “heavenly places”, and the new constitution, “one new man”, we feel sure that many now hesitating will be led on to conviction. Remember the presence of “now” in Col. i. 26 as you seek to enlighten men as to “what is the dispensation of the mystery” (Eph. iii. 9, R.V.).

#6. The testimony of the words “hidden” and “manifest”. pp. 73 - 75

The testimony which was given in #5 of this series spoke of the illuminating conviction brought about by the word “now” in Col. i. 26. And we sought to show, in the article dealing with this, the importance of the time element in our testimony to the mystery. Col. i. 26, however, is not exhausted. The friend whose testimony is now before us writes:--

“With the help of the chronological order of the scriptures, it appeared that the scriptures previous to Ephesians and Colossians could not contain the revelation of the mystery, when the apostle could write by inspiration and say, “Which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but *now* is made manifest to His saints” (Col. i. 26).

By the phrase “chronological order” the reader must not understand our brother to mean the precise dating of the epistles. Whether Galatians was the first epistle, as we believe, or, as some believe, nearly the last, is not the point. Whether the dates of the epistles given by various authorities are accepted or rejected, makes no difference to the present witness. Whether I Thessalonians was written in A.D.52 or in A.D.54 is, for our present purpose, of no importance. Whether it was written *before or after Acts xxviii. is of supreme importance*. It is to this chronology of the epistles, and not to debatable dates, that our friend refers. No man’s faith need rest in the wisdom of men, as it would if the exact dating of an epistle were of importance. It is not necessary to read one word outside the pages of the Bible to arrive at a complete understanding of the disposition of the epistles in relation to Acts xxviii.; and that is all that is necessary here.

Having been prepared by this application of “right division”, our friend was ready for the illumination that came from the words “hid” and “manifest”. If Col. i. 23-27 be true, then the apostle was the first to receive the revelation of the mystery. He was the only one to whom this dispensation was entrusted, and until he received the command to make

it known, the mystery lay hidden in the mind of God. It was not hidden in types and symbols in the Old Testament, nor veiled in the parable form in the New. While it rests solidly upon the great basis of justification as taught in Romans, it is a superstructure which was unknown and unexplained to those to whom the gospel was perfectly clear:--

“The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.”

It was not hidden by the rubbish of tradition, but by the will of God. This being so, it is not faith that seeks for the truth of the mystery in O.T. prophecy or type, but perversity. It is not faith to hold fast to the ministry of Christ in the Gospels, and to ignore His risen ministry; just as it was not real faith that prompted the bringing of the spices at His burial, ignoring His testimony that after three days He would rise again.

The significance of Col. i. 26, for our friend, was twofold. To learn that the mystery had been hid from all ages and generations would of itself bring no joy, teach no truth, and set no course; but to learn that what had hitherto been so hidden was now “made manifest” was news indeed. Shall God open His treasures, and man despise His grace? Alas, many seem to ignore the wonders of love that are herein displayed. They say, with the Jew, “The old is better”.

This, then, is another testimony to the truth of the mystery. It will be using a passage already blessed to others if these two related features (“hidden” and “manifest”) are given due weight by those who would enlighten their fellows as to what is the dispensation of the mystery (Eph. iii. 9, R.V.).

“With all thy getting, get understanding” (Prov. iv. 7).

**#11. The fallacy: Fallacies classified.
pp. 35 - 38**

Aristotle divided fallacies broadly into two sections: “Verbal” and “Non-verbal”.

Of the first class, which are not much more than verbal quibbles, he names six varieties:--

(1) *Ambiguity of words*.—This is met by clear definition.

(2) *Ambiguity of structure*.—*Minto* gives as an illustration:--

“What he was beaten with was what I saw him beaten with: what I saw him beaten with was my eye; therefore what he was beaten with was my eye.”

Under this heading would come the misinterpretation of figures of speech, and the taking literally of what is meant figuratively, e.g., “This is My body”.

(3) *Illicit conjunction*.—*Minto* gives as an illustration:--

“Socrates is good. Socrates is a musician. Therefore Socrates is a *good musician*.”

Here two items are joined together in the conclusion that have no necessary or logical relationship.

(4) *Illicit disjunction*.

“Socrates is a good musician. Therefore he is a *good man*.”

(5) *Ambiguity of pronunciation*.—We remember the following incident that illustrates this class of fallacy:--

A little boy attended school for the first time, and was told to sit in a seat quietly until he could be attended to. After a while he began to cry; upon being questioned as to his trouble, he exclaimed, “I was told to wait here *for the present*, and it has not come.”

This form of fallacy often depends on the confusing of verb and noun, which may both sound alike.

(6) *Ambiguity of inflexion*.—This is more likely to occur in a language rich in inflexions than in one in which they have been largely eliminated as in modern English.

Turning to Aristotle’s second division, we note the following cases of “non-verbal” fallacy:--

(1) *The fallacy of the double question.*—The standard example of this is the question: “How long is it since you left off beating your wife?” Many a person who objects that he has not received a “straight answer” to his question, has really fallen into this fallacy. For example, one who is ignorant of the fact that we distinguish between the phase of the hope which is taught in I Thess. iv. and that which is taught in Col. iii. may be surprised that we cannot return a “straight answer” regarding “the rapture” and other related subjects. To require a plain “Yes” or “No” for an answer, may often be an unjust demand.

(2) *The fallacy accidentis.*—This fallacy consists in obtaining assent to a statement with a qualification, and then proceeding to argue as if no qualification had been made, and *vice versa*. A common example of this fallacy is the use of the statement that “the letter killeth”. This being agreed, the argument proceeds to discountenance all verbal study, use of concordances, study of grammar, etc.—a conclusion which is entirely false.

(3) *The fallacy called non-sequitur.*—When reviewing the pamphlet on Conditional Immortality in Volume XXIII, page 175, we drew attention to the prejudice introduced in the opening paragraph:--

“It is a remarkable fact that, with the advancement of the Darwinian theory of evolution, the doctrine of annihilation became popular.”

It may be a fact that these two doctrines advanced together, but what is not a fact is that the one grew out of or was caused by the other. The mind of the reader, however, is intentionally led to assume that such is the case. Many other things, some good, some bad, became popular at the same time, but only some of them were related as cause and effect. We must, therefore, be on our guard, lest we allow our minds to be persuaded that because two events are stated in sequence, they are necessarily related as cause and effect.

Shakespeare puts into Hotspur’s mouth a sound refutation of this type of fallacy:--

GLENDOWER.

“At my nativity,
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
Of burning cressets; and, at my birth,
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shaked like a coward.”

HOTSPUR.

“Why, so it would have done at the same season,
if your mother’s cat had but kittened,
though yourself had never been born” (1 Hen. iv. 3. 1, 13).

Many superstitions, faith in certain remedies, and other common beliefs are examples of this false type of reasoning.

(4) *The fallacy called petitio principii (or surreptitious assumption).*—The common name for this form of fallacy is “Begging the question”. One can easily fall into it, as for example: “If one should attempt to prove the *being* of God from the *authority* of Holy Writ” (*Whately*).

Arguing in a circle is another form of the same fallacy. It assumes what is awaiting proof. For example, to the question, “How do you find the velocity of light?” the reply might be given, “We find that from the distance of the stars”. If the questioner continued, “How do you know the distance of the stars?” and the reply was, “We know that from the velocity of light”, the whole process would simply be arguing in a circle.

English lends itself particularly to the fallacy of “Begging the question” as it abounds in synonyms derived from several languages. A writer who begins in plain Anglo-Saxon, and proceeds in language derived from Latin, should be watched—for he may be telling you nothing, when he appears most erudite. If, for example, he says that “*life* is a *vital* force”, he has merely repeated the idea of “life” in two languages.

(5) *The fallacy called ignotatio elenchi* is simply arguing beside the point, distracting the attention by irrelevant considerations. We quote *Minto* here:--

“We should hold the point clearly in our minds, and watch indefatigably for corroborating propositions. But none of us being capable of this, all of us being subject to bewilderment by a rapid whirl of statements, and all of us biased more or less for or against a conclusion, the sophist has facilities for doing two things—taking for granted that he has stated the required premises *petitio principii* and proving, to perfect demonstration, something which is not the point in dispute, but which we are willing to mistake for it.”

John Stuart Mill gives the following classification that may prove useful in further studies:--

Fallacies.

OF SIMPLE INSPECTION		(1) F. A PRIORI.
/ FROM \	INDUCTIVE F. \	(2) F. of OBSERVATION.
/ EVIDENCE \	/ (3) F. of GENERALIZATION.	
\ DISTINCTLY /	DEDUCTIVE F. (4) F. of RATIOCINATION.	
\ CONCEIVED. /		
OF INFERENCE	/ FROM \	
/ EVIDENCE \		(5) F. of CONFUSION.
\ DISTINCTLY /		
\ CONCEIVED. /		

The fallacy *a priori* is the argument from cause to effect. The fallacy of *observation* is illustrated by the excitement caused when an “Old Moore’s prophecy” comes true, and the complete non-observation of the scores of “prophecies” that never approach fulfillment. The fallacy of *generalization* we have considered under the heading, *Non-sequitur* (“It does not follow.”). The fallacies of *ratiocination* are examples of faulty logic. The fallacies of *confusion* we have already dealt with under various other terms.

We shall have to deal with this important phase of our study again, approaching it from other angles.

#12. Some elements of crooked thinking. pp. 69 - 72

Robert H. Thouless, in his book "Straight and Crooked Thinking", has rendered a great service in the cause of truth by exposing some of the elements of "crooked thinking" that play a considerable part in controversial speaking and writing. In this article we shall follow, fairly closely, the outline he has given at the end of the book, together with many of his own illustrations.

(1) *The use of emotionally toned words.*—We must be on the look-out for the difference that exists between "objective" and "emotional" meanings: if we do not, we are likely, without our knowing it, to be swayed by prejudice. *Thouless* gives the well-known example of the declension of the word "firm": I am *firm*, thou are *obstinate*, he is *pig-headed*.

Prof. Charlton has rightly pointed out, however, that emotionally toned words have their proper place, especially in poetry. Take for example the lines of *Keats* from "The Eve of St. Agnes":--

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast."

Notice the emotional value of the words "*casement*", "*gules*", "*Madeline*", "*fair*" and "*breast*". "Gules" is the name used in heraldry to signify red. "Casement" conjures up an element of romance. *Thouless* rewrites the lines substituting plain words for emotional ones, that we may appreciate the difference:--

"Full of this window shone the wintry moon,
Making red marks on Jane's uncoloured chest."

In the exposition of Scripture, we must be on our guard against emotional words, lest the truth suffer in consequence. Let the reader turn to the Gospel according to Matthew or Mark, and read the record of the crucifixion. Then let him imagine what a chapter *Dickens* would have made of it, and whether it could possibly have been read aloud.

Politics is a fruitful field for the development of emotionally charged words. For instance, "a fluent and forcible speech delivered by one of our party is *eloquent*; a similar speech by one of the opposite party is *rhodomontade**". (*Vain boasting - from the boastful character of Rodomonte, in the *Orlande Furioso* of Ariosto).

Ruskin's comment upon *Whistler's Nocturnes*, provides another example:--

“I have heard and seen much of cockney impudence before now, but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public’s face.”

The emotional tone of the words “cockney”, “coxcomb” and “flinging a pot of paint” is very strong; and the passage is utterly unworthy of that master of good English, and champion of a good art, *John Ruskin*.

Let us not lose the power to speak, write, and think with plain words. All genuine feeling demands adequate expression, but even genuine feeling is neither proof nor evidence. The words “I feel” often introduce serious error:--

“When we catch ourselves thinking in emotional phraseology, let us form the habit of translating our thoughts into emotionally neutral words.”

Look at the following list of words, both having much the same meaning when reduced to cold fact, but likely to have very different effects upon the mind of the ordinary reader unless he be prepared:--

“The <i>spirit</i> of our troops.”		“The <i>mentality</i> of the enemy.”
“Their <i>unquenchable heroism</i> .”		“Their <i>ponderous foolhardiness</i> .”
“Summary <i>execution</i> .”		“Base <i>assassination</i> .”
“ <i>Wise severity</i> .”		“ <i>Atrocity</i> .”
“This <i>fluent</i> and forcible speech.”		“This <i>rhodomontade</i> of extremists.”
“These <i>practical</i> proposals.”		“This suggested <i>panacea</i> .”

(2) *A sophisticated formula*.—A fairly common way of avoiding or ignoring a sound refutation of an extreme position is to say that “the exception proves the rule”. How often has valuable evidence been disposed of by a solemn quotation of this equivocal formula. Yet, if we thought for a moment about it, we could hardly fail to realize the falsity of the whole argument. If there be an exception, then the rule ceases to be universal. We have been misled in allowing ourselves to be persuaded that the verb “to prove” necessarily means “to prove *true*”. It does not necessarily mean that; and in this case it means “to test”, whether the statement under consideration be true or false. If there be an exception, that exception proves the rule *to be false*.

(3) *The power of suggestion*.—It is a “psychological fact that if statements are made again and again in a confident manner, without argument or proof, the hearers will tend to believe them, quite independently of their soundness, and of the presence or absence of evidence for their truth”.

If any reader doubts the power of “repeated affirmation”, let him think of the great business houses who spend thousands of pounds annually in placarding the country with advertisements; or of the practice, in “faith-healing” campaigns, of getting the assembly to sing the same choruses until they are all rocking to and fro and emotionally plastic. We earnestly plead with any who are responsible for meetings resolutely to forbid this unhealthy practice.

Another method of gaining an unfair victory is that of “suggestion by prestige”. This may take the form of the use of imposing titles, or reference to one’s qualifications or years of study. While we must, as believers, render to all their due, we must resolutely withstand any attempt to overwhelm the argument by mere prestige. Truth is independent of the channel through which it comes. Mere years of study *may* mean mere years of bias; and even the world has the proverb, “No fool like an old fool”.

We do not intend here to give all the examples of “crooked thinking” that *Thouless* includes in his book; we will only add one or two more, without attempting to comment upon them:--

- (4) *Making a statement in which “all” is implied, but “some” is true.*
- (5) *Proof by selected instances, and by inconsequent arguments.*
- (6) *The appeal to mere authority.*
- (7) *The use of generally accepted “tabloids” of thought.*
- (8) *Argument by imperfect and by forced analogy.*

This is but a selection from a list of thirty-four dishonest or fallacious types of argument. The last, dealing with analogy, is of great importance; and we hope to devote several articles to its consideration.

In closing, we should like to remind the reader of an obvious but important fact. The mere possession of a chart of physical exercises is not of any service to its owner unless he puts them into practice. In the same way, the mere fact that fallacies in argument have been tabulated and illustrated in this magazine will not be of much use to the reader, unless he personally puts this knowledge into practice. The reader should therefore study articles both from the newspaper, and from current literature (including articles in *The Berean Expositor*), with a view to detecting any of the fallacies which have been enumerated in this series.

#13. The importance of analogy. pp. 111 - 113

After we have traversed the subject of logic and its place in the search for truth, after we have realized the fact that definitions, propositions, syllogisms, etc., are all important, we nevertheless shrink from the idea of never speaking, writing or reasoning except along the formal lines of pure logic. Such would be impracticable and most wearisome, and as a matter of fact has not and never will be practiced. The guiding principle of life, said Bishop Butler, is “probability”. It is not mathematically certain nor absolutely sure that the sun will rise to-morrow, yet who is there that does not act as though it were a certainty? When we start on a railway journey, we do not, and we cannot, stay to enquire whether the signalmen are on duty, the driver experienced, the railway company faithful to its contracts, or that the station to which we travel actually exists. Probability is so allied to human experience as to amount to moral certainty.

When we come to the investigation of spiritual things, there is no other means of imparting knowledge, or of discovering truth, than by probability. The scientist cannot see God through telescope or microscope, but the very existence of a *scientist* is the surest proof that a greater intelligence than his own exists. In our studies under another heading, we drew attention to the teaching of the *Apocrypha*, and in the *Book of Wisdom* we read:--

“For by the greatness and beauty of things created, the maker of them is judged of proportionably.”

Now this word “proportionably” is *analogos* in the original, and the word *analogia* is found in Rom. xii. 6 in the phrase: “the proportion of faith.” In its primary sense and use, *analogy* belongs to mathematics, and indicates the equality of ratios, which we usually speak of as proportion, and use the formula; As $A : B :: C : D$ (as A is to B, so C is to D). In mathematics there is no room for “probability”. There is no possibility of doubt that: As 3 is to 4, so 6 is to 8 or 9 is to 12.

Again, it is most important to recognize that in “proportion” we are not dealing with “resemblance”, but *relation*. There is no resemblance, says the proverb, between chalk and cheese, nevertheless the proportion remains the same, whether by A B C D we mean cheeses and chinks or chinks and cheeses. The importance of this fact will be demonstrated later, but many an absurdity has passed for valid reasoning that has confused *resemblance* with *relationship* even among those believers who have learnt something of the truth concerning the “body of Christ”, for some absurd conclusions have been drawn from the title “body” through failure to appreciate this distinctive character of analogy.

Martin F. Tupper in his “Proverbial Philosophy” has one or two lines on analogy that are helpful:--

“The wonderful all-prevalent analogy that testifieth one Creator,
The broad arrow of the Great King carved on all the stores of His arsenal.”

“The mind and the nature of God are shadowed in all His works,
And none could have guessed His essence, had He not uttered it Himself.

“For we learn upon a hint, we find a clue,
We yield an hundred-fold; but the great sower is analogy.”

“Analogy is milk for babes, but abstract truths are strong meat;
Precepts and rules are repulsive to a child, but happy illustration winneth him:
In vain shalt thou preach of industry and prudence, till he learn of the bee and the ant;
Dimly will he think of his soul, till the acorns and the chrysalis have taught him;
He will fear God in the thunder, and worship His loveliness in flowers;
And parables shall charm his heart, while doctrines seem dead mystery;
Faith shall he learn of the husbandman casting good corn into the soil;
And if thou train him to trust thee, he will not withhold his reliance from the Lord.”

“Wherefore it is wise and well to guide the mind aright,
So to talk of spirit by analogy with substance;
And analogy is a truer guide, than many teachers tell of,
Similitudes are scattered round to help us, not to hurt us;
Moses, in his every type, and the Greater than Moses, in His parables,
Preach, in terms that all may learn, the philosophic lessons of analogy;
And here, in a topic immaterial, the likeness of analogy is just.”

These words set analogy very high in the realm of teaching, and one has only to ponder the subject, and to search one's own experience, to find abundant confirmation. Many a discovery has been brought about by analogy. Christopher Columbus discovered America by analogy. Many of his conclusions proved false, but some were true and led to results undreamed of. By analogy, the ball and socket joined in the human skeleton led Stephenson to effect a great improvement in his locomotive engine.

With this introductory word concerning the importance of analogy, we will conclude, taking up the matter with more precision in our next article.

#14. The definition of analogy. pp. 145 - 147

In our last paper we introduced the subject of analogy, and considered briefly, with a few examples, its importance and prevalence. The limits of the validity of argument by analogy are subjects of long-standing controversy. Varying conclusions have been reached, according to the state of mind of the times, and the approach to the subject, whether philosophical, mathematical or religious. We are chiefly concerned here with the use of analogy in the things of God and His revelation, and we need not, therefore, take up valuable time and space in dealing with the history of the controversy. *Whately*, speaking of analogy writes:--

“Two things may be connected together by analogy; though they have in themselves no resemblance, for analogy is the resemblance of ratios or relations. Thus as a sweet taste gratifies the palate, so does a sweet sound gratify the ear, hence the word sweet is applied to both though no *flavour* can ever resemble a *sound* in itself.”

Even *Whately's* use of the word “gratify” is an example of the analogous in language, for “gratify” indicates “gratitude”, and the giving of thanks. It is used here figuratively, and of course rightly, for it is a false conception of truth and truth-telling to imagine that figurative language is not true. Indeed, the opposite is often the case; a figure of speech is often more true to the inner fact than any amount of “plain unvarnished speech” (to use another figure). However, in spite of the attempt on the part of *Whately* to limit analogy to relations, it will be found in ordinary use that:--

“Some identity of nature is always postulated in every analogy, as in the instance just given both ‘hearing’ and ‘tasting’ are *sensations*.”

When we turn to the Scriptures, we find that analogy is largely associated with what is called *anthropomorphism*, that is, the ascription of human passions, actions and attributes to God. The Hebrew name for this figure was *Derech Benai Adam*, “The way of the sons of men”; the Latin name is *Condescensio*, indicating the condescension of the infinite God, Who for the enlightenment of His creatures reveals Himself under human symbols and figures. We will not here turn aside from our theme, to deal with the place of figures of speech in general (this may well follow the present series); for the moment we must consider the connection between analogy, anthropomorphism, and revealed truth:--

“That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed 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” (Rom. i. 19, 20).

This verse shows without question that *something* may be known of God by analogy; enough at least to make idolatry inexcusable. The question, however, that attracted the close scrutiny of the “Schoolmen” was *how far* anthropomorphism could be justified in the things of God. Anthropomorphic statements cannot be taken literally; yet they

cannot be summarily dismissed. We read in the Scriptures of the face, the eyes, the ears, the hands, the fingers, the nostrils, the heart, and the bowels of God. To accept the statements literally would be manifestly false and unscriptural; and to justify them logically and philosophically is a task that cannot be easily accomplished.

One result of the Schoolmen's study was the emergence of the fact that language must be distinguished by a threefold usage. It can be used (1) univocally, (2) equivocally, and (3) analogically. A word is used *univocally* when in two or more propositions it conveys precisely the same meaning. It is used *equivocally* when it is used in entirely different senses. It is used *analogically* when it is employed because of the connection observable between two *relations*. For example:--

The Wisdom of God.—This cannot be a *univocal* use of the word wisdom, because that would mean that God's wisdom was neither more nor less than man's wisdom, which is false. It cannot be *equivocal*, for in that case it would convey nothing to the mind. If God's wisdom had absolutely nothing in common with man's, human language would be entirely unfit for the purposes of revelation. The expression "the wisdom of God" is employed *analogically*, for there is something in common between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God. What is partial, limited and incomplete in man, is perfect and infinite in God.

Some have attacked the validity of analogy through mistaking analogy for metaphor. This distinction we must investigate more fully when we deal specifically with figurative language, but we must touch upon it here for the sake of our theme. Metaphor expresses an *imaginary* resemblance, but *analogy* expresses a *real* resemblance. For example, "All flesh is grass" is a metaphor. There is an imaginary resemblance between "flesh" and "grass" that justifies the figure. "I am the door" is a metaphor. "This is My body" is a metaphor. What deplorable superstition and error have resulted from the regarding of this metaphor as a reality. Neither the bread used by the Lord Himself, nor that which has been used since by His disciples through the ages, has even been anything but bread.

Analogy, however, implies a real resemblance. Power, personality, presence, mean something real, whether spoken literally of man or figuratively of God.

Our next problem, therefore, is to consider how the anthropomorphic terms of Scripture are to be received, and what provision God has made for the true and full use of analogy. This we must take up in our next paper.

One word in conclusion. We have entitled this paper, "The definition of analogy". Strictly speaking, however, analogy is extremely difficult to define. *Bishop Butler*, whose "Analogy" is well-known, refused to attempt its definition, and proceeded rather to its application. We must not be taken to task for attempting something that greater minds have avoided—we use the word "definition" in a loose sense, and not in a strictly logical one.

#15. Analogy, and the Image of God. pp. 208 - 211

In our study of the underlying principle of analogy, we have advanced from the severely mathematical conception (set forth by the symbols $A : B : C : D$) to a consideration of the anthropomorphic language of revelation. It will be necessary, before we go further, to consider the objections to, and the justification of this use of human terms to set forth the divine.

Many readers will be acquainted with the philosopher's charge against "religion", and its use of the human to express the divine:--

"The lions, if they could have pictured a God, would have pictured him in a fashion like a lion; horses like a horse; the oxen like an ox."

The implication is that man has pictured God as a gigantic man, and consequently thinks of Him in terms that are human raised to a superlative power. There is some truth in this gibe of the philosopher; but it is only half the truth, which as *Tennyson* puts it, may be "ever the blackest of lies".

We must now turn our attention to the following questions:--

- (1) Is man specially constituted to embody in a *small* degree that which is *great* in the Lord?
- (2) Does the Scripture warrant the use of *human* terms in explanation of the *divine*?
- (3) What do we mean by personality? Is God a person?

Let us take first the question of personality. What is a person?

"A person is a self-conscious and self-determining individual, the source from which thought and conduct radiate" (*Author unknown*).

Kant's definition, although it has been modified and improved, remains the basis of all modern philosophy of personality, and is true. An animal may be conscious, but not *self-conscious*, and so has no *personality*. "Persons, as opposed to things, are individual, conscious, intelligent and free." Personality is conscious of its own existence, can reflect upon itself, and can speak of "I". Personality may be expressed in the phrase: "I think, therefore I am." Everything in life and experience is open to question and doubt, except the individual personality of the questioner:--

"Our being with its faculties, mind and body, is a fact not admitting of question" (*Dr. Newman*).

"Personality is the only thing that is real, not related or derived" (*Prof. Green*).

"Perfect personality is in God only; to all finite minds there is allotted but a pale copy thereof" (*Lotze*).

It comes to this, therefore: that man, being a person, can say “I am”. We are immediately reminded that when God revealed Himself to Moses, it was this special emphasis upon personality that was prominent. No attributes such as goodness, righteousness, holiness are introduced; but simply unlimited individuality—“I am”:

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Exod. iii. 14).

Analogy in natural science *suggests* a personality. The evidence of design suggests a designer, the evidence of a plan suggests an intelligence. And the Scriptures fully endorse this approach to truth:--

“They say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?” (Psa. xciv. 7-9).

To fail to perceive the force of this argument is to lack understanding, and to be like a “brute” beast. This analogy is at the bottom of all right reasoning; and, as we have seen from Rom. i. 19, 20, it left the heathen without excuse.

In the moral realm analogy brings us nearer. Everything points to the Person, although it does not actually bring us into living contact with Him. This final living contact demands more than nature or morals can supply.

Not only should we appreciate the place of anthropomorphic teaching concerning God, but we should also realize something of what may be termed the theomorphic in man. The words of *Martineau* are pertinent in this connection:--

“There are but three forms under which it is possible to think of the ultimate or immanent principle of the universe. Mind. Life. Matter. Given the first, the universe is intelligently *thought out*: given the second, it blindly *grows*: given the third, it *mechanically shuffles* into equilibrium. We are *rational*, we are *alive*, we have *weight and extension*.”

“It is from our microcosm that we have to interpret the macrocosm.”

“The severest science is in this sense, just as anthropomorphic as the most ideal theology.”

Earlier in this series we drew attention to two facts:--

- (1) Reasoning is impossible apart from definition, and definition is impossible without affixing names.
- (2) Adam manifested this essential attribute of intelligence by naming all the animals that passes before him (Gen. ii. 20).

If we go back earlier in the record of creation, we learn that man was created in the image of God (Gen. i. 26). The moment we remember this, we realize that analogy between the visible things of man and the invisible things of God rests upon a solid basis.

It is fundamentally true. God has purposely fashioned man in this form; and so he is able to learn by analogy.

A still more wonderful factor enters into the scheme when we remember the method of the divine revelation in Christ. Not only has God in the first place endowed man with a “pale shadow” of His infinite personality, but in the fullness of time, “God was manifest in the flesh”:

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

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John xiv. 9).

For the believer, Christ sets forth the true analogy. Man, made in the image of God, sees in Christ, Who is the image of God, the whole person and attributes of the invisible God.

We have already referred to the revelation of God to Moses, under the title “I AM”. This title immediately followed by another:

“Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is My name for the age, and this is My memorial unto all generations” (Exod. iii. 14, 15).

The One Who is the “I AM” condescends to call Himself “Jehovah”, His name for the age. This name enters into the composition of the word “Jesus”, and belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ in all its fullness. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New. He, too, used the title I AM, when He said: “Before Abraham was I AM.” But usually He condescended, and used analogy, revealing Himself by saying, “*I am* the door”; “*I am* the true bread”; “*I am* the good shepherd”.

We trust that the reader has been led from Logic to the Logos, and has discovered that in the person of the Son of God we arrive at true understanding, and that apart from Him, all reasoning is incomplete, and becomes at best a great “Perhaps”.

We now turn our attention to that special department of “understanding” that revolves around the legitimate place of Figurative Language, and in a series of articles to follow this one, we hope to give some guidance towards the appreciation of this intricate but most profitable study.

Words in Season.

#20. Simple gospel notes on John iii. 16.

(iv.) The essential link.

pp. 59, 60

John iii. 16 is divided into two sections: first the Godward, and then the man-ward. This we have already shown in an outline for children in Volume X, page 78, but it may be interesting enough to set out again here. The device is a simple one, but may serve as a useful representation of an important fact:--

GOD.	PERISH.
ONLY BEGOTTEN.	EVERLASTING.
SON.	LIFE.

Here we have the word “gospel” formed by the important features of this verse, and divided into its two sections. The hyphen that joins the two syllables together and makes the complete word, represents faith. The gospel preached must be the gospel believed if it is to be effective.

Whosoever believeth.—While the word “whosoever” suggests, like the word “world” in the same verse, that there are no barriers here of race, colour or dispensation, we must be on our guard lest we build upon the word more than it can in justice bear. *Pas ho pisteuon* is “Every believing one”. The “all” or the “every” is qualified. It is “all without exception”, if we keep it within the scriptural limitation of faith. It is “all without distinction”, because it is qualified alone by faith and not by creed, colour or caste. The stress, however, must be placed upon the *faith* rather than upon the all; otherwise we may overstep the boundary of truth.

The Gospel of John is particularly full in its presentation of faith, and it will be helpful for us to notice some of its examples, observing what or whom is believed, and with what results:--

“*As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name*” (John i. 12).—Here “receiving” is placed in correspondence with “believing” and partly explains the word. “Receiving Him” is parallel with “Believing into His name”. The result of this reception is the authority and privilege of becoming children (*teknon*, not *huios*) of God.

“*And they believed the scripture, and the word that Jesus said*” (John ii. 22).—In this passage faith is seen resting on the Scripture, and the word that Christ had said. In this case it was not until after the resurrection of the Lord that they believed, and then because “they remembered”—evidently in fulfillment of the promise of John xiv. 26.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life” (John v. 24).—One of the essential features of this faith is the belief that Christ is the Sent One. The passages relating to this theme in John’s Gospel are too numerous to quote, and to give only a few would spoil the effect of the cumulative testimony. We hope that none of our readers will rest unacquainted with this important testimony of John’s Gospel.

“For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words” (John v. 46, 47).—Another essential feature is that the same faith that receives the words of Christ as gospel truth must also receive His testimony to the authority and truth of the writings of Moses.

The whole witness concerning faith in John’s Gospel is summed up in the words of xx. 30, 31: “But these are written.” Faith is connected with documentary testimony attested by eye-witnesses—“in the presence of His disciples.” There is no room here for feelings or fancies.

“That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John xx. 31).—To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that He is the Messiah of the Scriptures, the Anointed One, and therefore the true Prophet, Priest and King. It is to believe that He was the Sent One, and that He became man, for this involved in the title, “the Son of God”.

(To be concluded).

#20. Simple gospel notes on John iii. 16.

(iv.) The essential link. (concluded).

pp. 72, 73

“And that believing ye might have life through His name” (John xx. 31).—This is the great result: *life*. All gifts and graces, all work and witness, must arise out of this initial gift, for without life all else is impossible.

While *pisteuo*, the verb “to believe”, occurs in John’s Gospel some ninety-eight times, the noun *pistis*, “faith”, is never used. While the real lesson that underlies this distribution of the words is not seen upon the surface, it would be wise in teaching from this Gospel to remember the fact, and to speak in harmony with it. The deeper lesson involved may occupy our attention at some other time.

It may be as well at this point to raise the question, Why should faith above all things be made essential? Faith is essential, for without it contact is impossible. Even in everyday affairs, can we enter into any important business of life without faith? Is there no faith in the Post Office and its system when you drop that valuable letter, without

witness and without signature of acceptance, into the local pillar-box, to be conveyed perhaps to the ends of the earth? Is there no faith in banks, tradespeople, schoolmasters, servants? If a man is to be saved by grace he must believe. Do not be mystified by the higher teachings of faith. Realize, and, if you are a preacher to others, make your hearers realize that he that cometh to God *must* believe that He is. This is the irreducible minimum, and, apart from the evil heart of the natural man, is as unconscious as breathing and as unquestioned as eating and drinking.

#21. Simple gospel notes on John iii. 16.
(v.) The alternatives.
pp. 159, 160

“I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil” (Deut. xxx. 15).

The gospel of God concerning His Son, whether presented by John or Paul, finds man on the way that leads to death, and plants the believer’s feet on the way of life. In John iii. 16 the alternatives are expressed by the words: “Shall not perish, but have everlasting (or age-abiding) life.” In John v. 24, the alternatives are “not coming into condemnation”, but “passing out of death into life”.

If we keep closely to the working of John iii. 16 we shall believe and declare that man by nature will perish unless saved by the work of Christ.

Perish.—There is, surely, no mystery about the meaning of this word. When we read in John vi. 27 of “meat that *perisheth*”, we need no further explanation. If a chemist or physicist undertook to prove that the original elements that composed the meat were not really destroyed, we should still know that the meat as such had perished, whatever we might think of the survival of its constituent elements. When in the same chapter, the Lord said, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing *perish*” (vi. 12), the meaning is perfectly clear. Fragments of bread and fish if left about on the grass would “perish” so far as the question of “food” is concerned. Again, in the same chapter, the Lord uses the word when He says, “Of all which He hath given Me *I should lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day” (vi. 39).

It is clear from the reference here that apart from resurrection, even those given to Christ by the Father would be “lost” or would have “perished”. So far as their bodies are concerned they have turned to the dust, and God has gathered to Himself the spirit of life; in the language of Scripture, they “are not”. This is in entire conformity with the words of I Cor. xv. 17, 18:--

“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ *are perished.*”

Now if Scripture taught that at death the believer went immediately either to glory, or to an intermediate state of some degree of blessedness, though in a disembodied condition, how could the word “perished” be a fitting word to use? Should any object that this is ignoring the teaching of the Lord concerning “hell fire”, we refer such to Matt. x. 28:--

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him which is able to DESTROY both soul and body in HELL.”

“Hell” (or rather, as the word is here, “Gehenna”) *destroys*, and the destruction extends to soul and body. How those who hold to their tradition of a “never-dying soul” can make it agree with the Word of truth we cannot understand.

As the word *apollumi* (perish) occurs some ninety times or more it is not possible to turn to all the references here. We give, however, the various ways in which the word is translated in the A.V. to help any who may wish to investigate the matter further. The number after the word indicates the number of occurrences of that particular translation:--

Destroy (23); Lose (28); Be destroyed (3); Be lost (3); Be marred (1); Die (1); Perish (38). We read of lost sheep, lost money, lost life, lost reward, a lost son. We read of being destroyed by flood, and by fire and brimstone. We read of perishing by hunger, by storm, by being cut off and cast away. These and other usages focus the light of truth upon John iii. 16, and show the state of man by nature and the doom that lies ahead. The blessed alternative is “age-abiding life”, life because Christ Himself lives, because He is the Resurrection and the Life.

These, then, are the alternatives: perishing or having age-abiding life (John iii. 16); death or life (v. 24); the wages of sin, death, or the gift of God, age-abiding life (Rom. vi. 23); alienation from the life of God, or reconciliation (Eph. iv. 18; ii. 16).

The issues are plain and unambiguous:--

“He that hath the Son hath LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God hath NOT LIFE” (I John v. 12).

Whoever you may be that read these solemn words, weigh them over before God before you dare to trifle with them.

May these simple notes be a “word in season” to some who are engaged in preaching to others.