

## W414\_Fullness.mp3

[00:00:01] This is a recording made in the Chapel of the Open book and is number 19 of the series. The form of sound words. In this series, we are taking just an alphabetical index to guide us to pick out some distinctive passages in the testimony of Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. Who is a minister to us. We happen to be Gentiles. And I have in mind, particularly those who are beginning to approach this great subject and those who may be responsible for Bible classes or other meetings who would be glad of a little guidance as far as I am able to give it in presenting this truth. And as I said earlier, if I have to go over the ground that we all know in this chapel, well, we ought to be mighty glad that we do know it and only too glad that others are sharing. But I'm sure to think of what Christ has done for us to think of something, of the glory of his person, to think of the possibility that we have a place in that purpose. We ought to be glad to hear it over and over again, for there is nothing like it in the world outside and no one can give it except God himself. First of all, you will notice on this chart we are here, the foundation of the world. And there are curious words. Katta valo tohuwabohu that all have to come into consideration presently.

[00:01:34] But before we do that. I would like to put this passage in its context. Because every part of the word of God is related to some part. And to plunge right into it sometimes is only to make matters more obscure. So first of all, I go back to the gospel, according to Matthew and the 10th chapter, and I ask you to notice this fact. Matthew the 10th chapter. And when he had called unto him his 12 disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. Now, the names of the 12 apostles. Are these the first Simon who is called Peter and Andrew, his brother. James, the son of Zebedee and John, His brother. Philip and Bartholomew. Thomas and Mathew the publican. James, the son of Alphaeus and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus. Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. Well, there's no doubt as to the 12 Judas drops out. If you remember by reason of his defection and Matthias was appointed. But for the moment, these 12 were appointed when Christ was upon the earth. As he walked the streets of Jerusalem and by the shore of Galilee. Well, you say, Why are you saying all that? Well, of course, some of you know that. I'm going to ask you to look at Ephesians, the fourth chapter. And starting our reading at verse eight, Ephesians four.

[00:03:31] Wherefore he said when he ascended up on high. He knows we're on a different platform now. In Matthew ten, he was here, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief walking this earth. But in Ephesians four he has ascended up on high. He's a conqueror. He led captivity captive. And as the ascended one, he gave gifts unto men, verse 11, and he gave some apostles. Well, are you sure you don't need to have a great deal of intelligence to say, Well, this must be another order of apostles? If Simon and Bartholomew and Thaddeus, who never mentioned again in these parts of the scriptures. They were appointed by the Christ who walked the earth. When they were proclaiming that he was the King. Of Israel. Now the ascended and rejected Christ has given another order of apostles, not to the people of Israel, but to US Gentiles. And it's not so much the kingdom of heaven has drawn nigh. But the church of the one body is being in formation. And it's not merely to be a restored earth or a restored nation of Israel, but it's to be a new heaven and a new earth with a sphere of blessing far above all principality and power. It's right for us then to distinguish things that differ. And if at the outset you say, Oh, I think that's splitting hairs, I don't think it makes any difference.

[00:05:09] Well, if that's the case, we can't go much further. But none of us are going to take that attitude. The ascended Christ gave some apostles and they were given for a special work. And that comes for the first time in the New Testament in this epistle to the Ephesians. Well, now why should the epistle to the Ephesians have something special about it? Well, that's the next thing to discover. If you look at chapter four, verse one, you will find this Apostle Paul has a peculiar title. I, therefore the prisoner of the Lord. Now, he doesn't say it merely once. If you look back at Chapter three, he says it in verse one again, for this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles. So it's just as much a title as an apostle or a prophet or an evangelist. Now everybody is put in prison is not necessarily an apostle or a prophet. It may be there for his own crime and his own sin, but this man was apprehended by the hatred of the Jewish people. He appealed unto Caesar. He was sent to Rome and he was put in prison. And there he remained for about two years or more. But it was overruled by God that in that prison cut off from fellowship with others, he should receive a wonderful revelation as to what God is doing in the interval that's been brought about by the defection and failure of the people of Israel.

[00:06:38] Now you see, when Christ came, when he walked the earth and called Peter and James and John, he limited himself. Because if we'd have gone on reading in that

Matthew the Matthew the 10th chapter, we should have heard him say, go not into the way of the Gentiles or into any city of the Samaritans. Enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Now, do we believe what he said or don't we? What if we say we must believe what he said? Well, then the ministry which is recorded in Matthew, is a limited one, definitely limited by himself. But when Israel failed to respond, as they did, then, this great ministry of salvation is extended. As you remember, the last chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when Paul had an all day conference with the leaders of the Jews, and they still remained unbelieving. He said, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it. And for two years he received all that came in unto him, declaring this wonderful new aspect of truth. Well, now the next thing for us to make sure that every one of us who are listening to this is aware that the Apostle has gone out of his way to explain that there were entrusted to him two distinct ministries.

[00:08:05] When I say distinct, one was in operation while the people of Israel were still here. The other is in operation when the people of Israel are in their blindness. Now, let me remind you the last epistle that Paul wrote while he was a free man is the epistle to the Romans. And that is a basic epistle in many ways. But you will discover that when he was speaking about the gospel, he said these words, I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Well, that's true. Should be today, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. That's true today to the Jew first. That's not true today. It was true when Paul wrote it because the Jew had a special place in the economy of God. And in that same epistle to the Romans, where he said, the Jew first he said to the Gentiles, now you watch out. Don't you be wise in your own conceits. You are only a wild olive, contrary to nature. Graft into the olive tree of Israel. But now we come. When we look at the epistle to the Ephesians, there is no olive tree there with a gentile, just a wild olive. We've got no Jew and no gentile in view at all as distinct but one new company on perfect equality because they're all members of the Body of Christ. So if you come with me to the 20th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you will see that Paul has definitely made it known as a part of the teaching that we should understand that one ministry was coming to an end and another was about to begin.

[00:09:48] And that one that was about to begin was connected with prison. The 20th chapter, we start looking at verse 17. Now, if you know the map of Asia minor, the part that's sticking out like a little bump pointing towards Europe. You will find there is a place called Miletus and it's on the mouth of a river or a mouth of a creek. I liken it to

Southend on Sea in relation to London as though if the Apostle had been coming here, he said, Now you meet me at Southend. I haven't got time to come all the way up to London and back again. I'm on my way to Jerusalem. So it says. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church. And when they were come together, he said unto them. You know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I had been with you at all seasons. All right. In any church today, if the minister stood up and said, now, you know, dear friends, I've been with you for ten years and I remind you and you say 1 or 2 would look at one another and say, do you think he's going to tell us he's leaving? Well, that's natural, isn't it? So you listen, he said, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks.

[00:11:26] Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what I have been doing. And now, verse 22. Now that's a change, isn't it? I'm turning my back on one ministry. I'm facing another. And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem. He wasn't bound with fetters on his ankles or his wrists yet, but he was already the bond slave of Jesus Christ by the fact that the Spirit of God had made it known. Glimpse at Chapter 21, will you? Verse ten. And as we tarry there many days there came down from Judea, a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost. So shall the Jews in Jerusalem bind the man that openeth his girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. Now, when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go to Jerusalem, Then Paul answered What we need to weep and to break my heart.

[00:12:37] For I am ready and to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. You see, this was something extraordinary. They couldn't quite understand it, but the apostle makes it clear that he faced it. And these symbols of binding him with a girdle showed that it was indeed in view this bondage. And we come back to Chapter 20. Verse 22. And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there except this save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me or await me. So he knew at least one thing. There was plenty of trouble waiting for him. Afflictions and were

associated with bonds or imprisonment. But he said, as he said in chapter 21. But none of these things move me neither count of my life, dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy. Now you'll find those words, Finish my course. In the last episode, he wrote Second Timothy Chapter four. I'm not turning to it. He said to Timothy, I have finished my course. Henceforth, a crown. So you see, Nero didn't stop Paul's ministry. God stopped it. And when the time came for Paul to touch the tape, he could have said, Nero, you can do what you like with me.

[00:14:05] You haven't stopped my ministry. I have finished my course here. He says. I'm about to commence it. So here we have a new ministry. He's turned his back on one. He says That's finished. I'm facing another. I'm on my way to Jerusalem. I don't know what's waiting for me except bondage. And sure enough, he was taken prisoner. And then he was sent to Rome. And there he received the epistle to the Ephesians to write. And we've got the prison Ministry of Paul embedded in that one epistle, and in the others that follow just another word or two. And none of these things move. Me neither. Count all 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. And now behold, I know that Ye all among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God shall see my face no more. 48, isn't it? If it doesn't mean that. Why is it written? Well, now let's turn to chapter 26. He's already now a prisoner and he's about to be sent to Rome. But they've had a good many times examining him, and they can't quite find what to do with the man because he's not broken. No laws. He'd done no crime. He'd simply been handed over by the Jews and they wanted to get rid of it.

[00:15:25] So at the end of chapter 25, verse 24 says, and Festus said, King Agrippa and all men which are here present with us, you see this man about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, that's the reigning Caesar I have determined to send him, of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought in force before you, and especially before thee. O King Agrippa, that after examination had I might have somewhat to write for. It seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not with order signify the crimes laid against him. So he stands before a gripper and a Chapter 26 is occupied by his defense. Before Agrippa, he says in verse two, he was happy to stand before King Agrippa because he

said, I know that you are an expert. You know all about these things to do with the Jewish people. He runs over the manner of life he had. There was no fault found with regard to him. And then he comes to this time when on the road to Damascus. Recorded in Chapter nine, he was suddenly held up by a light from heaven and a voice calling to him.

[00:16:52] And he says in verse 15, I said, Who art thou, Lord? He said, I am Jesus. Whom thou persecutest? Now in Acts nine, you don't know what the Lord said to him, because in Acts nine, you're told what Ananias told him. But now for the first time, they're going to read what the Lord actually said to him, because this contains a reference to two ministries. And it wasn't right to make it known until the moment had come. And he said, But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness. Notice the word both. You couldn't use the word both if it only dealing with one thing. Could you? He's dealing with a ministry which was finished and a ministry which is about to begin. And he said, I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen. And for a moment, glimpse back to Chapter 22. Verse 15. For thou shalt be his witness unto thee of all men, of what thou hast seen and heard. And that stops there. At all. So he says both of those things which thou hast seen and of those things in which I will appear. Now that's future, isn't it? So there was an immediate commission to the Apostle Paul, which he fulfilled halfway through the acts of the apostles that came to an end.

[00:18:29] And then the Lord had promised to appear a second time, which he did. And it says of those things in which I will appear unto thee. Delivering thee from the people. That's the people of Israel and from the Gentiles. That's the ones who got him in. In control. Unto whom now I send thee. I'm sending you now to the Gentiles. There are some versions that leave the word now out. But inasmuch as it's the present tense, it must be now whether the words put there or not. If it's there, it's emphatic. If it's not there, it's still future in the sense that I'm now doing you for a future ministry, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles unto Him. Now I send thee to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light. Do you remember, Ephesians, the eyes of his understanding, being enlightened? Do you remember Colossians? Who hath delivered us from the authority of darkness, from the power of Satan unto God that ye may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith

that is in me. So there you have the apostles witness both in these epistles calling himself the prisoner of Jesus Christ for US Gentiles who claims to have received a message for this present interval, this present period.

[00:19:55] And there you have it set out at large in the Acts of the apostles. Well, now what I want to do to place this verse in its right context is to go back to that epistle, to the Ephesians, and look at it a little bit more closely. The first 14 verses. And then I feel I've done the right thing in putting this passage, which is under our consideration in its place. And next time we meet together, we shall have to say, Well, now we've looked at all that we get right down to the meanings of these words. Now the words before the foundation of the world occurred in verse four, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Now, if you will look at these verses. Verses one and two are an introduction. That's very equivalent idea, dear sir. Only he says it very much more fully. And he wishes them grace and peace. It actually starts his epistle with a word blessed in verse three. And do you notice this is asking for nothing? He's asking for nothing. He's thanking God for everything. That's the position this man's got in. He doesn't say, Oh, bless me with many blessings, Lord. He says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us. Are you in that position or would you like to be? Well, there's only one access and one door to it.

[00:21:33] You simply believe what God says. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. But I won't go into details about that before I ask you to notice the general subdivision of these verses. Would you look at verse six? To the praise and the glory of his grace. You noticed that? Now look at the verse 12 that we should be to the praise of his glory. And now look at verse 14. At the end, unto the praise of his glory. You notice that comes three times. Well, that's a little guidance to you and to me. Texas, though he has written a hymn and the first few verses are the first verse, and then he has a chorus to the praise of the glory of his grace. Then he writes another verse and he says unto the praise of his glory. Then he writes a third verse and says unto the praise of his glory. Well, whenever you get a subdivision like that, don't shut your eyes to it. Accept it and say, That's good. Now I can look at each one separately, although it's a three fold cord that makes a wonderful sort of combination, but it's each one has got its own place. Just run your eye down verses three, four, five and six. You won't find a single reference to sin.

[00:22:54] To salvation. To forgiveness. For judgment. It's all going back before the foundation of the world. And you see that the father has made his will. This just has to do with choosing somebody and. Predestinate them to a position. So he says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. And the literal rendering is even more wonderful. Blessed us with every blessing that is spiritual. Every blessing you can think of that is spiritual is included in this, and it's in heavenly places. Now, that is never found anywhere else. That expression except in this one epistle. All we get the word heavenly all over the New Testament. Heavenly? Oh, yes. In the Gospel. According to Matthew, the first book and in the Book of Revelation, the last book, we get the word heavenly, but in the heavenly places or in the heavenlies where Christ sits at the right hand of God is only found in this one epistle. So that's one thing to notice when it says this is according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. That we shall be wholly without blame before him in love and so on. Well, now, when he gets to the end of that passage made accepted in the beloved, that is the will of the Father made before what we call time began. Now he comes into the present, the time, verse seven, in whom we have redemption.

[00:24:43] Now, this is nothing to do with before the foundation of the world. This is now since man came on the earth. Since man sinned. So we call the first section the will. Of the father. We call the second section the work of the son, and we call the third section the witness of the Spirit. So we have alliterated it by the letter w the will, the work and the witness, the will of the Father choosing the work of the Son, redeeming the witness of the spirit sealing. Isn't that a precious line of teaching? If that can belong to you and to me? We noticed that redemption is through his blood. There are some who say, well, they can understand the sacrifices being necessary in the primitive days of the Old Testament, but we don't want it now in these refined days in which we live. But it's here and it's in the epistle to the Colossians. In fact, it's in every part of the Bible, old and new. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission because of the fact that it means that some equivalent has been made that God is just at the same time that he justifies the ungodly. So there we have the redemptive work of Christ. And ultimately, in the closing verses, we have the earnest of the inheritance, the spirit of promise.

[00:26:14] So we have an earnest just now that's a sort of a deposit that God has given us a first fruits just as something to hang on to now until the day comes when we can enter into our possessions fully. So there we have the will of the father. Well, now. The part that we are concerned about for the moment before the foundation of the world doesn't come in the redemption work of Christ, but it comes in the will of the Father, according as He hath chosen us. And when anybody makes a will, he chooses somebody. That's if you're going to leave anything to anybody. And it says he's predestinated these to the adoption. Now, our version says the adoption of children. But there's a great distinction made in the New Testament between children and sons. And you'll have to watch your step by using the authorized version. They're not quite clear. The revised are put it all around properly. The revised version. This is an adoption. That doesn't mean taking somebody out of a family and putting him into a home. This is a high honor because in Romans, the ninth chapter when Paul was going to run through the list of the special features that characterized Israel's position, he said to them, pertain the adoption. That was the first thing. Now, when Moses went before Pharaoh, he said to Pharaoh, God has sent me to say, Let my firstborn go.

[00:27:43] Now, Israel were the first nation on the earth. You know that well enough because all list of them. But he was the one that God chose to have the adoption for the adoption. If I give you the Greek word and you divide it up into its two parts, why Ossetia doesn't mean to be born into a family. It means to be placed as a son. It means that someone has made his will and he selected which one of a number. It might be a cousin. It might be a nephew. In the days when this was written, the Galatians did the same thing. They could appoint one. To be the heir to have the adoption. And God says, I've appointed you poor, outcast Gentiles as you were to have this high honor. Isn't it remarkable that people shrug their shoulders and say, Oh, I'm not concerned about it? Well, we can't make people, but we can only say the door is open. Now, this expression before the foundation of the world occurs three times in the Bible. Now, one of the things that I would like to impress upon you and me is this that we can never hope to understand any part of the teaching of Scripture. If we ignore this statement that Paul has made in the Epistle to the Corinthians. He says, We don't use the words that man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches comparing spiritual with spiritual.

[00:29:05] Now, if I once have brought before my attention that the expression before the foundation of the world comes three times and I don't bother to look at those three. Well, I cannot expect to be led by God, for I'm turning my back upon a most important principle of understanding. Shall we look and see where these three occurrences come? The first occurrence is in John 17, in the prayer, which is recorded just before our Savior finished his work here and ascended to the Father. John The 17th chapter. These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify thy son. That thy son also may glorify thee. So the work is apparently in view of being finished, and the consequent glory is now in view, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. For this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now O Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, When before the world was. But you may say to me. I thought we were looking for the expression before the foundation of the world. So we are.

[00:30:44] But here, first of all, he says, Glorify thou me. With the glory which I had with thee before the world was. But now we come further down in this same wonderful prayer. Verse 24. Father. I will. And as an extraordinary thought here, friends, if you read every page of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, you'll never find that any one person has ever gone into the presence of God and said, I will. Well, I think if you think of your own prayers, have you ever gone into the presence of God and says, Father, I will or you couldn't do it, could you? However boastful you may be. Will you get into that presence? It's thy will be done. Not Father. I will. He is the exception. This son of God could go into the presence of his father and not say Wilt thou. But he says, Father, I will. That marks him off different from every other person that's ever walked this earth. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. Isn't that lovely on the part of Christ? He's not only saying glorify thou me, but he says. Let them all come back with me. I go to prepare a place that where I am. There you may be also. You don't bother. You don't want to know. Well, I can't help you, can I? I can only point it out to you.

[00:32:12] Father, I will. That they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am. That they may behold my glory, Which thou hast given me now. For thou loved me

before the foundation of the world. So Christ himself is associated with that same statement. I was loved, he said before the foundation of the world. The Ephesians were chosen before the foundation of the world, and they were chosen in him. The one that was loved. Now, there's one other passage because I said there were three. That's the first chapter of the first Epistle to Peter. First Peter chapter one. He says in verse 18, forasmuch as ye know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. The Apostle Peter had very much room for silver and gold. He says, more than once. If you have been redeemed with that which you've been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. So Christ as the Lamb of God was foreordained before the foundation of the world. Now let's look again. He was loved before the foundation of the world. And he was without blemish before the foundation of the world. Now, will you turn back to Ephesians chapter one? Verse four, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blemish.

[00:34:17] Our version says without blame. The very thing that said of Christ is said of this people and before him in love. The two words that are said of Christ before the foundation of the world in love and without blemish are now said of you and me, if we believe this truth. Well, you may say to me, I don't think I'm worthy of that, friends. There's nobody worthy of it. This is the gift of God. And in order that you may see that this is addressed not to holy people, but ones who need to be made holy, not to those who are worthy of it, but those who are quite unworthy. Look at Chapter two. Verse 11 and 12. Wherefore remember that ye being in time, past gentiles in the flesh. That's all. You were treated by the Jews as outcasts. Now look at verse 12. That at that time ye were without Christ. The Gentile world had no messiah. They hadn't any prophets to tell them that one was coming to be the Christ, which means the anointed one. The Gentile world was without that the Jewish people. Oh yes. They got their Old Testament, which says unto us, a child is born unto us. A son is given and his name shall be the mighty God.

[00:35:44] Oh, they got that At that time, ye were without Christ. But anybody listening to me at this present moment who says, well, if I speak honestly, I should have to say I'm without Christ. I don't know much about him. All right. Listen. At that time, you were

without Christ being aliens. Aliens. We generally think about the foreigner who comes to this country as an alien. But we are aliens so far as the Commonwealth of Israel are concerned. We can't gatecrash their. We must have a right there. Otherwise we should be turned out as the man who went into the wedding without a wedding garment being aliens. From the Commonwealth or citizenship of Israel and strangers. From the covenants of promise. So we are in a proper peace, aren't we? We are without Christ. We are without a citizenship. We are strangers. We are aliens. We have no covenants, no promises. Having no hope. And without God in the world. It says in verse 11, We were in the flesh. It says in verse 12, We were in the world. And if we were reading the book on psychology, it would put it in more highfalutin language. It would speak of heredity and environment. The flesh is heredity and the world is environment. So they say, if we can only cut through heredity by education or we can cut through the environment by building better houses. What? Oh my.

[00:37:21] What? We are living better than ever. We lived in this country. But are we a better people? No. So here we have then the introduction to this subject. What does it mean? Chosen in him before the foundation of the world? I've tried to show you that it belongs explicitly to Paul's prison ministry and that it's nowhere else said of any redeemed company that are associated with that calling. The only other reference is are Christ himself. Now, to anticipate what we're going to see next time, I want to show you that the word doesn't mean the foundation of the world in the sense of creation, but it means the overthrow of a system. And that takes us right back to Genesis one, verse two. And the earth became without form and void. Now, that's tantalizing, isn't it? Because we've come to the end of our time and I've done the preparation that I thought was necessary. So when we meet together next time, we shall assume the prison ministry of the Apostle Paul, and we shall assume this emphasis upon the before the foundation of the world, we shall have to look and see that there are other passages which say from the foundation that since the time or they're different. And then we shall have to look at these words and look at this diagram. And then I hope that the passage will speak to us with no uncertain sound as to that peculiar character which it occupies in the outworking of the purpose of the age.