

**The Key
of
Knowledge
or
Dispensational Truth**

**BY
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No. 1 of this Series "The Dispensational Frontier"

No. 2 of this Series "Who Then Is Paul?"

No. 3 of this Series "The Key of Knowledge"

THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE

OR

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

Supposing the reader is sure that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God", and that he is logical enough to believe that inasmuch as the Gospel according to Matthew is a part of "all Scripture", it is therefore with the rest equally "inspired", we ask the question would it be wise or right to decide to distribute freely among the unsaved the Gospel according to Matthew? We can well understand that such a question will be met in many cases with a most decided token of objection, and we hasten to assure the reader that no attack is being made on the Scriptures or on the Gospel according to Matthew, but that a serious objection is being laid against their "indiscriminate" use. Continuing our supposition, let us say that a copy of this Gospel according to Matthew has been placed in the hands of an unsaved man with the assurance that this Gospel is indeed and in truth the Word of God. He discovers that "everlasting life" is found in Matthew 19:16,29 and 25:46, and accordingly, being intensely interested, he reads these passages in the hope that the way of everlasting life may be made clear. He is somewhat disturbed to read the question

"Master, what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal (everlasting) life?"

and is even more disturbed to read the Lord's answer,

"If thou wilt enter into life KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS,"

and he is not left in doubt concerning what commandments are in view (9:16-22). While pondering this legal and unattainable qualification for everlasting life he observes a second reference in the same chapter, and with some hope of discovering terms within his powers, reads:

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (19:29),

and is hard put to it to decide which of the two sets of conditions are the more difficult or the more hopeless. In any case he is not at

all sure that these passages are “good tidings” so far as he is concerned. However, he learns that *one other* pronouncement on this vital theme is found in chapter twenty-five, and accordingly discovers that those who are denominated “the righteous”, who go into “life eternal” (everlasting), are those of the nations who have treated the Lord’s brethren with kindness, even though they confessed that they had no idea at the time that they were doing such acts unto the Lord Himself. In no instance is faith in exercise or the finished work of Christ in view, but in each case some element of merit is prominent. He can gain everlasting life by “keeping” the ten commandments, or by “forsaking” home and land, or by “ministering” to the Lord’s brethren, without consciously ministering unto Him, and he is rightly puzzled. There is one answer to this and every similar perplexity. There is a

Key of Knowledge

which a misguided prejudice has hidden from both tract distributors and seeking sinner, and that key is the much abused and much misrepresented.

Dispensational Truth

Anyone who has been rightly taught, discriminates one part of Holy Scripture from another. Such *honour* the Word by believing implicitly ALL that it says. A *discriminate* believer, that is to say one who appreciates *dispensational truth*, would believe, *without reservation*, the limitations imposed on Matthew’s Gospel by the words:

“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

“I AM NOT SENT but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”

(10:5,6, 15:24).

He would know of another gospel which speaks of and to “the other sheep”, which were not of “this fold”, namely, the Gospel according to John, and there, the seeking sinner would find in such passages as John 3:15,16,36, 5:24,6:40,47 and 10:28 that everlasting life is the unmerited gift of God, received upon believing His Son. Matthew is as equally inspired as is John, but it is not sufficient to believe 2 Timothy 3:16 concerning “all scripture”, we

must also as assuredly believe 2 Timothy 2:15 and “rightly divide the word of truth” if we would be “unashamed” workmen, and ashamed will all be who indiscriminately use Matthew where John is dispensationally indicated, or in any other way fail to use this divinely given Key of Knowledge.

Before we elaborate this important principle of interpretation, let us be sure of our material, the words employed and their usage and meaning. The word “dispensation” occurs in the A.V. four times, and translates the Greek word *oikonomia*. This has come over into English in the form *economy*.

Oikonomia is a compound made up of *oikos* “house” and *nemo* “to administer”, its usage extending much further than the limits of domestic economy, but never completely losing sight of its homely origin. No examination of the word *oikonomia* can be considered complete or trustworthy that ignores the fact that it was in use in the Septuagint Version for over two hundred years before the New Testament was written. The usage in the LXX must of necessity influence the usage in the New Testament and moreover, by consulting the LXX we can turn back to the Hebrew Old Testament and observe what Hebrew words were translated by *oikonomia* and *oikonomos* in that ancient version. In Isaiah 22:19 and 21 the LXX uses *oikonomia* to translate two Hebrew words.

“I will drive thee from thy station” (Heb. *matsab*).

“I will commit thy government (Heb. *memshalah*) into his hands”.

Shebna had been treasurer “over the house”. He was to be deprived of his office, and Eliakim the son of Hilkiah was to be installed in his place. What this office of *oikonomia* involved can be seen by the language used in verses 21 and 22.

“And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none open.”

Matsab means station or garrison (1 Sam. 13:23). In other forms it means to stand as a watchman (Isaiah 21:8); a prefect or deputy (1 Kings 4:19). *Memshalah* means rule, dominion (Gen. 1:16), *mashal* (Gen. 3:16). This word *oikonomia* is the one trans-

lated "dispensation" in 1 Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, 3:2, Colossians 1:25, and the associations of *oikonomia* and their Hebrew equivalents *must be* kept in mind when we come to the New Testament occurrences of this term. *Oikonomos*, i.e. the person who exercises this rule, and translated "steward" in Luke 16:1 and in 1 Corinthians 4:1,2, is found eight times in the LXX version; two being found in the book of Esther, three in 1 Kings and three in 2 Kings. In Esther 8:9 *oikonomos* translates the word "lieutenant" which in its turn is the Persian *achashdarpenim* "satrap", which is found in Ezra 8:36, Esther 3:12, 8:9 and 9:3. In the plural this Persian word is translated "princes" in Daniel where it occurs nine times. This Persian word is translated in the LXX *dioiketes*, Ezra 8:36, *oikonomos* Esther 8:9, *strategos* Esther 3:12, *turanos* Esther 9:3, *toparches* Daniel 3:2, *hupatos* Daniel 3:2,3, 6:7. *Dioiketes* means a treasurer, from *dioikes* to keep house, to manage affairs, to administer; *strategos* refers to a military leader, a "Captain"; *turanos* a tyrant, sovereign; *toparches* a governor, one who rules over a place (*topos*); *hupatos* supreme, a consul.

Here, therefore, is the background of the term that emerges in the New Testament as a "dispensation". It will be seen that it is no synonym for the ages, times or seasons. To speak of "ages and dispensations" however is not incorrect, for the ages are not simply the duration or flight of time, they give the *characteristics* of any one or more segregated periods during which the Lord deals with men, nations or assemblies, in some manner peculiar to the times. Old Testament usage, as we have seen, conjures up in the mind either a public official, or a house manager, a combination of Treasurer, Ruler, Consul, General, Satrap, Prince, Governor, all of which when extraneous characteristics are eliminated can be expressed in the one word "Steward".

We now turn to the New Testament remembering that the language of the Greek New Testament is strongly influenced by the Greek version of the Old Testament. What *oikonomos* or *oikonomia* meant to the Greek-speaking Jew at the time of the advent of Christ, would be the meaning he would be supposed to attach to them, when for the first time he came across them in the Gospels and the Epistles, unless an inspired warning were given, telling of a change of meaning that must now be accepted. Of the

four gospels, Luke's is the only one in which the Greek words *oiknomeo*, *oikonomia* or *oikonomos* are used. These three words occur nineteen times. Of these, eight occur in Luke, ten are found in Paul's epistles, and one only in Peter. The first reference is Luke 12:42:

“Who then is that faithful and wise STEWARD (*oikonomos*), whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?”

The particular concern of this steward is “rightly to divide” the portion allotted to each of the household. This is expressed in two ways, (1) “to give their portion of meat”; (2) “in due season.” *Sitometrion* is a compound of *sitos* “corn” and *metron* “measure”. Theophrastus, a disciple of Plato, when describing “a mean, sordid” person, says “he will himself measure out the usual allowance to his domestics”. The custom was observed also among the Hebrews. Where the A.V. reads “feed me with food convenient for me” (Prov. 30:8), the margin reads, “Heb. of my allowance”. The only occurrences of *sitometreo* in the LXX are in Genesis 47:12,14:

“And Joseph nourished (*sitometreo*) his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.”

In verse 14, the LXX reads:

“And Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and the land of Canaan, in return for the corn which they bought, and he distributed corn (*sitometreo*) to them.”

Here it will be observed, Joseph is acting as an *oikonomos*, a steward, and he dispenses the food not only in amount but in quality, according as it would be appropriate for Jacob himself, for his brethren and for the household, *siton kata soma*, literally “corn according to body” or “corn suited to each person”. In this we have an early illustration of “dispensational truth” which takes into account the different ranks, and spheres of blessing, and also sees to it that *babes* have milk and *adults* have a full diet. Paul as a steward of the mysteries of God most carefully observed this essential rule, as may be seen in his reference to “babes and fullgrown” in 1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:11-14, Ephesians 4:14. In the fourteenth verse of the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis we see Joseph as a faithful steward, faithfully and honestly distributing the corn in exchange for the money taken for

that purpose, and our mind immediately travels down the age to the unfaithful steward who said to his Lord's debtors "How much owest thou? ... write down fifty" or "four score".

This parable gives us the first occurrence of the Greek words *oikonomia* and *oikonomos*, which are found together in Luke 16.

"There was a certain rich man, which had a steward (*oikonomos*); and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship (*oikonomia*); for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself ... my Lord taketh away from me my stewardship ... when I am put out of the stewardship ..." (Luke 16:1-4).

Here we have three occurrences of *oikonomos* "steward" and three of *oikonomia* "stewardship". The duties of this steward are manifest. He occupied a position of trust. He shared that position with no one else. He had control of the goods of his master, and could, if he were dishonest, alter the terms of contract between his lord and his lord's debtors. The charge laid against this steward is that he had "wasted" his master's goods. *Diaskorpizo* means to scatter Luke 1:51, and one of the other meanings given in the Lexicons is "to DISPERSE", the very opposite of "to DISPENSE", for this is to dispense in an evil sense. The preacher and teacher who boasts that he has no room for "hair-splitting" or for "ultra-dispensationalism" often ignores the distinctive dispensational features of the Scriptural message, e.g. "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), "other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (John 10:16), "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision" (Rom. 15:8), "They gave to me (Paul) and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that WE should go to the GENTILES, and THEY unto the CIRCUMCISION" (Gal. 2:9), "I Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1), and dissipates or indiscriminately scatters to all and sundry, instead of giving "convenient" food in "due season". This time note "in due season" it will be remembered was used of the faithful steward in Luke 12:42, and is employed by the apostle Paul when speaking of the truth entrusted to Him. It is a solemn fact that the preacher or teacher who ignores "the due season" will as surely dissipate the truth entrusted to him, as will the man who consciously handles the Word of God deceitfully. Dispensational Truth therefore is Truth for the Times.

We move now from the Gospel of Luke to the epistles of Paul, and there we find the word *oikonomos* used as follows “Erastus the *chamberlain* of the city” (Rom. 16:23). The Revised Version replaces the word chamberlain by the word *treasurer*. In either case Erastus occupied a position of trust, that involved both the disposition of money and of service, and was used by the same apostle that had already applied the title *oikonomos* to himself (1 Cor. 4:1), and was to claim a special *oikonomia* as the Prisoner of Jesus Christ for us Gentiles (Eph. 3:1). If Erastus of Romans 16 is the same as the Erastus of 2 Timothy 4:20, it appears that he was the chamberlain of the city of Corinth. One feature which is almost too obvious to mention, but which the undispenational treatment of Scripture makes necessary, is that Erastus was chamberlain of *one particular city*. He had no right to interfere with the finances and the laws of any other city. Peter, James and John recognised this essential feature (Gal. 2:7-9) but alas, dispensational frontiers have been so indiscriminately crossed and re-crossed today, that it is now considered to be a mark of enlightenment to say that they do not exist, except in the minds of those who hold the so called “Coles-Bullinger-Welch heresy”. Before Romans was written, Paul addressed two epistles to the city of Corinth, where Erastus exercised his office as *oikonomos*.

“Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and *stewards* of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in *stewards* that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:1,2).

Let it be noticed and remembered, that the first time Paul uses the title “steward” of himself, he links it with the word *musterion* “mystery”. The fitness of this we shall see in all its fulness when we come to the epistles of the Mystery, Ephesians and Colossians. The Revised Version reads “mystery” instead of “testimony” in 1 Corinthians 2:1, as also does the revised text by Wescott and Hort. In chapters 2 and 3 we have a demonstration of the faithful stewardship of the mysteries of God entrusted to the apostles. The Corinthians were critical of the apostle’s manner of speech saying it was “contemptible” (2 Cor. 10:10) and Paul was exceedingly sensitive to this criticism, so much so, that he reveals that he was with them in fear and much trembling (1 Cor. 2:3). This admission is bounded on either side by a reference to his “speech”.

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom declaring the MYSTERY of God,”

and then goes on to reveal something of the cause of his anxiety. Apparently the Corinthians, like many others, were desirous of having their ears tickled with high sounding phrases, but, said the Apostle, I resolved to limit my message among you, to “Jesus Christ and Him crucified”, even though he knew that by so doing he would arouse their antipathy. “Howbeit,” he continued, “we speak wisdom among them that are perfect ... we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.” In chapter three he returns to this limitation which he had imposed upon himself saying:

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat” (1 Cor. 3:1,2).

The subject matter of Inspired Scripture is so vast that the reader, in order to comprehend with any clearness both the matter and the application of its teaching, naturally and rightly subdivides the material before him, arranging the teaching of the Word under such headings as:

- (1) Doctrinal Truth, e.g. “Justification by faith”.
- (2) Practical Truth, e.g. “Walk worthy of the vocation”.
- (3) Prophetic Truth, e.g. “The coming of the Lord”.
- (4) Church Truth, e.g. “The church which is His Body”.
- (5) Kingdom Truth, e.g. “The kingdom of heaven”.

We can well understand that both those who agree with us and those who do not, may say “Where in this list is DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH? why is *that* omitted?” It has been omitted with intent, for Dispensational Truth *cannot* share with any of these subdivisions, for ALL *Truth is Dispensational*, there is no other, and unless and until doctrine is correctly related with the dispensation which at the moment obtains, such a doctrine will be rendered false. Practice flows out of doctrine. Practice is the fruit of which doctrine is the root. I cannot “walk worthy of the *vocation*” of Ephesians, until I know wherein that vocation consists, and to know that, I must know its dispensational setting, otherwise I shall, as a member of one calling, attempt to put into practice the walk that is worthy of another, and end in confusion.

The bulk of prophetic truth pertains to Israel as a people, to Israel's Messiah, and to the land and kingdom associated with the promises made to Abraham and to David. Until I, as a Gentile, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no "fathers" in the Scriptural sense, see my true dispensational place, I shall be tempted to appropriate prophetic statements to myself, to distort the Scriptures so that where they say "Israel" I shall say "church" (as the headings of some chapters in the prophets of the Authorised Version actually do), and refer to chapters such as Matthew twenty-four and 1 Thessalonians four, or passages in Daniel and the Revelation, as though they all speak of the blessed hope of the church of the *parenthetical dispensation* of the Mystery.

There is no Truth that is not Dispensational

The attitude of many critics is therefore not only misleading but fatal. The cry "ultra-dispensationalism" which apparently is the battle cry of many of the self-styled defenders of the Faith, has really the same effect as the veil, by which the god of this world blinds the eye of the believer, dangling in front of him Scriptures that belong *to another* calling in order that he shall not see the truth *of his own*. That friendly person who says in effect: "Dispensational Truth is just a "bee in the bonnet" of certain teachers, particularly followers of Dr. Bullinger and of Charles H. Welch. We do not object to you entertaining this peculiar idea, providing you keep it to yourself, and soft pedal this aspect of your teaching, allowing us to continue our mixture of Jew, Gentile and Church of God, heavenly places, earth, Jerusalem, body, bride and the like, and to continue in that state of 'bliss where it is folly to be wise'" is but helping to veil the eyes of the believer. It is our conviction, which we hope to demonstrate in these pages, that Dispensational Truth, instead of being the pet theory of a fanatical few, is "the key of knowledge" which tradition, orthodoxy and "churchianity" have hidden from the seeking believer.

Every word needed and unaltered is our claim

One great claim of those whose studies are *guided* and *guarded* by Dispensational Truth is, that under this system of interpretation, and under *this system alone*, every word that is written in

Holy Scripture is seen to be necessary, not one statement needs to be altered, modified or omitted. Jew will always mean Jew, the Israel of God will not mean the church, Gentile will always mean Gentile. The meek that inherit *the earth*, cannot be the same company whose blessings are “in heavenly places”; the Church which is “the Perfect *Man*” (*aner*, male, bridegroom, husband) cannot be “the *Bride* the Lamb’s *wife*”. We therefore re-arrange the list set out on page 8 to show that the different subdivisions of truth are all subdivisions of the one great all-covering principle—Dispensational Truth.

← DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH →				
Doctrinal Truth	Practical Truth	Prophetic Truth	Church Truth	Kingdom Truth
Law and Grace	Calling or walk	Israel or lo-ammi	Body or Bride	K. of God or K. of Heaven

It must be our privilege and our responsibility to consider these items and to show that apart from Dispensational Truth we are always liable to confound things that differ and to affirm as present truth that which has waxed old and is vanishing away.

By *dispensational truth* therefore we mean that particular revelation of God’s will to man during some particular administration or economy, and specially appertaining thereto. When we speak of some teaching or practice as being *undispensational*, we mean that owing to the introduction of a new administration, certain things that obtained under a previous regime have become obsolete. By the term *undispensational* teaching, therefore, we mean that the teaching peculiar to one dispensation has been imported into another and differing dispensation, where the conditions of divine dealing render the practical application of such teaching quite inadmissible.

What do we mean by Doctrinal Truth? Doctrinal truth is concerned with sin, salvation, justification and the like and from one point of view it would seem that such things remain unaltered by changes of dispensation. That this is not so, let Paul testify as he does in the epistle to the Galatians:

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing ... Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:1-4).

While Christ changes not, an undispensational view of the law, or of the imposition of the rite of circumcision, can make the finished work of Christ PROFITLESS and of NONE EFFECT! Who, after this, will say that dispensational truth can be ignored, or opposed with impunity? What a dilemma those are in who have no place for dispensational truth! If dispensational distinctions mean nothing to them, then such are in this awful predicament. Like the Galatians, if they *do not* submit to the rite of circumcision, they must be cut off from His people (Gen. 17:14) and if they *do* they fall from grace, and Christ profits them nothing. They are like the landless fugitive, having no claim to either heaven or earth, kingdom or church. The apostle Paul had no two thoughts about the bearing of dispensational truth in the place of the law and of the gospel. In his epistles the old covenant is called the “letter” that “killeth”, whereas the new covenant is the “spirit” that gives “life”. Yet *both* covenants are of God, and if Scripture is not to be “rightly divided” we must straddle this fence and juggle with the law and grace until the day of doom. The Apostle calls the law “the administration of death” and its glory, something that was to be “done away”. He compares and contrasts the fading glory of the “face of Moses” with the knowledge of the glory of God in the “face of Jesus Christ”. *The law of Moses* is as fully inspired as is *the Gospel of Christ*, yet dispensational truth transfers the believer from the *Truth* that condemns, to the *Truth* that saves, and it is sad to realise that some in their antagonism to what they do not understand are actually assisting the god of this world, who veils the eye of the believer, forcing him to look at Truth that has become obsolete, so that Truth for the time shall neither be seen nor appreciated (2 Cor. 4:3,4). Dispensational truth translates us “from glory to glory” from the *fading* glory of the law, to the *permanent* glory of the gospel. Who then will deny its efficacy and its grace?

Let us take one special feature of the law that is strongly urged upon the believer today; either from one extreme by such as the Seventh Day Adventists, or from another by the Lord’s Day

Observance Society. Dispensational Truth alone puts both in their right place, and in no other way can these contrary claims on our obedience be really set aside. Among the explicit commands of God is the observance of the Sabbath day. It is an integral part of the ten commandments, its observance was not left to private judgement, and disobedience was punished by death.

“Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people” (Exod. 31:14).

“And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day ... and the Lord said, The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp” (Num. 15:32-35).

How do you react to these passages of God’s Word? Should the reader make *the slightest movement* in the direction of the idea, that since the law was given by Moses, grace and truth has been brought in by Jesus Christ, he will be unwittingly advocating the supremacy of Dispensational Truth as a deciding factor and that it is indeed the key of knowledge. If we believe that consequent upon the resurrection of Christ, the first day of the week takes the place of the seventh, then we shall be sheltering under the much vilified protection of Dispensational truth, even though there is no evidence that the Lord’s Day of Revelation 1:10 refers to any day of the week, but much evidence to show that it refers to the great prophetic “Day of the Lord”.

If we deny the validity of dispensational truth, we must admit two things:

- (1) We are guilty of such disobedience that we should have been stoned to death long ago.
- (2) We have no scriptural and logical answer to the questions Why has this penalty not been enforced? or Has God failed as a Law-Giver?

Before leaving this subject, let us return to the verses quoted from Exodus and Numbers, and see for ourselves that the “key” is there waiting for us all the time and easy to be seen had prejudice not blinded our eyes. The words printed in italics constitute the dispensational items which completely and righteously exonerate

all believers *today* from either the obedience to, or the penalty for breaking, this law.

“Speak thou also unto the *Children of Israel*, saying Verily My sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a *sign between Me and you* throughout your generations: that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth *sanctify you*. Ye shall keep the sabbath *therefore*; for it is holy *unto you* ... *It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever*” (Exod. 31:13,14,17).

The wards of this key of knowledge are visible to all: the Children of Israel, the sign between Me and you, the sanctifying of you, the consequence “therefore”, the pointed words “unto you”. No Gentile, called during this day of grace, called during the period of Israel’s dispersion, called during the parenthetical dispensation of the Mystery, called after Acts 28:28, called while Israel are *lo-ammi* “not My people”, can have the remotest connection with these words quoted from Exodus 31 or Numbers 15. Before, therefore, any doctrine of the Scripture can be considered obligatory upon us, or addressed to us, we should seek an answer to the following questions:

- (1) Is the commandment addressed to Israel?
- (2) Is the commandment found in Paul’s epistles?
- (3) If so, is it found in epistles written before Acts 28, while the Jew was still “first”? or
- (4) Is it found only in those epistles written by the Apostle as the “Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles” after the present dispensation came into force (Eph. 3:1)?

When we have arrived at a Scriptural answer to these questions dispensational truth will either open or shut the door, give entrance or forbid access according to whether the command does or does not belong to the present economy.

“To whom, when, where and why” are the wards on this key of all truth. Quite a number of the Lord’s people sweep aside all these questions as unprofitable, and say that all they are interested in is “practice”. These are the people who seem to have a great fondness for “brass tacks” for calling a “spade a spade” the very opposite of these fantastic hair splitters, known by the unworthy title

“Ultra-dispensationalists”. Let us face this matter squarely. Christian practice arises out of Christian doctrine. The Christian doctrine of grace differs from Mosaic doctrine of law, consequently before we can “practise” we must know what is our calling, whether we are under law or under grace, whether we are dispensationally a “wild olive graft contrary to nature” into the olive tree of Israel (Rom. 11), or whether we belong to that newly created “one new man” the other side of the demolished “middle wall of partition” (Eph. 2).

One word employed in the Scriptures to designate “practice” is the word “walk”. This is true under law or under grace, but surely the walk enjoined upon those who were under the law cannot be the same as the walk of those who are under grace, for the full statement of this practical outworking of truth is that all such “walk” must be worthy. Now the word worthy (*axios*) suggests the beam of a balance, a correspondence, an equivalence, and following the exhortation of Ephesians 4:1, the walk enjoined must be “worthy”, it must correspond with the “vocation” or “calling”. We must believe and know Ephesians 1-3 before we can do and follow 4-6. Until a builder sees and studies the plans that have been drawn up and approved, he cannot commence “work”. Should he “saw” wood, “lay” bricks, or execute any other of the processes involved in building before consulting his plans, he would but waste precious time and material. In the same way, a believer who does not know his calling cannot walk “worthy” of it. It is useless to stress Ephesians 4-6 when Ephesians 1-3 is either ignored, misunderstood or denied. If we place ourselves in the Acts of the Apostles, with its *two* baptisms we shall find it impossible implicitly to accept the *one* baptism of Ephesians four. We shall find ourselves attempting to explain away this insistence on “one”. We repeat our contention that when once we accept the all covering authority of dispensational truth we need *all* that is written, just *as* it is written, *to* whom it is written, without alteration, modification or private interpretation.

Practice is the *fruit*, Doctrine is the *root*, the character of both depends upon the tree that has been planted, the soil in which its roots are fed, the climate that decides the growth and produce. In other words both doctrine and practice are governed and decided by the dispensation to which they belong. I have seen date palms

and orange trees growing in the open garden of a friend, but if I imagined that it was mere “ultra-horticulturalism” to tell me that a back garden in a London suburb was “all one and the same” as a vineyard in the South of France, nature would go its own way in spite of all my labour, prayers and so-called “faith”. *I should get no fruit*. Such gardening would have ignored time, place and condition, in other words, it would be undispensational to attempt to grow plants whose habitat is so different from the one I know.

Some objectors to dispensational truth adopt the attitude that so long as we are “sincere” we can afford to ignore all this “hair-splitting”. However, on one occasion I was able to demonstrate the futility of such “sincerity”. I was standing in a bus queue, and a man in front of me made it known that he wanted a bus to X. I said to him in effect, “however sincerely you may *believe*, however *convinced* you may be that all the rest of the queue are wrong and you alone right, you will never arrive at X if you wait here, *there is your bus*, and that is your queue, some fifty yards further along the street”. Happily this particular person did not airily wave my information aside as “mere dispensational hair-splitting”. The fact that he had his return ticket or his fare, the fact that he was a believer in buses, the fact that he sincerely hoped to get to X, all was of nothing worth *while he stood in the wrong queue*. In like manner neither doctrinal nor practical truth come into the picture until dispensational truth adjusts the focus.

What is true of doctrine and practice is equally true of prophecy and its interpretation. The prophecy of Isaiah is concerning Judah and Jerusalem (Isa. 1:1) and the primary interpretation of this prophecy must relate to that people of that city. The application of its teaching when tempered by true dispensational understanding opens its treasures for all believers, but the rule remains unchanged, namely, that while all Scripture is FOR our learning, not all Scripture is TO US or ABOUT US. Callings must be discriminated. It is impossible within the limits of this article to attempt a survey of prophecy, as a whole, we will therefore limit ourselves to the consideration of one important phase of prophetic truth, namely the Second Coming of Christ. Matthew twenty-four is the sequel to early chapters of that same gospel. There Christ is seen as “born King of the Jews”, in Bethlehem, the city of David. Before Him, in fulfilment of Isaiah forty, went John the Baptist. The temptation

in the wilderness reaches its climax in the vision of the kingdom and glory of the world. When the disciples used the expression “the end of the world” (Matt. 24:3) the *sunteleia*, they used a well-known term, found in Exodus 23:16 “the feast of the ingathering”. While all attempts to compute the date of the second coming of the Lord are forbidden, two periods of time are nevertheless given in Matthew 24. The second coming of that prophetic chapter will take place “AFTER the tribulation” (Matt. 24:29, see 21) and DURING the last week of Daniel nine (Matt. 24:15, Dan. 9:27). These items provide a dispensational test that must not be ignored, and effectually prevent us from reading into Matthew 24 the hope of the church of the Mystery.

Again, it is not the teaching of this chapter that all nations will have been *evangelised* before the end comes, but that “*this* gospel of the *kingdom*” shall be preached in all the *oikoumene* (the prophetic earth) for a *witness* unto all nations (Matt. 24:14). Those who accept the Divine rule of dispensational truth, have no need to alter mentally “this gospel of the kingdom” with its miraculous signs, to “the gospel of the grace of God” without miraculous gifts, they do not stretch the limited word *oikoumene* to include the ends of the earth, they do not alter the words “for a witness” to read “unto salvation” or “unto everlasting life”. Dispensational truth rejoices to accept without alteration or demur, every word given by inspiration of God. Can one ask for more? *Can those who deny dispensational truth say as much?*

Romans 15 says of the hope that was before the church during the Acts period, and while Israel were still a people, and while the Jew was still first:

“There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles: in Him shall the Gentiles trust (hope, *elpizo*). Now the God of hope (*elpis*) fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Rom. 15:12,13).

While Isaiah eleven contains a gracious promise, the Millennial conditions there anticipated and shared by the Church during the Acts are not, and cannot be the hope of the church of the Mystery. Again 1 Thessalonians four, with its insistence on “the archangel” links the phase of the second coming with Israel, for Michael the archangel stands for Israel (Dan. 10:21, 12:1,2). In like manner

the second coming of 1 Corinthians 15:52 is related to “the last trump”. The hope of the Mystery, set out in Colossians 3:1-4, “the manifestation in glory” is a fitting climax to those promises that speak of heavenly places, far above all (Eph. 1:20,21) and is a different aspect of that coming that is intended by the words “in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17), and “on the Mount of Olives” (Acts 1:11, Zech. 14:4). Hope in Scripture is either the *realisation* of a *calling*, or the *fulfilment* of a *promise*, and the Church of the Mystery, is entirely disconnected with the promises made unto the fathers (Eph. 2:12) whereas this was the prerogative of Israel (Rom. 9:3-5). Dispensational Truth recognises that Israel is the key to prophetic truth while they are a “people” before God, the promises made to the fathers, the Millennial glories, the Headship and Kingly-Priesthood of Israel must colour the hope set before the believer.

When Israel became *lo-ammi* (not my people) in fulfilment of Hosea 1:9, 3:1-4, Israel the appointed channel of blessing being temporarily removed, God introduced the dispensation of the Mystery, using the apostle Paul as the Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, as the mouthpiece to “make all men see” (Eph. 3:1-14, Col. 1:23-27). We cannot expect to walk worthy of this calling, or to know what is the hope of this calling (Eph. 1:18, 4:1) if we persist in ignoring the distinction that Scripture makes between the purpose of God with Israel as a people, and the purpose of God while Israel are scattered abroad in unbelief — in other words if we persist in ignoring the sovereign rights of Dispensational Truth in the realm of its interpretation of Holy Scripture. What has been said along this line is enough to convince any who will examine the matter without bias, and to multiply examples will not necessarily strengthen the argument, and so there we must leave this aspect of the matter. It might however be, that where the reader will not listen to the arguments we have brought forward, he may feel obliged to listen to the example of his Lord. Consequently, we ask him to turn to the record of the Saviour’s opening ministry, as recorded in Luke four, and see for himself that the Lord recognised dispensational truth.

“And He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias.

And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

And He closed the book and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of them all that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him.

And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (4:16-21).

The passage quoted by the Lord is Isaiah 61:1,2. If we turn to that passage we shall see that the second verse continues "and the day of vengeance of our God". Consequently the Saviour broke off His reading at the first sentence, and the comma found in the Authorised Version of Isaiah 61:2 represents a period of nineteen hundred years at the very least, for the day of vengeance *has not yet come*. Had the Lord continued with the second sentence of this second verse, *He could not* have said "This day is *this* Scripture fulfilled in your ears" but He graciously and gloriously honoured the principle of "Right Division" (2 Timothy 2:15). He accepted the key of interpretation "Dispensational Truth" and reserved the "Day of Vengeance" for His Olivet prophecy (Luke 21:22).

Two important facts emerge from our Lord's use of Isaiah 61.

- (1) Stopping as He did when reading verse 2, He acknowledges the dispensational principle.
- (2) Quoting the remainder in His prophetic reference to His second coming, He showed that while Dispensational Truth divides the truth according to its legitimate time and place, *it never denies* that at the appointed time all must be fulfilled. "That all things which are written may be fulfilled" is only completely realised when dispensational truth is allowed its full force and sway.

While much more could be brought forward from the Scriptures, we believe sufficient Scriptural data has been placed before the reader, to justify, at the least, a suspension of judgement until all the implications of these examples are weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary. The one grand principle of in-

terpretation is that given by Paul to Timothy, namely, "Rightly Divide the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). A principle that distinguishes spheres of blessing, character of calling and the different ways that God has dealt with men since Adam fell, while the purpose of the ages has been unfolded and the stages in the attainment of the goal of Redeeming Love have succeeded one another; in which Patriarchal rule has been succeeded by Law, Kingdom by Church, and all making a perfect and harmonious whole; wherein no discordance can be heard, no contradiction tolerated, no confusion admitted, but where all is seen as the worthy product of Infinite Wisdom, Love and Grace, where all Truth resolves itself into DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH in which, while there may be "differences of administrations" it is "the same Lord" and "the same God which worketh all in all".

Dispensational truth has something deeper and richer than an academic interest, it is essentially

Truth for the Times

If the reader has followed the argument of this article so far, he will have arrived at the conclusion, that each dispensation has its own "body of truth" and that those epistles written by Paul as "The Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" constitute "Truth for the Times". Now, in such a claim there is a challenge. First, it supposes that there can be "truth" in God's Word that is not "for the Times". Secondly, that such a discrimination is proper and Scriptural, and thirdly, that four* epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 2 Timothy) minister truth for the present dispensation, as no other part of Scripture can.

Let us take these three divisions of our subject and examine them separately in the light of all Scripture.

First. Can there be "truth" that is true at one time and not true at another? In one sense, any word that God has said is eternally, unalterably, true. The law given through Moses is as true today as when it was first instituted. Yet, not one of those who read these words has ever kept all those laws, which are true, nor has he any intention of doing so. The law of Moses, as we have already seen,

*Philemon does not treat of the distinctive character of the dispensation of the mystery, its gracious spirit permeates all the epistles by whomsoever written.

contains commands that were not only enjoined upon the people, but accompanied by severe penalties for non-observance. There is a series of commands accompanied by the threat for disobedience, that "He shall be cut off from his people". Such are the rite of circumcision (Gen. 17:14), the eating of leaven during the days of unleavened bread (Exod. 12:15), the keeping of the sabbath (Exod. 31:14), the keeping of the day of atonement (Lev. 23:29), the observance of the passover (Num. 9:13), the purification upon touching a dead body (Num. 19:13,20). Now either these passages are the truth of God, or they are not. We believe that they are truth, the words of Moses being endorsed by the Saviour Himself (Luke 24:27, John 5:46,47). Here therefore are words of truth, recognised as truth by believers, who nevertheless agree that they have not obeyed them, and do not intend to obey them, yet they have not suffered the penalties involved, nor do they expect to. Indeed, as we have already observed, in the self-same Bible that enjoins, with such solemnity, circumcision or the keeping of the Sabbath day, we also read "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing...ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:2 and 4). And again, to the same effect, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Col. 2:16).

How are we to reconcile these, apparently, conflicting statements? You must be circumcised; you must not be circumcised. You must keep the Sabbath day; you should not keep the Sabbath day. You will be cut off if you fail to observe these commandments; you will fall from grace if you do. Unless the whole of the revelation of God is to be reduced to a mass of contradictions, surely there is a key provided that will give an honorable and satisfying solution of the difficulty. There is, and that key is implied in the term *Dispensational Truth*, the principle "Right Division", in other words "truth for the times". We therefore arrive at the next inquiry.

Second. Such a discrimination between one scripture and another is both proper and Scriptural. When the Apostle enjoined Timothy "rightly to divide the word of truth", or when he urged the Philippians to "approve things that are excellent", or, as the margin indicates, to "try the things that differ", he had this prin-

ciple of interpretation in view. When the Apostle distinguishes between Jew and Gentile, between kingdom and church, between earthly promises and heavenly places, between Bride and Body, between the citizenship of the New Jerusalem and the seating together of some "in heavenly places", each portion of Scripture is recognised as "truth", but not every portion referred to is "truth for the times". This principle of discrimination is called "dispensational truth", simply because all these differences are the result of changes in the developing purposes of God. Now,

Third. After Israel had been set aside, as recorded in Acts 28, we find Paul still a prisoner at Rome, but free to receive all who would come to him, and in that condition he remained for two years. From that prison he wrote four epistles, each indelibly bearing the marks of his imprisonment in the body of the epistle. These four epistles are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Subsequently, he wrote the second epistle to Timothy, in which he again refers to the fact and significance of his imprisonment.

"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 youward" (Eph. 3:1,2).

"I am an ambassador in bonds" (Eph. 6:20).

These words make it clear that Paul, as the prisoner, had a special stewardship regarding the Gentiles, and we read further that this stewardship relates to "a mystery" revealed for the first time to men through Paul, and that it "completes" the Word of God (Eph. 3:3-11, Col. 1:23-27). It is of the essence of a mystery that it should be "hid" until the time arrives for it to be revealed, and these scriptures, cited above, show that this mystery was "hid in God", "hid from ages and from generations" but has "now" been made manifest through the exclusive ministry of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

To the believer, brought up in orthodoxy, accustomed to the phrase "the church began at Pentecost", taking to himself as a matter of course the words "we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (Psa. 95:7), the results of the application of "right division" and the somewhat startling claims of "dispensational truth", may seem after all to rest upon the somewhat un-

certain basis of human deduction and inference. It may be that if we can discover that those dispensational changes which subdivide the purpose of the ages, have always been *announced*, and that spiritual deduction only finds its place after, and not before, the announcement has been *made public*, the recognition of the differences that claim attention and which are vital to the full acknowledgement of our calling may be simplified.

In the endeavour to discern the changing dispensations, we may collect together "things that differ", we may observe that one calling is associated with the period "before the foundation of the world", and another with a period "from (or since) the foundation of the world". We may observe that in one calling Christ is "King"; in another He is represented as "Priest after the order of Melchisedec", in another He is denominated "Head over all things to the church which is His body". We may observe that some believers are "to inherit the earth", but that others find their place in the "New Jerusalem", and yet others are blessed with all spiritual blessings "in heavenly places", and that this sphere of blessing is "where Christ sits at the right hand of God". We might moreover bring forward the prevalence of miraculous gifts and the persistence of the hope of Israel, right through the Acts of the Apostles to the last chapter, and compare and contrast this state of affairs with the teaching of the "Prison Epistles". These, and many other studies are a legitimate approach to the study of the Scriptures, and fulfil the injunction "comparing spiritual things with spiritual". In this present study the key word is the word "witness", and our contention is that *every dispensational change is introduced, or accompanied by an accredited witness*. We are not left to our own searchings or deductions, we find witnesses at intervals along the way, who declare in the name of Him that sent them that this or that change has taken place. If this be so, then we should spare no pains to become acquainted with so important a feature in the unfolding of the divine purpose.

The first thing that we must do is to discover who, and what are called "witnesses" in the New Testament and, in order to avoid cumbering ourselves with unwanted material, we shall ignore references to "false witnesses" or those witnesses referred to who have no bearing upon the subject in hand.

- (1) JOHN THE BAPTIST. "The same came for a witness" (John 1:7).
- (2) THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. "I am one that bear witness of Myself" (John 8:18).
 - (a) The Father bears witness of Christ. "The Father that sent Me beareth witness" (John 8:18).
 - (b) The Holy Spirit's witness of Christ. "He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26).
 - (c) The Scriptures bear witness of Christ. "They are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).
- (3) SUPERNATURAL GIFTS AND SIGNS.
 - (a) "The works that I do, bear witness of Me" (John 5:36).
 - (b) To apostles. "God also bearing them witness ... with signs" (Heb. 2:4).
- (4) PETER AND THE TWELVE. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8).
- (5) THE APOSTLE PAUL.
 - (a) Paul, before Acts 28. "His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:15).
 - (b) Paul both before and after Acts 28. "A witness both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear" (Acts 26:16).
 - (c) Paul after Acts 28. "The testimony of our Lord nor of me His prisoner" (2 Tim. 1:8).

It is written of John the Baptist "John did no miracle" (John 10:41) and there is neither sign, wonder nor miracle recorded of the apostle Paul after the change of dispensation which took place at Acts 28. We therefore distribute the witnesses in the New Testament as follows:

- A John the Baptist. No miracle.
- B Christ, and His apostles until Acts 28. Sign, wonder and miracle.
- A Paul the Prisoner. No miracle.

It should be noticed with heart searching seriousness, that each one of the "witnesses" enumerated in the list above, were actually "martyrs". John the Baptist was *beheaded*, the Lord Jesus Christ was *crucified*, Peter was forewarned by the Lord as to the *death* he

should die and spoke of the near approach of his "decease" in his second epistle (2 Pet. 1:13-15), and Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy in view of his approaching death which tradition says, as well as the evidence of the epistle, was by *execution*. They were witnesses in the double sense of the word. It cannot be too strongly emphasised therefore that only in a secondary sense can any one of us today be called "witnesses".

JOHN THE BAPTIST. — "How far was he an eye-witness"?

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto Him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. THIS IS HE OF WHOM I SAID ... and John bare record (*martureo* same word "bear witness" John 1:7), saying I SAW the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon Whom thou shalt SEE the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" (John 1:29-33).

THE TWELVE. — "How far were these eye-witnesses"?

"Wherefore of these men which had COMPANIED with US ALL the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, BEGINNING from the baptism of John, UNTO that same day when He was taken up from us, MUST one be ordained to be a WITNESS with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21,22).

PETER. — "He was seen of Cephas" (1 Cor. 15:5).

PAUL. — "Chosen ... see that Just One and ... hear His voice"
(Acts 22:14).

As we trace the unfolding purpose in the New Testament we observe that at each central epoch, a witness is raised up.

Witnesses for Pentecost and its message are abundant in the early Acts. Even the number "twelve" had to be made up—for had not the Lord spoken of "twelve thrones" that must be occupied by the "twelve apostles"?

With the call and commission of Paul, however, a new witness appears and his advent indicates another dispensational change. He is given a number of titles, "A chosen vessel" being the earliest recorded. Paul was to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel. "Gentiles" occupying the first place even as they do in the prophetic utterance of the

aged Simeon (Luke 2:32). The emphasis upon the Gentiles in these passages, cannot be disassociated from the withdrawal of favour from Israel.

“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing *ye put it from you*, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).

From Acts 22:6-15 we learn more fully the commission given to Paul during his conversion on the road to Damascus:

“For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard” (verse 15),

and referring to this first ministry which ends with the shadow of prison in Acts 20, he summed it up as “testifying (or witnessing) both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

In his defence, the Apostle more than once linked the two sections of his ministry by the word that is translated either “witness” or “testify”.

“As thou hast *testified* of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou *bear witness* also at Rome” (Acts 23:11).

In like manner, Paul’s prison ministry, the ministry that unfolded the new dispensation of the mystery, the ministry that finds its exposition in the “Prison Epistles”, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy, this too is a “witness” or a “testimony”. The first ministry comes to an end in Acts 20, and the new ministry is envisaged. Referring to the prophecies that spoke of “bonds and afflictions” Paul said:

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, TO TESTIFY the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24).

This implies something more than preaching the gospel as an “evangelist”, it includes this, but it gives meaning to the emphasis which is laid on “the grace of God”, for in the Prison Epistles we read that “the dispensation” which had been given to the apostle as “the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles” was “the dispensation of *the grace of God*” (Eph. 3:1,2).

Again, in his defence before Agrippa the apostle spoke of his two-fold ministry, again using the word translated either “witness” or “testimony”.

“I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a WITNESS both of these things *which thou hast seen*, and of those things in the which *I will appear* unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee” (Acts 26:16,17).

The apostle’s prison ministry is called “the testimony (or witness) of our Lord” and of Paul “His prisoner” (2 Tim. 1:8). The special teaching which Timothy was enjoined to commit to faithful men, was a teaching which he had heard of Paul “among many *witnesses*” (2 Tim. 2:2). So, in his first epistle to Timothy, Paul speaks of the great message concerning “One God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all”, he adds (our translation):

“THE TESTIMONY IN ITS OWN PECULIAR SEASONS” (1 Tim. 2:5,6).

Then immediately following this most discriminating claim, he adds:

“Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (1 Tim. 2:7).

The words translated “in due time” in 1 Timothy 2:6 which we have rendered “in its own peculiar seasons”, are the Greek words *idios* and *kairos* in the plural dative. *Idios* means something peculiarly one’s “own”, and is so translated in 1 Timothy 3:4,5,12. A similar phrase, similarly translated in the Authorised Version is found in Titus 1:2,3:

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before agetimes (*pro chronon aionion*); but hath in due times (*kairois idiois*) manifested His word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.”

Here we find it is a “God that cannot lie” which strikes the same note as the interjected words of 1 Timothy 2:7 “I speak the truth in Christ I lie not”, and suggests that this peculiar dispensational claim here “attested” would be strongly “contested”, a fact that most of those associated with *The Berean Expositor* will endorse.

Here also we have a message “committed” to Paul in harmony with a “commandment of God”, which is but another way of saying “whereunto I am ordained” (1 Tim. 2:7).

The revelation of the Mystery and the dispensation of the grace of God, especially committed to Paul the Prisoner with its accompanying Gospel of the grace of God, and its teaching concerning the one Mediator Who gave Himself a ransom for all, as distinct from the more limited reference in Matthew 20:28, which was “for many”; this new ministry was a testimony or a witness that had its *own peculiar season* for its manifestation and announcement. Therefore every fresh unfolding of the dispensations has been accompanied at its inception, with a specially equipped and commissioned witness. Dispensational truth, like all other aspects of truth, can be supported, illustrated and enforced, by comparison, by study and by every other legitimate means, but it is an occasion for thanksgiving to have seen, that its discovery does not depend upon the WIT of man but stands solidly and unassailably upon the WITNESS of God. From the days of John the Baptist until the end of times, each and every dispensational change could be heralded with the words employed by Paul “A testimony in its own peculiar season”.

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