

The Berean Expositor

Acts xvii. 10, 11

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

II Tim. ii. 15

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DEAR FELLOW-MEMBERS,

The completion of Volume XI of *The Berean Expositor* calls for deep and earnest gratitude to the Lord for all His enabling grace and providential care during another year's testimony.

The increasing darkness, both in the world and in the professing church, seems but to make the humble witness of our magazine the more necessary.

Our object remains unchanged. We seek to glorify the Lord, and to edify His people, by presenting in its varied aspects a Word of TRUTH RIGHTLY DIVIDED. The peculiar testimony of the Prison Epistles must be our chiefest burden, seeing that this is *the* message for the Dispensation of the Mystery. Neither space, nor the understanding of our calling, will allow us to cater for the needs of all believers.

To all those who appreciate the blessings of dispensational truth, we earnestly commend this little witness.

With an increasing desire to be "found faithful",

Yours in Christ our Hope,

CHARLES H. WELCH
FREDK. P. BRININGER

December, 1921.

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Answers to Correspondents.

pp. 143, 144

No. 25.—*Thought it not robbery to be equal with God* (Phil. ii. 6). J.N.D. translates, “Did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God”, and adds the suggestive footnote, “*I have no doubt all this is in contrast with the first Adam*”.

The R.V. reads, “counted it not a prize”, and gives in the margin “a thing to be grasped”.

Arpagmos, “the act or the object of plunder”, comes from *arpazō* which occurs 13 times in the N.T. and is translated “take by force”, “catch away”, “pluck”, “pull”. *Arpagē* occurs three times, and is rendered “spoiling”, “extortion”, “ravening”.

Adam when tempted through Eve heard the words, “Ye shall be as God”. It was a thing to be grasped at, and Adam was not equal with God, he was of the earth, earthy, mortal and but a living soul.

Is this the teaching of Phil. ii.? Does it teach that far from claiming equality with God, the Lord Jesus never “contemplated such an act of usurpation”?

Let us examine the context. In the first place, why is this profound subject introduced? Was the Deity of Christ in question? No, for the apostle had just said, “look not every man on his OWN things, but every man also on the things of others” (ii. 4). That this is the theme of the passage will be evident by reading on to verse 21 where the answering clause is found, “For all seek their OWN”, unlike Timothy who cared for others. Yet further on the concern of Epaphroditus was not for himself, but because the Philippians had heard that he had been sick. Finally comes the parallel of Phil. iii. where the actual “gains” of the Apostle are not “held as a prey”, but gladly relinquished for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

The whole context demands that equality with God was the *actual possession* of Christ before He became man. If this be not so, all point is gone from the words, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”. If Christ be an example to these Philippians as was Timothy, Epaphroditus and Paul, particularly the latter, then Christ must have given up an actual possession. He Who in the beginning “was God” (John i. 1) had no necessity to grasp at that which was His own. All others of necessity must if they aspire to Divine honours. Satan, Lucifer, Adam, Herod, Antichrist, all grasp at something they desire but which they do not possess. Christ is entirely separated from these. We feel sure that no argument can overthrow the manifest intention of the Apostle as indicated by the theme of these two chapters.

A Doctrine of Demons.
God, the Author of Sin.
p. 173

A contemporary rightly says that the fact that any particular doctrine is taught by demons is of itself sufficient proof that it is untrue. We would therefore earnestly draw the attention of any of our readers who may have inclined to the teaching that God is the author of evil to the following extract from a Spiritualistic book entitled “*Whatever Is, Is Right*”.*

“*Evil* does not exist, evil is good. A *lie* is the truth intrinsically; it holds a lawful place in creation; it is a necessity. *Vice* beautiful in the eyes of the soul. *Virtue* is good and *sin* is good. The woman who came to the well of Sychar was just as pure in spirit before she met Christ, even though she was a harlot, as she was afterwards when she went to live a different life. There’s no difference between Herod the murderer of the babes in Bethlehem, and Christ the Saviour of men. *Murder* is good, and is perfectly natural act. There are *no evil Spirits, no Devil, and no Christ*. Christ and the Devil are both alike.

*For not a path on earth is trod
That does not lead the soul to God.*

No matter how bad that path may be, whether it be the path of the liar or the murderer, it is the path of Divine Ordination and Divine Destiny.”

The closing paragraph should be prayerfully weighed in the balances of the Sanctuary by those who in their zeal to emphasize the Sovereignty of God and the truth that He worked ALL THINGS after the council of His Own Will, have not seen in all its hideousness the logical outcome of this doctrine of demons.

[NOTE: * - Quoted from “After Death – What?” by One of the Laity.
(Garden City Press, Southport).]

The Ministry of Consolation.
The Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures.
p. 174

As one's experiences widen, the burden of sorrow as well as of sin becomes a reality, and the need for comfort as well as conciliation a needed ministry. Sickness, anxiety, and distress arising out of the state of the times call for a word in season. One after another, loved-one or fellow-worker is laid in the grave, and the battle becomes more lonely, and the day more drear. A doctrinal treatise is not necessarily "a word in season to him that is weary", but true lasting consolation can only come from that treasure-house of truth—the Scriptures:--

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

The trial of Job will minister to the tried saint, and inspire patience and hope by seeing *the end of the Lord*. The trial of Abraham's faith and the glorious issue of his trust in the God that quickeneth the dead may be a special word for some in similar anxiety. Whatever the sorrow, patience to endure without murmuring, without rebellion, with undiminished faith will be a prime necessity, and comfort, sympathy and consolation will ever be the greatest need. These two are ministered most fully by the Word of God, "that we through PATIENCE and COMFORT of the Scriptures". These two mutually lead the sorrowing child of God to look beyond the cloud, beyond the grave, beyond earth's pilgrimage; they minister HOPE—"That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have HOPE".

"We sorrow", and here we share the common lot of Adam's race. "We sorrow not as those who have no hope", and here we at once have ministered to our grief the oil of patience and the wine of comfort, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words". Behind the written Word is the Living God of that Word. His Word ministers patience, comfort and hope. He Himself is the "GOD OF PATIENCE AND CONSOLATION THE GOD OF HOPE" (Rom. xv. 5-13). The Scriptures are the channel, God Himself the source. We seek to obey the exhortation, "Comfort one another with these words".

Second Epistle to Timothy.

p. 191

The subject matter of the four chapters of II Timothy may be conveniently ranged around four words, which, as they commence with the same letters are easily remembered.

II Timothy.

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| i. | The A Postle. | The form of sound w ords. |
| ii. | The A Pproved workman. | The rightly divided w ord. |
| iii. | The A Postasy. | The inspired w ord. |
| iv. | The A Ppearing. | The preached w ord. |

Berean Bible Studies.

The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #5. pp. 30, 31

We have noted the various dispensations which have been or will yet be in operation; we now draw attention not so much to the surface distinctions (such as the presence or absence of miraculous gifts), but to those things which are at the very basis of all God's dealings. First we must notice that from dispensation 2 to dispensation 11 (*see* Volume X, page 127) we have the presence and effects of SIN. Coupled with sin we find DEATH. Both are said to REIGN.

In the fifth dispensation (commencing with the exodus), God introduced the principle of LAW, and from Moses to Christ law was in force. The law never saved a man, never justified, never freed, it only condemned, and showed what sin and the creature were. GRACE is the exact opposite to law. It is free unmerited favour bestowed upon the vilest. Grace is said to REIGN; where grace is in operation the reign of sin comes to an end, and law has no place.

There is, however, another principle which must be distinguished from grace, and that is MERCY. This does not hold such blessings as does grace; it operates in different ways, and has other ends in view. There is yet one further principle whereby God deals with sin, and that is JUDGMENT.

It will be found that grace absolutely, and mercy largely, have reference to the elect and the present. Judgment, however, covers all men and relates mostly to the future. By thinking of Judgment merely as the act of condemnation, we have completely missed its scriptural meaning, and failed to give it its place in the *Purpose of the Ages*.

After judgment nothing is left but the second death, beyond which Scripture gives no word to teach that there is anything.

Questions on Course C. Paper No. 5.

1. How, and by whom, did sin enter into the world? What do you understand by the word sin? Give the various names for *sin* as used in the Scriptures (*e.g.*, trespass), and show their distinctive meanings. Collect the references to sin, and sins, also point out their differences.
2. Examine Rom. v. 12-21, show its structure, set out its teaching under two columns: (1) Adam, (2) Christ. Examine in the same way I Cor. xv. 21-28, 42-49, and Rom. viii. 19-21. How do these passages bear upon the purpose of the ages?

3. Go through Romans and Galatians and note every reference to “law”. What do you learn regarding its place in the purpose? Go through Matthew and Acts for the same. Do you note any difference?
4. Can you find *grace* in operation before the coming the Christ? Go through Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, noting every reference to grace. Does grace extend to all men, or to the elect?
5. In what part, and in what connections, is *mercy* mentioned in Romans? Wherein do these passages differ from those in Romans which deal with grace?
6. Go through the book of Judges and note the work of the judge, *e.g.*, ii. 16 “deliver” (same word as “save”, vi. 14). Take the word “judgment”, and write out the passages where it is linked with mercy, deliverance, instruction.
Consider carefully and state the design and effect of punishment in Lev. xxvi. 14-46; Isa. ix. 13; Ezek. xx. 26; Hag. ii. 17; II Cor. xiii. 10; I Tim. i. 20; Rev. ix. 20, 21, xvi. 9-11; Prov. xx. 30; Isa. xxvi. 9; Isa. iv. 4; Dan. iv. 25, 26; Hos. v. 15, vi. 4; Judges x. 15; II Chron. xxxiii. 9-13.
7. Does Rev. xx. teach that all those who stand before the Great White Throne are cast into the lake of fire? Collect parallels to the judgment according to works. Where do you place such a passage as Jer. xxxi. 20? Explain as fully as you can John v. 28, 29.

The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #6. pp. 94, 95

The purpose of the ages may be divided into three spheres, (1) earthly, (2) heavenly, and (3) super-celestial, this last one being the dispensation of the mystery. For our present purpose, however, we can combine (2) and (3), waiting until our studies have advanced sufficiently for us to appreciate the distinction. We find TWO TIME PERIODS.—(1) From, or since the foundation of the world, and (2) Before the foundation of the world.

NOTE.—“Foundation” in these references is the Greek word *katabole*, which means “to cast down”. The verb is so translated in II Cor. iv. 9 and Rev. xii. 10, and in the Septuagint (Greek version of O.T.) it occurs in II Sam. xx. 15; Hag. ii. 22. In all its occurrences “to throw down” is a good rendering. The time referred to may be Gen. i. 2, or at the flood—in either case it should be rendered before or since the “overthrow of the world”.

TWO SPHERES OF OPERATION.—The earth, and the heavens. Both become involved in sin and uncleanness, and both have a future in the redemptive plan.

TWO MINISTRIES.—The first including within its scope a great variety, prophet, saviour, and apostle, in fact, all except the second, viz., the ministry of Paul as Apostle to the Gentiles, and as the prisoner of the Lord.

TWO AGENCIES.—The kingdom, centred in Israel, the church as ministered to by Paul.

TWO GOSPELS.—The gospel of the kingdom, and the gospel of the grace of God.

TWO HOPES.—(1). The *parousia*, the personal coming and presence of Christ on earth, and (2) The “being made manifest with Him in glory”.

To distinguish between these things that differ is essential to a clear understanding of the teaching of the Word of truth.

Questions on Course C. Paper No. 6.

1. Collect all references to “From”, and “Before, the foundation of the world”. Note any peculiarities. Compare with refs. to “Before times eternal” (Before age-times).
2. Give references (and explain them) which show that (1) the earth, (2) the heavens, come within the sphere of redemption. Is it true that the Bible teaches throughout its pages that the believer will “go to heaven”? Prove your answer from the Word. Collect refs. to “inheriting the earth”. Explain Abraham’s connection with the heavenly city (Heb. xi.).
3. Heb. i., ii.; Rom xv.; Acts xx. 17-27, xxvi. 16-18, and Eph. iii. 1-10 speak of various ministries. Consider each passage, and show the respective ministries.
4. What is the scriptural meaning of “The kingdom of heaven”. Does it differ from “The kingdom of God”, “The kingdom of His dear Son”, and “The church”? Does Scripture warrant the belief in a future literal earthly kingdom? Give references to prove your answer. What does “Church” mean in the Bible. Does it always apply to the same thing?
5. What is the meaning of the word “gospel”? How many different gospels are mentioned in the Word? Explain the passages referring to “gospel” in Galatians. State clearly what constitutes the gospel of the kingdom, and what were its accompaniments. Is the following statement true? “There can be no gospel without a crucified and risen Saviour.” Give Scripture for your answer. Explain Mark xvi. 14-20. Note the “shalls”.
6. Trace the word *parousia* (coming) in Matt. xxiv.; I Thess., and I Cor. xv. Note all its accompaniments. What is the hope set forth in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and II Timothy? Who is the Archangel of I Thess. iv.? Who does he represent?

The Purpose of the Ages. Course C. Paper #7.

pp. 142, 143

In considering the *Purpose of the Ages* in its broad outlines we should observe how the carrying out of the purpose is connected with certain lines of development.

GOD.—So far as the purpose of the ages is concerned, apart from the dispensation of the mystery, three items stand out very prominently. (1) A people – Israel; (2) A city – Jerusalem; (3) A King – David typically, Christ essentially.

SATAN.—Satan has or will travest these. He has (1) A people – some of the Gentiles; (2) A city – Babylon; (3) A King – Saul typically, Antichrist essentially.

God's purpose are developed by at least three distinct agencies. (1) ISRAEL. (2) THE GENTILE. (3) THE CHURCH OF GOD. Two great outstanding events prophesied in connection with both Jew, Gentile and Church are the two comings of Christ. Thus the two activities are those of God and the opposing and counterfeiting activity of Satan, both of which have direct reference to Christ. The three agencies likewise are linked most closely where Christ appears.

Questions on Course C. Paper No. 7.

1. (a) Israel – the People. (b) Jerusalem – the City. (c) Christ – the King.
Collect references which link these three with the purpose of the ages.
2. (a) The Gentiles. (b) Babylon. (c) Antichrist.
Collect references which link these three with the purpose of the ages.
3. ISRAEL.—Israel's history may be divided as follows:--
 - (a) Abraham to Moses.
 - (b) Moses to David.
 - (c) David to captivity under Nebuchadnezzar.
 - (d) Captivity to Christ.
 - (e) Christ to setting aside of Israel
 - (f) Re-gathering of Israel.
 - (g) Repentance and blessing.Give the books of the Bible that deal with each of these sections. Point out in each section the most outstanding features, keeping in mind the purpose of the ages.
4. GENTILE.—Where, and in what connection do we first read of Gentiles?
Explain the relation of the Gentile world spiritually before the preaching of the gospel of God by reference to Rom. i. and Acts xvii. How does Rom. i. illuminate the case of the Syro-phenician woman (Matt. xv. 21-28), the command of Matt. x. 5, 6, and the necessity of the reconciliation, Rom. xi. 15 and II Cor. v. 18-20.

What is meant by the “times of the Gentiles”? When did they begin? When do they end? Explain Dan. ii.

5. CHURCH.—Explain the difference between Israel, Gentile and Church. What is a Church? Wherein does the “Church” of I Corinthians differ from that of the Epistle to the Ephesians?

What spheres of blessing, government, etc., will these several companies or churches occupy in the future administration of God’s purpose?

6. Collect and arrange in order the prophecies which followed the first coming of Christ, and which foretell the second coming.

How were the prophecies concerning the first coming fulfilled? Literally or figuratively? How does your answer affect belief in the teaching concerning the second coming.

7. What is the Millennium? What follows it? Does Christ reign at the end of the 1,000 years? When does it finish, if ever?

DEVOTIONAL ARTICLES.

A word fitly spoken.

pp. 15, 16

It is an axiom sanctioned alike by Scripture and popular proverb that *Actions speak louder than words*. Yet while we should ever remember that such is the case, we must not miss the scriptural importance of the spoken word. “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matt. xii. 36). The context shows the *idle* word to be *unfruitful*.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. xii. 34).

“If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (James iii. 2).

James continues with the figure of the small bit in the horse’s mouth, and the small rudder of the great ship. It was sufficient for God to confound the *words* of men at Babel in order to stop their *work*. No work is accomplished without words spoken, written or described. The builder must have plans and specifications; the soldier must have orders; the merchant must give instructions and keep accounts. Let us therefore remember the power of a word.

In the physical world many are dumb simply because they are deaf (*see* Mark vii. 35). In the spiritual world also the same is true. Would we have the “tongue of the learner”? then Isa. l. 4 shews us that such is ours only as we have the “ear to hear as the learned”.

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer” (Psa. xix. 14).

The Lord’s Leading.

pp. 47, 48

While it is the constant exercise and prayer of the Child of God that he may be continually led of the Lord, this is often a very difficult and humbling experience, and many souls are baffled and perplexed by the strangeness of the way. A few thoughts on this important theme may not come amiss.

The Lord guides by the application of His own Word. One can be positive in saying that no one is ever “led” to disobey or contravene the teaching of Scripture. Instead of praying for guidance on many subjects, we should read the answer already given in the Word. For example, the Lord has linked together these two things:--

1. *In all thy ways acknowledge Him.*
2. *And He shall direct thy paths.*

Without any special prayer, or special guidance, this lamp unto our feet will settle the Lord's will for us. We stand at the cross-ways of life. Which is the path for us? This road seems attractive, but it leads in a direction where it will be difficult or impossible to acknowledge the Lord in *all* our ways. *That is the Lord's guidance*; that shuts the door for us. Scriptural examples, as well as individual experience, go to show that the Lord's answers are far more frequently in a negative than in a positive direction.

Take, as an illustration, the case of the apostle Paul and those with him as given in Acts xvi. 6-10. After they had preached the word in Phrygia and Galatia, we find that they were *forbidden* to preach the word in Asia. Here is a negative leading; they were not told where they *were* to preach, but were simply forbidden to preach in that one spot. They arrived on their journey at Mysia, and here it appears they wondered whether it was the Lord's will for them to evangelize Bithynia; "but the Spirit suffered them not." Here again was a negative answer, there was no other course open apparently than to go straight on, so

"passing by Mysia they came down to Troas, and a vision appeared unto Paul in the night.....immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

Here was at last the positive. There is no mystery whatever about the preponderance of negatives in our experience. Just as there is one right way of doing a thing and a hundred wrong ways, so is it with the will of God. And just as there are 99 chances to 1 that we shall adopt the wrong way first, so it is highly probable that we shall attempt to preach in our Asia, or assay to go into our Bithynia instead of going straight from our Galatia to Troas and Macedonia.

The negative answers will grow less in proportion to the nearness of our walk to the Lord, and the knowledge of His will. As we grow in grace we shall sense as it were the right and the wrong, we shall ask less for those things that are not according to His will, we shall seek more to please Him than to please ourselves, and instead of experiencing a whole list of negatives, we shall approach the Divine plan for us more quickly and certainly. Our prayers are answered when the Spirit *forbids* or *suffers us not*, just as surely as when He gives the vision and the assurance of the call.

With what certainty we tread when the positive answer is given: "*immediately* we endeavoured", "*assuredly* gathering", "we came with a *straight* course", and we find the one "whose heart the Lord opened", (Acts xvi. 6-15). It is helpful in this connection to remember the LXX rendering of Prov. iii. 6:--

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall RIGHTLY DIVIDE thy paths."

The Goal of a Ministry.
“That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”
(Col. i. 28).

pp. 63, 64

The apostle, writing about his earlier ministry, said, “I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase”. And again, “As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon”. “Ye are God’s husbandry, Ye are God’s building” (I Cor. iii. 6, 10).

It is evident that beyond the responsibility of sowing true seed, and of laying the true foundation, the apostle looks to God to “give the increase”; and even the work actually performed by him was “according to the grace of God which is given” unto him. There is therefore from this standpoint a holy care-less-ness, a sense of irresponsibility that must ever accompany the labours of one who realizes that God alone gives life and growth and fruit.

That this does not by any means present a complete aspect of ministry the epistles to the Corinthians will abundantly show. How these epistles reveal the heart of this faithful apostle, yearning, fearful, anxious for his children in the faith! What an epistle that written to the Galatians is in this same particular! This other phase of ministry is brought before us in Col. i. 28:--

“Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom: that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

For this the apostle “laboured”, and “stroved”, and had a great “conflict”. It must ever be the same, while truth and the world and the flesh remain unchanged.

One cannot but be anxious at the state of Christian testimony. The signs of the times, while not directly referring to the Church of the One Body, point clearly to the approaching end of the age. The coming of the Lord to the earth, the meeting of the Lord in the air must be anticipated, if by ever so small a space, by the realization of the “hope of glory”;--

“When Christ, Who is our life, shall be manifested, THEN you also shall be manifested with Him IN GLORY” (Col. iii. 4).

As professing Christianity more and more openly leaves the Lord and His truth, as leagues and combines encircle the earth in their deadly embrace, how can we stand by and watch dear children of God dallying with that which they themselves will finally repudiate as an unholy thing? The apostle not only desired that the Corinthians should build upon the One true foundation, but that also what they built would stand the test of the fire of that day.

It is not for us to set out a catalogue of the failures of others, but we would earnestly plead with all who have realized the sacredness of a rightly-divided word of Truth to realize also the sacredness of a rightly-divided Church. Failure to discriminate, in a child of God, is a serious error, doubly so if that child of God is a leader of others. No wonder James said:--

“My brethren, be not many teachers,. Knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment” (James iii. 1).

Look at the prayer which the apostle prayed for that Church which he taught to press on for the prize:--

“And this I pray, that your LOVE may abound more and more in knowledge and in all DISCERNMENT; that ye may try the things that differ; so that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (Phil. i. 9, 10).

The scriptural conception of love here is no mere sentiment, it abounds not merely in affection and kindness and “bowels and mercies”, but in “knowledge” and in all “discernment”, it quickens the perceptions, it makes us more sensitive to that which is *for* and *against* Christ. The discernment vitally influences the future, it is the only safe path of sincerity and inoffensiveness in the day of Christ.

There is a distinct connection between a rightly-divided Word and a discrimination between the *world* and the *Church*, the *flesh* and the *spirit*. It would be better for some not to have learned of “heavenly places in Christ Jesus” if they are not going to “set their mind on things that are above”, and have “no confidence in the flesh”. The days into which we are entering are defined by the Spirit as “perilous times”, and we must not hesitate to “warn” because some will consider that we are “troublers of Israel”. May all unite together to make a clear uncompromising loving testimony to the truth given to us, before the days of our testimony be numbered.

“That He might be just.”

(Rom. iii. 26).

pp. 76 - 79

Unless we had previously given attention to the subject, we should probably follow the usual error of thinking of the gospel first of all in terms of blessing to ourselves. What is the gospel? God’s good news concerning OUR forgiveness, OUR salvation, Christ’s death for OUR redemption—something like this arises to the mind at once; yet though this attitude is natural, it is hardly scriptural. Look at Rom. i. 1-4; there the gospel of God is defined as “concerning His Son”, and nothing beyond “His Son” is mentioned in verses 3 and 4. That is God’s definition of the gospel, its saving power to those who believe is one of its applications—but it is not the first, or most important, feature.

Similarly with the use of “righteousness” and its cognates (“just”, “justify”), whilst it is true that Romans clearly establishes the doctrine of justification by faith, it also as clearly emphasizes the Godward side. Not only does the Scripture reveal God as “the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus”, but, more important still, the gospel is so designed that this blessing can be prefaced by the words, “that *He might be just* and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus” (iii. 26). Particular care is taken that the righteousness of God should not be compromised in any way. Christ has been set forth as a propitiation, not *first* for the remission of sins, but *first* “to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”. “The passing by of the sins that had taken place before” was not without a righteous basis, and the apostle is careful to make it evident that by the proclamation of the gospel God is justified as well as man, as in the past, so in the present, “to declare at this time His righteousness”.

Look again at the argument in Rom. iii. 1-8. Complicated as it may be, one fact stand out clearly, God is just in all His ways. “That Thou mightest be justified” is the aspect of truth we here seek to emphasize. Again note the reasoning:--

“If our righteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous Who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man). Let it not be so, for then *how shall God judge the world?*”

Any system of teaching which reflects upon the righteousness of God touches the very basis of all things. The two following verses expand the thought as follows:--

If the truth of God is really after all furthered by my lie, then I should not be judged as a sinner, for my sin has really contributed towards the fulfillment of God’s purposes, and He is as much implicated in it as I am; why am I judged as a sinner? Why not rather (as some slanderously reported that the apostle taught) take this line, “let us do evil that good may come”?

By the teaching of Rom. iii. neither God nor man can “do evil that good may come” without being involved in unrighteousness. Of those who do such things the apostle said, “Their judgment is just”, and he has already spoken of God Himself being “justified” and overcoming when He is “judged”. A similar case is exhibited in Rom. vii.:--

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Let it not be; nay, I had not known sin, but by the law.....wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good: was then that which is good made death unto me? Let it not be so, but sin, that it might appear sin, working out death in me by that which is good: that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”

Another rendering of this verse may be helpful:--

“That good thing, then, has become death to me? By no means, but sin has; that sin might be manifest, through that good thing producing death to me; so that sin through the commandment might become an exceeding great sinner” (verses 7-13).

“Sin is lawlessness”; “He that committeth sin is of the devil.....in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (I John iii. 4, 8, 10). The line of

argument in Rom. iii. links the believer with God in His attitude towards evil. It was slander upon the apostles to report that they affirmed “let us do evil that good may come”. It is also nothing more nor less than a slander upon the name of God to teach that He adopts the same method. God is not the author of evil. But some may interpose, “The Scripture in at least one place definitely ascribes the creation of evil to God”. That passage is Isa. xlv. 7:--

“I make peace, and create evil:
I the Lord do all these things.”

It is a matter of common knowledge that the Hebrew word *ra*, which is here translated “evil”, may mean either moral evil, or evil in the sense of a judgment, or a calamity. That being the case, the context alone must decide. By observing the simple parallelism of the verse the meaning is clear:--

A		I form light,
B		And created darkness.
A		I make peace,
B		And create evil.

Just as darkness is the antithesis of light, so evil will be the antithesis of peace. If the intention had been to teach that God was the creator of moral evil, the antitheses would have been, “I make righteousness”, or “I make good”. The antithesis however is peace, which is the fruit of righteousness, and therefore evil here must be the inflicted punishment which is the wages or the fruit of sin.

The Lord claims to be the doer of all these things; there is nothing here that is not in line with the teaching of the Word as a whole, but to teach that God is the author or creator of moral evil we cannot help feeling is a “slander”. If evil has been started on its course by God, if it is the work of His hands and according to His will, we might well exclaim with the apostle, “*How then shall God judge the world?*”

God is just, while the justifier of the believer, and God is just while the judge of the unbeliever. He has taken pains to draw our attention to the way both law and gospel “declare His righteousness”; may we eschew any vain and deceitful philosophy which either in actuality or in tendency leads us in any other direction.

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4).

Consecration.

pp. 95, 96

What does the word imply? How far is it Scriptural for a believer to speak of yielding himself, of seeking a second blessing, and of being filled with the Spirit? That it is the blessed privilege of the redeemed and justified to “yield” their members unto God, Rom. vi. declares, and in so far as Rom. vi. is obeyed, true consecration must result.

While not using the expression “a second blessing” exactly as it is intended by those who most frequently employ the term, nevertheless the grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches us to live.....looking (Titus ii. 11). This again must result in consecration. To be “filled with the Spirit” often implies an undispensational position, but the true filling in harmony with Eph. v. 18 results in the practical submission to God’s order as set forth in the rest of the chapter. This too is true consecration.

An old Testament word seems to point the way to a true understanding of the term; the word that is rendered “consecration” in Exod. xxix. 9, 29, 30 is literally “to fill the hand” (*see* verse 9 margin). With what must the hand be filled to satisfy the idea of consecration? Our hands may be filled with service, with gifts, with work, yet we may miss true consecration. Exod. xxix. not only gives us the word “fill the hand”, but it also reveals what shall fill the hand. Aaron during the ceremony of his consecration not only had the blood of a ram applied to his ear, thumb and toe, but also had to do with “a ram of consecration”. This together with a loaf of bread, a cake of oiled bread, and a wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the Lord, is put into his hands—“thou shall put ALL in the hands of Aaron.....for a wave offering”. The connection here between the ram of consecration and the wave offering leads us on to Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, “Ye shall wave the sheaf before the Lord *to be accepted* for you, on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it”. The context shows that the morrow after the Sabbath is that which follows Passover, in other words, it typifies Christ risen from the dead.

Here therefore is the secret of true consecration, the hands filled with all that pertains to the risen Christ. This will solve all problems, and settle all difficulties. Consecration is not a matter of rule, but of newness of life. Let us seek grace to enable us to free our grasp of the things of this world, that in truest consecration we may “fill our hands” with the things of Christ risen, in other words, consecration is expressed for us in Col. iii.

“Set your mind on things above.”

Herewith.
pp. 108 - 110

A curse is alternated with a blessing in Mal. iii. 9, 10:--

“Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts, But ye said, Wherein shall we return?” (verse 7).

The same cry is found in Zech. i. 3. The return of the Lord to His people in blessing hinges upon their return unto Him in repentance and obedience. The return enjoined is not the external return from the captivity of Babylon, but the return in heart to the forsaken covenant. Hence the words that preface the command to return are:--

“Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.”

Brazen and stiff-necked, the people reply, “Wherein shall we return?” This querulous spirit is symptomatic.

“I have loved you, saith the Lord.

Yet ye say, WHEREIN hast thou loved us?” (i. 2).

“A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? If I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.

And ye say, WHEREIN have we despised Thy Name?” (i. 6).

“Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar:

And ye say, WHEREIN have we polluted Thee?” (i. 7).

“Ye have wearied the Lord with your words.

Yet ye say, WHEREIN have we wearied Him?” (ii. 17).

“Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts.

But ye said, WHEREIN shall we return” (iii. 7).

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me.

But ye say, WHEREIN have we robbed Thee?” (iii. 8).

“Your words have been stout against Me, saith the Lord.

Yet ye say, WHAT have we spoken so much against Thee?” (iii. 13).

It would be well to consider the reply of the Lord to these questions, which the reader can do for himself. We come back to the passage with which we started.

The people’s defection is gauged by their attitude toward God, they had robbed God by withholding the “tithes and offerings”. The ninth verse reads in the A.V. “Ye are cursed with a curse”. The *Sopherim* say that they altered the letter M into N (Hebrew), thus making it passive instead of active (*see Companion Bible*). The primitive text reads, “Ye have cursed Me with a curse”; the alteration was made to avoid a supposed irreverence. Disobedience and self-seeking rob God and, awful thought, curse Him! The alternative is comforting—How may we *bless* God? by obedience and loving service.

The word rendered *Wherein* is literally “in what”. God’s answer to all their questions seems contained in the word, “herewith”, literally “in this”.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse and prove Me now HEREWITH, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (iii. 10).

The mere tithe of that already given by the Lord, rendered back in grateful service, would open the flood gates of blessing, and the cup would run over. The locust had been ravaging the crops, the fruit of the vine had been prematurely cast, and the people may have said that to take a tenth even from the failing stocks was wrong, unwise and foolish. God challenges worldly wisdom and fleshly economies. Prove Me now HEREWITH. The devourer shall be rebuked for your sakes, the vine shall not cast her fruit before the time.

Haggai, another prophet of the restoration, has much to say upon these same lines. “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?” He calls upon them to consider their ways, to notice the results of their self-seeking policy.

“Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes” (Hag. i. 6).

The God of the widow’s barrel and cruse is also the God of the leaky purse. Little is much with His blessing, but even blessings may become curses (Mal. ii. 2). The people looked for much, and it came to little. Why? “Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house.” This spirit shuts up heaven. “Therefore the heaven over you is stayed.” Yet did this people but bring the tithes into the storehouse, and think of God’s house instead of their own, the very windows of heaven would open. Not merely a falling dew, but a very flood of blessing. Cease to run to your own houses, run instead to Mine, cease to trust to the arm of flesh, and trust in Me, so seems to run the Divine argument. If Hag. i. contains a parallel with Mal. iii., so also does Hag. ii. Again the people are urged to *Consider*:--

“And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, *from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the Lord*: Since those days were, when one came to a heap of twenty measures, and there were but ten: when one came to the pressfat for to draw out fifty vessels out of the press, there were but twenty. I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands: yet ye turned not to Me, saith the Lord.

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even *from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid*, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: *from this day will I bless you*” (Hag. ii. 15-19).

God’s HEREWITH in Haggai is the laying of the foundation stone of the temple; in Malachi it is the ordinances of His service, in both it is the spirit that puts God first, the Old Testament parallel with Phil. ii., “The mind of Christ”.

Do not we lose by withholding from the Lord? Have we never experienced the purse with holes in it? Shall we not rather seek the spirit of the Lord’s words, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”, knowing full well that our small loss will be

made more than gain, “All these things shall be added unto you”. Are you called to take up more time in the Lord’s service? Prudence, your own plans and the advice of your friends will tell you that you cannot afford it. Remember the Lord’s “Prove me now herewith”. Is there some service opening before you that will take more of your money? *Consider!* Compare the blessed experience of the widow of Zarephath (“the place of refining”) with that of the people addressed by Haggai and Malachi. Let us render to the Lord unstinted service, let us accept His blessed “Herewith”.

“There shall not an hoof be left behind.”

(Exod. x. 26).

“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.”

(Numb. xiv. 29.)

pp. 110, 111

While the reading of these two passages together produces the feeling of a contradiction, that feeling is superficial, for it is an instance of the proverb “Circumstances alter cases”.

The quotation from Exodus refers to Egypt, the quotation from Numbers refers to the wilderness. The first passage stands at the head of a long line of passages, all of which teach in type, prophecy and doctrine the blessed truth, that salvation being by grace through redemption, is thereby indefectible. Of all who are typified by Israel in Egypt under the shelter of the shed blood it is true, “They shall never perish”. Were we concerned to develop the doctrine known as “the final perseverance of the saints”, we could easily fill more space than is at our disposal with passages of scripture which would prove beyond question that those who have once passed from death unto life, can never pass back from life into that death again.

The second passage equally stands at the head of another long line of passages, all of which, in type, prophecy and doctrine, emphasize that over and beyond the blessed fact of an unconditional salvation, is placed a conditional prize or crown or recompence of reward. Again, the passages which speak of present endurance being linked with a future glory, present conflict with a future crown, present denial with the attainment of a future prize, are too numerous for such a short article as this must be.

Together with these passages come the converse, those which speak of the possibility of even Paul himself being *disapproved* (“castaway”, A.V.), and of Moses, that man of God, forfeiting his right of entering the promised land. The believer who has been delivered from the bondage of sin and death cannot be left behind in Egypt—“not a hoof”, but by reason of unfaithfulness, of murmuring, of the worship of self instead of the whole-hearted following of the Lord, many who were thus redeemed from Egypt fell in the wilderness.

That there is nothing new in this line of thought we are well aware. We are but repeating the message of *The Hope and the Prize*, and the articles on *Hebrews*, but we felt a simple word to stir up the mind by way of remembrance might not come amiss in a time when the snares and cares of this evil age are unremittingly pressed upon the believer as he seeks to follow the pilgrim path. “Let no man beguile you of your reward” (Col. ii. 18).

Dispensational Difficulties.

#1. Is the Church of the One Body also the Bride?

(With a Note on the statement that the Church is feminine).

pp. 9 - 11

There are some who are not quite clear as to the distinction which Scripture draws between the Church called before Acts xxviii., and that of the mystery called after Acts xxviii.

The epistle to the Ephesians gives the definition, "the Church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all". This Church is further spoken of in the second chapter as "one new MAN", and Scripture figures are inspired and consistent. A new *man* can never be a *bride*. During the Acts of the Apostles the Church was not the new man, and there the Apostle speaks of it as a betrothed virgin, "I betrothed you to one husband, a chaste virgin to present you to Christ" (II Cor. xi. 2). There is no simile here, it is not "*as* a chaste virgin", as the A.V. reads. The new man is consistently spoken of as the Church which is the Body. The chaste virgin is consistent with the Church which is the Bride; the Church which is the Bride is associated with the New Jerusalem (Rev. xix.), whereas the Church of the One Body is connected with the super-heavenlies "far above all". Some have a difficulty when they come to Eph. v., for there the relationship of husband and wife is very prominent. Chapter v. is a section in the practical portion of the epistle, where the walk of the believer is considered. The section does not stop short at the relationship of husband and wife, but speaks of children and parents, servants and masters.

Believers who are members of the One Body have relationships one with another to observe, and the relationship of husband and wife comes first. Husbands are exhorted to love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church; wives are exhorted to be in subjection to their own husbands as the Church is to Christ; children are exhorted to be obedient; and fathers to tenderness; servants are reminded that in their service they may serve the Lord Christ, and masters are reminded that they have a master in heaven. None of these things, however, can rightly be made to teach or to prove the dispensational position of the Church. The practical exhortations would remain true if the church of Ephesians had been the kingdom of the heavens, or any other company.

Some have been perplexed because they have heard it said that where the A.V. reads "it" in Eph. v. 25, 26, the original reads "her", and have therefore concluded that the church being feminine must be the bride. This method of argument is fallacious. The *word* translated "Church" is feminine, and is therefore followed by a feminine pronoun, but to say that this proves the church to be a female is to betray ignorance of the facts of language. Turn for a moment to modern language. The French have feminine and masculine "words" which are of course accompanied by feminine and masculine articles and pronouns. *La table* is feminine: should we be truthful if we spoke of the table as a female, and referred to it by the pronouns "her" and "she"? *Le livre* is masculine: is a

French book therefore a male, and must we speak of “him” and “his”? The truth is that the “word”, and not the “thing” named, is feminine or masculine; so with the Greek. The same argument that would prove the Church to be feminine would prove the Spirit to be neuter.

Let us look at a few examples of feminine words, *kephalē* is feminine; this word is translated “head” in Eph. i. 22, but this does not in any sense imply that the head of the Church is a female, “and gave HIM (*MASCULINE*) to be HEAD (*feminine*) over all things to the CHURCH (*feminine*) which is His BODY (*neuter*)”. In Eph. ii. 1 we have “trespasses and sins”. “Sins” is feminine; does this imply that only women are guilty of “sins”? In Eph. ii. 3 we read of the “lusts of the flesh”; the word “flesh” is feminine, whether used of male or female. “Wrath” in the same verse is feminine also, so also is “love” in verse 4, and “grace” in verse 7. When Christ said, “I am the true VINE”, the word used is feminine; when the Lord said, “I am the DOOR”, the word again is feminine. The word *graphē* (“Scripture”) is feminine, while the “law” (*nomos*) is masculine.

We will not multiply instances of that which is patent to those having the most casual acquaintance with language. We can only regret that such examples of “a little knowledge” should still be found, as that quoted above. The title of the Church as either the Bride, *or* the Body, has no connection with the etymological or grammatical requirements of the word *ecclesia*, but is a subject of revelation. The question of the use of the “body” in I Corinthians we will deal with in a separate paper.

#2. “The Body” in I Corinthians. pp. 40 - 43

It is our belief that the Church of the One Body is peculiar to the revelation of the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians), and that before the dispensation of the mystery the Church was not the “One Body”. We certainly find references to the body in I Corinthians, and as some of our readers are not clear about the subject we propose to consider it here.

The passage to which reference is made is I Cor. xii. This chapter, together with xiii. and xiv., is “concerning spiritual gifts”. First of all the apostle divides his subject into two distinct sections:--

1. The spiritual gifts emanating from evil sources (xii. 2, 3).
2. The spiritual gifts emanating from the Divine source (xii. 4-11).

Looking at the second part we observe that it is sub-divided into three groups:--

1. There are diversities of gifts, but the same SPIRIT.
2. There are differences of administrations, but the same LORD.
3. There are diversities of operations, but the same GOD (xii. 4-6).

Here we notice that while there are differences, there is also an all-pervading unity. In verses 7-11 the diversity of gifts (No. 1 above) is considered at length. First the manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit withal. Secondly, this manifestation is a “diversity in unity”:

“To one. . . .	is given. . .	the word of wisdom. . .	by the Spirit.
To another. . .	is given. . .	the word of knowledge. .	by the same Spirit.
To another. . .	is given. . .	faith. . .	by the same Spirit.
To another. . .	is given. . .	the gifts of healing. . .	by the one Spirit (Vaticanus).
To another. . .	is given. . .	the working of miracles.	
To another. . .	is given. . .	prophecy.	
To another. . .	is given. . .	the discerning of spirits.	
To another. . .	is given. . .	divers kinds of tongues.	
To another. . .	is given. . .	the interpretation of tongues,	

But ALL these worketh that ONE and the SELF SAME SPIRIT,
dividing to every man severally as He will” (xii. 8-11).

This expansion of the subject is followed by the reference to the body, being introduced by the words *kathaper gar* (“for just as”); the references to the body, therefore, are logically connected with the teaching of the chapter “concerning spiritual gifts”. This is taught by the word “for”. The references to the body are to be taken as an illustration of the diversity in unity of these spiritual gifts. This is taught by the words “just as”. “For just as the body is ONE, and hath MANY members, yet all the members of that body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ” (*Ho Christos*). This is the title of the Lord pre-eminently, yet not exclusively. Any who were *anointed* by God come under that title. The first epistle of John speaks of such:

“And you have an ANOINTING from the holy one, and ye all know it” (*Vaticanus*),
“but the ANOINTING which ye have received of Him abideth in you and ye need not
that any man teach you” (I John ii. 20, 27).

This anointing was evidently something supernatural in its character and effect. Who among us to-day could truthfully say, “we need not that any man teach us”? Those to whom John wrote could be called, like the Corinthians, “the Christ”. In II Cor. i. 21, 22 we read:

“Now He confirming us with you in Christ, and having anointed us, is that God who
also hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts.”

This “confirmation” was by means of numerous gifts:

“Which was *confirmed* to us by those who heard, God also attesting by signs and
wonders and with divers miracles and *distributions* of holy spirit, according to His will”
(Heb. ii. 3, 4).

Here we have the “diversities” of I Cor. xii. The confirmation and the anointing by means of these supernatural gifts have been withdrawn, the seal and the earnest remain. Eph. i. 13, 14, I Cor. i. 5-7, and Mark xvi. 17-20 bear similar testimony to the presence of “gifts”. “The Christ” therefore of I Cor. xii. is NOT THE CHURCH OF THE ONE

BODY (which is characterized by *the absence* of all signs and evidential miracles), but that Church which was composed of supernaturally-gifted believers. The argument of the apostle is, therefore, that the gifts are to be looked upon as so many different members of one body, each gift is necessary to the perfect functioning of the whole, the more ostentatious gifts, such as speaking with tongues, being no more important than the less obtrusive ones. Whatever gift had been given to any individual was to be held and used for the edifying of the whole company.

This unity is the baptism of the one Spirit, Who baptized all these believers into one body (verse 13), and the remaining verses take up the thought of the diversity of gifts and the unity of their origin by a more detailed reference to a human body. Following on therefore from the teaching of verse 12 the apostle says:--

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized in one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, for the body is not one member, but many.”

Many seize upon these words as though they were a revelation of the mystery of the One Body, which had been hidden since the ages. Such have only to read chapter x. 1-4 to see the reference back to Exodus:--

“All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink.”

Returning to I Cor. xii. let us notice the “one body” as the apostle details it. “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?” Here is clearly a resumption of the argument of verses 7-12, “if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it not therefore of the body?” Here, members of the head are introduced, which cannot possibly be true of the Church of the One Body, for the Head of that Body is Christ Himself. The next verse is directed against the spiritual pride of those who possessed some more apparent gift than others, “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?” “but now God hath set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him.” With this verse read verses 27, 28:--

“Now ye are a body of Christ, and members in part, and God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers (these are the members like the eye or the ear), after that miracles, the gift of healings, helps, governments, diversity of tongues.”

Coming back to verse 18 we observe the continuation of the argument, “and if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body”. The argument is pursued even to speaking of “uncomely parts”, which certainly can find no place in “the Church which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all”. Chapter xiii. is the more excellent way, and chapter xiv. resumes the theme of the gifts. Here the apostle dwells upon the useful gifts, and “edifying” is a key word, “forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church” (verse 12).

The endeavour to read in I Cor. xii. that which is declared to be a mystery unrevealed until the imprisonment of Paul robs both sets of teaching of their point and purpose. In Corinthians the Church in connection with the supernatural gifts is likened to A body, the Church of the mystery is spoken of as being dispensationally THE body.

Let us try the things that differ.

#3. The Heavens and the Super-heavens. **pp. 75, 76**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. i. 1).

“And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters, and God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament heaven.”

“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night.....and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven.....” (Gen. i. 6-17).

“The heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Thee” (I Kings viii. 27).

“Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth” (Isa. lxv. 17).

“He.....ascended.....far above all heavens that He might fill all things” (Eph. iv. 10).

“A great high priest who has passed through the heavens” (Heb. iv. 14).

“A high priest made higher than the heavens” (Heb. vii. 26).

“The heavens and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire.....the heavens shall pass away with a great noise.....the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved.....nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet. iii. 7-13).

“The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together” (Rev. vi. 14).

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.....and I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the former heaven and the former earth were gone” (Rev. xx. 11, xxi. 1).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies in Christ.....far above all principality and power” (Eph. i. 3; 20, 21).

The above collection of references hold within them some wondrous teaching. Let us seek to separate the material into groups. Peter in his second epistle speaks of three worlds, as will be seen upon examination:--

1. “*The world that then was*” (II Pet. iii. 6).
2. “*The heavens and the earth which are now*” (iii. 7).
3. “*New heavens and a new earth*” (iii. 13).

This suggests to us that all our material belongs to one or other of these three groups.

1. THE WORLD THAT THEN WAS.—To this belongs Gen. i. 1. Note that it is not said that the earth and the heavens perished, but the “world”. This is indicated in Gen. i. 2, “the earth became without form and void and darkness was on the face of the deep”. References to “the heavens of heavens”, “passing through the heavens”, “higher than the heavens”, take us beyond the present “heaven”, to the “super-heavenlies” at the very right hand of God.

2. THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WHICH ARE NOW.—Vast as is the “expanse” (*raqia*, “thinness”, *sterēoma*, “firmament” Heb. and Greek) containing the sun, moon and stars, it is temporary and destined to pass away. To this present circumscribed heaven belong most of the references in the Old and New Testaments. The kingdom of the heavens will be set up before the new heavens are created. To this heaven belong the heavenly calling of Hebrews, and Abraham’s heavenly city.

Both Peter and John tell us that the present heaven is to pass away. The latter is most arresting in his description. He likens the passing away of the heaven to the sudden release of a stretched out roll of parchment. When the present temporary heaven rolls up and passes away, the real original heaven of Gen. i. 1 will once again come into its place.

3. THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.—To this period belong the blessings of the mystery. The only calling or revelation that has pierced the present temporary heaven and touched that which can be spoken of as eternal is that dispensation of the grace of God which has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies far above all. This shows the unique character of the church of the one body. It is connected both by time and place with that which begins before the present heavens were made and goes on when the present heavens shall be no more.

The church of the mystery is the only link during this age between the time before sin entered and the time when sin shall be no more. All other purposes are “under the heavens”, this one alone places those who are blessed under its terms “above the heavens”. If these things are so, it would be very surprising if the doctrine and practice of this peculiar people were not different from all others.

#4. The Hope of the Church of the Mystery. pp. 125 - 128

If I Thess. iv. be not the hope of the *one body*, it is reasonable that the question should arise, What is the hope of the church of the mystery? A patient study of Scripture will provide a fairly detailed presentation of the hope of Israel, and also the hope of the calling of the church which was formed during the Acts period.

When we approach the question of the hope of the one body an equally full and detailed account of that hope is not given. That however does not indicate that our hope is not to be known or understood. Where the church of the mystery in either doctrine, practice or hope shares with the church of other dispensations, details will be rare. When we consider that *four short epistles* contain the special teaching of the dispensation of the mystery we shall not be surprised to find that practically nothing but essential and peculiar truth finds room therein. Take for example *doctrinal* truth. Sin is interdispensational; it is not the peculiarity of any company or calling, consequently definitions of sin are not included in the Prison Epistles. We have "All Scripture", and can learn from that all that is necessary.

Coming therefore to the question of the HOPE, we observe first of all that there are some features that are common to the hope of all periods. These will not need repetition in the small compass of the Prison Epistles. Let us notice three outstanding features common to all.

1. RESURRECTION.—There can be no need of detailed proof to show that the one grand all-inclusive circle of hope is resurrection. Israel are to be brought up "out of their graves" when the time comes for them to be made "one nation in the land", and the "tabernacle of God to be once more with them (Ezek. xxxvii.). This truth is attested by Paul (Acts xxiv. 21; xxvi. 6, 7; xxviii. 20). The church during the Acts as ministered to by Peter or Paul had their hope only in resurrection (I Pet. i. 3, 4; I Cor. xv.).

2. THE LORD'S PERSONAL PRESENCE.—No student of prophecy can avoid the emphasis placed upon the personal presence of the Lord as the center of the hope of nations or of churches. Peter intimates that until the Lord Jesus returns, there can come no season of refreshing (Acts iii. 19, 21). The Lord Himself in Matt. xxiv. links the end of the age, the conclusion of tribulation and the setting up of the kingdom, with His own *parousia* or personal presence (rendered "coming"). The Thessalonian saints "waited for God's Son from heaven" (I Thess. i. 10). The Corinthians waited for the "revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. i. 7).

3. THE BEMA OR JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.—The Lord, when He sits upon the throne of His glory, shall divided the nations into sheep and goats (Matt. xxv.), and take account of His servants and their use of the talents committed to them. The Corinthian saints were taught that they "must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”.

We shall find that these three features are true of the hope of the one body. These, therefore, while receiving any necessary adjustment will remain in essence the same.

So far we have noticed things which are common. There are distinctions too that are indicated, quite apart from the peculiar hope of the one body. The believer, during the time when the kingdom was in view, hoped “to inherit the EARTH”. During the transitional period of the Acts, the believer hoped to meet the Lord in the AIR, the living to be changed in a moment in the twinkling of the eye. Some, the overcomers, looked for a CITY which hath foundations, the new Jerusalem. ALL, whether to inherit the earth or the heavenly city, must enter by the way of resurrection, and find the center of their hope in the glorified Christ, either as David’s greater Son, or the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

When we turn to the epistles of the mystery, it is to find the few points of *difference*, all else remaining as taught throughout Scripture. Col. iii. 1-4 presupposes that our hope must be via resurrection, and be consummated when with Christ personally, the difference being in the *sphere* of its enjoyment and the *mode* of its attainment, “For ye died and your life is hid with Christ in God: When Christ Who is our life shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him in glory”. Here is (1) Resurrection, and (2) Personal presence, the difference being indicated by the words, “With Him in glory”. This manifestation of the Lord takes place in heaven *before* He descends to the air of the earth, and the hope of the one body is that whenever the moment comes for the Lord to be made manifest “IN GLORY”, then that church will be made manifest with Him.

This indicates that the church of the one body must be removed before the Lord’s return to the earth, and before the hope of I Thess. iv. or I Cor. i. is realized. There is no indication given of any manifest ascent into heaven. Nothing that would be noticed by the outside world, as it must be when the saints are “caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air”. The professing church is in ignorance that “the mystery” has been revealed, or that such a company as “the one body” exists, and when that company has ceased on earth they will not be missed. The church of the one body has never formed a separate sect or denomination. Its inception was a secret. Its annunciation was within the four walls of a Roman prison. Its course through the age has been purely elective in character and has never found a place in the general evangel. Its consummation will equally be unobserved.

What we do know is this, that just prior to the descent of the Lord to the air and to the earth, the complete church of the one body will be “manifested with Him in glory”. Their blessed hope is “the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ”, and for this they “live.....looking”. The references in the prison epistles to *prize, crown, inheritance, and reward* must be studied in order that the earlier teaching concerning the *bema* or judgment seat may be re-adjusted to the altered dispensation.

There is more detail in the Prison Epistles however than we may at first credit. It is locked up in the words “One hope of your calling” and “the hope of His calling”. As the special and peculiar features of our calling are realized so will the conception of our hope be increased. For example, our blessings are “in the superheavenlies” (Eph. i. 3). In *spirit* we are already seated with Christ there “far above all”. What is this but a revelation also of our hope? If our hope be the hope of our *calling*, then when our hope is realized we shall in *fact* as well as by *faith* be found seated with Christ far above all. Each reader must pursue this for himself and as he does so he will be answering the question, what is the hope of the one body?

It is possible that the testimony to the mystery will end as it began. One by one the living members of the one body will fall asleep and the truth will be buried in the tomb of the last believer. How such will be raised and be made manifest in glory we are not told. We do not *understand* how Christ was raised, but we believe it and rejoice in it. This too must be true in connection with our hope. Just as our salvation is a phase of the *one* salvation, and the church a special company of all the redeemed, so our hope is a peculiar phase of one great event and centred in the heavenly glory of our great God and Saviour.

While proving the things that differ we must ever remember the things which underlie and remain unchanged. May we “Live.....looking.....” (Titus ii. 12, 13).

#5. Baptized Believers.

pp. 158 - 160

We occasionally come into touch with companies of believers, who by the prominence which they give to baptism by water refer to themselves as “baptized believers”. Moreover, it is very usual to find those who are members of the one body, and blessed with all spiritual blessings under the dispensation of the mystery, conceding this point, and allowing others to say of them, *they do not believe in baptism*.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Every member of the one body is a “baptized believer”, and in no sense should we allow any to say of us that we do not believe in “baptism”. See the strange argument which is used; while it is conceded by those who practice water baptism that it is a typical rite, nevertheless, we allow those who emphasize *the shadow* to monopolize the claim to baptism, while we who rejoice in *the substance* (the “one baptism”) often appear to undervalue it. It must be one of the objects of our endeavour, for without it the unity of the Spirit is incomplete. “Divers baptisms” are classified as “carnal ordinances” in Heb. ix. 10, which together with the tabernacle and its offerings, was a representative figure (*parabolé*) for the season then present.

If we take the opening verses of Rom. vi. to teach the lesson conveyed by the immersion of the believer in water, we shall be the better able to understand the reality of the one baptism of Eph. iv.:--

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into His death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we should walk in newness of life, for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.”

When we turn to the epistle to the Ephesians, we find that we have been:--

“Made alive together with Christ, and raised together, and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (II. 5, 6).

By consulting Eph. iv. 5 we read that there is ONE baptism. It is nothing less than a piece of self-deception to make ONE read TWO, for if one baptism can mean two, then one *body* may well mean two, one *spirit* two, etc. We know well that when John the Baptist commenced his ministry there was ONE baptism—that of water, and he looked forward to another baptism—that of spirit. During the Acts of the Apostles, there were TWO baptisms, viz., water and spirit, the type and the reality. *The reality has always been the baptism of the spirit*, and when the type has no dispensational place the reality still remains untouched and unchanged.

True baptism united the believer with his Lord in His death and resurrection—a unity typically set forth in the ceremony of water baptism. What therefore can have possessed the mind of believers when we find them reasoning that while the reality is the baptism of the spirit, and the type that of water, the removal of the TYPE removes the REALITY! Is there not true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man, because the earthly type has crumbled to dust? Is there no one sufficient sacrifice because the typical offerings have ceased? What distorted logic is it that dares to say that those believers who, by the Divine sentence, are united by one Spirit to the death, burial, resurrection and present glory of the ascended Lord, are *un-baptized*? Col. ii. 11, 12 speaks emphatically on this point:--

“In whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him by baptism, wherein also ye were raised with Him through the faith of the inworking of God who raised Him out from the dead.”

Doubtless in the days of the apostles and after there were those who would strenuously deny that the Gentiles were “the circumcision” (Phil. iii. 3), simply because they had not submitted to an *external rite*; nevertheless the circumcision without hands was the real thing, while many who boasted of the carnal rite were foreigners to the reality. In the same way, *that* baptism which united the believer with his Lord is independent of the carnal ordinance. When the nature of the dispensation required typical ordinances, God commanded water baptism in association with the real invisible baptism. When the dispensation changed, and believers were “no longer children” and they “put away childish things”, the external ceremony was no longer imposed upon

them, but the reality remained. The one baptism of the one Spirit is the only baptism that figures in the unity of the Spirit.

If other believers are found biting and devouring one another over the shadow, let us see to it that we do not, for a little peace, yield the true place of the substance. Our stand must be that every member of the church of the one body is *ipso facto* a “baptized believer”, and that no amount of emphasis on the type can lift it into the place of the reality.

“The things which are seen are temporal, the things that are not seen are age-abiding” (II Cor. iv. 18).

Studies in Ecclesiastes.

#6. Does your Business Pay? (i. 3). pp. 17 - 20

We have scanned somewhat briefly this wonderful book, and have seen the conclusion of the matter, that apart from the blessed hope of resurrection both Paul and Solomon agree that we are of all men most miserable. We now return to the opening section of the book to look more closely at the method which is adopted, the materials that are used, and the result that is achieved.

The thesis with which Koheleth opens chapter i. 2 and closes chapter xii. 8 is that which he probes and proves throughout the twelve chapters. *All is vanity*, such is the statement. Now for the proof. The preacher puts forth a question:--

“What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?”

It is most important, in order to arrive at a true answer, that we should have a true understanding of the question, which is one concerning profit. The Hebrew word is *yithrohn*, and signifies literally “What is over and above”, that is, the true commercial everyday idea of profit. Labour, which earns enough to supply to-morrow’s strength to labour again, is but an endless circle to be described in the verses that follow, and is profitless however much it may seem to produce. The reader may prove this meaning by the usage of the cognate *yother* which occurs in Ecclesiastes seven times, viz.:--

- | | |
|----------|---|
| ii. 15. | “Why was I then <i>more</i> wise.” |
| vi. 8. | “What hath the wise <i>more</i> than the fool.” |
| vi. 11. | “What is man the <i>better</i> .” |
| vii. 11. | “By it there is <i>profit</i> to them.” |
| vii. 16. | “Neither make thyself <i>over</i> wise.” |
| xii. 9. | “And <i>moreover</i> .” |
| xii. 12. | “And <i>further</i> .” |

The only positive statement is the central reference. In this book of superlative vanity something *is* profitable. What is it?

“Wisdom is good, like an inheritance, and by it there is profit to them that see the sun.....the PROFIT (*yithrohn*) of knowledge is that wisdom giveth LIFE to them that have it” (vii. 11, 12).

Here we are plunged at once into the very heart of the matter. All labour is profitless which does not yield treasure in heaven. Merely to moil and toil for the meat that perisheth, for the clothes that wear out, for the gold that fades, for riches that take wings, is to live the life of a bankrupt though we die wealthier than a *Cræsus*. So to dispose of one’s time, so to arrange one’s labour that some of the seed sown shall be harvested “in that day”, that some of the treasure shall be laid up as a good foundation for the life that is life indeed, even though some of our crops down here are sparse and our bank account low—such labour is not without its “moreover”. From the verse which asks the question

concerning the profitableness of labour (i. 3) until chapter ii. 26, the great subject of investigation is this one of works, sore travail and labour. After the enumeration of the time and seasons (iii. 1-8), which in effect summarizes the whole round of human activity, the question of i. 3 abruptly reappears: "What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?" The insane idolatry of mere accumulation is exposed in the next reference to "profit" (v. 9-12):--

"Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all (or consists in the whole): the King himself is served by the field."

The verses which follow both speak of the failure of silver and of increase to satisfy. The occupant of the humble cottage, were he taught by this book, would never envy the owner of the mansion which overlooks his roof. Can that wealthy man eat more than one meal at a time? wear more than one suit at a time?

"What advantage to the owners thereof saving the LOOKING AT THEM with their eyes?" (v. 11).

In contrast with all the vexations and taxations of the wealthy is the poor man:--

"The sleep of the labouring man is sweet whether he eats little or much."

A plain and frugal supper satisfies his modest desires, and an extra good meal brings no nightmare to haunt his slumbers. Again the question is raised in v. 16, and labour for riches proves to be labour for the wind, and where is the profit? Did not the Lord Jesus Himself take up the teaching of Ecclesiastes when He said:--

"For what is a man profited if he shall *gain* the whole world and *lose* his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26).

Here the truth is enforced by a figure that does not speak merely of accumulating silver or adding field to field, it contemplates the possession of the whole world—yet even then we ask where is the profit? there is none, for the reward which the Lord will give when He comes in the glory of His Father is forfeited. Is not the conclusion of Ecclesiastes' investigation expressed in the words:--

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.....but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"?

The apostle Paul knew full well that the balance-sheet is not to be made up annually—it is an affair of life:--

"For me to live is Christ, and to die GAIN" (Phil. i. 21).

"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.....I count all things but loss.....that I may have Christ for my gain" (Phil. iii. 7, 8).

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content" (Phil. iv. 11).

We return to the opening chapter, and note the observations which follow immediately upon his question. He instances the generations of mankind, the sun, the wind, the rivers. One thing is common to them, a continuous never-ending circle. One generation passeth away and another generation cometh. The sun is no sooner risen than he seems to hasten

along his pathway to complete his circuit. The winds whirl about continually, and return according to their circuit. The rivers run into the sea and return again to their source. "All things are full of weariness" (see xii. 12 for the same word). There is no satisfaction to be found in the things of this life of themselves. What is the eye for but to see? yet "the eye is not satisfied with seeing"! The idea of the endless circle comes out again in i. 9, 10:--

"Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us."

The final statement seems to reach the depths of vanity. "No remembrance" (i. 11). After all the toil, the heart ache, the sleepless nights, the weary struggle, the little petty triumph—oblivion, forgotten! *Ichabod*: where is the glory? One writer remarked that if he had to use two geometrical figures, the one to represent man the other God, he should use a circle for man and a straight horizontal line for God for He alone moves forward, man but treads a never ending mill.

This book has something more cheerful to say even about this life, when we are ready for the lesson (we intend to pause here so that we may all face this Scripture). Here we are in a world of strife, struggle, turmoil. Whether we are officially in a state of Peace or War makes very little difference. Men and women spend their lives in pursuing the unsatisfying round of eating and drinking, buying and selling, losing and gaining, in short, all the items enumerated in iii. 1-8, for what use or purpose? If it ends in the things of this life, it has been a mere circle. If that circle is so big that it embraces "the whole world", yet the Saviour says, "What shall it profit a man?"

My reader, ask yourself the question as before the Lord, DOES MY BUSINESS PAY? Do not consult your pass book, nor speak of your turn-over, do not think of your increasing barns or added acres; where is the profit in the scriptural sense? Does each year find you with an increasing balance stored up "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal?" When you have computed your yield per acre, have you thought of that other harvest? "God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Some commodities are not very saleable. For example, how few *Buy the truth and sell it not*. How many of us are keen to *Redeem the time because the days are evil*? And when we labour with our hands do we have the apostle's injunction in mind, *That we may have to give to him that needeth*?

One word in conclusion. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." With that "one event" vanishes all the "gains" of this life. Oh to realize the value of an everyday appreciation of resurrection ground!

"Your labour is NOT IN VAIN in the Lord."

#7. Sore travail and its exercise (i. 12-15). pp. 53 - 56

After surveying the course of nature and seeing impressed upon the whole of creation the endless circle of objectless activity, Koheleth proceeds to a further detailed investigation. We observed that the opening of verse 3 gave the key to the direction of the search, *What profit?* We shall now observe that verses 12 and 13, which commence a sub-section, likewise provide the key to the matter of the search:--

“I, Koheleth, was King over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith” (Eccles. i. 12, 13).

The search was to be conducted “by wisdom” and it is essential to our appreciation both of the method and of the results of the enquiry, that Koheleth retained that God-given wisdom throughout the investigation. Wisdom is the emphatic word of this section, *e.g.*:--

“To seek and search out by wisdom” (13).

“I have gotten more wisdom.....my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge” (16).

“I gave my heart to know wisdom” (17).

“In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow” (18).

In ii. 3, even in the apparent plunge, “giving myself unto wine”, Koheleth still could say, “Yet acquainting my heart with wisdom”. Further, in ii. 9, the writer asserts, “My wisdom remained with me”. We travel as far as vii. 25 still to hear the words:--

“I applied my heart to know and to search, and to seek out wisdom and the reason of things.”

In the conclusion of the book, the wisdom of Koheleth is mentioned:--

“Moreover because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge” (xii. 9).

Whatever we may think of the personal participation of the writer in the objects of his search, we must not ourselves forget the scriptural emphasis upon the searcher’s wisdom. Moreover, he declares also for our benefit that at the time he pursued this enquiry, he was King. These investigations were not carried out by an inexperienced minor, but one who for the purposes of his kingly office had received a special grant of wisdom. Further, in a king of such wealth, magnificence and sway as that of Solomon, we see one who was able to the fullest extent to sound the depths and scale the heights in his research.

Returning to verse 13, we observe that Solomon gave his heart “to seek and search”. The word “search” (*tur*) is the word used so frequently of the spies in Num. xiii., xiv. It indicates a thorough survey according to the charge given by Moses to the spies (Num. xiii. 18-20) both of the nature of the land itself, its crops and its inhabitants. So Solomon’s search was thorough, it was “by wisdom” and it was the occupation of his

“heart”. The object of this thorough search was “concerning all things which are done under heaven”, which in turn is further described as:--

“This sore travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.”

The object is the things “done” under heaven. Verse 14 tells us that Koheleth had seen all the works that are done under the sun, and they were all vanity and vexation of spirit. It is the same sentiment and the same word, rendered “wrought”, that we read in ii. 17. Among the things “done” we never include the “oppressions” that abound on every hand (iv. 1-3). But to limit our observations within handy compass we note the many things “done” in this practical experiment, as indicated in chapter ii. Each reference is to the same original word:--

“Till I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should *do* under heaven” (3).

“I *made* me gardens and orchards” (5).

“I *made* me pools of water” (6).

“I *gat* me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts” (8).

“Then I looked on all the works that my hands *had wrought* and on the labour that I had laboured *to do*” (11).

“What can the man do that cometh after the King? even that which had already *been done*” (12).

“The work that is *wrought* under the sun is very grievous to me” (17).

Here is an array of doings, the result—“very grievous”. In our “text” the things done are defined as “sore travail”. This is an expression which we meet several times through the book. The question is asked, “What hath man of all his labour?” The answer is:--

“All his days are sorrows, and his travail grief” (ii. 23).

“He giveth (to the sinner) travail (namely) to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God” (ii. 26).

“I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it” (iii. 10).

“There is one alone.....he hath neither child nor brother: yet there is no end of all his labour;this is also vanity yea, it is a sore travail” (iv. 8).

“A dream cometh through the multitude of business (travail)” (v. 3).

“Riches perish by an evil travail” (v. 14).

“The business (travail) that is done upon the earth” (viii. 16).

These references show that the “things done” by the sons of men, those things which constitute “business”, are a “sore travail”. Sorrow and grief, heaping up for another, whether the good before God, or for someone else because one has neither child nor brother, disturbing one’s very sleep so that the daily business demands the activity of the restless brain at night, the transient character of these hard-earned riches, and the baffling mystery of it all—these constitute one of the causes for vanity and vexation of spirit. There is, however, in all these intricacies the redeeming feature of a purpose. This sore travail is given to the sons of men “to be EXERCISED therewith”. So fundamentally true is this, that the same Hebrew word that gives us “travail” gives us “exercise”. This word comes in many passages Scripture, *e.g.*:--

“Before I was *afflicted* I went astray” (Psa. cxix. 67).

“To *humble* thee and to prove thee” (Deut. viii. 2).

This second reference well illustrates the teaching of Ecclesiastes:--

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble (exercise) thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know: that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live.”

This is parallel with the teaching of I Cor. x. 13:--

“God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able: but will with the temptation also make the issue, that ye may be able to bear up under it.”

And again, in Heb. xii. 11:--

“No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless AFTERWARDS it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are *exercised* thereby.”

Oh, the tragedy of unlearned lessons! The trial passed through without being exercised, the suffering endured without result, the heavy stroke without the blessed fruit. God has so ordered the affairs of men that this world shall not yield only joy and gladness; sorrow, vexation and worry at every turn beset the sons of men, not out of caprice or indifference, but that they may be exercised, humbled therewith. And the Christian too passes through sore trials, so that he may learn to lean harder and more completely upon his Lord.

Has the reader been “exercised” thereby? Have you gone on your knees with your trouble to ask that you may not miss its lesson? Have you realized that He who sends the trial makes the issue?

As a conclusion to the opening investigation Koheleth says:--

“That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered” (i. 15).

This conclusion, namely the utter inability of man to “reform” this age, is stated again in viii. 13:--

“Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which He hath made crooked.”

Well may the gloomy Dane say:--

“The world is out of joint. Oh, cursed spite
That ever I was set to put it right.”

The sore travail of the age is clarion-tongued in its call for Christ. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth, waiting for the coming of the Prince of peace. *“I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until He come whose right it is.”* It is for the believer to be spared the fruitless agony of the gospel of reform, and to fret not himself because of evil doers, because of him that bringeth wicked devices to pass, but to roll his burden upon the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.

#8. The search for “that good” (i. 16 - ii. 3). pp. 81 - 83

In the opening verse (i. 13) the Preacher tells us he gave his “heart” to the search concerning the sore travail of men. In the verses that follow, we can see how his heart went out into all the avenues of human suffering, pleasure and experience in his endeavour to discover “what is that good?”

- A1 | I communed with mine own heart.
- B1 | Greatness and wisdom.
- A2 | My heart.
- B2 | Great experience of wisdom and knowledge.
- A3 | I gave my heart.
- B3 | Wisdom, madness, folly, grief, sorrow.
- A4 | I said in mine heart.
- B4 | Mirth, pleasure mad.
- C1 | What doeth it?
- A5 | I sought in mine heart.
- B5 | Wine, folly.
- C2 | What was that good which they should do?

Koheleth had gotten wisdom more than all that had been before him in Jerusalem. His heart also had “great experience of wisdom and knowledge”. He had not only possessed but he had used his gift. The word *experience* is given in the margin “seen much”. It is variously translated in Ecclesiastes, viz., “to see”, “enjoy”, “perceive”, “consider”, “behold”. Nevertheless Koheleth realized the unplumbed depths that surrounded him. So with all his wisdom and experience of it, he gave his heart “to know wisdom and to know madness and folly”. In many points chapter vii. echoes these opening verses. There he shows that his experiences have taught a needful lesson:--

“I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me. That which is far off and exceeding deep who can find it out? I applied mine heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness.”

Here Koheleth indicates that by wisdom some things cannot be fathomed, and this is more positively taught in viii. 16, 17:--

“When I applied mine heart to know wisdom and to see the travail that is done upon the earth, how that one doth not see sleep with his eyes by day or by night. Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man *cannot find out* the work that is done under the sun, because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to show it, yet shall he not be able to find it.”

Again in iii. 10, 11 the sore travail and its legitimate exercise is contrasted with the “far off” and the “exceeding deep” things which wisdom cannot explore:--

“He hath made everything beautiful in its season: also He hath set the age in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”

Revelation alone can make us know the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. What is revealed we know, what is unrevealed all our wisdom will never supply. We shall but make our folly manifest and ultimately be found wresting the scriptures to make them fit our theories. Again in another parallel with the opening section we read:--

“Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight, which He hath made crooked (the vain attempt is seen in every department of life to-day, from theology downwards). In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider that God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man *should find nothing* after him.....neither make thyself over wise” (vii. 13-16).

Solomon, therefore, when he gave his heart to know wisdom and madness and folly, was simply asking to:--

“perceive vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief (or mortification); and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow” (i. 17, 18).

This result he arrives at in ii. 21-23:--

“The man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge and in equity.....all his days are sorrows and his travail grief.”

It is impossible to attain to a knowledge of the world and its ways without experiencing the utter failure of man to save himself or reform the crooked world. Wisdom also fails us to make plain the work that God doeth from the beginning to the end. Faith in His written Word is our only safety and rest. We have already indicated that the word *experience* is the word *enjoy*. “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore look into pleasure.” What was the result of the investigation? “This also is vanity” (ii. 1). His experiment with “mirth” was very thorough. It is set out in detail in the verses that follow. In verse 10 Koheleth says, “I withheld not my heart from any joy (mirth)”.

“*Therefore look into pleasure.*”—This word *pleasure* is rendered “good” twenty-four times in Ecclesiastes, besides “better” and “well”. Koheleth did not “plunge into pleasure” here, but “investigated good”, as he repeats in ii. 3. Here he examines mirth, there he interrogates folly with the same object in view. All that he could say of laughter was that it was mad. In chapter vii. 3, 4, we find (as we have found before) his sober judgment on the matter:--

“Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.”

His question concerning mirth was, “What doeth it?” In what way does it help man upon the road to true peace and lasting joy. Surely the beginning of wisdom is to recognize that we are in an evil age, with corruption in our nature, and condemnation as our legal end. Laughter and mirth are out of place in the presence of such a state. It is like the crackling of thorns under a pot in its transience. Solomon went the whole gamut of experiences, and in verse 3, when he gave himself to wine, he exposed the subtle philosophy of the *Ruba’iyát of ‘Omar Khaiyam*. Chapter vii. answers the “laying hold of folly” by replying “It is good that thou shouldest take hold of (same word) this”, indicating the argument of verses 13-17 already quoted above. No conclusion is arrived at in ii. 3. All we know is that the writer tested these things in turn with one object:--

“Till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven all the days of their life.”

We must examine the process of investigation more thoroughly in another paper.

#9. Life’s true Portion (ii. 4-11). pp. 113 - 116

In this series we are seeking principles. The limitations of space and time prevent us from a closer consideration of connecting details other than a brief survey. Such a survey must be given now of the subject matter of chapter ii. 4-10. The pursuit of the enquiry as to what was “that good for the sons of men which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life” was not conducted as a theoretical speculation, but as a practical experiment. Koheleth’s attention is first described as that which from the days of the flood till the present time has been a past summary of human activity: “I builded, I planted”. Here we see the laying out and equipping of a great establishment. Matthew Henry in his commentary writes:--

“Solomon here, in pursuit of the *summum bonum*, the felicity of man, adjourns out of his study, his library, his laboratory, his council chamber, where he had in vain sought for it, into the park and play house, his garden and his summer house, exchanging the company of philosophers and grave senators for that of the wits and gallants, and the *beaux esprits* of his court, to try if he could find true satisfaction and happiness among them. Here he takes a great step downward from the noble pleasures of intellect to the brutal ones of sense; yet, if he resolve to make a thorough trial, he must knock at this door because here a great part of mankind imagine they have found that which he was in quest for.”

The turning from pure wisdom and abstractions to the concrete erection of buildings and planting of gardens here noticed is founded upon the two phases manifestly indicated

in i. 16, ii. 3, and ii. 4-10. The books of Kings and Chronicles give some idea of Solomon's activities as a builder.

"He built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. Also he built Beth-horon, the upper, and Beth-horon, the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates and bars: and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all the desire of Solomon which he desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion" (II Chron. viii. 4-6).

Koheleth not only built and planted, but he gathered a great retinue of servants and maidens. His possessions in cattle were greater than all that had been before him in Jerusalem. Silver and gold and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces were gathered without stint. Singers, both male and female, and musical instruments of all sorts were not omitted. Here was one who had unlimited scope and unlimited power,

"And whatsoever mine eyes desired, *I kept not from them*, I withheld not my heart from any joy" (Eccles. ii. 10).

Here all men may see ambition and desire gratified and indulged to the utmost bound, and from the record may learn the vanity of their own puny graspings. Here is one who was not an envious spectator of a distant pleasure, nor who merely had a share with others of the good things of this life; here was one who was pivot and center of all the beauty, luxury, refinement and greatness of kingly estate and gratified ambition. While the scheme was in process, Solomon's whole heart had been engaged and satisfied.

"For my heart rejoiced in all my labour, AND THIS WAS MY PORTION" (Eccles. ii. 10).

Here we leave details for principles again, and here we must stop to weigh and consider its meaning. This is the conclusion which Koheleth came to after he had traversed another field of enquiry.

"Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; FOR THAT IS HIS PORTION" (Eccles. iii. 22).

What comes after that no one can say. "For who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" (iii. 22). Yet again in chapter v. 18, 19:--

"Behold that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: FOR IT IS HIS PORTION. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to TAKE HIS PORTION, and to rejoice in his labour; *this* is the gift of God."

Finally in ix. 9, 10:--

"Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for THAT IS THY PORTION in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

These passages come as a revelation from heaven upon the true nature of this present life. We are now here practicing our scales, the public performance is future. We are now perfecting our powers of drawing, the academy picture is future. We do not call our friends around us to hear our scales, neither do we hang in the public gallery our many attempts with chalk and crayon. So with this life. Solomon realized that his portion was in the *doing*, and not in the *result*.

“If what shone afar so grand
Turns to nothing in thine hand,
On again: the virtue lies
In the getting, not the prize.”

This is perhaps pessimistic. Life's lessons need not “turn to nothing”. The “exercise” may yield peaceable fruits of righteousness, the sorrows may accomplish our perfecting. A professor of economics once said to his students, “Live all the time”. His meaning was—Do not set out in life with the idea that you will work hard till you are, say, 50 years of age, and then retire to some nice country house, with well-kept lawns, etc., etc., etc., and enjoy life, for you will do no such thing. “Live all the time.” Think, that little one of yours, for whose “future” you anxiously and wearily toil, whose budding life you hardly know so much are you engrossed with the imaginary youth of the future. If you would learn the lesson of Ecclesiastes, you will put aside that opportunity of extra business, which would add so many more pounds to your reserve of your child's “future”, and you will go and live with the little one for an hour or so; you will then enter into your portion, all the rest is simply vanity and vexation of spirit. Too late the parent wakes up to the fact that in thus slaving and saving he has really robbed his child and himself of their true inheritance. “Live all the time.”

It is quite untrue to think that the conclusion of Ecclesiastes is wicked or sad. Having faced facts and realized what life is, we conjure up no illusions, and chase no mirages. “Live *joyfully* with the wife whom thou lovest” says Koheleth, not live morbidly, morosely, grudgingly. Entertain no false ideas of life, and then life can be a blessed thing. Life is a pilgrimage, a series of halts and moving on again. When we make up our minds to achieve anything for its own sake then we find that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. When we realize that nothing is a goal in itself, but merely a means to an end, we shall not call the time wasted that helped us on another stage of our pilgrimage, even though the moment we achieved some object, it ceases to attract or be of service. So immediately following upon the rejoicing with which Koheleth had engaged in the labours he had planned, we find dissatisfaction and vexation when viewed in themselves and for their own sakes.

“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun” (Eccles. ii. 11).

The labour that ye may be “exercised” therewith is good. The resulting “work” which you produce may be very emptiness. If your heart is in the discipline, all is well, but if your heart is set on the result here in this life, then all is vanity. Even Alexander wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Let us thank God for the portion He

gives us, and remember that ever parallel Psalm lxxiii. Speaking of the seemingly prosperous wicked, Asaph says:--

“I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.....they have more than heart could wish.....they increase in riches.”

Need Asaph have envied such? Ask him as he leaves the sanctuary of God:--

“Surely Thou didst set their feet in slippery places.....Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee.....God is.....my PORTION for ever.”

#10. A time for every purpose – both of God and man. (iii. 1-17). pp. 152 - 155

The remaining verses of chapter ii. (12-26) are divided up into a series of quests and conclusions, arriving at length at the same result as we were outlining in our last paper when referring to ii. 10. While Koheleth quite appreciated the superiority of wisdom over folly, yet the maddening thing was that

“One event happeneth to them all. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool. Therefore I hated life; because the work that is done under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit” (ii. 14-17).

This must be the conclusion if we look for results in this life. Koheleth, however, has something better to tell us of wisdom later on; he says it is “good like an inheritance”, and this does give true “profit”. “Wisdom giveth life”, that is, the life to come.

At the end of chapter iii. Koheleth again considers the “one event”. Here, instead of looking at two classes of men, the wise and the fools, he sees all men comparable with beasts in respect to their end:--“One thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other.....all go unto one place.....” (19, 20). He no longer hates life however, but perceives what is the true “portion”, and is content (iii. 18-22). See also pages 113-116. Death, if viewed as the destroyer of all our works, must fill us with despair, and raise sceptic plaint as to the reason of things, but if death simply ends out term of schooling, then we may look forward to true accomplishment in the life to come and rejoice in the opportunities of this fleeting life while we may.

Another reason why Koheleth hated not only life but all his labour was that he would have to leave it to the man (who may prove the veriest fool) that should be after him. This made his heart despair. Here have I, he says in effect in ii. 21, laboured with wisdom, knowledge, and equity, yet now that my labour is accomplished I am faced with the spectre of human frailty. A few short years, and all my toil will pass to another—what then has been the good of all the planning, the labour, the care, the skill? Then he emerges into the sunlight of his previous conviction:--

“There is nothing better for a man, than he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who can enjoy, WITHOUT HIM?” (ii. 24, 25, Companion Bible).

Chapter iii. opens with the well-known list of times and seasons for every purpose under heaven. There is a real connection with the preceding argument, as the sequel indicates (*see* iii. 9-17).

“To everything there is an appointed time (cf. Ezra x. 14; Neh. ii. 6; Dan. vi. 10) and a fitting time for every purpose under the heaven” (Eccles. iii. 1).

The word “purpose” here indicates something *desired* (*see* II Sam. xxiii. 5), or *delighted in* (Psa. i. 2), or *pleasure* (Eccles. v. 4; xii. 1). It is not the purpose of God that is under consideration, as we are still pursuing the great theme of the book. There is a time to be born, and a time to die, and between these two events the whole round of positive and negative purposes that constitute the daily round are filled in. Planting or plucking up, killing or healing, getting and losing, loving and hating. The twenty-eight items give the sum of human activity, and when it is all summed up, Koheleth says, “What profit?”

If the affairs of men, with their profitless labours, are nevertheless regulated by a fitting time, so also is the work of God; “He hath made everything beautiful in its own time” (iii. 11). What we must learn is that God’s time is not man’s time. *Here* is the time for man’s purposes, but Koheleth says:--

“I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time THERE for every purpose and for every work” (iii. 17).

The *olam*, the inscrutable character and indefinite length of the age, is “set in the heart of man”. The *olam* or age is the “time and season” for every purpose under heaven. God’s purpose, however, goes back before the age, and runs on after it has ended. Man cannot “find out the work that God doeth *from the beginning to the end*” (iii. 11). “I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for the *olam* or age” (iii. 14). God’s work goes on beyond the scope and sphere of man’s work. “Nothing can be put to it nor anything taken from it” (iii. 14). How unlike man’s work, which is spoiled by the “one event” that happeneth to all. Left to other hands and hearts to waste and spoil, soon to be cast into forgetfulness, its very memorial vanished, what a contrast with the work of God. Man slaves for the temporal, God works for the *olam*, the age. The word *olam* or age occurs seven times in Ecclesiastes, as follows:--

Olam.

- A | i. 4. Generation pass, the earth abides.
- B | i. 10. Nothing new under the sun.
- C | ii. 16. No memorial.
- D | iii. 11. Set in their heart of man, to prevent full understanding.
- C | iii. 14, 15. The past foreshadows the future.
- B | ix. 6. No portion under the sun.
- A | xii. 5. The passing generation, the “long” home.

God works in the way He does “that men should fear before Him” (iii. 14). This is the conclusion of the whole matter:--

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

The complexities of this span of time, the inequalities, the time and chance which happen to all, the righteous suffering and the wicked prospering, all these and more make up the *olam* set in the heart of man. The relief that comes to the mind when one learns that a time is THERE when the crooked shall be made straight, when every work shall be brought into judgment, is beyond words. It enables one to obey the injunction, “Fret not thyself because of evildoers.....because of him that bringeth wicked devices to pass” (Psalm xxxvii.). God has a purpose and a work that transcends all our thought, “Wait patiently for Him”. This wholesome scriptural fear is verily a safety-valve in the midst of the baffling problems of Providence, “He that feareth God shall come forth of them all” (vii. 18). “Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days are prolonged” (so that Asaph-like we are tempted to say “I have cleansed my heart in vain: nevertheless what saith the scripture), “Yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God” (viii. 12).

Let us return for a moment to chapter iii. Does it not seem strange at first sight for Koheleth to interpolate between his weighty references to the work of God with regard to the age such things as eating and drinking?

“I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good during his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God” (iii. 12, 13).

Verily it is the gift of God, this strange unearthly peace in the seething strife of this world. No longer like the caged eagle do we beat ourselves against the bars; we know, and in that knowledge of Him we realize that all is well. We can enjoy the “good” of our labour, and thank God for His gift. The endless circle of human experience, after all, is a faint echo of the mighty purpose of the ages.

“That which hath been is now; and that which *is to be* hath already been: and God SEEKETH that which is past” (iii. 15).

How often is this glorious statement of the goal of the ages perverted into a sentence of threatening, “God requireth that which is past”, meaning the sinner’s past life.

“That which IS TO BE, hath already been.”

Revelation restores the lost paradise of Genesis. The new creation brings us back to the state of bliss which obtained before man or Satan fell. The whole work of redemption is to seek the lost and bring it back. “God SEEKETH the past.” Israel’s restoration is spoken of in the language of their past. “I will restore thy judges AS AT FIRST”

(Isa. i. 26). Before the age-times began God was all in all, when the ages shall have reached their consummation God will be all in all.

“That which hath been is now.”

Type and prophecy continually repeat the final truth. One antichrist there shall be, but there are also many antichrists. Even Scripture moves in the greatest of circles, and God Himself stretches out across the ages to bring a ruined world back to Himself. Such were the lessons which Koheleth learned as he contemplated the times and seasons of human activity. May we drink deeply into the spirit of this passage, and though exercised with the sore travail which God gives, be cheered with the joy of faith, which is also the gift of God.

#11. Adam; his relation to the theme (vi. 10). pp. 179 - 184

The reader is expected to weigh and examine the many and varied investigations conducted by *Koheleth*. Just a passing note or so must suffice for the details of the next chapter or two.

Chapter iii. 18.—The marginal rendering of the A.V. and the text of the R.V., together with the suggested version of the *Companion Bible*, show that some difficulty has been experienced in arriving at the true meaning of this verse. The most difficult word to place is that translated “manifest”. One of its most frequent meanings is “to purify”. Parkhurst places this as the primary meaning.

“The commandment of the Lord is *pure*” (Psa. xix. 8).

“To *cleanse* as is wheat from chaff” (Jer. iv. 11, xxiii. 28).

“To *purify*”, as by suffering and trial (Dan. xii. 10).

“*Fuller’s sope*” (Mal. iii. 2).

Isa. i. 25 has been rendered, “I will melt down as with alkaline salt thy dross, and I will remove all thy base metal”. We suggest that the meaning of Eccles. iii. 18 is somewhat as follows:--

“I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might *purify*, *winnow*, *cleanse as by trial* them, and that they might see that, apart from resurrection, the one event levels all to that of the beasts that perish.”

Koheleth evidently did not believe the philosophic conceit so universally believed to-day that man possesses *an immortal soul*; he left that for these more enlightened days. Though wisdom excel folly, the wise man dieth “AS THE FOOL”. Though man bear the image of God, he dieth “AS THE BEAST”. Psa. xlix. bears unequivocal testimony to the truth of Eccles. iii. 18, 21. This is indeed the final thought expressed by Koheleth at the close of his investigations:--

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God Who gave it. Vanity of vanities saith the preacher, all is vanity.”

Death is the final expression of vanity, and that which is associated with it the aggravating factors.

Oppression (iv. 1), all travail and rightness of work (4), the heaping up of riches for whom? (8), pass under review, punctuated at every step by a reflection on that which is good, or that there is nothing better than to accept quietly the limitations of our present position, fret not ourselves because of evil doers, but wait patiently for Him. This we indicate for the student and pass on.

iii. 10 - iv. 16.

A1		iii. 10.	Travail for exercise.		
B1		iii. 11.	Full enquiry baffled.		
C1		iii. 12, 13.	GOOD.		
A2		iii. 14, 15.	God's work – for the age.		
B2		iii. 16-21.	The one event – “as the beast”.		
C2		iii. 22.	NOTHING BETTER.		
A3		iv. 1.	Oppressions and power.		
B3		iv. 2.	The dead and the living.		
C3		iv. 3.	BETTER.		
A4		iv. 4.	Travail and envy.		
B4		iv. 5.	Folly eats own flesh.		
C4		iv. 6.	BETTER.		
A5		iv. 7, 8.	Labour without object.	\	Not
B5		iv. 8.	Sore travail and vanity.	}	a
C5		iv. 9-12.	BETTER.	/	second.
C5		iv. 13.	BETTER.	\	
B5		iv. 14, 15.	Poverty and prison.	}	The second
A5		iv. 16.	Fickleness and vanity.	/	child.

Chapter v. brings us to the sanctuary, and bids us keep our foot, be not rash with our mouth, “For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few”. From this standpoint, as with Asaph (Psa. lxxiii.), the writer can view many distressing prospects with calmness and hope.

“If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province”—play the man, act the citizen, champion the right, raise rebellion, overthrow the tyrant, assert the claims of humanity—so speaks the man of this world, and even the believer who imbibes its wisdom and traditions; such however is vain, the crooked cannot be put straight by such means, “Marvel not at the matter, for He that is higher than the highest regardeth”. What we have to do is to *regard* our foot when we go to the house of God (v. 1), *regard* His commandments (xii. 13), and to remember that “He that *regardeth* Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psa. cxxi. 3, 4), “And there be higher than they”, concludes *Koheleth*. This thought is carried over to vi. 10, where we appear to have reached the heart of the whole book.

Chapter vii., as we have previously pointed out, echoes most of the expressions of chapter ii., iii., and iv., and is in the second half of the book, when question begins to give place to answer. Right there, at the junction of the two parts of the book, is placed the solution of the enigma, *viz.*:-

“What is he who hath been?
Long ago his name was given
And it is perceived what (that name indicates)
It was ADAM; neither may he judge Him that is mightier than he.”

The vanity of this life, all the strange and perplexing dealings of Providence are all traceable back to the nature and fall of man. The NATURE of man as much as the FALL of man.

“The first man Adam was made *a living soul*; the last Adam *a life-giving spirit*. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (I Cor. xv. 45-47).

The answer to this set of difficulties is the answer to Ecclesiastes’ problem, *the resurrection of the dead*. “It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” Sown, not as some think when a person is *buried*, but when he is *born* into the world. For no one sows *dead* seed. The contrast is between the two Adams.

“As in Adam all die (wise as well as fools), so in Christ shall all be made alive (wise as well as fools)” (I Cor. xv. 22).

When once resurrection is believed and seen as the goal of God and the entrance into true life, then we reverse the statement of the vanity of all labour, “forasmuch as ye know that your *labour is not in vain in the Lord*”.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same; in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know (as Ecclesiastes perceived) that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. viii. 18-22).

“By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.....When I would do good evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. v., vi., vii.).

These and such like passages echo and illuminate the discovery of Eccles. vi. 10. The one great pitfall into which most of us fall is revealed in the last sentence of vi. 10. Man, whose name is red earth or mould, “the thing formed by the potter”, let him beware of saying, “Why hast thou made me thus?” We must avoid “judging” the One that is mightier than we are. The book of Job reveals something of this:-

“But how can mortal man be just with God?
If man contend in argument with Him,
Of thousand things he could not answer one
However wise of heart and stout of limb

Who ever braved Him, and prospered?

* * * * *

How then can I (address or) answer Him?

Or choose my words (for argument) with Him?

I could not be induced to make reply

Though just: but I would supplicate my Judge

* * * * *

If I appeal to strength; Lo! He is strong,

And if to justice; who could summon Him?"

(Job ix. - Metrical Version of *Companion Bible*).

The paranomasia of the two words *contend* and *content* may help us to see the Divine lesson. To fight against the divinely appointed hiding of God's work "from the beginning unto the end" leads to contending or judging God. Judging need not mean condemning, it may mean justifying—God requires us to do neither. We are as wrong when we labour to justify His ways with man, as we are when we rebel against His appointments. Better, far better, to obey Him, walk humbly with Him, wait patiently for Him, and trust Him. Who are we to express our conviction that "If God were to do so and so then He would be.....!" Is this asked of us? Have we still failed to learn the humiliating estate of the sons of Adam? Not till resurrection dawns shall we begin "to know even as we are known".

Elihu speaks in harmony with this, when he said to Job:--

"But surely, thou hast spoken in mine ears,

And I have heard a voice of words like these:

'A man without transgression, pure am I:

Yea, I am clean, without iniquity.

He is against me, seeking grounds of strife,

That He may count me as His enemy,

My feet He setteth fast within the stocks,

And taketh observation of my ways.'

Behold, thou art not just: I answer thee:

HOW GREAT IS GOD COMPARED WITH MORTAL MAN?

Why then 'gainst Him didst thou dare make complaint,

That by no word of His He answ'reth thee?"

(Job xxxiii. 8-13. - Metrical Version of *Companion Bible*).

Job, afflicted by a discipline the causes of which were hidden from his eyes, contends with God, and when the Lord does speak to him, He says to Job:--

"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? *he that reproveth God*, let him answer it" (Job xl. 2).

What a title for Job, "He that REPROVETH God"! His only answer is, "Behold I am vile".

"Then answered Job, and to Jehovah said:--

I know, I know, that Thou canst all things do

[Thou askedst] (xxxviii. 3; xl. 2).

'Who is this that counsel hides,

And darkens all because of knowledge void'?

'tis I! I uttered things I could not know';

Things far too wonderful, beyond my ken.
Hear now I pray thee: let me speak this once.
[Thou sadist (xl. 2)]:--
' 'tis I who ask thee: Answer me.'
I heard Thee with the hearing of the ear,
But now mine eye hath seen Thee, I abhor
[Myself]. In dust and ashes I repent."
(Job xliii. 1-6. - Metrical Version of *Companion Bible*).

A modern example of this skeptical criticism, the product of failure to discern the plan of the ages, is that of T. Hardy:--

"I have finished another year" said God,
"In grey, green, white and brown;
I have strewn the leaf upon the sod,
Sealed up the work within the clod,
And let the last sun down."
"AND WHAT'S THE GOOD OF IT?" I said.

While the age is set in the heart of man, and he is prevented from knowing what God doeth from the beginning unto the end, he only hears with the ear; he knows in part. To jump to conclusions, to construct theories, to attempt to pass the limits of revelation, is to be made ashamed of our words when we "see Him". Far better to heed the teaching of *Koheleth*, and fill our humble sphere with contentment. Does not the apostle, when writing to the Thessalonians, take the same line? They had been shaken in mind concerning the Day of the Lord. Paul instructs them concerning such deep things as the manifestation of the Man of Sin, but does not leave them until, like *Koheleth*, he comes down to everyday life, and says:--

"We command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with QUIETNESS they WORK, and EAT their own bread" (II Thess. iii. 12).

What difference is there between these words and those of Ecclesiastes?

It is because of the conclusion arrived at in vi. 10, that *Koheleth* could view the crooked things, and the oppressions, without being "astonished at the purpose".

"Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty:
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters,
Or in things too high for me.
Surely I have behaved and silenced myself,
As a child that is weaned of his mother:
My soul is even as a weaned child.
Let Israel hope in the Lord,
From henceforth and for ever" (Psa. cxxxi.).

Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth.

#31. The Child of Promise.

pp. 5 - 9

As early as the time recorded in Gen. xv. Abraham learned that God would give him a son, and that his heir should not be “this Eliezer of Damascus”. When the Lord bade him look toward heaven and consider the multitude of the stars, saying “so shall thy seed be”, Abraham believed. Chapter xvi. however opens with the words:--

“Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, bare him no children; and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.”

This maid was given to Abram by his wife in accordance with the law of the time (recorded in Code of Khammurabi), and the birth of Ishmael was the result. Abram was eighty-six years of age when Ishmael was born. Thirteen more years passed and then came the word, “I am the Almighty God, walk before Me, and be thou perfect”. God then renews the covenant with Abram, “thou shalt be a father of many nations”, and changes his name from Abram to Abraham, “father of a great multitude”. Then comes circumcision, the sign and the seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom. iv.). God can now reveal the next step to Abraham:--

“As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah (Princess) shall her name be, and I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: Yea, I will bless her, and she shall become nations; Kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face and LAUGHED.”

When Sarai overheard the words of the angel,

“I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son” (xviii. 10).

we read, “therefore Sarah LAUGHED”. Both Abraham and Sarah laughed—the one in the joy of faith, the other in the derision of unbelief. Responding to the laugh of faith, the Lord continued to Abraham,

“Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name LAUGHTER (Isaac).”

In reply to the laugh of unbelief come the words:--

“Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

Three important dispensational principles are disclosed to us by this passage:--

1. The nature of PROMISE.
2. The factor of TIME.
3. The fact of RESURRECTION.

The nature of Promise.

One of Abraham's titles is, "he that had the promises" (Heb. vii. 6, xi. 17). The land of Canaan in which Abraham sojourned is also called "the land of promise" (Heb. xi. 9). Isaac and Jacob who dwelt with him there are said to be "heirs with him of the same promise". Both the epistle to the Galatians and that to the Romans lay great emphasis upon the nature of God's promise. Let us notice what is attached to the promise:--

"That we might receive the promise through.....FAITH" (Gal. iii. 14).

"The covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the LAW, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect, for if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise" (Gal. iii. 17, 18).

Here the nature of the promise is shewn by its relation to law and faith. Turning to Rom. iv. we shall increase our understanding of the nature of the promise, and also learn more fully the strength of Abraham's faith. The first reference echoes Gal. iii.:--

"For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the LAW, but through the righteousness of FAITH, for if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.....therefore it is of FAITH that it might be by GRACE, to the end the promise might be SURE to all the seed" (Rom. iv. 13, 14).

Notice the teaching; it is by faith, by grace, that it might be SURE. Abraham and Sarah believed the promise (faith), but they endeavoured to help God (flesh), and the birth of Ishmael was the result. God will make the promise sure without the intrusion of the flesh, for the very intrusion of the flesh robs the word promise of its meaning.

The factor of Time.

Attached to every promise of God is an appointed time either stated or implied. Not only is this necessitated by the outworking of a plan, but it also is used to exercise and encourage simple faith. Ecclesiastes has noted, "There is a time to every purpose under heaven". The answer to the tried faith of Habakkuk was, "the vision is yet for an appointed time.....though it tarry, wait for it". So the promise to Abraham was timed. To the flesh the long years that passed after the normal age of parenthood had been reached were a hard trial of faith. It was not until Abraham was "about an hundred years old" that the promise was fulfilled; yet there was no tarrying on the part of God. "At the time of life", "at the set time", "at the time appointed", Isaac is born, and Ishmael is seen to be the symbol of law, bondage, and unbelief.

"It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman, but he that was born of the bondwoman was born after the *flesh*, but he of the freewoman was by *promise*" (Gal. iv. 22-31).

"They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but IN ISAAC shall thy seed be called, that is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. ix. 6-8).

In Gen. xxi. we read the simple yet sublime account of the fulfillment of God's promise:--

“And the Lord visited Sarah *as He had said*, and the Lord did unto Sarah *as He had spoken*. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, *at the set time* of which God had spoken to him.....and Sarah said, God hath made me to *laugh*, so that all that hear will *laugh* with me.”

Here Sarah's laugh is the laugh of faith. She is however forcibly reminded of her laugh of unbelief, for the context once more uses the word (this time translated “mock”), “and Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had borne unto Abraham, *laughing* (mocking).”

Not only is the promise of God entirely removed from the sphere of law and flesh, the accident of time and the impatience of unbelief, but its essential characteristic and crown is that it triumphs over DEATH.

The fact of Resurrection.

Rom. iv. displays the essential facts of resurrection both as regards Abraham's personal faith, the title of God, and *the* essential element in justifying faith. Abraham's personal faith. Which was easier to believe, that God in some far-off day would raise His own Son from the dead, or to believe that there and then, Abraham and Sarah “as good as dead” should be quickened into life? Abraham's faith is thus described:--

“Who against hope (humanly speaking), in hope believed, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be, and without growing weak in faith, he considered his own body now *dead*, when he was about an hundred years old, and the *deadness* of Sarah's womb, he did not use doubtful disputation in unbelief (*cf.* Rom. xiv. 1) against the promise of God, but was strong in the faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform, and therefore it was imputed for righteousness” (18-22).

This factor of resurrection re-appears in connection with Abraham's faith in Heb. xi. 17-19:--

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”

The one title of God that is given in this passage (Rom. iv.) is “God Who quickeneth the *dead*, and calleth those things which *be not* as though they were”. Abraham's trust was not in a blind impersonal Providence, not in the *Almighty* whose name is uttered by the despairing, and forgotten when the storm is passed, but the God of resurrection. This title of God before all others is the one which all believers to-day must recognize. Only *as such* can He be our Father; only as such can He be the God of hope, of peace, of all comfort, of patience, of glory. None of the glorious promises enshrined in the Divine titles can ever be realized or enjoyed apart from the resurrection. The Old Testament saints were taught this; the land of promise was theirs in resurrection: “they all died in

faith not having received the promise". The throne of David cannot be occupied apart from resurrection: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" are the words of the decree (*see* Psa. ii.).

The Church has no status or blessing apart from resurrection; chapter and verse can hardly be given, as this thought underlies the whole of the apostle Paul's ministry, both before and after Acts xxviii.

The Essential Element in Justifying Faith.

"Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again because of our justification."

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

Let us learn this important teaching concerning the promises of God, for it underlies all His purposes of grace and glory. The close association between Isaac and Christ (Gal. iii. 16; Rom. ix. 7), the references to the offering of the only begotten Son (Heb. xi. 17; John iii. 16) reveal that in some mystical way God Himself moves along these lines as well as His people. He also awaits the hour appointed. He must eliminate all human merit. He too works only in the sphere of resurrection life.

"For how many soever the promises of God, in Him is the yea; wherefore also through Him is the Amen to the glory of God through us" (II Cor. i. 20).

#32. The Perfecting of Faith (Gen. xxii.). pp. 36 - 39

We now approach the supreme trial of Abraham's life. *Laughter* in the shape of Isaac had entered into his home and heart, and the promises were all centred in that little life now growing up. Abraham's old age had been illuminated by the gift of God. Then came the test and the triumph. "Walk before Me and be thou perfect", God had said some twenty-five years previously. The first act which followed that command was the rite of circumcision.

The act which we now contemplate is not the *rite* of circumcision, but the *reality*. Phil. iii. defines true circumcision. It is threefold:--

- (1). Worship God in Spirit.
- (2). Rejoice in Christ Jesus.
- (3). Have no confidence in the flesh.

Surely if the flesh ever made an appeal it did in Gen. xxii. God said to Abraham:--

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.”

There is much meaning in the response of Abraham:--

“And Abraham arose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went unto the place of which God had told him.”

Here was no conference with flesh and blood. Had Abraham consulted Sarah surely she would have anticipated Zipporah’s reproach, telling Abraham that he was a bloody husband, and have withstood his purpose, and probably have prevailed. Had Eliezer been consulted, he too might have urged such strong reasons against the deed, that Abraham would have compromised. There were times in Abraham’s life when he stooped to lies and to the appeal of the flesh, but it was not so now. He had reached the *end* of his calling and his faith, and so can tell no one, ask no one, but just obey his God.

When God first appeared unto Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, there was the element of uncertainty in regard to his destination, “he went out not knowing whither he went”. This is repeated in Gen. xxii. Abraham did not know the exact place of the mighty transaction, but went out awaiting direction as the time arrived. This is always the character of faith, it is the opposite of sight. The simple words of Abraham to his young men, when read in the light of Heb. xi., reveal a triumphant faith:--

“I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and WE WILL COME AGAIN to you.”

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promise offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb. xi. 17-19).

A most important lesson, perhaps we should say *the* most important lesson for us here, lies in the word “account”. It occurs once in Hebrews, but eleven times in Rom. iv. In Rom. iv. Abraham believes the God of resurrection, and his faith is imputed, accounted for righteousness. The important thing to observe is that Abraham is passive as far as the imputing is concerned. Abraham believes, “is persuaded”, “staggers not”, “gives glory to God”, but he imputes nothing. “Abraham believed God and *it was counted* unto him for righteousness”: “his faith is *counted* for righteousness”; *cf.* “the man unto whom *God imputeth* righteousness without works”. This is the way in which the word is continually used. At the beginning Abraham, as we said, imputed nothing, but when faith is perfected his passive attitude is replaced by activity. What God can do in view of the resurrection of Christ, Abraham can in his measure do. So it is that the father can contemplate the slaying of his beloved son, “accounting that God was able to raise him up”. Rom. vi. is a step forward from Rom. iv., and there the active side is presented:--

“For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, he liveth unto God; likewise *reckon* (account) *ye also yourselves* to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. vi. 10, 11).

We find the active again in Rom. viii. 18, “for I reckon”, where resurrection glory is in view. We find the explanation of this advance in the epistle of James. He too speaks of the great trial of Abraham’s faith, and, as in Hebrews, it is connected with the idea of “going on unto perfection”. In this connection temptation is prominent:--

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her *perfect* work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.” “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life” (James i. 2-4, 12).

In chapter ii. 14, 21 James asks a straight question:--

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can *that* faith save him? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”

There is no confusion or contradiction of Rom. iv. Here, Abraham was justified by FAITH in Gen. xv. when he believed God’s promise regarding the seed. Abraham was justified by WORKS in Gen. xxii. when, still believing God’s promise, he offered Isaac, accounting that the God who gave him in figure from death (“one as good as dead”), could raise him again from the dead. It all resolves itself into a matter of personal, experimental, individual, faith. It was comparatively easy for Abraham to believe in the impersonal doctrine, the *idea* of resurrection. It was also comparatively simple to believe that God some thousand or so years hence would raise His own Son from the dead. It was quite another matter to build the altar, take the knife and prepare to slay his own flesh and blood, and believe that *there and then* (not some thousand years or so hence) God would raise his (Abraham’s) son from the dead. This is where faith is perfect.

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

This chapter (Gen. xxii.) is quoted in another context in Hebrews, to which we must turn:--

“And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through *faith and patience* inherit the promises, for when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee, and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (Heb. vi. 11-15).

The chapter opens with the words, “Therefore.....let us go on unto perfection”, and Abraham is cited as an example. Notice too this fact. James says that Gen. xv. was *fulfilled* in Gen. xxii. Heb. vi. says that the promise, made and believed earlier, was *obtained* in Gen. xxii. In Heb. xi. 33 we meet the expression again, “who through faith subdued kingdoms, *wrought* righteousness, *obtained* promises”.

There are some who look upon this subject with suspicion, or at any rate treat it as something like a pet theme of the editor. We would ask such to consider our claim that

this doctrine is a “Fundamental”, in view of the words of James ii., “Faith without works is DEAD”. While Gen. xv. reveals the justification of Abraham, Gen. xxii. shows its fulfillment. While Gen. xii.-xvii. contains the promises, in Gen. xxii. Abraham obtains them. We misunderstand the gift of life if we assume that because it is a gift, and a gift of grace and not of works, no activity on our part is called for. Scripture speaks otherwise, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come”, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead”. We have been redeemed from all iniquity, “that we might be a peculiar people, zealous of GOOD WORKS”. Let no creed, or remnant of a creed, cramp our minds and hearts. The teaching of Scripture is our creed, formulated or otherwise, for we all tend to turn the liquid metal into moulds of our own fashioning.

We have not dwelt in this article upon the wondrous theme of the great Sacrifice on Calvary, so vividly presented in this remarkable chapter. This is not because such has no place in our heart or teaching, but because that aspect is so evident to all, and so widely recognized. We would nevertheless not let the opportunity pass without using it, if only briefly.

Redemption by the blood of Christ, true atonement by His death, and full acceptance in His merits, are the first words of gospel preaching, and the first note of apocalyptic song. The religion of the age repudiates the necessity for the blood of Christ. Jude’s picture of the closing days is of men “denying the Lord that bought them”. We cannot read seven verses into the epistles of the Mystery without hearing that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ (Eph. i. 7). God has offered His only Son whom He loved, He spared *not* His only begotten Son. That Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me. Let us listen afresh to the word:--

“Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body”
(I Cor. vi. 19, 20).

#33. Jacob.—The Flesh and the Promise (Gen. xxv. - xxviii.). **pp. 67 - 71**

We have seen Abraham’s initial response to the call of God in his going out “not knowing whither he went”, and we have seen his last trial of faith in his journeying to one of the mountains of which God would tell him. While there is much of interest and instruction in the closing days of this man of faith, we feel it time to pass on to another figure who plays a part in the development of the purpose of the ages.

The marriage of Isaac with Rebecca (xxiv.) kept the seed of promise within prescribed limits, also affording in the case of the eldest servant (who *may* have been Eliezer of Damascus) an example of faithful service and Divine leading, “I being in the way, the Lord led me”. The words of xxv. 5 (“and Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac”) suggest as the heir of all things—Christ. Jacob the son of Isaac holds a place more prominent than his father in the typical outworking of the purpose, partly by reason of the

intensely human side of his career. Jacob's history begins before his birth. The N.T. commentary upon Gen. xxv. 22-26 is found in Rom. ix. 10-13:--

“When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

The purpose according to election is a key to Israel's position and privilege. The purpose ensured a remnant in the days of deepest apostasy. When Elijah felt he alone was left, the answer of God to him was, “I have reserved unto myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed his knee to the image of Baal.”; so verse 5 continues, “at the present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace”. Thus we have Israel blinded with the exception of a remnant.

Let not a cold Calvinism, however, intrude its rough-shod logic here. It is a simple thing to divided the world into two classes, the elect who are saved, and the reprobate who are as most certainly damned. The teaching of Scripture, however, is not so. Chapter xi. continues, and looking onward into the days to come speaks of a time of Israel's fullness, and of receiving them back again; of regrafting the broken branches in. The remnant according to an ELECTION OF GRACE far from *excluding* the rest pledges their restoration, for the figure used by the apostle in this connection is “the firstfruits” (verse 16). The firstfruit presupposes a harvest to come, and the election of grace presupposes the words of 26-29, “and so ALL Israel shall be saved.....for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance”.

The opening words of chapter ix. balance the closing verse of chapter xi. In both sections come the words, “all Israel”; in chapter ix. we read:--

“They are NOT ALL ISRAEL that are Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called.....the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

Some who were the children of Abraham by physical descent were nevertheless children of the devil according to the Lord's own testimony (John viii. 33-44). The nation of Israel, as a nation, was so according to election. Whether that *national* election is co-extensive with the salvation of Rom. xi. 26 is a point which we are not called upon to settle.

In Gen. xxv. we have the election of the nation, “two nations are in thy womb”, “the one *people* shall be stronger than the other *people*”. When God made the promise of a seed to Abraham, the flesh spoilt the answer of faith by introducing Hagar, in a weak attempt to help God fulfil His word. When God so definitely said, “the elder **SHALL** serve the younger”, it should have been sufficient. The firstborn according to election must stand. Yet what do we find? The flesh practicing deception upon Isaac in the matter of the blessing of the firstborn.

In connection with Jacob's birth is recorded the incident that gave him his name—"the heel-catcher" or "circumventor". This strange incident must have some meaning, for not only is it recorded in Gen. xxv., but it appears in the prophecy of Hosea in rather a strange manner (which receives consideration in another article). The incident which follows the record of their birth is evidently in continuation of this theme. Here we find Esau and Jacob as grown men. Esau is spoken of in Heb. xii. as "a profane person who sold his birthright", so we need waste no unspiritual sentiment upon one whose true character is revealed by that Word of God which discerns between soul and spirit. Neither can we commend Jacob's action. It was, to say the least, unbrotherly. Yet, if we look below the surface, we shall at least find this, that however wrong he may have been in *method*, he certainly did not despise the promise of God, but stooped to a mean level to endeavour to bring about its fulfillment.

An opportunity occasioned by his brother's extreme need presents itself, and Jacob seizes it—"Sell me this day thy birthright". The next step in this despicable attempt of the flesh to help God to fulfil His promise is recorded in Gen. xxvii. There, acting under the direction of his mother, Jacob disguises himself as Esau, and filches the blessing of Esau. Even Jacob finds his conscience too difficult to ignore when Isaac said, "how is it thou hast found it (the venison) so quickly my son?" for he replies, "Because the Lord THY God (not MY God) brought it to me". The blessing which Jacob lied and deceived to obtain, however, was not to be received by him in that manner. Even though Isaac does bless him with "dew of heaven and fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine", that blessing can hardly be said to epitomize the life history of Jacob, even upon his own testimony (xlvii. 9). Isaac certainly said of Jacob, even after he realized the deceit which had been practiced upon him, "yea, and he shall be blessed"; but it does not follow that by some decree of fate God was at all bound to fulfil any such thing, otherwise there would be a premium on the methods of Jacob.

We will here pursue the story of Jacob, and return to that of Esau later. Rebecca's scheme for her favourite son now begins to bear fruit. She who stooped to deceive is now to be the one who of her own accord advises the departure of Jacob on that journey from which she would not live to welcome him back. Esau's vow of vengeance was known to her, so she planned to deliver Jacob for a time, and send him far off to her brother Laban. What must the feelings of this frail fleshly pair have been, when Isaac, unconstrained, freely, and "by faith" (Heb. xi. 24) gave Jacob the coveted blessing, viz.:-

"And EL SHADDAI bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a called-out assembly (Hebrew equivalent for *ekklesia* or church) of peoples: and gave THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM to thee, and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave to Abraham" (Gen. xxviii. 3, 4).

Here we do not read of corn and wine, but of that which Rebecca and Jacob had schemed and lied for in vain. The blessing of Abraham did not of necessity belong to the firstborn by nature, nor could it be attained by the sharp practice with which the birthright was secured, or the low deception which filched the blessing. The promise of God which runs along the line of an election of grace takes no notice of either good or evil. God's government however does, and though Jacob cannot but receive the blessing of Abraham,

as the elect link in the chain of purpose, Jacob must nevertheless suffer the consequences of his deception, and the devoted mother must part from her son upon the morrow of his triumph. David experienced this same dual treatment too; the covenant remained unaltered, but war never left his house after his great sin. This is the first great crisis in Jacob's history. Here starts the long discipline which culminates in the change of his name.

We pause here to consider the folly of all, whoever they may be, who dare attempt by any means of the flesh even co-operation with the God of electing grace. Such attempt carries with it nothing but defeat and sorrow. Abraham never forfeited his place in the purpose of God, yet what a deed was that that gave him Ishmael for a son! Jacob never forfeited his elect position, yet his deceptions led him straight away to banishment, servitude, and to be deceived in his turn, first by Laban, Rebecca's brother, and then by his own sons, in the matter of Joseph.

Whatever our calling may be, and whatever the peculiarities of the dispensation under which we walk, God's attitude both to His gifts and callings, and also to truth and righteousness, remain the same. It is not written in Genesis alone, or even in Galatians with its "justified by faith without law", but throughout Scripture that "*whatsoever* a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap".

#34. Jacob and the God of Bethel (Gen. xxviii. - xxxi.). **pp. 104 - 107**

There is a statement, several times repeated, that Laban was "Rebekah's brother". If Rebekah can deceive for her son's gain, possibly her brother can deceive for his own, and such at any rate is the fact.

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba (the well of the oath) and went toward Haran"
(the frontier town of the Babylonian Empire) (Gen. xxviii. 10).

Somewhere between these two suggestive places Jacob is overtaken by the night. A stone formed his pillow and in that place Jacob met with God. There God speaks with him. No word of censure for his sins, no word of bitter disillusion, indicating that the blessing of Abraham could never be for such as he, but a blessed confirmation of the purpose according to election, which we learn from Romans is an election of GRACE. Above the ladder which Jacob saw, the top of which reached heaven (or as some read "beside him,") stood the Lord, who said:--

"I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south, and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, and behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. xxviii. 13-15).

When Jacob awoke, he said, “surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not”, and he was afraid and said, “how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven”. These words sound sincere; were they? Some commentators reckon that the bargaining cheating spirit of Jacob is manifest in the vow that follows; we however believe that here we have, in the opening chapter of this pilgrimage, the dawn of a new life, not by any means perfected, for he has much to learn of the weakness and failure of the flesh, before he shall halt upon his thigh, a cripple of grace. Some say, hark at his bargainings, with his *ifs*. “If God will be with me.....then shall the Lord be my God.” In the first place a true translation transposes the “then” of verse 21, and the “and” of verse 22, making the verses read thus:--

“If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s home in peace, and the Lord be my God, THEN, this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.”

Here is no bargaining spirit. Jacob, overwhelmed with grace, can only say, if this be so it demands of me nothing less than the devotion I now offer. The tenth or the tithe became a Divine institution, and appears to have been accepted of Jacob. The one whose stolen blessing included PLENTY of corn and wine is grateful to acknowledge “bread to eat”. Here is Jacob’s first meeting with God, and here is seen the effect of grace. Any one less than God would have felt it becoming and right, nay *righteous*, yea a moral necessity, to have prefaced the blessing with reminders, with censure, with warning, with upbraiding. Blessed be God! He knows best. Here, Jacob is more deeply moved by unsullied grace than ever he would have been by perfect law. Censure, rebuke, warning, would have called forth the depths of Jacob’s duplicity; unmitigated grace finds its echo in unsophisticated gratitude. Surely a fundamental here, not only of dispensational truth, but of private conduct too, especially in the dispensation of the grace of God.

The first act of Jacob was symbolical of supplanting and gave him his name Jacob (Gen. xxv. 26). His next recorded act shows him cheating his brother of his birthright and blessing, then comes the crime and the commencement of his pilgrimage. Here, possibly for the first time, Jacob comes into personal touch with God, and that God of his father becomes his God. His next recorded act is not one of selfishness, but of chivalry:--

“And it came to pass that when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban, *his mother’s brother*, and the sheep of Laban, *his mother’s brother*, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban *his mother’s brother*, and Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept” (Gen. xxix. 10, 11).

The repeated reference to his mother’s brother seems to indicate Jacob’s affection for his mother, and also carries an intimation that possibly Laban will have some of the cunning of his sister in his character, which forebodes trouble for Jacob. However, at the beginning Jacob is received with warm welcome, and with a kinsman’s affection. The last sentence of verse 13 suggests much, “and he told Laban *all these things*”. How much did Jacob tell his “mother’s brother”? Whatever it was, Laban said to him, “surely thou art my bone and my flesh, and he abode with him the space of a month”. At the end of

this time Laban suggests that Jacob should be paid for his services, and asks Jacob to name his wage:--

“And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter” (Gen. xxix. 18).

Now commences the operation of that even-handed justice which commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice to our own lips. Jacob of all men has to say to his uncle:--

“What is this that thou done unto me? Did not I serve thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou BEGUILED me?” (verse 25).

Laban realized that in Jacob he had too valuable a servant to lose, and possibly noting the rare love which Jacob had (verse 20) for Rachel acted accordingly. Another seven years unpaid service must Jacob give for the wife of his choice. Leah was hated (possibly “not loved so much”, *see* verse 30), and the Lord gave Leah children, but withheld children from Rachel. Rachel may have been more beautiful and loved more ardently, yet there is manifested in Leah’s attitude a loving patient trust in God, which is not so marked in Rachel. This comes out in the naming of her children. The first is called Reuben, “for she said, surely the Lord hath looked upon (*raha*) my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me”. Her second son she called *Simeon* (*shimeon*, hearing), “because the Lord hath heard (*shama*) that I was hated”. Again a son is born, and again her sorely tried faith revives, “now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons; therefore was his name called *Levi*” (joined). Her fourth son is called Judah, for his mother said, “let me praise the Lord”. Man had failed, her husband still loved Rachel more than herself, and she turns to the God of all comfort, voicing no more her heart’s burden, but saying in true resignation, “let me praise the Lord”.

Leah’s fruitfulness, if it failed to arouse her husband’s love, moved Rachel’s envy. Even Jacob’s anger is kindled against Rachel by her importunity. Rachel then in agreement with the code of Khammurabi and the example of Sarah gives her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob. A son is born, and Rachel calls his name *Dan*, for said she, “God hath judged me”. This child is not born into so kindly an atmosphere as the sons of Leah. The second one too, called *Nephtali*, was so called because Rachel said, “with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed”. Leah is now stirred and presents Jacob with her maid Zilpah; another son is born, and in happy exuberance Leah cries, “a troop cometh”, and calls his name *Gad*. Again another son, and he is called *Asher*, for said Leah, “happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed”, and so through the whole story. *Isaachar* means “hired”, *Zebulun*, “endued with a dowry”, *Dinah* the daughter is so named, but no reason is given. At last Rachel herself is remembered of God, and gives birth to a son whom she named *Joseph*, for she said, “the Lord shall add to me another son”. Here we reach another turning point in Jacob’s eventful career. Immediately the chosen wife of Jacob bears a son, Jacob thinks of home:--

“And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country” (Gen. xxx. 25).

What follows to the end of the chapter appears at first to be an evident piece of Jacob's typical cunning. Laban agreed that Jacob's hire shall be the speckled and spotted cattle, and removed all such from the herd and set a three days' journey between them and the rest of the flock under Jacob's hand. The question arises once more, was the action of Jacob, detailed in verses 37-42, the ingenuity of the man Jacob, or was it of God? Our first thoughts condemn Jacob we do not shrink from exploiting his cunning—yet, as at Bethel we may find sufficient evidence to alter our verdict. Read on into chapter xxxi. The Lord said unto Jacob, "Return unto the land of your fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee". He reminds his wives that with all his power he had served their father, who had nevertheless deceived him and changed his wages ten times. Then he introduces the part that God took in this state of affairs. At the time covered by Gen. xxx. 37-42 Jacob had a dream, and the angel of the Lord showed him practically what he then put into operation, and declared Himself to be "the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto Me". Laban's cupidity had alienated his daughters from him; "he hath sold us", could both Leah and Rachel say with truth, "and hath quite devoured also our money". Thus Laban prepared his daughters to be willing to leave their home and journey back with Jacob to the land of his fathers.

Truly, whether the central figure be a placid Isaac, a scheming Rebekah, a deceitful Jacob, or a greedy Laban, all are in the hands of One Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. Bethel was the turning-point in Jacob's life. As the God of Bethel God appears unto Jacob in his exile, so at Bethel once again with changed name shall Jacob once more meet with God.

#35. Israel—Prince of God (Gen. xxxii.). pp. 135 - 139

Jacob's first meeting with the God of his fathers at Bethel and the impress of grace he there received is to have yet more and abiding fruit. In a night vision some twenty years afterwards the Lord again speaks to him saying:--

"I am the God of Bethel.....now arise, get thee out of this land and return unto the land of thy kindred" (Gen. xxxi. 13).

We have no means of determining whether Jacob's silent flight was dictated by natural cunning or by Divine instruction, nor are we called upon to pass judgment. The action itself could be right or wrong, according to the will of the Lord at the time. Laban however gives chase, but before he can come up with the fugitives God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night saying, "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad". Laban's search for his stolen gods proves fruitless, and Jacob, knowing nothing of Rachel's action, takes the opportunity of forcing upon the conscience of Laban his own dishonest dealings during the time when Jacob served him faithfully and well

(xxx. 37-42). Laban and Jacob build a “witness heap” and a “watch tower”, for Laban said, “the Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another”.

At the close of the solemn covenanting Laban departed and “Jacob went on his way, and the angel of God met him”. Upon hearing of the approach of Esau with a company of four hundred men Jacob does two things: he first disposed of his forces, with foresight and wisdom taking the “two bands” of angels as his guide, and secondly he prayed. Here is the first real prayer recorded in the Bible. Abraham’s intercession for Sodom is more like an argument. Abraham’s servant’s words in Gen. xxiv are the expression of a desire for a sign. Here is a real prayer. It commences and ends with a reference to the covenant. Jacob’s conception of his claim on God is not based upon his worthiness or his need, but upon the covenant made with his fathers. The reference to the covenant made unto the fathers is followed by a remembrance of a personal promise, which in its turn is echoed by a confessed fear and felt need; in the center comes the repudiation of all worthiness echoed by an acknowledgment of God’s faithfulness:--

- A | xxxii. 9-. The God of the covenant with Abraham and Isaac.
- B | -9. Reminder of promise.
- C | 10-. Confession of utter unworthiness.
- C | -10. Acknowledgment of overflowing blessing.
- B | 11-. Prayer for deliverance.
- A | -11. Reference to covenant blessing.

Jacob after this prayer arranges a present to pass over the ford that Esau may be appeased and accept his returning brother in peace. His two wives and his two women servants together with his eleven sons pass over the ford, “and Jacob was left alone”. If Jacob could say of Bethel “how dreadful is this place”, what shall he say of this all-night wrestling with the angel of God? “And there wrestled a Man with him.” This wrestler is called *God* in verse 30.

There is a division of opinion regarding the meaning of this midnight wrestling. Some see in it a picture of overcoming prayer—but it does not say Jacob wrestled, but the *Man* wrestled—Jacob’s attitude was one of resistance. This passage, coupled with the strange supplanting act at his birth, is referred to in Hosea xii., and possibly the reference there will aid us in understanding the purport of Gen. xxxii. The passage in the A.V. reads as follows:--

“He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by strength he had power with God (margin ‘*was a prince, or behaved himself princely*’), yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him, he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us, even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial.”

The Companion Bible differs from the majority of commentators, both in the passage in Gen. xxxii. and in Hosea xii. In Gen. xxxii. the changed name *Israel* is interpreted, “God commands, orders or rules”, and the additional remark is made that “out of some forty Hebrew names compounded with *El* or *Jah* God is always the doer of what the verb means (cf. Dan-*el*, God judges). “The name” (continues the note) “is used here not to dignify but to reproach”, and the references are given. The words “hast thou power with

God and with men and hast prevailed” are explained to mean that Jacob had contended with Esau at birth, for the birthright, for the blessing, and with Laban. In contending with men he had succeeded, but now contending with God he fails, and receives the name *Isra-el*, (*God commands*) to teach him the greatly needed lesson of dependence upon God.

The notes of the *Companion Bible* to Hosea xii. 4, 5 are even more complicated. The words “by his strength” (in his manhood) referring to another occasion of strife; “had power with” (contended with), Heb. *Sarah* (hence his name Israel). The word “prevailed” is not to be referred to the result of Jacob’s contending, but means that He (the angel) prevailed. “He found him in Bethel”, *i.e.*, God found Jacob. If Jacob’s new name Israel indicates “God commands” it cannot at the same time have any connection with Jacob’s own “contending”—*see* note above—it must be one or the other, yet the *Companion Bible* emphasizes both.

We cannot say that the note on Gen. xxxii. appeals to us as being the true meaning, and therefore we have no help for it but an independent search into what is confessedly a difficult passage. One interpretation makes Israel a Prince with God, because he had power with God and prevailed, the other makes the name Israel mean God commands, and supposes it used as a reproach not a dignity. Let us turn again to Gen. xxxii. 24, 25. “WRESTLED.”—This word occurs nowhere else in the O.T. A substantive derived from this word is translated five times “dust” and twice “powder”. This would show the idea to be more “pounding”, “crushing”, or “pulverizing” than “wrestling”. It does not seem possible that an ordinary man could in his own strength “wrestle” with the Angel of God for hours, but from what we have gathered of Jacob’s character we can understand that it was not a trifling thing to reduce his old nature to powder.

“PREVAIL.”—This word suits well the idea of wrestling, but when connected with reducing anything to powder it is not so fitting; it is translated “could” in Gen. xiii. 6, xxxvi. 7, xxxvii. 4, xlv. 1, 3; “can” in Gen. xiii. 16, xix. 19, 22, xxiv. 50, xxix. 8, xxxi. 35, and as this is the usual rendering we are under no necessity to translate the passage other than “was not able”, or “could not”. One suggestive use of the word is found in II Sam. xvii. 20, “they be gone over the brook of water”. In II Sam. xvii. 20 we have *mee-chal*, when joined with the word for water it means, “manageable water”, “fordable water”, “water that can be overcome”. Jacob, by the ford Jabbok, was not so manageable. As the dawn of day approached it became imperative that the reduction of Jacob should be accomplished, and the angel touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh, and he limped the remainder of his pilgrimage. Jacob now clings tight to the angel and says, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me”.

Now, do the words that follow indicate a blessing for Jacob, or otherwise? First of all his name is *changed*, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel”. Now if Israel be a term of reproach, we are faced with a problem indeed; we are further told that Jacob had succeeded in his contending with men, but had failed with God. Neither statement is true, Jacob miserably failed in the scheme to get the blessing and Scripture settles the

other statement by saying of Jacob, “as a prince hast thou power with GOD and with men, and hast prevailed”.

We have other evidences of the purport of a change of name in Genesis, *e.g.*, Abraham instead of Abram, Sarah instead of Sarai. In both cases the change is to a higher plane and the result of a blessing. The name Sarah means Princess and contains the word which gives us I-sra-el. SAR.—*Sar* is rendered “prince” 208 times, and “captain” 125 times, hence chief, ruler, governor, etc., and seen in connection with Sarah Jacob’s new name seems to echo its meaning, she the Princess, he the Prince. One feature of great importance must now be noted which links together the *changed* names of Abraham, Sarah, and Israel, and also substantiates the meaning of Prince in the name Israel.

“As for Sarai thy wife, thou shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.....KINGS of people shall be of her” (Gen. xvii. 15, 16).

“Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel.....KINGS shall come out of thy loins” (Gen. xxxv. 10).

We must by this evidence retain the kingly thought in the word Israel. Here, in each instance, the change of name is associated with blessing, and a promise of a royal seed. Newbury interprets *Isra-El* by a prince of God, just as we translate *Peni-El*, face of God, or *Beth-El*, house of God. The change of name was given for a revealed reason, “FOR thou wast as a prince”, *saritha*, “as a prince hast thou power”, being but one word.

This word occurs nowhere else, but in Hosea x. 11. Bethel in the days of Hosea had become notorious for its idolatry. Israel is exhorted to consider the typical history of their father Israel, how from being a supplanter he was changed to a Prince of God, and how from being a keeper of sheep (xii. 12) he became a Prince of God, or, as the parallel is written turning from the type to the antitype, the captive bondman Israel in Egypt brought out of Egypt by a prophet (xii. 13) to become when at last they see God face to face “kings and priests unto God”. Ephraim or Israel had become idolators, they had fallen by their iniquity, yet, saith the Lord, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely”. Jacob’s experience at Jabbok is an Old Testament parallel to Paul’s experience spoken of in II Cor. xii. 9, 10:--

“And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmity that the power of Christ may rest upon me.....for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

Jacob’s human frame ever afterwards showed evidence of his weakness and the need to distrust the flesh, but it would ever be associated with a gracious blessing, a princely name and a consciousness that henceforth his strength was to be found in God. Jacob’s experience anticipates that day soon to dawn, when the night shall have passed away for ever, when his descendants shall look upon Him whom they pierced (*Peniel*) and shall say:--

“Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins by His own blood, and hath made us KINGS and priests unto God” (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Who is this One upon whom they look? “PRINCE of the KINGS of the earth.” *Sar* of *Sars*, the true and antitypical Israel, Prince of God. Saviour and saved are both foreshadowed. He the great King-Priest after the Order of Melchisedek, they the kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood. Israel like Jacob could not attain this by creature strength, it was when the hollow of his thigh was touched that he asked a blessing and received his princely name.

#36. Esau, the Profane. Jacob, the Perfect.
(Gen. xxv. - xxxv.).
pp. 164 - 167

We have passed Jacob's history in review up to the moment when he “saw God face to face, and his life was preserved”, and he was changed from supplanter to prince. Such is his transit, from catching his brother's heel in creature strength to losing the power of the flesh for spiritual force, from scheming, bartering, and lying to obtain the blessings that vanished into thin air to vowing with awe-struck heart, and praying with earnest self-abnegation to the God of Bethel, the God of all grace.

Jacob well set forth in type Israel's history. First the reliance upon self, then the exile, the servitude, the return and the new name—a Prince with God: and over all, from before birth and throughout that eventful pilgrimage, the God of Abraham and of Isaac, in very truth the God of Jacob. We now retrace our steps to the time of Jacob's birth to note what is said concerning Esau, for he too is typical.

The epistle to the Galatians uses the two sons of Abraham as a figure, Ishmael representing those in bondage, Isaac those who are free. Romans draws attention to Esau and Jacob, teaching that they are not all Israel that are of Israel, and that the true Israel is the child of promise. Not only did Abraham have two sons, the one a type of the flesh and the law, the other a type of promise and covenant mercy, but Isaac also had two sons, Esau and Jacob, who in their turn reflect in type the seed of truth and of evil.

Esau when he had grown is described as “a cunning hunter”. The word for “hunter” occurs twelve times in Genesis and is used of two persons only, Nimrod the mighty hunter and Esau the cunning hunter. Esau is further described as “a man of the field”. Jacob in the same verse is called “a plain man”. Why this rendering should have been chosen we do not quite see. The very next occurrence of the adjective is found in Job i. 1, “this man was PERFECT and upright”. In Song of Solomon v. 2 and vi. 9 it is rendered “undefiled”. The substantive is rendered in Gen. xx. 5 “integrity” (margin, “simplicity”, “sincerity”), and these three words together with uprightness are the words that are used to translate it throughout some twenty occurrences.

In the emphatic form *tahmeem* we find the word used of Noah, “Noah was a just man and *perfect*” (Gen. vi. 9). It is used of Abraham in the words, “Walk before me and be

thou *perfect*” (Gen. xvii. 1). It is used of the Passover lamb, “your lamb shall be *without blemish*” (Exod. xii. 5). Every occurrence of the feminine form is translated “integrity”. The last thing we should say of Jacob (as taught by our traditions) is that he was sincere, upright, simple or perfect. Who would think of Jacob and Job together? Nevertheless God who trieth the heart and knows what is in man definitely describes Jacob as a perfect or sincere man, whilst generous-hearted, easily-appeased, hale-fellow-well-met Esau is termed a profane person. God seeth not as man seeth, man looketh upon the outward appearance, but God looketh upon the heart.

The second description of Jacob is “dwelling in tents”. This fact is referred to in Heb. xi. 8, and is there used as a sign of faithful patience in view of the promise:--

“By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, *dwelling in tents* with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.”

The epistle to the Hebrews uses both the words which describe Jacob with special purpose, *perfect* and *dwelling in tents*. The same epistle describes Esau as a *profane* person who sold his birthright. Esau thus becomes the exact opposite of Jacob. Esau is held up as a warning to these Hebrews who were beginning to draw back, whose endurance was waning. Such could not be renewed *again* unto repentance, and are pointed to Esau:--

“Who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright, for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found *no place of repentance*, though he sought it carefully with tears” (xii. 16, 17).

The chapter goes on to speak of those who were the church of the firstborn ones, who are here warned against selling their birthright for a little respite.

Esau’s second name (*Edom*) is taken from this selling of his birthright for a mess of pottage, “that red” as he called it. Esau’s second name links him with his profanity, and Jacob’s second name with his loss of self and his royalty, Esau is named after a mess of lentils, Jacob is named Prince of God. Esau comes in from the field saying, “I am faint.....I am at the point of death; and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” Jacob after an all-night wrestle with the angel, touched at the breaking of the day upon his thigh so that the sinew withered, still clings tight saying, “I will not let thee go except thou bless me”. Esau after selling his birthright “did eat and drink and rose up and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright”. How many more have done the same! Jacob on the other hand, though he works with base tools and crooked means, pursues his end—THE blessing. We make no excuse for the method nor the means, but we do ask the reader, whether God Who judges the motive may not after all amid all that is false and fleshly see earnest desire, not for ease, comfort, or worldly greatness, but the heart’s cry, “Oh that I may receive the blessing of Abraham, and take my place in the line of God’s purpose”. For this frail flesh will lie and deceive, for this suffer exile and the heat by day and the frost by night, but nevertheless Jacob the perfect man shall by one path or another come at last to see the face of God, repent, believe, and inherit the blessing.

Esau's next evidence of his nature is given by his choice of wives. Jacob had two wives—but not of choice, yet Jacob's wives were of his kindred, he allowed not his “generation” to be contaminated, being like Noah “perfect as to his pedigree”, for the Abrahamic blessing involved a “seed”. Abraham's care for Isaac's wife will here come to mind. When Esau was forty years old he married two Hittites! These were “a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebecca”. It is in keeping with Esau's typical character that his Hittite wife should bear a Hebrew name, “Judith”, but her name alone was Hebrew. Esau, finding that Isaac straitly charge Jacob not to marry one of the daughters of Canaan and that his own Canaanitish wives were not pleasing to his parents, manifests the utter incapability of the flesh of doing a spiritual act by taking a wife this time of the line of ISHMAEL! Oh unhappy man! Judith, Hebrew in name, but not in heart: Ishmael, son of Abraham truly, but of bondage, not of promise. Esau has many followers in the religious world to-day, who vainly seek to copy the outward things of faith but manifest their profanity and their folly thereby. It is but the “form of godliness”.

Jacob' words when he meets Esau after their long separation are repeatedly of *grace*. When Esau said, “Who are these with thee?” Jacob replied, “The children which God hath *graciously* given thy servant”. When Esau asks the meaning of the droves he met, Jacob replies, “These are to find *grace* in the sight of my Lord”. Esau magnanimously tells Jacob to keep what he has for himself: “I have enough my brother”, but Jacob urges, “If I have found *grace* in thy sight that the present be received.....because God hath dealt *graciously* with me”. His parting words with Esau are, “Let me find *grace* in the sight of my lord”. After this Jacob erected an altar and called in *El-eloe-Israel*, God, the God of Israel. We must remember as we read this that Israel at that moment was the one individual—Jacob. It was Jacob's personal testimony to God Who had so wondrously kept his word.

The generations of Esau are given, and kings and dukes are in his line. Edom looms large in the day of judgment, the prophets speak much of its sin and its punishment. Isa. lxiii. gives a tragic figure of wrath, but the subject is too great to be dealt with here.

Jacob with his many failings finds many a parallel in the believer to-day. The very possession of “two natures” in the child of God will manifest itself in an erratic walk while the flesh is not reckoned dead, while the thigh bone is not out of joint. It is easy to be worldly-minded *in the world*, or heavenly-minded *in heaven*, but to be always heavenly-minded in the world needs great grace. May we who do not spare our censures on Jacob's meanness and cunning emulate his desire for the thing that matters most; and while we sound out the praise of noble generous Esau, take heed that we do not for a mess of this world's pottage sell *our* birthright.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

#17. The Captain; Perfected.

pp. 28 - 30

“For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in leading many sons to glory, to perfect the captain of their salvation through sufferings” (Heb. ii. 10).

Instead of simply saying “God” or “The Father” the apostle uses the title “Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things”. There is a reason for this which it is important to observe, and it comes out again in chapter xi. There the statement is simpler, and will enable us to perceive the underlying principle here in verse 10:--

“For it is necessary for him who comes near to God (a special term) to believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder to those who diligently seek Him” (xi. 6).

Three statements are here, which placed beside ii. 10 will illuminate that passage:--

“It is necessary.”		“It was becoming.”
“He is.”		“Him, for Whom and by Whom are all things.”
“Rewarder.”		“Perfector.”

The doctrine of reward is as primal and absolute as the very existence of God. “He is.” “He is a rewarder.” The words of chapter ii. 10 are an expansion of this. He who IS is the Creator whose creation has been arranged with a view to His own glory. He who is a rewarder of the diligent seeker plans also the pathway to glory—“Perfect through suffering”. Instead of counting the idea of reward as strange and proudly saying, “Virtue is its own reward”, “We ought to do right for right’s sake”, which is perfectly true, we should be more scriptural, and at bottom more true, if we saw in the framing and enforcing of all law whatever, that reward is essential, and that suffering is of purpose. So the words are introduced by *eprepe*, “It is becoming”.

Prepō is used again in vii. 26, when the essential suitability of Christ as High Priest is spoken of; also in Matt. iii. 15 where it was fitting and proper that the Son of God should fulfil all righteousness. It was therefore in the way of the nature of things that God who had made all things for Himself, in leading many sons to glory, should perfect their captain through sufferings. The idea of a suffering Messiah was repugnant to the Jew by reason of the traditions of the elders, but the apostle shows that the “taste of death for every son”, was most fitting and proper. The path of suffering to glory must not be counted as though some strange thing had happened, it is according to plan.

The last words of verse 9 are sometimes quoted to prove that Christ died for every man and therefore is the Saviour of every man. The passage does not teach this. We saw in our previous article that the “tasting” of death did not mean death itself, but the sufferings which preceded it, and that this tasting of death did not have redemption in

view, but glory. There is no word “man”, and the word “all” has reference to the “many sons” who were being led on to glory through suffering.

Christ is their captain, and Joshua is the type. That this is so the words in iv. 8 will shew. “For if Jesus had given them rest”, where the margin says, “*i.e.* Joshua”. Hebrews is NOT dealing with Moses and the Passover redemption from the land of Egypt, but with Joshua and the survival through the rigours of the wilderness to the triumphal entry into the land of promise. The wilderness is the setting of the book. A saved people addressed and they are not urged to believe and be saved, but to go on unto perfection.

Christ is called the captain again in Heb. xii. 2, and that once more in connection with perfecting and suffering; the “author (captain) and perfecter of faith” (not of *our* faith). There He is seen leading the van of that great company who overcame through faith and obtained promises. The “so great salvation” is for those who have been perfected, just as the “Prize” is in Phil. iii. Of Christ it is again written:--

“And having been perfected (by the things which He suffered, verse 8), He became the author of *aionian* salvation, unto all them that *obey* Him” (v. 9).

In connection with sufferings Christ as captain sets us an example, for He:--

“Hath suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps” (I Pet. ii. 21).

“For as much as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves therefore with the same mind” (I Pet. iv. 1).

It is well to consider Him lest we grow weary and faint in our minds. It is in this sense that we see Him as “the forerunner for us”, Who has entered beyond the veil. The Hebrew believers had endured a great contest (*athlēsis*) of sufferings (Heb. x. 32, same word in ii. 10); which, said the apostle, had great recompense of reward.

The perfecting of faith (I Thess. iii. 10; Heb. xii. 2), the perfecting of love (I John ii. 5), and the perfecting of holiness (II Cor. vii. 1) cannot be accomplished apart from suffering. Faith will be tried (Gen. xxii.), love will be called upon to suffer long and endure all things (I Cor. xiii.), holiness will cause separation from much that is attractive to the flesh and spirit.

We are heirs of God, if sons; but we are *joint-heirs* with Christ if so be we suffer with Him (Rom. viii.). Present affliction is temporal in duration and light in comparison with the *aionian* weight of glory which it works out for those who are exercised by it and whose eyes see beyond the temporal and visible. “The fellowship of His sufferings” is a necessary prelude to the fellowship of His glory.

*‘Weeping may endure for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning.’*

#18. A special aspect of Sanctification. pp. 60 - 62

To catch the meaning of the concluding portion of Heb. ii. (11-18) we must first of all see it as a whole, apart from details and difficulties:--

“All of one.”

- A | 11. Oneness in sanctification.
- B | 14. Oneness in nature. He partook.
- C | 14-16. Oneness in death and deliverance.
- B | 17. Oneness in nature. He was made like.
- A | 18. Oneness in temptation.

This simple arrangement sweeps aside the idea entertained by some that “all of one” refers to Adam, or to God. Verse 10 speaks of two parties, “many sons” and the “captain”. The perfecting of the captain can only bear upon the many sons, if they are united in some way. Verse 11 says they are, both sanctifier and sanctified being all of one. What therefore happens to the captain is communicated to the host. We must remember the limitations imposed upon the scope of “all” by the word “sanctified”. “All of one” does not here speak of the human race although Luke traces the genealogy of Christ back to Adam, and Paul uses the same expression (*ex henos*) in Acts xvii. 26 when he speaks of “every nation of men”. Neither does the passage speak of redemption from sin and its penalty. The exodus is already accomplished. The union here is with the things which accompany salvation. The Israelites were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea after redemption. This oneness is limited to sanctification. We must therefore seek a true meaning for this term before we can appreciate the teaching of the passage.

Hagiazō (“to sanctify”) occurs seven times in Hebrews. It is therefore a key-word and carries an important message:--

Sanctify.

- A | a | ii. 11. He that sanctifieth. The one perfected through suffering.
- b | ii. 11. They that are sanctified.
- B | ix. 12, 14. Blood of bulls flesh.
- Blood of Christ conscience.
- C | x. 9, 10. The will of God. The offering of the body. Once.
- B | x. 14. Perfected for ever (*cf.* x. 1) by one offering.
- A | b | x. 29. The blood wherewith He was sanctified.
- a | xiii. 12. The people sanctified by His blood, without the gate.

The thought is uppermost in Heb. i. 3 where purification for sins, and not redemption, is the aspect of truth presented. This aspect is sustained in ix. 12-14 where the blood of goats and bulls is linked with the ashes of an heifer, which were not used as a ransom or an atonement, but for sprinkling the unclean, and results in a *sanctification*

for the purifying of the flesh which had come into contact with *some form of death*. Christ's *sanctification* cleanses the conscience from *dead works*, the spiritual counterpart. Heb. x. 10 and 14 cannot be understood apart from the earlier verses. The word translated "continually" in x. 1 is the same as is rendered "for ever" in v. 14, and should in both cases be translated "unto perpetuity". Chapter x. 1 should be rendered:--

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year make the comers thereunto PERFECT UNTO PERPETUITY. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers *once having been cleansed* should have had *no more conscience of sins*."

Verses 10 and 14 are the answer to this, just as verse 14 is the answer to verse 13 in chapter ix. Chapter x. 29 speaks of the awful possibility of counting the blood wherewith He was sanctified unholy, and of doing despite to the spirit of grace, which is opened up in an intensely practical way in the verses that follow, where the drawing back from suffering and trial is a parallel. The last reference shows the captain of our salvation suffering outside the gate. The oneness between sanctifier and sanctified is expressed in the words:--

"Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii. 13, 14).

These last words are full of light for us as to the underlying idea of this sanctification. The pilgrim character, the wilderness pathway, the whole theme of race and crown is involved in the word. Its association with "perfection" would teach students of Philippians that much. See also another link between sanctification and pilgrim character. Those who are sanctified suffer the spoiling of their goods knowing that in heaven they have a better and an enduring substance. They have here no continuing city, but seek one to come. Like Abraham:--

"They desire a better country, that is an heavenly: wherefore *God is not ashamed* to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city" (xi. 16).

"Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause *He is not ashamed* to call them brethren" (ii. 11).

Hagiotes and *hagiasmos* in Heb. xii. 10 and 14 speak of holiness as the outcome of the Father's discipline, without which no man shall see God.

Hagios, apart from its occurrences in the expression "the Holy Ghost", comes in iii. 1, "holy brethren", who are immediately named "partakers of the heavenly calling", a statement which illuminates the meaning of "holy brethren" somewhat. In vi. 10 and xiii. 24 it is used for "the saints" without qualification. In ix. 2 it is rendered "sanctuary".

Hagion in its nine occurrences is used to denote the sanctuary or the holiest of all, either in the tabernacle in the wilderness or the true tabernacle, "heaven itself". The sanctification of "Hebrews" is linked with the wilderness and the tabernacle, not the kingdom and the temple, and with the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly (*see* xii. 22). It

is associated with purification from things of death, it leads outside the camp, it shares the reproach for Christ, and counts it greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Sanctification of the Spirit is *never once mentioned* in Hebrews. It is always connected with the sufferings of the captain of our salvation and His once offered sacrifice for the purification from sins and uncleanness. It is utterly valueless as an aid to exegesis simply to string together the occurrences of the word “sanctify” regardless of their origin or context. The word here, as we have seen, has a special shade of meaning which is closely related to the theme of the epistle to the Hebrews. It does not mean every saved one by virtue of salvation, as it probably does in Rom. i. 7. It is the title of the many sons who through suffering are going on to glory. It is closely associated with the captain and perfecter of faith, Who for the joy set before Him endured a cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. It is a necessity in view of the *aionian* salvation and inheritance.

The element of overcoming is often passed over in Heb. x., but it is there, and there with a purpose. It immediately precedes the reference to the perfecting of the sanctified, “from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool”. Such sanctified ones the great captain is not ashamed to call His brethren. The three quotations that follow in Heb. ii. are designed to show the close association of Christ and His people. This is particularly so in the second one where Christ uses the words, “I will put my trust in Him”. There we see Him trusting, in the days of His flesh, and it is there we find the oneness with Him in this sanctification by suffering.

#19. “Him who had the strength of death” (ii. 14, 15). pp. 87 - 91

“Forasmuch therefore as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, in like manner, partook of the same; in order that by means of death he might render powerless him having the strength of death, that is the devil, and might set free those who by fear of death were through all their life held in bondage” (Heb. ii. 14, 15).

The words of v. 11, “all of one”, here receive a fuller explanation. Those who were sanctified and called His brethren were partakers of flesh and blood, and were also held in bondage by the fear of death. The Lord too, their Redeemer, became partaker of the same nature, submitted Himself to death, and rendered the devil powerless. Had the passage meant merely to indicate the Lord’s sympathy with our frailty, flesh alone would have been used. “Flesh and blood” stand for human nature without reference to its deeds. In other words, the Captain of our salvation became a real man “in like manner”, “not in show, nor in appearance, but in truth” (*Chrysostom*).

“The children” are first described as to their natural state—“common sharers of flesh and blood”; then, as to their moral and dispensational condition, “held in bondage by fear of death”. The Saviour is first described as to His natural state—“He partook of the

same”; and then as to the moral effects—“He rendered powerless the devil” and delivered His brethren.

Three passages should be read in conjunction with these verses. Rom. viii. 3; Phil. ii. 7, 8; Heb. x. 5-7 and their contexts noted.

- Rom. viii. 3. “God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.”
Phil. ii. 7, 8. “Was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as
a man”
Heb. x. 5-7. “When He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and
offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared
me”

The section of Romans which contains viii. 3 commences with Rom. v. 12, and reveals the entry of death. Here death is spoken of as exercising dominion, “Death reigned by one”. The dominion of sin and death is the theme of Rom. vi. 9-14. The law of sin and death is uppermost in Rom. vii. 21-25. Rom. viii. 2 introduces the other law, which indicates deliverance, “For the law of spirit of LIFE in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”. This was accomplished by Christ assuming our nature, the result being “that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit”. The context this side speaks of life (6, 10, 11, 12, 13), our deliverance from the bondage of corruption (15-23), a bondage which is ever related to “fear” (15).

The statement that Christ was made in the likeness of sinful flesh is here chiefly connected with the practical out-working of truth, of triumph over death, of “life because of righteousness”, of “life and peace” as a result of being “spiritually minded”. The passage speaks moreover not only of being heirs of God by virtue of being sons of God, but of being JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST by virtue of suffering together with Him (17, 18). Here the goal is that Christ should be “the first-born among many brethren” (29). Here we read of having “the spirit of Christ”, of working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, of being finally fashioned like unto the body of His glory (iii. 21). Here we have also a close connection with Hebrews:--

- “Who being in the FORM OF GOD” (Phil. ii. 6).
“Who being the brightness of His glory and the EXPRESS IMAGE of His person” (Heb. i. 3).
“He was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. ii. 7).
“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. ii. 14).
“And being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death” (Phil. ii. 8).
“That through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil” (Heb. ii. 14).
“Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name” (Phil. ii. 9).
“Who for the joy set before Him endured a cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God” (Heb. xii. 2).
“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb. i. 4).

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work on account of the good pleasure” (Phil. ii. 12, 13).

“Make you perfect in every good work, in order to do His will, doing in you that which is well pleasing in His sight” (Heb. xiii. 21).

The third reference (Heb. x. 5-7) we have already had occasion to examine when dealing with the word “sanctified”. There we read of the moment when the Lord laid aside His glory, the moment of His *kenosis* (Phil. ii. 7); and just as He left the glory that was His before the world was to enter by human birth in the crib at Bethlehem that path of suffering, we hear Him say:--

“Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.”

Here we are allowed by wondrous grace to hear the words with which the Lord of life and glory voluntarily partook of the same flesh and blood as the children of men, that in the body thus prepared for Him He might learn obedience by the things He should suffer, and, being made perfect through suffering, lead many sons to glory.

Before we attempt to explain our verse, we must examine another item. The Lord submitted to death, not only that all Adam’s sons might live again (I Cor. xv. 22), but that “He might render ineffective the one having the strength of death, that is the Devil”. What is this strength of death? Here we are not viewing atonement, for Christ offered Himself in all aspects of His sacrifice, “unto God”. The Devil possessed this strength, and we must seek from the Word the meaning of the expression. *Kratos* is used in Eph. i. 19 of resurrection, “according to the energy of the strength of His might”, and in vi. 10 of its practical application to the believer, “Finally be empowered in the Lord and in the strength of His might”, this empowering being in view of the conflict with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places.

It will be remembered that (evidently) at the time when Moses was to appear with Elias on the mount of transfiguration, “Michael the archangel when contending with the Devil disputed about the body of Moses” (Jude 9). It will be remembered that the mount of transfiguration came into prominence in our investigation into the meaning of the expression “taste of death” of Heb. ii. 9, and Peter in his epistle of suffering in view of glory introduces it in the first chapter. It is the vision of the overcomer. Death is spoken of ten times in Hebrews. In v. 7 we are taken to the garden of Gethsemane and there the Lord:--

“in the days of His flesh, offered up both prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him who was able to save Him out of death, and was heard for His piety.”

This passage, the reference following the cluster in Heb. ii. (9, 14, 15), carries with it the same sense that is more dimly seen in Heb. ii., namely, death as viewed in connection with suffering and glory, obedience and perfection, *aionian* salvation, and the so great salvation. Here also, as in Heb. ii. 17, the High Priesthood of Christ is introduced (v. 6). The next reference to death (vii. 23) speaks of the priesthood of the sons of Aaron in contrast. The last reference seems of great importance in our endeavour to understand the peculiar meaning of death in Heb. ii. 14, 15. In Heb. xi. 5, the chapter

of overcomers, sons led on to glory perfected through sufferings but not yet perfected in resurrection, we read of Enoch, who by faith “was translated that he might not see death”. When we turn to chapter iii. 17, 18, we read of the tragedy of the wilderness:--

“And with whom was He displeased forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?”

Those in Heb. ii. were all their lifetime held by the “fear” of death. In chapter iv. 1 we read, *immediately* after hearing of those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness:--

“Let us therefore FEAR, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it.”

In writing of the wilderness to the Corinthians, the apostle says:--

“Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were DESTROYED OF THE DESTROYER” (I Cor. x. 10).

When a believer was handed over to Satan by the apostle, it was for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved. Parallel with this is I Cor. iii. 15, “He shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire”. This too is the one great theme of Hebrews.

“But we are not of them who draw back unto destruction (the destruction of the flesh, the two words used come together in I Cor. x. 10), but of them who believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb. x. 39).

The death of Christ was effective in rendering ineffective him who had the strength of death. By His one offering the “sanctified” (Heb. ii. 11, x. 14) are “perfected” for ever.

The deliverance is like that from a legal opponent (Luke xii. 58), or from the grip of disease (Acts xix. 12). It is not the word that indicates deliverance from sins in the gospel sense of the word. It is from the power of someone into whose hands, or under whose authority, we have come. The connection between the believer’s “perfecting”, expressed in Colossians and Philippians as circumcision, and antagonistic principalities and powers is indicated in Col. ii. 10-15, and its connection with the “reward” is seen in v. 18. The death and the deliverance of Heb. ii. must be seen as related to the overcoming, the crown, the prize, and it is against this “strength of death” the believer is ranged as he presses along the path, and to which he is delivered should he so sadly fail as did those who tempted God in the wilderness.

The Captain of our salvation is the TRUE JOSHUA under whom we enter into the rest that remaineth.

**#20. (An interpretation of Heb. ii. 16,
submitted to the reader for prayerful consideration).
pp. 120 - 122**

“For verily He took not on *Him the nature of* angels, but He took on *Him* the seed of Abraham.”

A.V. margin Gr. Reads: “He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.” The R.V. follows the A.V. margin.

A great mass of conflicting opinions will be found in commentaries upon this verse, some seeking to prove that Christ did not *assume* angelic form, but human, some seeking to prove that the passage means that He did not *succour* or *assist* angels, but men. Parkhurst in his lexicon says:--

“The text therefore means that Christ, when He came to redeem us, did not assume a glorious, awful and angelic appearance, but etc., etc.”

This is promptly denied by his Editor who follows with a note:--

“There appears little ground for assigning this sense to *epilambanomai*. Ernesti says that the ancient Greek church always interpreted the verb in this place *to assist*.”

Moses Stuart disposes of the A.V. idea of *the nature of angels* by saying that both *usus loquendi* and context is against this meaning:--

“For the apostle had just asserted above that Jesus took on Him a nature *human*, and it would be a mere repetition.”

Moses Stuart thinks it means “to aid”. Dr. Owen proceeds by lengthy argument and characteristic sub-division to prove the meaning to be “*assumo, accipio*, to take unto, or to take upon”, and that:--

“The apostle teacheth us by it, that the Lord Christ took to Him, and took on Him, our human nature of the seed of Abraham.”

The idea of “relieving” or “helping” is fitly expressed by *antilambanomai* (Luke i. 54; Acts xx. 35; I Tim. vi. 2), but the writer of Hebrews passes by this word. The reader is probably no wiser by all this than before, and we have endeavoured to indicate the exceedingly ambiguous results of past scholarship in elucidating this passage. The A.V. margin and the R.V. indicate the first and last results of all this endeavour. We shall therefore be justified in saying, that as there is no agreement among the learned themselves, we must turn once more to the fountain head. One writer complains that the other usages of the word “to take hold” do not help him; the reason seems that they do not help his idea of what it means. Let us examine the word afresh, *epilambanomai*.

Matt. xiv. 31.
Mark viii. 23.
Luke ix. 47.
Luke xiv. 4.

“Stretched out His hand and *caught* him.”
“He *took* the blind man by the hand.”
“And Jesus *took* a child.”
“He *took* him, and healed him.”

Luke xx. 20, 26.	"Take hold of His words."
Luke xxiii. 26.	"They laid hold upon one Simon."
Acts ix. 27.	"And Barnabas took him."
Acts xvi. 19.	"They caught Paul and Silas."
Acts xvii. 19.	"They took him."
Acts xviii. 17.	"The Greeks took Sosthenes."
Acts xxi. 30, 33.	"They took Paul."
Acts xxiii. 19.	"Took him by the hand."
I Tim. vi. 12, 19.	"Lay hold on eternal life."
Heb. ii. 16.	"The passage under consideration."
Heb. viii. 9.	"I took them by the hand."

An impartial examination shews that the word is colourless. There is no moral meaning inherent to it. The same word can be used when Christ takes a man by the hand to heal him, as when the Roman soldiers take hold on Simon to compel him to bear the cross. The same word can be used for Barnabas' kindly act in taking hold of Paul to bring him to the apostles, as for the mob who took Paul with the intent to kill him. This characteristic of the word precludes the idea of "assisting, helping, succouring". It also seems to preclude the idea of *assuming*, as in the rendering "assuming the nature of angels". It simply means to take hold upon, whether for good or evil motives and objects.

We have already observed that the A.V. italics make Heb. ii. 16 a somewhat needless repetition. May there not be some meaning which has been on the surface all the while? We believe there is. There is a footnote in the *Emphatic Diaglott* which reads, "For truly it", *i.e.*, the fear of death, or death itself, "does not lay hold of, or seize on angels, but of the seed of Abraham it does lay hold" (*Theolog Ref. and Kneeland*). Those of our readers who are not conversant with the original must know that the "He" or the "it" is contained within the verb *epilambanomai*, and *epilambanetai*, means equally *it*, as well as *He*, takes hold. Let us look at the structure again, verses 14-16 are included together there under one member (wrongly shown on page 60 as verses 14, 15).

C | 14-16. Oneness in death and deliverance.

This member is made up of parts, and we can test the congruity of this new suggestion here.

C 14-16.	A1	The death of Christ.
		The destruction of the Devil who had the strength of death.
	A2	The deliverance of those subject to bondage of fear of death.
		The seed of Abraham laid hold of by fear of death.

With the exception of the fourth line, the emphatic word is *death*. If the A.V. reading be retained it introduces a discordant note. If the idea of "assisting" be adopted it harmonizes with "deliverance", but has no relation with the emphatic word "death". What has Scripture to say about angels and death? Luke xx. 35, 36 says:--

"But they which are accounted worthy to obtain that age (the very pith and marrow of Hebrews) and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, FOR THEY ARE EQUAL TO THE ANGELS."

If the seed of Abraham, and flesh and blood, were laid hold of by the fear of death and thereby brought into bondage, Christ's becoming flesh and delivering them from that bondage is a fitting sequel.

“Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest” (verse 17).

We have already seen that the Lord Jesus “tasted death” and in the garden of Gethsemane His soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death. Three times He prayed with reference to that awful cup. Heb. v. 7 tells us that He was heard for His piety. There is a direct connection between Gethsemane and the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ in Heb. v. It is an expansion of Heb. ii. 16-18. Since Christ has come and died and risen again, such words as II Tim. i. 10 can be written:--

“Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath on the one hand rendered death powerless (same word Heb. ii. 14) and on the other hand illuminated life and incorruptibility through the gospel.”

Those who once were subject to bondage can now look death in the face and say, “O death, where is thy sting?” We submit this interpretation to the judgment of our readers and shall be glad to hear from any who may search out the matter more thoroughly.

#21. Propitiation and the Pilgrim (ii. 17, 18). pp. 148 - 152

“For which reason it behoved Him to be made like to His brethren in all things (*kata panta*), in order that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, with a view to making a propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. ii. 17, 18).

“All things” here is *panta*, a word liable to much abuse, for although it may seem a very forceful argument to emphatically say, “God say All things, and that does not admit of exception”, we find that this very epistle interprets its own language for us, and definitely teaches that “all” does not necessarily mean “all” in our sense of the word.

Heb. iv. 15 returns to the theme of Heb. ii. 17, 18:--

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one having been tempted in all points (*kata panta*) like (see ii. 17) as we are, SIN EXCEPTED.”

This is important. The temptations referred to in the epistle to the Hebrews in which Christ so fully shared, like the temptations of Abraham (Gen. xxii.), and the children of

Israel in the wilderness were trials of faith, *not temptations to sin*; thus the “all points” are by no means universal.

The word *homoioō*, “to be made like”, gives us *homoioiotes*. This comes in the parallel verse (iv. 15), where we read that Christ as the high priest was “in all points tempted like as we are”. The actual wording is *pepeirasmenon de KATA panta KATH homoiotēta*, “having been tempted according to all things according to a likeness”. Heb. vii. 15 contains the only other occurrence of the word in the N.T. The fact that the Saviour stooped not only to our humanity, but to endure its trials and its sorrows, is emphasized as one of the chief of His high qualifications as the true, merciful and faithful high priest. His work here is twofold. In the things pertaining to God—expiation for sins of the people; in the things pertaining to His people—succour for those who are tempted. The *hilaskomai* (“reconciliation” in A.V.) gives us the *hilasterion* of Heb. ix. 5, “the mercy seat” of which Paul said he could not then speak particularly. If we remember that he makes a similar statement regarding the Melchisedec priesthood of Christ (v. 11), we shall perceive that the subject before us is fuller and deeper than we at first might suppose.

In the doctrine of Romans the mercy seat figures in iii. 25, “Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation*”, but the subject is not exhausted by justification. The mercy seat bore the cherubim of GLORY, and was the very visible throne of God in the tabernacle. There, the Lord said, He would meet with Moses and commune with him. The epistle to the Romans, with its emphasis upon justification, sees the blood-sprinkled mercy seat resting upon the ark which contained the unbroken tables of the law. The epistle to the Hebrews sees the same blood-sprinkled mercy seat, but while it recognizes the teaching of the preservation of the tables of the law, it finds the necessity of “finding fault” with the old covenant in a way which is parallel, though different from the setting aside of the law in Romans. Moreover, Hebrews takes account of the other articles which were covered by that mercy seat and indeed speaks of them before mentioning the tables of the covenant, viz., “the golden pot that had the manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded”.

The manna speaks of wilderness provision. In Christ as high priest the believer finds all that the golden pot of manna means. The epistle to the Hebrews is essentially the book of the wilderness and the pilgrim, and in pressing on to perfection the wilderness experience is repeated. The believer learns that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Faith, not sight, is his characteristic. The rod that budded speaks of a living priesthood. This too is emphasized in Hebrews:--

“And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of DEATH; but this man, because He continueth ever, hath an intransmissible priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever LIVETH to make intercession for them” (vii. 23-25).

Manna from heaven for all our needs, an ever-living high priest to save to the uttermost, this is vitally connected with the thought of the propitiatory and the propitiation of Heb. ii. 17. The LXX commonly rendered the Hebrew word *kopher*.

This word gives us “atonement” in the A.V. The great day of atonement is the type which is in view in Heb. ix.

It will be noticed that the idea of cleansing or purifying is prominent in that chapter. First we have the cleansing of the conscience by the blood of Christ as the antitype of the ashes of the heifer. Then we have the cleansing by the blood, the patterns of heavenly things and the heavenly things themselves being thus cleansed. The opening section of chapter ix. speaks of the high priest who went into the holiest alone once every year, not without blood. This is an evident reference to Lev. xvi. and the day of atonement. The closing section speaks of the Lord Jesus as the true high priest:--

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear a second time WITHOUT SIN unto salvation.”

While the “second time” indicates the “second coming” of the Lord, the meaning which is to be attached to the expression here is the fulfillment of the type in Lev. xvi. Not until the high priest had gone in beyond the veil with the blood of atonement and had appeared *the second time* did the people, typically, enter into the “so great salvation” of Hebrews.

When we look at the context of Heb. ii. 17 we observe that it is covered by the thought of “sanctification” (ii. 11). The only aspect of Christ’s sacrificial work which is given in that great summary of Heb. i. 3 is that of “purification” or “cleansing” (as in Heb. ix.). The sufferings of Heb. ii. are connected with perfecting and glory, delivering from the fear of death, and making propitiation for sins. Here, in Heb. ii. 11, we have the offering of Christ “sanctifying”. In Heb. x. 14 we get to the farthest extreme, where we read that “by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that ARE SANCTIFIED”.

This is what is intended in Heb. ii. 17, 18. First He sanctifies (ii. 11), then He perfects (ii. 17, 18). Here the perfecting work is seen beginning; we shall trace it through its various processes until we read the Hebrew’s equivalent to the prize of Phil. iii., viz., “the spirits of perfected righteous ones” (Heb. xii. 23). This perfecting of the sanctified is the theme of the book, and merely to lift out a verse, as so many do x. 14, is practically to misquote it, for it is not usual for an evangelical or protestant speaker, when using Heb. x. 14, to teach the “perfecting” of those *already* sanctified, but to buttress up some anti-Romish doctrines, truth in its way, but not the truth of that verse.

It will be noticed that ii. 18 leaves us with the thought of “succour in temptation”, and not “salvation from sin”. Babies are “unskillful”, i.e., “untested” or “untempted”, but perfect ones have their senses “exercised”. The pilgrim journey is one beset with temptations, but all for the good of the tempted. The Lord will never fail them; perfect sympathy exists between the great high priest and the tried saint. He Himself has suffered, being tempted; He can succour those who are tempted. Failure therefore is simply lack of faith, not lack of provision. This we shall see more clearly when we enter upon the examination of chapters iii. and iv.

To summarize. The four steps towards perfection are:

First.—Sanctification.

Second.—Realization of the oneness existing between the risen Lord and His people.

Third.—Consciousness that the one who had the strength of death can no longer hold us in bondage.

Fourth.—That complete provision, both for sins on the one hand (Lev. xvi. deals with the sins of a people *already* redeemed and separated), and for wilderness temptations on the other hand, has been made in Christ.

While some of the figures used may not fit the church of the One Body, the blessed realities are for all saints in all times.

“If we walk in the light the blood cleanseth us from all sin We have an advocate He is the propitiation” (I John i., ii.).

#22. The Heavenly Calling and Profession (iii. 1). pp. 187 - 190

The first word of Heb. iii. is *hothen*, which properly means “from whence”. The idea intended by its use here may be expressed by saying, “Seeing that things are thus (as indicated in Heb. i., ii.) then I ask you to consider the One who is both apostle and High Priest of our profession.” The title High Priest is one which most believers will associate with Christ, but how few realize His equal glory as THE Apostle!

One of the special aspects of the Gospel according to John is to set before us Christ as the Apostle and High Priest. John’s Gospel is divided into two sections, the first being the outer and public ministry (i.-xii., Apostle), the second the inner or private ministry (xiii.-xxi., High Priest). Both sections begin with a reference to “His own”. “He came to *His own*, and *His own* received Him not.” “Having loved *His own* that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” Here in this thirteenth chapter we see the Apostle and High Priest.

“Jesus knowing that He was COME FROM GOD”—The Apostle.
“And WENT TO GOD”—The High Priest.

This is repeated in the wonderful seventeenth chapter:--

“Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast SENT”—The Apostle.
“I am no more in the world I COME TO Thee”—The High Priest.

The fact that Christ was the *sent* one is the burden of the Gospel. It is *aionian* life to recognize Him as the *sent* one (xvii. 3). The disciples are marked by the knowledge that

Christ was the *sent* one (8). The oneness of the Father, the Son, and the saint, so marvelously indicated in verse 21, is with the object that the world might believe that the Father *sent* Christ. This is repeated with the added words, all reminding us of Heb. ii., "That they may be *perfected* into one, and that the world may know that Thou hast *sent* Me".

It was no new thought to the Hebrews that Messiah should be the Apostle, or the *sent* One. In Isa. xlviii. 16; and lxi. 1 the Hebrew equivalent is used. According to Isa. xix. 20 the exodus from Egypt is to be repeated: "He shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and He shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt". Moses was evidently a "sent one".

"Come now therefore, and I will *send* thee unto Pharaoh."

"This shall be a token unto thee, that I have *sent* thee."

"I AM hath *sent* me unto you."

"The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath *sent* me unto you" (Exod. iii. 10, 12, 14, 15).

It is possible that Moses had the promised Messiah in view when he said to the Lord, "Send now I pray Thee by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send" (Exod. iv. 13). The immediate result of this continued hesitancy on the part of Moses is the mention of Aaron, destined to be the High Priest. Moses apparently forfeited this office, and instead of his holding the office both of Apostle and High Priest this was now to be shared with his brother. Great as Moses was, and great as every Jew held him to be, all must confess that know the truth that He who combined the two offices in His one Person was greater. Thus it is that Moses is introduced in chapter iii. Christ has already been seen greater than angels. He is now seen greater than Moses: then greater than Joshua, greater than Aaron, and greater than all the offerings of the law.

Christ is here called the Apostle and High Priest of our "profession". What is the idea contained in the word "profession"? (*homologia*). Hebrews uses the word three times:--

"The Apostle and High Priest of our *profession*" (iii. 1).

"Let us hold fast our *profession*" (iv. 14).

"Let us hold fast the *profession* of our faith" (x. 23).

Seeing that it is the profession of faith, the word indicates something which is subsequent to faith, parallel with "the things which accompany salvation". We view Christ here not as Redeemer, but as Apostle and High Priest of our profession. This profession is further illustrated by the use of the cognate *homologeō*.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and CONFESSED that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. xi. 13).

"Let us go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips CONFESSING to His Name" (Heb. xiii. 15).

Here the two references emphasize the stranger and pilgrim character of this profession of which Christ was Apostle and High Priest. For this other-worldly character see I Tim. vi. 12, 13:--

“Fight the good fight of faith (fight = same word “race” in Heb. xii. 1) and hast
professed a good profession before many witnesses (witnesses=same word as Heb. xii. 1)
. . . . Christ Jesus, who testified before Pontius Pilate the good confession.”

It is evident by the balance of the words that the “good fight” is parallel with the “good confession”; and seeing that the “fight” is the same as the “race” of Heb. xii., the titles “Apostle and High Priest of our profession”, and “The Captain and Perfecter of faith”, have much in common. As the Captain He was the Apostle, the Sent One. As the Perfecter, He was the High Priest, who went back to God. The “profession” being the profession of “faith” is another view of the particular aspect of faith exhibited in Heb. xi.; in other words the whole theme revolves around the idea of pilgrim walk and perfecting. The holy brethren are exhorted to “consider” Christ as the Apostle and High Priest of their profession. In close association with the final reference (x. 23) recurs the word “consider”. This time however the exhortation is to “consider one another” in view of the approaching day. These holy brethren are addressed as “partakers of the heavenly calling”.

A superficial exposition, which is ever ready to seize upon some verse to refute “Ultra-dispensationalism”, whatever that may mean, says:--

“Here is the same word that is used in Ephesians, therefore the Hebrews were members of the One Body, and the whole dispensational distinction is exploded.”

Readers of *The Berean Expositor* know full well that the peculiar and exclusive character of the dispensation of the mystery rests upon *positive* Scripture (e.g., Eph. iii.) and not inference, and further that the words of Eph. i. 3, 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; and vi. 12, have a special feature to be found nowhere else—but this we leave.

It is essentially in harmony with the perfecting of the pilgrim character, that those addressed should be called “partakers of the heavenly calling”, and that heavenly calling needs no further exposition than is given in Hebrews itself to make its scope and position clear to us.

“Heavenly.”

- A | Partakers.—Now.
 - a | iii. 1. Partakers of heavenly calling. Christ not ashamed.
 - b | vi. 4. Partakers of holy spirit.
- B | Place. The Tabernacle.
 - c | viii. 5. The shadow of heavenly things.
 - d | ix. 23. The heavenly things themselves.
- A | Partakers.—Then.
 - a | xi. 16. The better country--a heavenly, God not ashamed.
 - b | xii. 22. The heavenly Jerusalem (Holy City).

If we trace the teaching associated with this word, we are led on through participation of the “gifts”, which were anticipations of the world to come (vi.), and from the shadow to the real tabernacle “heaven itself”, to the heavenly country, and heavenly Jerusalem. Heb. xii. 18-21 speaks of Moses, verses 22, 24 of “Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant”. Connected with the latter is the perfecting of those who were sanctified. There we see them, “the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven”. These are associated with “the spirits of perfect righteous ones” and the “innumerable company of angels”. How any can confuse such a description with the Right hand of God *far above* all principality and power is beyond our understanding. So far as we are concerned we see a decided difference and keep it so.

It was the consciousness of this “heavenly calling” that supported Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, enabling them to “confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth”. As we have pointed out before, there is a close parallel of principle between Hebrews and Philippians, and the consciousness of the “high calling” in Phil. iii. enables the believer there to count all things loss, and make the same confession of faith.

Let us remember what is connected with “confessing to His name” (Heb. xiii. 13-16) and the many passages which link suffering with future glory.

The Hope and the Prize. (*Second Series*).

#1. A consideration of the circumstances of the times of “Philippians” with those of to-day. “The Handicap.” pp. 21 - 24

Many exercised believers have felt how exceedingly slender is their likelihood of attaining to the standard set before them in the epistle to the Philippians. This is well, for in direct connection with the theme of race and crown the apostle concludes: “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”. There is, however, a great difference between a due recognition of our frailty and a spirit of despondency. God has *also* appended to the theme of the race and the crown a second conclusion:--

“There hath no trial taken you except what is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will with the temptation also make the end, that you may be able to bear up under it” (I Cor. x. 13).

As we read the epistle to the Philippians, we become conscious that the atmosphere and the conditions under which the church at Philippi were exhorted to seek the prize differ in many essential features from those obtaining to-day. While the epistle is not addressed to the church as such but to the saints in Christ Jesus, we must not dismiss as of no account the remaining words of the address, “with the bishops and deacons”.

The church of the One Body holds the Head and each single member of that body as a joint or band should minister the one to the other; there is no such thing within that body as the distinction between clergy and laity. Those who were bishops and deacons were men specially qualified to help the church, particularly in the matter of “teaching” and “taking care of” the church of God (I Tim. iii.). No church could be anything but better for having such men as described in that chapter, and the Philippians, being blessed with such, possessed great advantages over the individual believer of to-day.

There is also a strong emphasis upon the *collective* effort of the saints in the epistle to the Philippians. The apostle himself thanks God for their fellowship in the gospel, and tells them that in his bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel they all were partakers of his grace (Phil. i. 6, 7). Even though the personal desire of the apostle was “to depart and be with Christ”, yet he chose the alternative of remaining with the believers “for their furtherance and joy of faith”. What this must have meant in the way of example and encouragement we can only dimly surmise. These Philippians were exhorted to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (i. 27). They were exhorted to have the same love and to be of one accord (ii. 2, iv. 1, 2). Prisoner though the apostle was, and isolated as he always must have been, yet he can rejoice in Epaphroditus not only as a “brother”. But also as a *fellow-worker*, and *fellow-soldier*.

Further, Epaphroditus was a link between the apostle and the Philippians, for he was also “your messenger”. When the apostle urged the Philippians to follow his example he could use the word “become *fellow*-imitators of me” (iii. 17). The emphasis upon fellowship in this epistle is worth noticing:--

<i>Sugkoinōnēsas.</i>	“To have fellowship” (iv. 4).
<i>Sugkoinōnōs.</i>	“Fellow partakers” (i. 7).
<i>Sugchairo.</i>	“To rejoice together” (ii. 17, 18).
<i>Sunzugos.</i>	“Yoke fellow” (iv. 3).
<i>Sullambano.</i>	“Assist together” (iv. 3).
<i>Summimētas.</i>	“Fellow imitators” (iii. 17).
<i>Summorphos.</i>	“Conformity” (iii. 21).
<i>Summorphizomai.</i>	“To be conformed” (iii. 10).
<i>Sumpsuchos.</i>	“Equal soul” (i. 2).
<i>Sunstratiōtēs.</i>	“Fellow soldier” (ii. 25).

Here is fellowship in suffering, in labour, in joy and in spirit, here the apostle and the Philippians together could press on the pathway of victory.

We now pause for a moment to remember that in the correspondence observable between the four prison epistles II Timothy echoed Philippians. Let us turn to that epistle to learn of any charge that may have come over the external circumstances of the subject of the Prize. Let us begin with a further tabulation of the words which introduce the idea of fellowship:--

<i>Suzaō.</i>	“To live together” (II Tim. ii. 11).
<i>Sunapothnēskō.</i>	“To die together” (II Tim. ii. 11).

Here we have two references only, which have nothing to do with the subject, as they refer to the position of the believer by grace, without reference to the question of the subsequent faithfulness, service or reward. It is evident that the atmosphere of II Timothy is essentially different from that of Philippians. Here isolation and a solitary fight is more the condition. Let us trace this as we did the fellowship in Philippians. First of all there are no bishops and deacons addressed. While *rule* characterizes the first epistle to Timothy, with its reference to behaviour in the church of God, bishops, deacons, the place of women in the assembly, widows, etc., *ruin* (as far as corporate testimony is concerned) is the characteristic of the second epistle:--

“This thou knowest, that ALL they which are in ASIA be turned away from me”
(i. 15).

The house of Onesiphorous stands out as a blessed exception (II Tim. i. 16-18). Timothy also must take this separate stand:--

“If a man therefore purge himself from these (false teachers), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work”
(II Tim. ii. 21).

Timothy's fellowship is to be with "those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart". Serious opposition to the truth is predicted (ii. 25, 26), culminating in the "last days" with a "form of godliness"; "from such", continues the apostle, "turn away". The charge which he gives to Timothy in the fourth chapter points essentially to a lonely and isolated stand:--

"Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season.....for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.....they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. iv. 2-4).

Still the loneliness continues:--

"Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas HATH FORSAKEN ME.....only Luke is with me.....bring the cloak and the books, especially the parchments.....at my first defence NO MAN stood with me, but all FORSOOK me" (II Tim. iv. 9-22).

The second epistle suits the period *in which we live*. Churches there are by the thousand, but, in spite of all that the votaries of each peculiar assembly may bring forward, the true church has disappeared from the face of the earth. All the existing assemblies from the great apostate church, down through every grade and variety of connection with, or separation from, this world's patronage, manifested in the presence of every variety of ministry or in its absence, in the claim to gifts or the denial of them, in a plethora of ceremonies and observances as well as in their entire absence, no collective company of saints now represents the church. At best these companies provide convenient opportunities for testimony and worship, and association with the purest may often prove a snare.

Whereas the pathway for attaining to the Prize in the days of Philippians was one of blessed *fellowship*, the pathway to-day is one of blessed *loneliness*. The essentials of the conflict remain the same, and He who shall sit upon the Umpire's throne (the *bema*, the seat of the umpire at the races and athletic sports) alone knows the just and equal terms in which the handicap can be fixed; before therefore we can fully understand the scriptural teaching of *The Hope and the Prize*, the altered conditions of II Timothy must be studied. We therefore hope to turn our attention to this epistle which deals with the last and perilous days, so that the reader may not be left in uncertainty either as to the nature of the conflict, or the terms of its triumphs.

#2. The Prize and the Crown. pp. 56 - 59

We noticed in a general way in our opening article the change that had come over the character of the testimony between the days of “Philippians” and those of “II Timothy”, and suggested that this change may possibly influence the conditions relating to the prize. We will, before proceeding further, show that II Timothy deals with a similar phase of teaching to that of the epistle to the Philippians, and then we shall be able the better to compare or contrast the two sets of teaching.

The central thought of Philippians is expressed in the word *Prize*. While this word does not occur in II Timothy a close parallel nevertheless exists, to which we now draw attention. Timothy, in the early part of chapter ii., is addressed under three figures:--

The Soldier. The Athlete. The Husbandman.

THE SOLDIER.—The good soldier has not only to fight, but to “endure hardness” (ii. 3). What this hardness may involve verse 9 indicates, where the same word is used, “Wherein I *suffered trouble* as an evil doer, even unto bonds”. Once again in this short epistle the apostle speaks to Timothy as to enduring hardness, “But watch thou in all things, *endure afflictions*, do the work of an evangelist” (iv. 5). The good soldier merges with the preacher in the case both of Paul (ii. 9) and Timothy (iv. 5).

The word “good” in ii. 3 is not *agathos*, but *kalos*. Three connected things are spoken of as *kalos* in this epistle:--

1. The special revelation of God’s purpose entrusted to Paul (i. 14).
2. The servant of the Lord under the likeness of a soldier (ii. 3).
3. The contest, or race (*see* Heb. xii. 1, 2), rendered “fight” (iv. 7).

The *good* deposit. The *good* soldier. The *good* fight.

Here we have another link between the soldier and the preacher. This time we learn that the preaching is of a special character, and this helps us to understand something of the nature of the “hardness” which those who preach or teach this aspect of truth will have to endure.

The next item to observe in connection with the good soldier is given in ii. 4, “No man that warreth *entangleth* himself”. The word *emplekō*, through the Latin, gives us the English “implicate”. This entanglement has to do “with the affairs of this life”. Roman soldiers were not allowed to engage in commerce, and the apostle alludes to this fact here. The word “life” here is not *zōē*, but *bios*. *Bios* sometimes has the force of “the means of supporting life”, “the livelihood”.

“Even all her *bios*, her means of supporting life” (Mark xii. 44).

“Had spent all her *bios*, living” (Luke viii. 43).

“He divided unto them his *bios*, living” (Luke xv. 12).

“Hath this world’s *bios*, goods, means of living” (I John iii. 17).

While the believer must seek to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to provide for his own, to labour with his hands, etc., he must guard against any tendency to becoming “entangled”. His wilderness experiences are to teach him that man doth NOT live by bread alone. The moment the means of livelihood entangle the believer he ceases to be a “good” soldier, and bids fair to lose in the “good” contest. A mistaken notion, largely spread by hymnology, is that every believer is of necessity a soldier of Christ. This is not the case. It is the last phase of ripe experience. It comes last in the epistle to the Ephesians (vi. 10-17).

THE ATHLETE.—The figure changes from a soldier to an athlete. “And if anyone contend in the games” (*athleō*). This is a figure which the apostle has elaborated elsewhere:--

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And everyone that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.....lest.....I myself should become disapproved” (I Cor. ix. 24-27).

The closing word, wrongly translated “castaway”, is echoed in II Tim. ii. 5. “He is not crowned, unless he contend lawfully.” Any who have entered for a race, or engaged in sports, will know that no amount of prowess, skill or endurance can avail a competitor who does not “strive lawfully”, or in modern terms, “breaks the rules”.

THE HUSBANDMAN.—This third figure is introduced to emphasize the truth that the prize or the crown is the result of achievement. “The husbandman must first labour, before he can be a partaker of the fruits” (II Tim. ii. 6).

As to the comparison of the teaching of the two epistles, Philippians and II Timothy, we notice that whereas the word “soldier” does not occur in Philippians, FELLOW-soldier does (ii. 25). Athlete does not occur, but FELLOW-athletes does (i. 27; iv. 3). This word (*sunathleō*) translated “striving together” and “laboured with” does not occur anywhere else. Here is an essential difference between the conditions under which the Prize and Crown might be obtained. Philippians abounds in fellowship, II Timothy is marked by loneliness. “Forsaken”, “turned away from me”, “no man stood by me”; these are the expressions we meet in II Timothy. Most believers who seek to hold the good deposit, the mystery, walk solitary paths. Since Philippians was written the contest has become one of solitary, individual, scattered combatants. “Striving together” does not represent the attitude now. It is for our encouragement and strengthening that we draw attention to this change. The Lord Who knows the case fully knows what is the handicap.

After having addressed Timothy, the apostle speaks next of himself. He suffers trouble, or endures hardness for the gospel. Not only so, he patiently endures all things “for the elects’ sake”, and that for a particular purpose, “that they may also obtain salvation, that which is in Christ Jesus, with *aionian* glory”. What that special aspect of salvation may be, and what the accompany *aionian* glory means, is immediately explained:--

“It is a faithful saying; for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him:
If we patiently endure, we shall ALSO REIGN with Him:
If we deny Him, He also will deny us:
If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself.”

Here we have two subjects, allied, but distinct. The first is a question of dying and living. The second is a question of enduring and reigning. The one essential for LIFE is having died with Christ. Subsequent faithfulness cannot make that gift of grace more secure, and subsequent failure cannot remove us from the place that grace provides. The essential for REIGNING is patient endurance. Here, faithfulness and faithlessness count. Here, should we deny Him, He will deny us. The crown will be withheld, nevertheless, He abideth faithful, “saved so as by fire” will prove that to be true. For the sake of clearness we set out the theme as follows:--

II Tim. ii. 11-13.

- A | Living with Christ.
- B | Reigning with Christ.
- B | “Reigning” may be denied. OUR faithfulness counts.
- A | “Living” cannot be denied. HIS faithfulness alone counts.

External conditions change, but essential terms remain. We may not be able to draw up a sliding scale, nor would such a thing be tolerable, nevertheless it is a comfort to know that in these dark days, when the helpful guidance of true apostles, prophets, bishops and deacons is withdrawn, and the encouragement of standing shoulder to shoulder in the fight is no longer ours, that He who searches the reins and hearts can interpret the conditions with perfect accuracy. Paul calls Him “The Lord, the righteous Judge” in connexion with the “crown” to be bestowed “in that day”.

#3. II Tim. ii. 15 a Separating Principle. pp. 91 - 93

We noticed in our last article the distinction which is drawn between *living*, and *reigning* with Christ (II Tim. ii. 11, 12, 13). A few verses further on in the chapter the idea is repeated:--

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ (some readings have “Lord”) depart from iniquity” (19).

The good *soldier* must be clear from entanglement in the affairs of daily life, that he may please Him Who chose him to be a soldier. The *athlete* must observe the rules if he would gain the crown. The *husbandman* must labour before he can taste the fruits. The *believer* who would reign with Christ must patiently endure. So also on the foundation of God the seal is dual. Not only does it say, “The Lord knoweth them that are His”, which is parallel with the words of verse 11, “If we died with Him, we shall also live with

Him”, but it further says, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity”, which is parallel with the words of verse 12, “If we patiently endure, we shall also reign with Him”. The words which are engraven upon this seal are found originally in a most solemn context.

There are three men whose sins are so characteristic of the last days that they are mentioned together by Jude, and separately in the first epistle of John and in the Revelation, viz., Cain, Balaam and Korah. Cain was of that wicked one and slew his brother, and is a type of the world, for the passage immediately adds, “marvel not if the *world* hate you” (I John iii. 12, 13). Balaam is linked with Jezebel and the profanities of the Apocalypse Beast. Jude connects three different items with these three men. “The WAY of Cain, the ERROR of Balaam, the GAINSAYING of Korah” (Jude 11). This element of opposition which attaches to the name of Korah is seen in II Tim. ii. 24, 25:--

“The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patiently bearing up under evil, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.”

That is one kind of opposition. It is not hopeless for the verse concludes:--

“If God peradventures will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”

There is another more fatal kind of opposition indicated in the next chapter and associated with the perilous times of the last days. These are “ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth”. These are likened to the Egyptian Magicians who withstood Moses. These resist the truth. These are connected with “a form of godliness”, and there is nothing left for us to do but “from such turn away”.

The reader may wonder what all this has to do with the seal set upon God’s foundation. In Num. xvi. we have the record of Korah’s rebellion. When Moses heard Korah’s words he fell upon his face, and in his reply gives the first words of the seal:--

“And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the Lord will shew who are His” (5).

When the morrow came, and the dreadful decision was to be made, Moses gives the second part of the seal:--

“Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men” (26).

This principle of departure not only applies to those like Korah, and those who have merely the form of godliness, it also applies in modified form to believers. This we find in the words that immediately follow in II Tim. ii. 20:--

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earthenware; and some on the one hand for honour, and some on the other hand for no honour.”

First let us be clear on this point. All the vessels are in the one great house. They are all the property of the One Master. In doctrinal words they are all saved, and are found in verse 11. Some however are unto honour, while others are unto no honour. The word

“dishonour” is too strong. Simple lack of honour is the meaning. Some vessels will be specially delightful to the Master. These will be at His hand on the table. Others will never have the honour of His smile, they never leave the kitchen or the scullery. The Apostle now applies his figure—

“If a man therefore will thoroughly purify himself from these things (of verses 16-18, 22, 23), he shall be a vessel unto honour, having been sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (21).

The “profane and vain babblings” (ii. 16), and the “foolish and unlearned questions” (ii. 23), must be “shunned”, and avoided. Equally emphatic is the first epistle to Timothy. “Refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness” (I Tim. iv. 7). The reason for this care is revealed in the two remaining quotations:--

“Neither give heed to fables and interminable genealogies, which minister questions, rather than a DISPENSATION OF GOD (*see* texts) that is by faith” (I Tim. i. 4).

This passage by giving the later reading shows the seriousness of the charge, the next particularizes what that dispensation of God is:--

“O, Timothy, keep that which is *committed to thy trust*, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of that falsely named *gnōsis* (knowledge)” (I Tim. vi. 20).

What that is that was committed to Timothy we must look into later. One more word is needed here. In II Tim. ii. 14 there is a reference to striving about words and subverting the hearers. In verse 16 there is the command to shun the profane and vain babblings. These, as we have seen, are a special snare set for the believer who seeks to maintain the truth of the mystery. Verses 14 and 16 speak of the danger to be avoided; what does verse 15 say? Here we read the positive and contrastive statement:--

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

Not a FELLOW-workman, as in Phil. iv. 3, just as there is no fellow-soldier, or fellow-wrestler. All is individual. If we would be “approved” (the positive of the word used by Paul and translated “castaway” in I Cor. ix.), if we would be “unashamed”, if we would be “unto honour”, if we would “strive lawfully” and so be “crowned”, then here is the great separating principle. Rightly to divide the word of truth. This will mean conflict. It will rouse opposition. It will call for patient endurance, but it leads to salvation WITH AIONIAN GLORY.

#4. The Arena (II Tim. iii. 1-13). pp. 123 - 125

The Philippians contested for the Prize in the midst of “a crooked and perverse generation” (ii. 15), and had adversaries who would seek to terrify them, who would judge their very evidence of salvation as so many “tokens of perdition” (i. 28). The Hebrews, as they ran the race set before them, “endured a great fight of afflictions”, and “took joyfully the spoiling of their goods” (Heb. x. 32-35).

Those whose conditions and circumstances fit the times for which II Timothy has been written have their unpeculiar trials which are given as special chapter to their unfolding (II Tim. iii.). The first item that contributes to the afflictions and hardness which must be endured arises out of the state of the “seasons” of these last days. The word translated “perilous” occurs in but one other place, viz., Matt. viii. 28, where it is rendered “fierce”, and describes the state of men “possessed of DEMONS”. The apostle, in I Tim. iv. 1, had already written:--

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter seasons, some will apostatize from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and DOCTRINES OF DEMONS.”

Demon possession having come, its character begins to shew itself, “Fierce seasons will have set in”. The remarkable growth of spiritism and the many doctrines preached and believed in the churches for which no basis exists in the Word of God indicate that these “fierce” times are upon us. The moral state produced by these doctrines is given, and for all who would seek to live godly in such a time nothing but persecution can be expected.

“For men shall be *philautoi* (self lovers), *philarguroi* (money lovers).....
aphilagathoi (without love for good).....*philēdonoi* (pleasure lovers) more than
philotheoi (lovers of God)” (II Tim. iii. 2-4).

The list of characteristics begins and ends with a reference to love. It is punctuated by love of money, no love of good, and love of pleasures. If love be the fulfilling of the law (Rom. xiii. 8-10), yea, the first and great commandment of the law (Matt. xxii. 34, 40), then these words characterize lawless times. If in the blessed three, faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest, if love never faileth, then these loveless times have lost their very salt and are fit for nothing but trampling under feet.

Love is the supreme test. Instead of God comes self; instead of His glory comes money; instead of His service comes pleasure. All the other awful things mentioned, such as “boasters, proud, blasphemers”, can all be resolved unto a lack of or misdirection of love. The whole position is summed up in verse 5:--

“Having a FORM of godliness, but denying the power thereof.”

If those who hold the mystery of the faith could do so with a compromising conscience, no doubt their path would be fairly easy; but obedience to the injunction

which immediately follows, “from such TURN AWAY”, brings down upon them the wrath of a condemned Christendom. Christendom has long since “turned away” from Paul and his divine commission (II Tim. i. 15) and is about to be turned away from the truth unto fables (II Tim. iv. 4). There can be no compromise with such—the “turning away” is mutual. We have to discriminate between two kinds of opposition:--

“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the full knowledge, *epignōsis*, of the truth” (II Tim. ii. 25).

These are believers who from ignorance, prejudice or the bondage of tradition oppose themselves.

“Ever learning and never able to come to a full knowledge, *epignōsis*, of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith” (II Tim. iii. 7, 8).

The magicians of Pharaoh were demon worshippers (I Cor. x. 20) and such demon-possessed resistance calls for a different attitude on the part of the soldier of Christ.

We are now ready to understand the teaching of Eph. vi. 10-19. The soldier there described wrestles with “spiritual wickedness” and the armour is to be particularly taken in view of “the evil day”, which evil day II Tim. iii. declares to be upon us. Further, the Prize or the Crown is in view, for the word of verse 13 “having done all” is literally “having worked out all”, the very words used in Phil. ii. 12 and II Cor. iv. 17. The apostle refers Timothy to that period of his ministry when he worked quite independently of the twelve.

“Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me” (II Tim. iii. 11).

He then adds the words which included Timothy and every succeeding generation of faithful ones, “Yea, and all who will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (verse 12).

“Evil men and impostors (jugglers—a synonym for magicians and so balancing Jannes and Jambres) shall wax worse and worse” (II Tim. iii. 13).

To protest against the popular doctrine of demons that the world is getting better, that a millennium brought about by education, sanitation, and human evolution is coming, will be asking for reproach and scorn. Such false teachers will progress, deceiving and being deceived, until truth is entirely exchanged for the lie, fables will take the place of inspired Scripture, and the voice of faith will be like one crying in the wilderness. Such is the arena in which the contest is set for these last days. The whole world deceived and blinded by demons and their teaching; resisting the truth, and unable to grasp it; having but a form of godliness, a very Babylon out of which God calls His own, and then persecution, affliction, reproach, scorn, until the Lord comes and the conflict ceases in His Presence.

The “evil day” of Eph. vi. is upon us. Praise God for the “whole armour of God” wherein we may stand conscious that we are *more than conquerors in Him Who loved us*.

#5. The Weapon (II Tim. iii. 14-17). pp. 156 - 158

“BUT CONTINUE.”—With these words the apostle turns to Timothy as he warns of the evil days to come. The deceivers will “make progress” even as their “profane and vain babblings” will “make progress unto more ungodliness” (ii. 16). Now just as ii. 16 is in sharp contrast with the command rightly to divide the word of truth (ii. 15), so iii. 13 is in sharp contrast with the rightly divided word itself (iii. 14). Timothy is to:--

“Continue in the things which he had learned and had been assured of, knowing FROM WHOM he had learned them, and that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures” (iii. 14, 15).

The one weapon in the complete armour of God is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. vi. 17). “It is written” overthrew the tempter in the wilderness. The “word of their testimony” ranked next to the “blood of the Lamb” as the overcoming power of the conquerors in Rev. xii. While the world makes its so-called “progress”, the believer stand fast to the Word. Such an attitude is unscientific, it is behind the times, it does not fit in with the ever-broadening tendency. As the “image” nears its final phase, “but continue” is our watchword. That in which the believer is to continue is twofold.

THE SCRIPTURESS.—The apostle links his own special teaching which Timothy had learned with the Scriptures. In chapter iv. Timothy is charged to *preach the word*. This word is in iii. 15, 16 called the holy scriptures. The word “scripture” in iii. 16 is *graphē*, meaning that which is *written*. The words “given by inspiration of God” represent the one word *Theopneustos* = “God-breathed”. This is the temper of the steel of our one weapon; it is without alloy. Divine inspiration is predicated not of *some* scriptures, but of ALL. Moses was an historical person; Sinai was a fact; Adam and Eve dwelt in a literal garden eastward in Eden; Noah actually lived and built an ark on dry land; Abraham literally was the father of Israel. If the last piece of the Christian armoury be the sword of the Spirit, the first piece is the girdle of truth.

A further item of importance concerning Scripture is that there is no interval for human interference between the Divine utterance and the human record. “All (*written*) Scripture is God-breathed.” It is not that Isaiah, after a vision, pondered its meaning, worked himself up to a pitch of excitement and translated the disorders of his time into a far-fetched dream of Messianic deliverance. The *written* record that “He was despised and rejected of men” is that which God *said*. Acts i. 16 is a valuable example of the truth of II Tim. iii. 16, “This Scripture.....which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake”. The mouth was David’s, the words were God’s. Then observe the range of these same Scriptures. They are able to make wise unto salvation. They are profitable

for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. They are essential for the perfecting and outfitting of the man of God.

Notice the two extremes that meet together at the Word of God. The “child” (*brephos*, the newly-born babe), is made wise unto salvation; the “man of God” is thoroughly equipped for service—both by the self-same Word. The Scriptures are equally powerful as an instrument of *salvation* (iii. 15) as they are for the utmost demand of *service* (iii. 17), and fill all the interval of doctrine and correction that either and all may need. The apostle here links the special teaching which he gave to Timothy with the Divinely inspired Scriptures. “Let another praise thee” saith the Word. Now note what Peter declares. He says:--

“No prophecy of the Scripture is of its own unfolding, for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Pet. i. 20, 21).

That is Peter’s conception of “Scripture”. Now hear his testimony to Paul:--

“Even as our beloved brother Paul.....hath written unto you.....which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURE” (iii. 15, 16).

Paul’s writings are ranked by Peter with *the other Scriptures* which were not produced by the will of man but by God. When Paul drew Timothy’s attention to his own special set of Scriptures, he was but reiterating the message of II Tim. ii. 15. While all Scripture is inspired, it needs to be rightly divided to obtain the truth for the times. This takes us back to the earlier utterance in chapter i. 13, 14:--

“Have a draft of sound words, which thou didst hear FROM ME.....The good deposit do thou guard.”

So in chapter ii. 2, when speaking of apostolic succession [evangelist (iv. 5), teachers (ii. 2)], the apostle emphasizes his special teaching:--

“The things which thou hast heard FROM ME by many witnesses, *these things* deposit (see i. 14 *parathēkē* and *parathou*) among faithful men, who shall be competent to teach others also.”

If we would have a weapon that will never fail, it must come from the armoury of Scripture, and if we would fight the good fight, stem the tide, and be unashamed in that day, then we must firmly grasp the special revelation committed to the apostle Paul, taught by him to Timothy, and in turn passed on down the age to the feeble company who still perceive some of its glory and grace. If we would “strive lawfully”, we shall “rightly divide the Word”. The Word contains rules for more contests than those into which we are called, and to mis-apply these various conditions spells shame and failure.

If the times are perilous, or fierce, we have a sure word for our evangel and our hope. Let us hold fast the faithful word in this day of darkness, *looking for that blessed hope*.

#6. The Crown Won. pp. 185 - 187

"The crown. . . for all that love His appearing" (II Tim. iv. 8).

These words epitomize the great condition in view of the crown. Taken alone, they may not appear to teach more than a belief in the second coming of Christ. Taken in connection with the teaching of the whole epistle they say much more.

We observed that a misplaced love marks the last days—love of self, love of money, love of pleasure. The love of His appearing is in entire contrast to this. A person may believe the *doctrine* of the "pre-millennial advent", and love self, or love money, or love pleasure; but if he receives "the LOVE of the truth", if he "loves", not a doctrine, but the Personal epiphany of Christ, he will *ipso facto* be placed outside the pale of modernism, and will be called upon to endure hardness. If the believer seeks in any small measure to stand hardness. If the believer seeks in any small measure to stand in the breach and preach the Word committed by Paul to Timothy, he will learn that one great part of his qualification will be the grace to "endure afflictions" (iv. 5).

In II Tim. iv. 6 the apostle uses the two peculiar words of Philippians. For the sake of clearness let us repeat them:--

Philippians.	II Timothy.
i. 23. "Having a desire <i>to depart</i> and be with Christ."	iv. 6. "The time for my <i>departure</i> has come."
ii. 17. "If I be <i>offered</i> upon the sacrifice and service of your faith."	iv. 6. "I am now ready to be <i>offered</i> ."

What he was willing for in Philippians has arrived in II Tim. iv. He summarizes his course. In Philippians he had to say, "Not as though I had obtained". In II Tim. iv. he says:--

"The good fight I have fought, the race I have finished, the faith I have guarded; it remains that there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me in that day and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing."

The crown follows the finishing of the race. The race will be finished, the faith will be guarded, the contest will be carried through by all who love His appearing. Practical righteousness flowing out of imputed righteousness stands on the side of the risen yet rejected Lord. Practical righteousness will not go hand in hand with lawlessness, will not share the platform with "doctrines of demons" or "fables", but will lay aside every weight and run the race set before it. This "appearing" is more fully set forth in Titus ii. 11-15, and is the hope of the one body (Col. iii. 4). Phil. i. looks on to this same day, when it says, "That ye may approve the things that are excellent (parallel with II Tim. ii. 15), that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ" (i. 10).

While the prize of Phil. iii., “the out-resurrection out from the dead”, is not mentioned by name in II Tim., the fact that Paul repeats the words of Phil. i. 23 and ii. 17, and summarizes with confidence his contest and race inclines one to feel that he stood in no doubt concerning that for which he forgot all that was behind, and counted all as loss, “if by any means” he might attain to it.

The prize and the crown are to be distinguished. The former is defined as “being with Christ” and attaining to a special resurrection from the dead. The latter is not awarded until “that day” which is still future. Nevertheless they are to be viewed together. Not all who will attain to the crown will necessarily have also reached the prize, but the one is a step to the other. The difference is rather one of degree than kind. We are not edified by an undue curiosity into these things which Scripture has not enlarged upon; we do well to observe the special conditions under which we labour, notice the weapon which is provided us, set our hearts upon that day of His appearing in glory, and leave both prize and crown with that One who is called “The Righteous Judge”.

We do not pretend to have exhausted the theme. A few indications of the changed environment that now obtains from what existed when Philippians was written is all that we undertook to show. This was done with a desire to help those who may have felt that the *increasing* difficulties and the *decreasing* aids, the failure of corporate testimony, and the lonely battle, made the case hopeless. We direct such to II Timothy that they may see their position and take courage.

It is not possible for any one of us to decide either for ourselves or for others as to the possibility or the probability of having attained either prize or crown. The best thing is humility. To reckon that we are not yet perfected, and for the love of the truth press on.

“Not for weight of glory, not for crown or palm
Enter we the army, raise the warrior’s psalm.
But for love that claimeth lives for whom He died.”

The Eight Signs of John's Gospel.

#1. The Purpose of their Selection.

pp. 1 - 5

We have recently concluded a short series of articles on the *Miracles of the Gospel of Matthew*, and at this point it might be useful to examine the “signs” of John's Gospel before taking up a fresh theme.

John never employs the word *dunamis* = “mighty work”, and only once uses the word *Teras* = “wonder” or “miracle” (John iv. 48), where it is linked with “signs”. *Semeion* (sign) is the word which John uses in his Gospel, and which again in another form meets us in the opening words of the Apocalypse—“He sent and SIGNified it”. We are not to look at the signs recorded by John as exhibitions of power, but rather to seek to discover what they signify. That there is a designed selection is evident, for the six of the eight are not recorded by Matthew, Mark or Luke. Further, while eight are recorded, John bears testimony that “many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book” (xx. 30, xxi. 25). We are not left in doubt as to the inspired purpose for which these eight signs recorded, for John himself gives the fullest explanation:--

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

The eight signs recorded, therefore, are set before us with this twofold object, and not these signs only but practically every sentence in the narrative is written either to give some further detail concerning the person of Christ as the Son of God, or to show the nature of believing and receiving life or rejecting and passing into condemnation. *The Companion Bible* in Appendix 176 sets out in very full detail the correspondence which exists between these different signs. The reader is referred to that for details; a mere summary of the structure must suffice us here:--

The Eight Signs.

- A | ii. 1-11. THE MARRIAGE IN CANA.—The third day. No wine. Glory manifested.
- B | iv. 46-50. THE RULER'S SON.—After two days. At the point of death.
- C | v. 1-47. THE IMPOTENT MAN.—Pool Bethesda. 38 years. Sabbath. Sin.
 - D | vi. 1-14. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND.—Many went back.
 - D | vi. 15-21. THE WALKING ON THE SEA.—Many of the people believed.
- C | ix. 1-44. THE MAN BORN BLIND.—Pool Siloam. From birth. Sabbath. Sin.
- B | xi. 1.44. THE SISTERS' BROTHER.—Two days. Lazarus is dead.
- A | xxi. 1-14. THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES.—The third time. No meat. Lord magnified.

It is important to remember that the Gospel of John is divided into two sections, each commencing with a reference to “His own”:

1. “He came to His own, and His own received Him not” (i. 11).
2. “Jesus having loved His own.....loved them unto the end” (xiii. 1).

The first twelve chapters are devoted to His public ministry, which ended in rejection. Then public ministry ceases, and the Lord spends the time instructing His own. The signs are restricted to the first twelve chapters, with the one exception which occurs after His resurrection. Besides this the occurrences of the word *semeion* are restricted also. Of the seventeen occurrences sixteen occur between chapters ii. and xii., the remaining occurrence being at xx. 30. The effect of the signs is traced through these twelve chapters, and the effect—reception or rejection—is repeatedly given:--

“Many believed in His name, when they saw the signs which He did” (ii. 23).

“Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with Him” (iii. 2).

“When they had seen the sign.....they said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” (vi. 14).

“Many of the people believed on Him and said, When the Messiah cometh, will He do more signs than these which this Man hath done?”

The last three references before the end of the public witness are sad in their revelation of the open-eyed denials of the rulers of Israel:--

“Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many signs, if we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.....then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death” (xi. 47-53).

“For this cause the people also met Him, for that they heard that He had done this sign; the Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after Him” (xii. 18, 19).

“But though He had done so many signs before them, YET THEY BELIEVED NOT ON HIM” (xii. 37).

Then follows the quotation from Isa. vi., parallel with the reciting of the quotation in Matt. xiii. and Acts xxviii., viz., rejection.

In accordance with the purpose for which they are recorded, these eight signs are linked up very intimately with the whole book, while the record is divided into compartments that emphasize the lessons for us in a graphic manner. Before the first sign is recorded comes the wonderful introduction of chapter i. Its testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is as unique as it is emphatic. We believe the true reading of John i. 13 to be “Who was born”, referring to Christ, not “which were born” referring to the believer (*see The Companion Bible, in loco*). Christ was the One Who was born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. See verse 14 continues, “and the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory”—what kind of glory? Kingly? Priestly? No, “the glory AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN from beside the Father, full of true grace”. The witness of John the Baptist is given with great clearness:--

“I knew Him not, but that He should be made manifest to Israel therefore am I come baptizing with water.....and I saw and bare record that THIS IS THE SON OF GOD” (29-34).

The testimony of Andrew is next given: “we have found THE MESSIAH” (41). Nathaniel concludes the witness of the chapter with the words, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God” (49). Then comes the first sign. Immediately before the second sign comes the meeting of the Lord with the woman of Samaria. What is her testimony?

“I know that Messiah cometh.....Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee, I AM HE.....The woman saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did, IS NOT THIS THE CHRIST?.....Now we believe not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ the Saviour of the world” (John iv. 25-42).

Then follow the second and third signs. The third sign is followed by bitter opposition. What was the chief feature of the opposition? Not only was it because the Lord had healed the man on the Sabbath day (v. 16), but “because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that GOD WAS HIS FATHER, making Himself equal with God”. In the verses that follow, the word “Son” with reference to Christ occurs no less than ten times, and the Father thirteen times. Between the central pair, the fourth and fifth signs, come the words, “This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” (vi. 14). At the conclusion of the controversy which follows the fifth sign stand Peter’s memorable words:--

“We believe and are sure that *Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*” (vi. 69).

The crowd voices the common feeling in chapter vii.:--

“Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit when Christ cometh, will He do more signs than these which this Man hath done?.....Of a truth this is the prophet; others said, This is the Christ.....there was a division among the people because of Him” (26, 31, 40, 41, 43).

Chapter viii. concludes with the stupendous claim of Christ, “before Abraham was I AM”. Then comes the sixth sign. The gradual illumination of the blind man’s heart and mind is beautifully set forth in the record. His first confession was, “He is a prophet” (ix. 17). As a result of his loyalty to the Lord who had blessed him “they cast him out”. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him He said unto him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” We might have expected anything but this, some word of sympathy, some word of cheer, but no, the Lord of life desires this soul to believe and live:--

“He answered and said, Who is He, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee; and he said, Lord, I believe; and he worshipped Him.”

The last sign before rejection now draws near, and the Jews come to the Lord and say, “If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly”; as a result of His answer we read:--

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.....for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.....because I said I am the Son of God” (x. 24-42).

The seventh sign contains Martha’s confession:--

“I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”

and ends with the plot against the Lord’s life. With the next chapter the first part of John’s gospel concludes, testifying to the blindness of Israel’s heart and to the glorious person Who had been so fully set forth as the Son of God; for when Isaiah beheld the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, before whom the Seraphim veiled their faces as they cried, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Jehovah of hosts”, the Scripture declares that

“These things, said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” (xii. 41).

A long interval comes between the seventh and eighth signs. The great High-Priestly prayer of John xvii., where come the words, “glorify Thy Son”, still sustains the theme. Even the choice of Barabbas emphasizes it, for the name means “son of a father”. When Pilate declared that he found no fault in Christ, the Jews answered him:--

“We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself *the Son of God*.”

Thomas’s belated but full confession immediately precedes the final sign—“My Lord and my God”.

Such is the setting of these signs. May every reader experience the joy of faith, as we behold this wondrous record of the Father, and increasingly seek to honour the Son as we honour the Father, for He is worthy.

#2. The Marriage in Cana (ii. 1-11). pp. 33 - 35

We have seen that the signs selected by John have as their common object “*that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name*”. Our task is therefore simplified. Instead of seeking in each sign to find out its purport, we have only to seek the peculiar part it plays in the illumination of this double purpose. The first sign is recorded in chapter ii. 1-11, and took place at Cana of Galilee.

We have already observed that the eight signs are in the form of an introversion, the first corresponding with the eighth. *The Companion Bible* points out thirteen items of correspondence. There is in both a *background*. In the one Nathaniel’s faith and his declaration, “Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel”. In the other Thomas’s confession, “My Lord and my God”. (Here *The Companion Bible* gives us Thomas’s unbelief).

The *place* in both signs is Galilee. There is also a reference to the “third” day and the “third” time. Wine is provided in the one case, and food in the other. In the first sign we read, “They have no wine”, in the last they had “caught nothing” and had “no meat”.

In the first we have six water pots, in the eighth 153 fishes. In both there is a command, “Fill the water pots”, “Cast the net”, which is obeyed. The verb “to bring” or “to bear” (*pherō*) occurs in both signs: “And they bear it”, “Bring of the fish”. The verb “to manifest” (*phaneroō*) also occurs in both signs. In the first his glory is manifested, in the last Himself. The value of such details is that they emphasize for us the important part of the sign, and indicate what part of the incident constitutes the “sign” and what the accidental setting.

The title of Christ which immediately precedes the record of the first sign is “The Son of man”. Nathaniel had confessed Him “The Son of God”. The Lord Himself refers to Himself as the “Son of man”. This title carries with it the idea of rule and dominion forfeited by the first man. The title occurs twelve times in the Gospel which is suggestive of its association with Israel.

If we read the narrative of this sign without reference to the preceding chapter we shall begin talking about the “third” day and its type, resurrection. If, however, we pause to ask what the primary meaning of the words of ii. 1 may be, light will be thrown upon its true typical character. The words, “And the third day”, indicate a continuance of reckoning. In chapter i. we read of four successive days, which link up the waning ministry of John the Baptist with the opening ministry of the Lord.

“The day following” (i. 43); “The next day” (i. 35); “The next day” (i. 29). Now, as i. 29 says, “The *next* day”, i. 19-28 must indicate the day previous. This gives us four days in all. The first day is the day of John’s confession, when he took no honour to himself but ascribed greatness to the coming Messiah. The second day John sees Jesus and says, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world”, and also contrasts his baptism with that of the Lord’s. He concludes this second day’s testimony with the words, “I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God”. The third day John again says of Christ, “Behold the Lamb of God”. This results in two of his disciples following the Lord. One of these proves to be Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, who first found his own brother Simon and said, “We have found the Messiah, that is, the Christ”. The fourth day the Lord goes into Galilee and calls Philip: and Philip find Nathaniel, and Nathaniel confesses that Jesus is the Son of God and King of Israel.

The marriage in Cana was therefore the SEVENTH day of this record. This is typical. Here the opening scene is a Marriage just as Rev. xix introduces Rev. xx. With the “Marriage supper of the Lamb.” As the Lamb of God he had already been heralded, though for the time His glory must be veiled. Some of the disciples of Christ who were invited with Him had been disciples of John the Baptist. It would be necessary to teach them that a dispensational change was indicated by the personal ministry of the Messiah. Weddings and wine are quite foreign to the witness of John the Baptist. They harmonize

with the message of Christ. John is the Friend of the Bridegroom, but Christ is the Bridegroom Himself.

The instruments of the miracle were the six water pots “after the manner of the purifying of the Jews”. Again the new dispensational note is struck. That which was O.T. ritual is changed into the pledge of millennial joy. He the Son of man and Son of God has come, in order that all types shall have their completion and all promises their fulfillment.

His first miracle “manifested forth His glory”. It is not a miracle merely of compassion or mercy. It foreshadows coming glory. “His hour was not yet come” (ii. 4); and although that hour must come, wherein the Son of man must be lifted up, nevertheless glory must follow, for so it is written. The last miracle before His own death and resurrection was at the tomb of Bethany. Here, however, in this opening sign He manifests His glory at a marriage; His glory was manifested in that He supplied their lack. They had “no wine”. We are not told what effect this sign had upon the guests or the bride and bridegroom. We are told, “His disciples believed on Him”.

This sign has been recorded in order that we might believe:--

- (1). The Jesus is the Christ.
- (2). That He is the Son of God.
- (3). That believing we might have life through His name.

The miracles which He did were the evidence of His Messiahship. This we have already seen in Matthew’s Gospel. They are further given to reveal Him as the Son of God. This one in particular is a miracle of creation. What is ordinarily accomplished by the slow process of vegetable growth and development is here performed instantaneously at a word from Him. To believe Him is to receive life. Here life is indicated “more abundantly”. Not water for purifying, but wine that maketh glad the heart of God and man. We are perfectly certain it was not the wine that is a mocker, that biteth like a serpent, respecting which Scripture itself testifies, “whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise”.

#3. The Ruler's Son (iv. 46-50). pp. 65 - 67

The first and last signs bring before us the nation's need. There is a failure of supply which can only be met by their Messiah. The second and seventh signs emphasize sickness and death, death being mentioned in these two alone.

The first sign was given on the seventh day of the record. In the second sign restoration takes place "at the seventh hour". Seven disciples figure in the last sign (xxi. 2). We shall find this element emphasized still more in the signs that follow. It is a genuine part of the symbolism. The nation's restoration to joy and the marriage feast will take place in the Sabbath that is coming, the seventh thousand years of this world's history. So likewise will their being received back as alive from the dead.

Possibly, if the words of verse 43 stood alone, no symbolic meaning would be attached to them, but they appear again in the corresponding seventh sign, and unitedly compel one to think of Hos. vi. 1-3, viz.:--

"After two days He will revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

The passages are:--

"After two days He departed" (John iv. 43).

"He abode two days.....after that saith He to the disciples, Let us go into Judea again" (xi. 6, 7).

This period prophetically covers the 2,000 years of Israel's death as a nation, and indicates the millennium as the day of Israel's revival and new life. To the same period refer the words of Hos. xiii. 14:--

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues: O grave, I will be thy destruction."

The apostle Paul, speaking of Israel's failure as a nation, says:--

"If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but LIFE FROM THE DEAD?" (Rom. xi. 15).

Twice does the nobleman use the words "come down" to the Lord. This may be simply common usage, it may be strictly topographical, it may nevertheless be a part of the sign itself. Over and over again in this Gospel the Lord refers to Himself as the bread which *came down* from heaven. Israel's great cry in the day of deliverance will be:--

"Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest *come down*" (Isa. lxiv. 1).

Israel at the point of death will have no hope of deliverance except from above.

We must however be careful to note the great difference between the second and seventh signs as well as the correspondence that exists between them. In the case of the nobleman's son *healing* is the word, whereas in the case of Lazarus *resurrection* is the one essential. In the second sign the child is "at the point of death", dying of a "fever".

The verb "to heal" occurs but three times in John's Gospel (iv. 47, v. 13, and xii. 40). The last reference is at a dispensational crisis, and is found in the quotation of Isa. vi. 9, 10, a passage fraught with solemn importance. Healing in John's Gospel means not only the physical cure, but the spiritual healing of the nation. Immediately before this quotation is made, the seventh sign has been given. "Lazarus is DEAD." No longer a nation "at the point of death" needing healing is set forth, but a nation dead and buried, needing nothing less than resurrection. In Acts iii. 11 the word "to heal" reappears, with the renewed preaching of repentance. Once more Isa. vi. 6, 10 are quoted in Acts xxviii. 27, this time finally. The time for healing is past, death has come, and Israel must await the hour when it shall hear the voice of the Son of God.

In five out of the eight signs the Lord speaks the word only, and does not touch the subject. There is an emphasis on the power of His word. In the first sign He simply says, "Fill the waterpots with water"; "Draw out now". In the second, "Go thy way, thy son liveth"; and the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him. In the third, in contrast to the complaint of the impotent man that he had no one to put him into the pool, come the words, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk". This is followed by the wondrous words:--

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.....He that heareth My word.....hath everlasting life.....the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

This truth is fully set forth in the raising of Lazarus. Here again we see a second setting forth of the Messiahship of Jesus, and perceive the power of life which abides in His name and which is received by faith.

Readers will sympathetically bear in mind that this series, together with *Fundamental of Dispensational Truth*, is written for those readers who have not as yet progressed far in the study of these things.

#4. The Impotent Man (v. 1-47). pp. 97 - 100

We saw that death was confined to the second and seventh signs, and we shall now see that sin is spoken of only in the third and sixth. It will be observed, moreover, that the second pair of signs intensifies the subject.

In both the third and sixth signs we have a pool, a long standing case, and the Sabbath day. Further, the nature of the spiritual infirmity and blindness is suggested by the reference in each case to the *words* of Moses and the *works* of the Father. Both signs were given at Jerusalem. The pool in the third sign is called Bethesda. The pool in the sixth is called Siloam. In both cases a reference is made to either the language or the meaning of the name “which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda”, “Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent”. Bethesda means “the house of mercy” and here in this sign mercy is seen and heard. Whether the troubling of the water by an angel is to be taken as scriptural truth or whether we have here the record of a popular idea, makes no difference to the value of the story. Israel as a nation were guarded, redeemed, led, taught, and punished by the instrumentality of angels, but the world to come, of which the apostle speaks in Heb. ii., has not been subjected to angels.

Among the many impotent folk who anxiously awaited the troubling of the water was a man who had been in a state of helpless infirmity for thirty-eight years. If the reader consults *The Companion Bible*, Appendix 50, vii. 2, 3, he will see that this is the actual period of the wandering of Israel in the wilderness, which wandering was a punishment for their sin of unbelief. The impotent man is a type of Israel shut out from the promised land, cut off from *aionian* life. To this man comes the word of power:--

“Arise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the Sabbath” (John v. 8, 9).

The epistle to the Hebrews deals with the actual historic wandering in the wilderness, and speaks of the “rest” that remaineth, which rest is a *sabbatismos* (See Heb. iii., iv.). Here we have therefore at the pool of Bethesda the type of Israel’s restoration. The man who was healed being cross-questioned by the Jews confessed that he did not know who his benefactor might be. This is paralleled in the sixth sign, where the neighbours and the Pharisees cross-questioned the man concerning his benefactor. Commencing with “a man that is called Jesus”, he is led on at length to the confession that Jesus was the Son of God.

We shall see the prophetic significance of the sixth sign later, but it is already obvious to any student of the prophets that in both of these signs Israel’s restoration is set forth. The bigotry and hatred manifested over the “desecration” of the Sabbath revealed the utter darkness of the minds of these leaders of the people.

Let us spend a moment to survey the Lord’s doings on the Sabbath. In Matt. xii. 1-8, where the word first occur, the Lord shows how vastly different was his understanding of

the Sabbath from the strait-laced formal conception of the Pharisees. Out of this controversy comes the first great truth, that we do well ever to keep in mind. "The Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath day."

The next truth to emerge from the crafty questioning of the Pharisees is that it is lawful "to *do good* on the Sabbath". Mark in his Gospel adds one item that must not be omitted here:--

"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath" (Mark ii. 27, 28).

If we glance back again to Matt. xii. we shall see that this latter sentence is there connected with "mercy and not sacrifice"; in other words, the Sabbath is the day of healing, of mercy, of the beneficial effect of the redemption made by Christ. It is fitting therefore that the impotent man should be healed at the "House of Mercy". We shall see also how fitting the pool of Siloam was when we come to the sixth sign. Luke while recording the incident of Matt. xii. gives a further illustration of the importance of the Sabbath.

A woman bound by Satan for eighteen years is loosed from her bond on the Sabbath day. The Lord gives special emphasis to the fact that the woman who was "made straight" was a "daughter of Abraham". The Millennium is the day in which the seed of Abraham shall be delivered from the long-standing bondage of Satan, when they shall be healed, when their blindness shall give place to sight, when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice that awoke Lazarus (the seventh sign), when the marriage feast shall be set, and the "new wine in the Father's Kingdom" shall be tasted with joy, when the 153 fishes shall all be gathered to the shore with net unbroken.

In John v. 17 the Lord refers to the Father's works, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". The meaning of this statement is that up till the ministry of Christ the Father had wrought for Israel, "hitherto" meaning "until now". From the commencement of the ministry of the Son the Father wrought through Him. This truth comes out again in John ix. 4, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day". The testimony of Moses is also referred to in both signs.

"There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John v. 45-47).

The Pharisees confess in chapter ix. 29:--

"We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is."

Had Israel really believed Moses, they would have known when Christ presented Himself "whence He is", and their thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering would have ended, and the Sabbath of blessing, the kingdom of heaven which "is at hand", would have dawned. As it was, blindness total and complete is found in the parallel sign. Thus all these signs testify. "No wine" is echoed by the absolute "nothing" (xxi.). "The *point*

of death” is echoed by “dead and buried” (xi.). The thirty-eight years of infirmity are exchanged for blindness from birth (ix.).

A prophetic meaning attaches to the words of Christ when He found the man in the temple, “Behold thou art made whole: SIN NO MORE, lest a worse thing come unto thee”. There will be some who will sin even during the Millennium, and a worse punishment than wandering and dying in the wilderness will befall them. The Millennium must not be confounded with the new Creation. The seventh day is the *last* day of the week, not the first. The new creation follows the age of the Kingdom, and in that new day sin and sorrow shall be found no more.

The first set of signs indicates *what might have been* had Israel repented. The second set indicates *what did and will take place*, for Israel has now entered into blindness and death, from which nothing can save them but the personal advent of their long-rejected Messiah.

#5. The Central Signs (vi.). Feeding of Five Thousand, and Jesus Walking on the Sea. pp. 139 - 142

The signs already considered have been indicative of Israel’s condition and prophetic of the nation’s restoration. The fourth sign (Feeding of five thousand) reveals the way in which this restoration will be accomplished, and leads on to a crisis. It is the last of the series.

The feast of the Jews which is mentioned in the sign is suggestive (“The Passover a feast of the Jews was nigh”), for here we shall read of the blood of Christ, without which no man shall have life. Both of these central signs take place after the Lord had ascended into a mountain. Israel’s restoration is connected with the Mount of Olives both in the prophets (Zech. xiv. 4), the Lord’s own prophecy (Matt. xxiv. 3), and the angel’s announcement (Acts i. 12).

The Lord to test Philip asked him, “Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat”. He replies that “Two hundred pennyworth would not be sufficient to provide every one with a little”. Andrew remarks, “There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes”, but adds, “what are they among so many?” Clearly “buying” or “sharing” will not go far, for there are over 5,000 hungry people to feed. The Lord now says, “Make the men sit down” and then begins, after giving thanks, to distribute the loaves to the disciples. When all had eaten “as much as they would” twelve baskets were filled with the fragments that remained “over and above.” The apostles were thereby also provided with a full supply of food. The effect of this sign upon the multitude was to make them say, “this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world,” and they contemplated taking Christ by force and making Him King. “When Jesus therefore

perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a King, He departed again into a mountain Himself alone.”

Here we reach a point of great dispensational importance. Nothing is clearer than the testimony of Scripture that Christ came to be King of Israel, yet when the multitude contemplated making Him King, the Lord withdrew Himself. The reason is to be found in their motive which is exposed in the sequel. The fourth and fifth signs are so linked together that we cannot proceed to that sequel without dealing with the parallel sign. The night drew on and the disciples entered a boat and “went over the sea toward Capernaum. It was now dark and Jesus had not come to them.” Presently the sea began to rise by reason of a great wind that blew. The other gospels testify to the dangerous character of these storms that sweep the inland seas. About half way across the lake they saw the Lord walking on the sea and drawing nigh unto the ship. This was the first time the Lord had used any miraculous power in His own case. Here we have an anticipation of the Lord as the risen One. In John xx. 19 after resurrection, closed doors were no barrier to the spiritual body of the risen Christ. Here as He walked upon the sea this power is foreshadowed.

The disciples were afraid, but the Lord reassures them by crying out, “It is I; be not afraid”. The actual words of Christ were far more impressive than these. In John viii. 58 He said, “Before Abraham was, I AM”. Here in John vi. 20 He uses *identical language* “I AM, be not afraid”. Here is the true significance of the sign. He that must save Israel, Who alone can satisfy their need, is the “I AM” Who in the days of Egypt originated the first Passover, and is here about to fulfil that wondrous type. When Israel look upon Him whom they pierced and testify of the redeeming power of His blood, they will also say, “this is our GOD, we have waited for Him”. The rising sea and the great wind will be found in Rev. xiii. and Dan. vii. The four winds of heaven when they strive upon the great sea will bring about the day of Jacob’s trouble, yet as the prophet says, “He shall be saved out of it”, saved, as signified here, by the personal coming in the midst of their danger of the Lord Jesus Christ, the I AM of the O.T.

The people who had been fed follow after the Lord, and are rebuked for merely seeking the “loaves and fishes”. The Lord points them to the meat that endureth unto aionian life. Then follows the discourse on the Manna, and the blessed fact that Christ Himself is “that bread of life”. He goes deeper: “the bread that I will give is My flesh which I will give for the life of the world”. Yet further He adds, “Except ye.....drink His blood, ye have no life in you”. Many of the disciples when they heard this said, “This is a hard saying, who can hear it?” When He followed this by emphasizing the elective character of God’s purpose (verse 65) “many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him”. Then comes the climax. To the twelve the Lord says, “Will ye also go away?” and Simon Peter bears his abundant testimony that he at least has learned *the* lesson of the signs:--

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of aionian life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (verses 68, 69).

Thus the central pair of signs turn from Israel's need to the person of the Messiah Himself, their only hope.

Each set of four signs is complete however in itself. This is quite compatible with the existing correspondence already pointed out on page 2 of this volume. Briefly they may be set out thus:--

Israel's		A		No wine.—Fully supplied.
Condition at		B		At the point of death.—Seventh hour.
the		B		Thirty-eight years.—Sabbath.
First Advent.		A		No bread.—Fully supplied.
Present interval.				
Israel's		A		The Sea.—I AM.
Condition at		B		The born blind receive sight.
the		B		The dead and buried receive life.
Second Advent.		A		The Sea.—It is the Lord.

#6. The Man Born Blind (ix.). pp. 167 - 170

With this miracle we commence the corresponding signs of the second series. The healing of the man born blind echoes the healing of the impotent man who had been in that case for 38 years. In this sign however we are dealing with a type of Israel after the rejection of the Lord had taken place. We have already drawn attention to the intensifying of the conditions of the second set of signs. As this is important and may have been missed, we give again the following figure.

Before Rejection.	After Rejection.
No wine.	Nothing.
At the point of death.	Dead and buried.
Important for thirty-eight years.	Blind from birth.

While the Lord tells His disciples that the cause of the man's blindness was neither his own sin nor that of his parents, the dispensational application is found in the closing of the chapter:--

“For judgment I am come into the world, that they which see not might see: and that they which see might become blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”

We observed in our consideration of the corresponding sign that John is careful to tell us what the name of the pool (*Bethesda*) was in the Hebrew tongue. Something similar occurs again in this sign. “Go wash in the Pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation

Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed and came seeing” (verse 7). The narrative of this remarkable cure is held up half way for the sake of the meaning of a name. That name therefore must have a bearing upon the meaning of the sign, otherwise the parenthesis is unwarranted.

SENT.—Is the reader aware that around this word the whole of the Gospel of John is written? that *the sin* of Israel was the rejection of the Sent One, just as their salvation will be found in His reception. As the two words rendered “sent” occur some sixty times we can only give an indication of their usage.

“He whom God hath *sent* speaketh the words of God” (John iii. 34).

“He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that *sent* Me” (John v. 24).

“The works.....bear witness of Me that the Father hath *sent* Me” (John v. 36).

“I came to do the will of Him that *sent* Me” (John vi. 38-40).

“My doctrine is not mine, but His that *sent* Me”(John vii. 16).

In chapters viii. to xvii. the word recurs. In that impressive chapter xvii. the word comes seven times:--

“And this is *aionian* life, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast *sent*.”

No one but the Sent One can give life to the dead or sight to the blind. We find in the next sign that the Lord, beside the tomb, audibly addressed the Father because of the people that stood by, saying “that they may believe that Thou hast *sent* Me” (xi. 42). There was much division among the people over this miracle. Willful rejection is now evident. “If any man did confess that He was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (ix. 22).

The questions which were put to the man born blind were used to lead him on in the truth. First he says, “The man that is called Jesus, etc.” (verse 11). Then upon being more directly questioned he answered, “He is a prophet” (17). Upon the third interrogation the man waxes warm, “I have told you already and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?.....if this man were not of God, He could do nothing” (27-33). This could not be tolerated. “Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? and they cast him out” (34). As in the parallel sign, the Lord finds the man a second time and the great revelation is made. “And when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?.....Lord I believe. And he worshipped Him” (35-38). This is immediately followed by the reference to judgment, sin and blindness, already quoted.

There is significance in the fact that the blind man was cast out before he believed that Jesus was the Son of God. The nation as such denied this truth. Only a few and an outcast few saw this light of life. It is also highly suggestive that the same word is used for the action of the Pharisees and of the Lord. “They *cast him out*” (ix. 34). “When He *putteth forth* His own sheep” (x. 4). The Lord overrules the wrath of men. They may cast out, but the Good Shepherd will use their action as a *putting forth* of His own sheep.

Returning for a moment to the body of the narrative, we cannot but feel the sincerity of the testimony of verse 25. The Pharisees said, “We KNOW that this man is a sinner” (24). The blind man replied, “Whether he be a sinner or no I know not, ONE THING I KNOW, that whereas I was blind, now I see” (25). The man’s theology was perhaps lamentably crude. Yet he knows “one thing”. We in our turn may not be able to answer all the questions which tradition, hatred, or ignorance may put to us; but “one thing” we know too. Here is a fixed, subjective, personal commencement. This is not creed, but conviction, not theology, but truth, not so much light, as it is life. If there is an element of vagueness in the words “The man that is called Jesus” in verse 11, there is none in the concluding portion of the statement, “I went and washed and I received my sight”. His knowledge of the Person of his Saviour grows constantly upwards from “The man that is called Jesus” to “a prophet”, “a man of God” to the “Son of God” and “Lord”. His sight was immediately and completely given. He did not as one on another occasion “see men as trees walking”, he “came seeing”.

If we collect the testimony of Scripture concerning the blindness of Israel and consider the testimony alongside of this sign, we shall see much that is parallel and prophetic. Let us praise God for the revelation given concerning the duration of this condition:--

“Blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. and so all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. xi. 25, 26).

Lessons for Little Ones.

#12. pp. 31, 32

Four titles for sinners are given in Rom. v., viz.,:--

1. Without strength.	\	<i>Negative.</i>
2. Ungodly.	/	
3. Sinners.	\	<i>Positive.</i>
4. Enemies.	/	

The initial letters if taken in pairs spell WE and US. The first is not so bad as the last, yet if a child is too weak to save himself, he will be lost, just as much as if he were an active enemy. God has one remedy for the four classes:--

“Christ died for Us.”

“Christ died for the ungodly.”

“While We were yet sinners Christ died.”

“While We were enemies We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.”

Notice the lesson of the little words in Rom. v.:--

YET (6, 8).—No waiting for us to try to “be good”.

FOR (6, 8).—His death for us.

BY (9, 10).—His blood, His death, His life.

FROM (9).—Wrath.

TO (10).—God.

Shew how “God commendeth His love” (v. 8); trace on what Scripture says of *sinners*. This will shew the nature of the love of God.

#13. Counted, and counted for (Rom. iv. 3-8). pp. 79, 80

In answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostle says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ".

FAITH, OR BELIEVING.—Go through the Gospels and Epistles noting the many references which link salvation, eternal life, justification, etc., with faith or believing. Keep a note of all the passages. Now go through these references again, this time to see who or what is believed. Faith will be found to rest usually in God, His Word, the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn now to Rom. iv. 3-8, "Abraham believed God, and it was *counted* unto him *for* righteousness". Here the faith of Abraham was "*counted for*". Verse 5 uses the term again in connection with faith.

In verses 4, 6 and 8 the words "reckoned" (4), "imputed" (6), and "impute" (8), are all the same as "counted", but observe the essential difference—there is no word "for". Faith is "counted" FOR something else, but faith is not reckoned AS righteousness, for it is not. Reward (4), Righteousness (6), Sin (8), are not "counted FOR" something else, but are "counted" themselves, but faith is only of value when it rests in Christ.

To illustrate this important difference consider a £1 Treasury Note, a 20/- Postal Order, and a Sovereign. The Treasury Note, or the Postal Order, we say are worth £1. But are they worth £1 in the same way that a Sovereign is? Should the Treasury Note be put upon the fire it would cease, but should a Sovereign be placed in the fire it would still present £1 worth of gold. The Sovereign, then, can be "counted" a pound, whereas the paper money can only be "*counted for*" a pound. While the Government pledges itself to honour the Note it is of value, but its value is not intrinsic, its value is relative.

Faith itself is of no more value than making vows, praying prayers, or attempting good works. Faith is only of value because it is connected with the finished work of Christ. That is the bullion in the Bank of God which alone makes faith what it is. Should God at any time link salvation with anything else, faith would contain no saving power of itself.

To carry out thoroughly the earlier suggestion of this paper it is necessary to use a *Concordance*, and the child should be made familiar with one as soon as it has the necessary ability to read and understand. Later on we hope to give some assistance to parents in guiding and encouraging the child to use and appreciate a concordance.

#14. From Darkness to Light, through Blood.
pp. 111, 112

I wonder whether you know the meaning of the Belgian Flag? Its colours are black, yellow and red, arranged in three vertical panels.

The Legend of the

flag epitomizes

B lack	Y ellow	R ed
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the history of the

country and reads

From Darkness to Light, through Blood.

Here we have not only the Belgian Flag, but one which could have been carried by Israel as they left the bondage of Egypt, by the redemption of the Passover Lamb, FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, THROUGH BLOOD. That also is my flag, it is yours too if the Lord Jesus is your Saviour.

Study the Scriptures for the following subjects, viz., SIN is represented by *darkness*. SALVATION is represented by *light*. Such salvation is only accomplished through the blood of Christ.

Studies in the Epistles of the Mystery.

#42. “The law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Eph. ii. 15). pp. 24 - 27

In verse 14 the Lord Himself is set forth as our peace in contrast to the condition of enmity which is brought before us in verse 15. The A.V. leads us to believe that the enmity was abolished in the flesh of Christ, which indeed in a broad sense is a scriptural doctrine as Col. i. 22 and ii. 14 indicate. A close adherence to the wording of Eph. ii. 15 however leads to another conclusion and to a slightly different truth. Rotherham observed the different teaching here, and renders the passage:--

“He in fact is our peace Who made both one, and the enclosing middle wall took down, the enmity, in His flesh the law of commandments in decrees bringing to nought, that the two,” etc.

The two sentences are:--

1. *The middle wall taken down, and*
2. *The enmity in His flesh abolished.*

The middle wall and the enmity in His flesh are the same, both are obstacles to peace, and both were taken down or abolished. The explanation, “the law of commandments in decrees”, is given to throw light upon the nature of the middle wall, and how that could be spoken of as the enmity in His flesh. How could enmity be connected with Him?

When the apostle wished to enumerate the covenant privileges of Israel, he included, as one of their exclusive dispensational possessions, Christ. But can Christ, the One who is the very Head of the One Body, really be included as a peculiar possession of Israel? Yes, within the limitations set in Rom. ix. 5, for there we read:--

“Of whom, AS CONCERNING THE FLESH, Christ came, the One Who is (really) over all, God blessed for the ages.”

According to the flesh Israel have the prior claim to the Messiah. This He recognized during His earthly ministry, for He said to the Gentile woman who came to ask a favour, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”. In the second epistle to the Corinthians the apostle makes a very sweeping statement:--

“So that we, from now, know no one according to flesh (or fleshly distinctions, seeing that Christ died on behalf of all, verse 15), and even though we knew Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know Him (thus), so that if any one be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away, behold they have become new” (II Cor. v. 15-17. Vatican MSS).

What is the compelling context of this new vision of Christ? “Having judged this”, namely, the death for all (not only for Israel), the new creation, and the reconciliation.

This is parallel with Eph. ii. Circumcision in the flesh made with hands erected a middle wall of partition; but Christ viewed as risen from death, as the One in whom the reconciliation found its fullest scope (ii. 16), where the *new* creation was expressed in the *new* man (“for to create in Himself”), is above and beyond all these “old things”. In the dispensation of the Mystery they have “passed away”, new things have come into being. Christ in the flesh was a minister of the circumcision; Christ in the spirit is Head over all things in the new creation.

So it will be observed that the enmity was in His flesh, and that so long as Christ according to the flesh was preached the enmity between Jew and Gentile remained. The Gentile believers had been “in the flesh”, and in that sphere were aliens and strangers “without Christ”. During the period covered by the Acts of the Apostles, we see the gradual opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles.

What were these “ordinances”? Looking at the modern use of the word some have interpreted this passage almost exclusively as of *Baptism* and the *Lord’s Supper*. We cannot see anywhere in the Scriptures that either of these ordinances stood as the “middle wall of partition”, for believers from either Jews or Gentiles were baptized and partook of the Lord’s Supper. The fact that the word here translated *ordinances* is the same which is rendered *decrees* in Acts xvi. 4 does not by any mean prove that they are one and the same, for those decrees were delivered to the church by Paul, and the record continues, “and *so* were the churches established in the faith”. The epistle to the Colossians uses very similar words to those in Ephesians, and there these ordinances are more particularly indicated:--

“And ye are in Him filled full, who is the Head of all principality and authority, in whom ye have also been circumcised with a circumcision not made by hand, in the putting off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ, having been buried together with Him in baptism, wherein also ye have been raised together, through the faith of the inworking of God, who raised Him from among the dead; and you, being dead to trespasses and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, He hath made alive together with Him, having freely forgiven us all trespasses, having blotted out that which was contrary to us, and removed it out from the midst, having nailed it to His cross; having put off the principalities and authorities, He made a public example of them, triumphing over them by it” (Col. ii. 10-15).

The decrees or ordinances of Eph. ii. constituted a middle wall and enmity. This wall was destroyed. The parallel reference in Col. ii. shows these decrees as being “against us” and “contrary to us”; they were “taken out of the midst” and “nailed to His cross”; there need be no mystery about the matter, for the passage goes on *to define* these ordinances for us:--

“Let no man *therefore* judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect to a feast, or new moon, or Sabbath, which are a SHADOW of things to come, but the BODY is of Christ” (Col. ii. 16, 17).

Heb. x. 1 tells us that the law had the shadow of good things to come, and here all the ordinances or decrees of the law, which so emphasized the difference between Jew and

Gentile, are set aside, annulled and cancelled, the enmity gone, the middle wall broken down.

Perhaps nothing crystallized the difference between the Jew and Gentile so much as did the decree of circumcision. This is particularly dealt with both in Eph. ii. and Col. ii., and it is pointed out in Eph. ii. as being “made by hand”, so linking it with Col. ii. by the contrast in the words “made without hands” of verse 11. So essentially does the member of the One Body find his all in Christ, that bondage of any kind except the holy bond of peace and love (Eph. iv., Col. iii.) must be intolerable. Therefore the apostle proceeds to speak of the decrees and ordinances of the “vain deceitful philosophy” which sought to hold them apart from Christ the Head (Col. ii. 18). He concludes by referring again to the decrees, this time not the decrees of the law of God which are binding until He repeals them, but the decrees of the world, such as:--

“Touch not, taste not, handle not, all which things are consumed in the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men” (Col. ii. 21, 22).

A decree of God is placed upon the same level as the decree of man, when once that decree is undispensational. This is plain not only from the chapter before us, but from Gal. iv. 8-11:--

“Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods, but now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years, I am afraid for you.”

These Galatians, as heathen, never rendered obedience to the observance of Israel’s days, months, seasons, and years, yet their turning back from the liberty of Christ to the bondage of law was all one and the same in essence, as turning back to the weak and beggarly elements of heathendom. The member of the One Body is free from ALL decrees, whether ordained by Moses, by Elders in Jerusalem, or by his fellow man; One is his Head, Christ, and for the glory of His name he submits to no other.

Those believers who seek to know Christ after the flesh, whose only title for Him is the too familiar “Jesus”, may of necessity find themselves still involved in that enmity which is connected with the flesh. We know but ONE BAPTISM and ONE BODY, we are bound to observe no day in particular (this does not give licence to outrage other believers’ feelings concerning Sunday), but gladly seek to walk worthy before the Lord and our fellows. The atmosphere of reconciliation and new creation is too pure, too heavenly, for anything pertaining to the flesh. Here grace reigns, enmity is abolished, and Christ Himself is our Peace.

**#43. “The New Man and Peace” (Eph. ii. 15, 16).
pp. 49 - 52**

The middle wall (*mesotoichon*) being abolished, the enmity being slain, the decrees removed from the midst (*mesōs*), handmade distinctions gone and the flesh as a factor eliminated, there can be only one conclusion at which we can arrive, This conclusion is arrived at in the words “dead to trespasses and sins”, “buried with Him in *the* baptism”, “putting off the body of the flesh”, and “the creation of the one new man”. With that creation peace dawned, “in order that the two (‘the both’, 14-16) He might create in Himself unto one new man, making peace”. The creation here, like the reconciliation of verse 16, is limited to the one body, but it is a blessed foreshadowing of that new creation which in a fuller measure is yet to be.

“THE TWO.”—Here are the elements out of which the new creation is fashioned. The context leaves us in no doubt as to who are intended, the Gentile in his darkness and distance, and the Jew in his pride and privilege. The uncircumcision and the circumcision, the sheep and the dogs. The flesh is so entirely removed from this sphere, that God’s own institutions which were connected therewith are destroyed.

“CREATION.”—Creation indicates something new. II Cor. v. and Rev. xxi. bear their testimony to the passing away of the *old*, and the making of all things *new*. It is utterly inconsistent with the meaning of the word “create” to bring over anything “old” unchanged. If anything is repeated it will be adjusted to its new setting (*see* Gen. i.). There are not a few who through failure to discern things that differ and things that excel desire a list of commands and prohibitions, as though they were still under law. Everything pertaining to the flesh must stay behind as we rise together with Christ into the new creation. This settles the question of baptism and the Lord’s supper, the decrees of Acts xv., the order and gifts of I Corinthians, and the many other questions which half-grasped truth begets. The church of the one body is a new creation, and is “in Himself”. He is our peace, and “in Him” are all our blessings.

“ONE NEW MAN.”—The new man is created during this present dispensation, the chaste virgin was in process during the last (II Cor. xi. 2), and the bride appears in the next. How can there be any consistency in the language of Scripture if the one new man is the BRIDE? What one might call the balance of truth is becoming increasingly impressed upon us. The privilege of belonging to the church of the one body carries with it the responsibility to fellow-members and to the living Head; to belong to a new creation places one outside of much that pertains to this life. To be created a new man involves a corresponding repudiation of the old man. This we may see in chapter iv., where the balance of truth is emphasized by the balance of literary structure.

In Volume II & III, page 92, appears the structure of Ephesians as a whole and chapter ii. 1-18 is seen to be balanced by chapter iv. 17 - vi. 9. There in both sections we have the two walks contrasted, in both good works find their place, and in both we have the doctrine and practice, position and responsibility connected with the new man

and the new creation. In chapter ii. the church as a whole is viewed as the creation of Christ, in chapter iv. the practical endorsement of that truth is taught:--

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation *the old man*, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and that ye put on the *new man*, which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness.”

The link also with the doctrine of the one body is here too; this being the practical section, we read that it is commanded to the *members*:--

“Wherefore putting away the lie, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are *members* one of another.”

The same balance of truth is observed in the sequel. As a result of the creation of the new man we read, “so making peace”. This new man has been created “of the twain one”; it is a unity. So in chapter iv. the unity of the Spirit is associated with the bond of peace.

Do we appreciate with any fullness the blessedness of the words, “so making peace”, “the bond of peace”? On every hand there is faction and strife, the sects are divided by the things of the flesh, one great company distinguish themselves by a name associated with baptism, another, with endless schisms within itself, makes the Lord’s table the rock upon which it splits. One great assembly styles itself Episcopalian, another Presbyterian (both referring in the N.T. to the *same* office!).

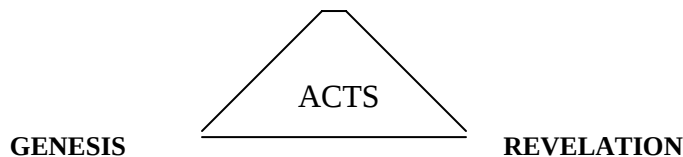
As we pass in review the well-nigh endless divisions of Christendom, ordinances and ministry ever come uppermost. What a blessing to be able with a good conscience to say “none of these things have any further place with me”. Possibly Scripture is clear over the question concerning baptism, possibly they who contend for believers’ immersion are right—but to the members of the one body, the question has ceased to be of vital interest. Possibly they who continue to use the unleavened loaf at the Lord’s table are scriptural, but the church of the one body is not associated in any way with the memorial of the new covenant. Possibly any priestly pretensions on the part of any man are not only unscriptural but anti-scriptural, but such controversies cannot occur within the bond of peace, for there all are members one of another, and all hold the one Head, all build one another up in love. With the destruction of the cause of enmity (the flesh), peace is assured.

This peace is the direct outcome of the creation of the twain, one new man. The attitude of the one body towards all men is peace, “we wrestle not with flesh and blood”; though this seems to be outside the faith and practice of many. The feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace indicates that our warfare is not on earth; even in the days of the kingdom the Lord said, “My kingdom is not of this world, else would My servants fight”, how much more is the church which is His body “called into peace”! Not only is there perfect unity existing between the erstwhile conflicting parties, more glorious still, the truth is unfolded, they, together, are *reconciled to God*. To say merely that they are reconciled to God, however, is stating but half of the truth, two actions, the one related to the other, are also described:--

1. That He might create the two in Himself, one new man, making peace.
2. That He might reconcile the both in one body to God, through the cross, having slain the enmity in it.

Reconciliation to God is of “both in one body”. The teaching of Matt. v. 24, “first be reconciled to thy brother”, is here observed. It is not the individual reconciliation of a sinner as a result of the forgiveness of his sins, but the reconciling of “the both in one body”. They are reconciled the one to the other, the middle wall has been broken down, they, in that capacity, can now be reconciled to God.

We are inclined to read the words “by the cross” with the concluding sentence, “by the cross having slain the enmity in it”, *it* referring to the body in its divided state of enmity. The parallel in Col. ii. 14, 18 seems to confirm this. Be this as it may, reconciliation with God, and peace between individual members is the blessed condition of the church which is His body. Not even the millennial reign of the Prince of peace foreshadows the goal of God like the mystery hidden during the ages. The Bible, taken as the record by a truncated pyramid.



The church of the one body with its glorious Head is by itself a complete things, and can well be represented by a small pyramid:



This foreshadows the end, and when placed upon the line indicating the rupture of Acts xxviii. “fills up the word of God” (Col. i. 25), completes the design and shows that the future vast new creation is but an enlargement of this smaller and superheavenly one, which is now manifested in the church which is His body. Surely no words are more fitting a conclusion than those of Col. iii. 15:--

“Let the peace of God rule (as an umpire) in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, AND BE YE THANKFUL.”

#44. Access to the Father (Eph. ii. 17, 18). pp. 84 - 86

Not only has peace been *made*, but it had been *made known*. The Lord Who made the both one “came and preached peace to you which were far off and peace to them that were nigh”. The two conflicting parties are variously named according to the aspect of truth which obtains at the time. So far as covenant relationship is concerned one is the circumcision, the other the uncircumcision. One is Israel, the other Gentile. Here the one is the far off, the other the nigh. Both the far off and the nigh needed the work and the proclamation of peace. The nigh were only such in the flesh. They had no access in the spirit. The “far off” is another title of the Gentiles in their dispensational disability.

In the days of His flesh the Lord categorically declared that He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The apostle, in Rom. xv., declares that Christ was a minister of the circumcision, and that he, Paul, was a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. In II Tim. i. 8 he says, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner.

The words “and came and preached” indicate that the ministry of the Mystery is as much the personal word and work of Christ, as the Sermon on the Mount or the Parables of the Mystery of the kingdom of heaven. It brands as unscriptural that sentiment which prefers the “words of Christ Himself” to those of Paul, for Paul links the testimony of his Lord with his own prison ministry. When Paul made known the blessings of the mystery, Christ Himself “came and preached”. It is of the first importance that we realize that Christ has spoken since His ascension. Eph. iv. 8-13 says:--

“When He ascended up on high He gave gifts unto men some apostles for the perfecting of the saints till we all come in the unity of the faith”

Peace constitutes the gospel of the Mystery, the word *preach* meaning to preach the gospel. “And having come, He announced as glad tidings, Peace.” The order is suggestive. Whoever would have put the Gentiles first before this period? Here the “far off” are named before “the nigh”.

This evangel made known the blessed fact of access. “For through Him, we, the both, have access in one spirit to the Father.” When we examined chapter i. 1-14 we observed how the Father, the Son and the Spirit divide the passage into three sections of truth. We find the same apportioning in the verse before us.

Through Him One Spirit The Father.

The recipients of the blessing are named “We, the both”, and the blessing itself is “access”. It is the sequel of acceptance. Those who are accepted in the Beloved of necessity have access to the Father. Those who have been reconciled in *one body* experience the blessed fruit in *one spirit*. Experimental access to the Father cannot be enjoyed except in this one spirit. Unity there must be in the presence of the Lord. The

sevenfold unity of the Spirit commences with one Body, and one Spirit, and concludes with one God and Father of all.

Access to the Father is the sum, the concrete expression of peace. This is seen in Rom. v. 1, 2, “We have peace we have access”. Sin means distance. The flesh means distance. Dispensational infancy means distance. The new man means access. This access is “through Him”. He is our peace, He made the both one, He abolished the enmity, He created the new man, He reconciled the both in one body to God, He came and preached peace, He alone can give access to the Father. The truth of John xiv. is the truth of Eph. ii., “I am the true and living way, no man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME”.

We noticed in our last paper that “the both in one body” were reconciled to God. Let us notice in this that it is “We, the both”, who have access to the Father. The reconciliation is to God, the access is to the Father. The reconciliation is basic, the access experimental. We miss much by not recognizing our membership of the one body. Reconciliation is here for the body as a whole. Access is for the both. They who would comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height must do so “with all saints”. Those who would wield the weapon of “all prayer” must watch with all perseverance and supplication for “all saints”.

The one body is related to God as the Father, as the sevenfold unity indicates, “One body one God and Father”.

The unity of the faith comprehends the Son of God, the perfect man. The perfect man is a title of both the Son of God, and the church which is His body. It is for this reason, among others, that the Father is so closely related to the body.

We draw near the verge of a profound depth in these things. When the Word became flesh, John says, “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father”. We do not read in John i. 1, “The Word was with the Father”, but “the Word was with God”. It is the Son who is in the bosom of the Father. The church of the one body as a whole is like the Son. The Father is the Father of His Son’s body, both in the natural and the spiritual world. What a calling and what a position—“Having predestinated us unto the SONSHIP”. Servants may not at all times have access. Young children also are not always free to enter, but full-grown sons, those whose measure is the perfect man, those who constitute the body of Christ, these have the access. May we believe this “gospel”, may we preserve this spirit, may we know what it is to be made nigh, and to draw near.

With this blessed position the section opened, “But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who once were far off are made *nigh by the blood* of Christ” (13). With this gracious privilege the section closes, “For through Him, we the both have *access by one Spirit*, unto the Father” (18). It is a blood-bought privilege. The spirit follows, but never precedes the blood. As in sanctification, “The oil upon the place of the blood” (Lev. xiv. 28), so here. When we do rise to the privilege of access, we find that it is after all but an experimental

acquaintance with our position in Christ and with Christ when we were “made to sit together in heavenly places”. The epistle to the Hebrews teaches the same thing:--

“Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the holiest by the *blood of Jesus*, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh let us draw near” (x. 19-22).

It is echoed in I John i. 7:--

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, *and the blood of Jesus* Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

“Let us draw near”, for we have been “made nigh”.

#45. “The Holy Temple” (Eph. ii. 19-22). pp. 116 - 119

Access unto the Father concluded the section of Eph. ii. which dealt with the distance, the “far off” character of both Jew and Gentile in the flesh. The far off are made nigh; the both made one. Reconciliation, peace and access are now their privilege in place of distance, enmity and the middle wall of partition.

Without our attempting an elaborate literary structure the expansion of the theme will be observed if we notice the following:--

Eph. ii. 11-22.

A		Once.—Strangers and aliens	\	
B		Now.—Made nigh.	\	<i>Body</i>
		C		Unity.—The two made one.
		D		Access.—In one spirit.
A		No longer.—Strangers and aliens	\	
B		But.—Fellow citizens.	\	<i>Temple.</i>
		C		Unity.—Fitly framed together.
		D		Habitation.—Of God in spirit.

The value of this method of study is that it keeps prominently before us the main theme. We Gentiles once were aliens, but we are such no longer. This is the primary subject. The intermediate verses (13-18) explain how this can be. It is accomplished by the blood of Christ, the destruction of all enmity in the flesh, the creation of the new man, and leads up to access in one spirit to the Father. The second section (19-22) starting with the altered position of the Gentiles “no longer aliens”, leads on, not this time to our access to God, but to His dwelling in us. This important order is observed in the two prayers of Ephesians. In Eph. i. 15-23 the believer is directed outside of himself to the right hand of God and sees what he is “in Christ”. In Eph. iii. again as a sequel to

access (*see* verse 12) and a united family (15), the believer's attention is directed within, and the inner man is prepared so that "Christ may dwell in the heart by faith".

The figure which is used of the company of believers thus made nigh is "The Body"; the figure used of the company of believers in whom God makes His dwelling place is "The Temple". This thought of the body and the temple is not new. Christ Himself "spake of the temple of His body" (John ii. 21). To the Corinthians the Apostle wrote as practical truth that which God was to put into operation as doctrine in Ephesians:--

"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ he that is joined to an harlot *is one body* but he that is joined unto the Lord *is one spirit* Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (I Cor. vi. 15-20).

There are some who see nothing more in Eph. ii. 19 than that the Gentiles who once were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel are now given access to that position. Two great objections to this are found in the Epistle, viz., one is the unqualified emphasis upon the new dispensation which Paul ushered in upon the revelation of the mystery, and the other is the presence of the word "FELLOW" in verse 19. When the Apostle unfolded the mystery, as he does in chapter iii., he uses this word to express the great distinctive fact:--

"That the Gentiles should be FELLOW heirs, FELLOW (members of the same) body, and FELLOW partakers of the promise" (verse 6).

So long as we are dealing with the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants of promise, so long must Israel's position be maintained, "The Jew first", the Gentiles being "wild olive branches grafted in". The dispensation has changed. Instead of the flesh we have the spirit; instead of nations and kingdoms we have the church which is His body. In this new sphere the Jew who believes, *equally with the Gentile*, loses all his national and covenanted distinctions. This blessed truth was preached by Christ through the prison ministry of Paul equally to those who were far off (Gentiles) and to those who were nigh (Jews), and while the distinctive character of this Church and dispensation is Gentile, those Jews who were made fellow-members at the beginning, were in no sense favoured above their Gentile brethren. The position of the Gentile in the one body is exceptional, and is designed to fill up the Word of God until the day comes for the breach to be healed and the threads resumed.

There is a great use made in these few verses of the word *oikos*, a house, and its cognates:--

FOREIGNER (ii. 19)	is <i>paroikos</i> (cf. Acts vii. 6, 29).
HOUSEHOLD (ii. 19)	is <i>oikeioi</i> (cf. Gal. vi. 10; I Tim. v. 8).
BUILT (ii. 20)	is <i>epoikodomeō</i> (cf. I Cor. iii. 10).
BUILDING (ii. 21)	is <i>oidodomē</i> (cf. I Cor. iii. 9).
BUILT-TOGETHER (ii. 22)	is <i>sunoikodomeomai</i> (only occurrence).
HABITATION (ii. 22)	is <i>katoikētērion</i> (cf. Rev. xviii. 2).

It will be noticed that the word which is so suggestive of the peculiar blessing of this dispensation, viz., "builded together", occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The

same is true of the other equally suggestive word of this chapter, viz., “made to sit together”. The “together” aspect with its thought of equality is one of the most important keys to the teaching.

The building, so variously expressed, rests on a foundation. For salvation Christ alone is the foundation (I Cor. iii. 11), but in the matter of the dispensational position of the one body the foundation is that of the apostles and prophets. What this means will be more clearly apprehended when we study Eph. iv. 11-16, but a reference to these verses will show that the foundation ministry was that of apostles and prophets, succeeded as II Tim. ii. 2 and iv. 5 indicate by that of evangelist and teacher. Apostles and prophets, however, do not form a substitute for Christ. He still the Chief corner stone. A further link with the body aspect is found in verse 21. There we read:--

“In whom the whole building *fitly framed together* groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.”

In chapter iv. 16 the same word occurs, there translated differently:--

“From whom the whole body (cf. the whole building) *fitly joined together* and compacted by means of every joint of the supply, according to the proportionate energy of each single part, maketh growth of the body (cf. groweth unto an holy temple) unto a building up of itself (the building of ii. 21) in love.”

The temple is the dispensational figure (ii. 21), the body is its practical manifestation (iv. 16). Chapter ii. 21 says, “IN whom all the building *fitly framed together* groweth”; chapter iv. 16, “OUT of whom the whole body *fitly joined together* groweth”.

The temple aspect of these dispensational blessings is *in Him*, the body aspect is *out of Him*. The one is our position, the other our practice. The one grows without reference to any activity, the other grows as it builds itself up, as each of its members ministers to the increase. The one grows *up* from the *foundation*, the other grows *up* into Him in all things which is *the Head*, even Christ. The body is the present position of the church, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all is its future glory.

The Church of the One Body, since the days of Paul himself, has never been a popular assembly. An outside position has ever been its allotted portion, yet who will worry as to access to the meeting places of saints who has access in one spirit unto the Father? Who will repine at the closed doors of temples and tabernacles, when they themselves are a dwelling place, nay, the very innermost shrine for God Himself? If the Gentile could not pass the barrier of the middle wall, the ordinary Israelite equally could not pass the barrier of the second veil. True access is found here in Eph. ii. The shadows are past for us, “the body is of Christ”.

Those who realize in any measure the unspeakable privilege, not merely of entering the true temple, but of being themselves the true temple, will not need much emphasis upon the exhortation to walk worthy. The world and the flesh (Eph. ii. 11, 12) are outside this holy place.

**#46. “Paul, the Prisoner” (Eph. iii. 1).
pp. 145 - 148**

The church of the One Body, reconciled, at peace, blessed far above all the strifes and distinctions of the flesh, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone, growing into an holy temple in the Lord and builded together for an habitation of God in spirit, now becomes a subject of the apostle's prayer. In order to catch the apostle's line of thought the whole parenthesis of iii. 2-13 must be passed over and the prayer of iii. 14-21 read as a direct outcome of the teaching of chapter ii. The church is an holy temple, a habitation of God in spirit. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father.” Before, however, the apostle reveals the subject matter of this second great prayer, he is impelled to make a digression by way of explaining his own peculiar and special relationship with that church.

Here is no merely interested worker or fellow-member, here is one into whose hands the whole dispensation of the mystery has been placed. Apart from the revelation made known to Paul, none knew the mind of God for the present interval. Instead therefore of proceeding straight on with the prayer of his heart, he turns aside at his reference to being “the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles” to explain and (if need be) defend his title. That there is something in this description of himself that rises to the level of an official character appears in this first reference. Paul, the prisoner of the Roman power, and a prisoner by reason of the hatred of his own kinsmen, nevertheless speaks of himself as the prisoner of Christ Jesus. Paul views his imprisonment much in the same light that Joseph viewed the treachery of his brethren:--

“I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life” (Gen. xlv. 4, 5).

Arising out of the temple character of the church are three themes. The first occupying, with the parenthesis, chapter iii., the prayer; the second occupying chapters iv. 1 – vi. 9, the walk; and the third occupying the rest of chapter vi., the conflict. Now, each of these three themes contains a reference to the apostle as a prisoner. (1) The PRAYER, with parenthesis concerning the dispensation, “The *prisoner* of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles” (iii. 1), (2) The WALK, “I therefore the *prisoner* in the Lord” (iv. 1), and (3) The CONFLICT and Mystery, “An ambassador in *bonds*” (iv. 20). The Epistle to the Philippians speaks of Paul's “*bonds* in Christ” (i. 13). The Epistle to the Colossians speaks of Paul as being in *bonds* for the mystery of Christ, and bids them in his parting salutation to remember his *bonds* (iv. 3, 18). The second epistle to Timothy links the testimony of our Lord with Paul His *prisoner* (i. 8).

Four epistles are marked off from the rest of Paul's writings (excluding the personal one to Philemon) by this reference to bonds, and by their distinct and exclusive doctrine. For convenience, we call them the *Prison Epistles*; they contain the truth concerning the One Body.

This prisoner of Christ Jesus had a very positive mission “on behalf of you Gentiles”. In Acts xix. the apostle ended his synagogue witness (8 and 9). In Acts xx. he concluded his ministry which he had up till then pursued. As we listen to his words to the elders of Ephesus, observing how he reviews the manner and matter of his ministry (18-21, 26, 27, 32-35), listening to their grief, “sorrowing most that they should see his face no more” (25 and 38), hearing him foretell the advent of the grievous wolves after his departure, we are impressed with the imminence of a crisis. His ministry is summed up in the words, “Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (21), “Preaching the Kingdom of God” (25), and declaring “all the counsel of God” (27). We may legitimately supplement this summary by adding his further statement before Agrippa. Following upon the heavenly vision on the road to Damascus the apostle outlines the course and the character of his ministry by saying that he:--

“shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles” (Acts xxvi. 19-23).

It is evident, however, from both Acts xx. and Acts xxvi. that the apostle, while conscious of the conclusion of one ministry, was also equally certain that he was about to enter into another. The words “And now” of Acts xx. 22 indicate a change. Before ever he was bound by the chain of Rome Paul could say, “Behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem”. He further went not knowing the things which should meet him there, except that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions awaited him. “But”, he concludes with humble confidence, “of no account make I life precious to myself, so that I may finish my course, even the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (xx. 22-25). That Paul had a two-fold ministry Acts xxvi. 16-18 bears abundant evidence, and it is obvious that the second commission dates from about this time, for so vividly does the apostle recall the Lord’s second appearing to him that he does not say “unto whom He sent me”, but “. . . . the Gentiles, unto whom NOW I SEND THEE”. Paul’s appeal unto Caesar was a step in the fulfillment of the Divine commission.

Acts xxvi. 18 contains in every sentence a foreshadowing of the prison epistles.

“To open their eyes.” “To turn them from darkness to light.” “And from the authority of Satan unto God.” “That they may receive forgiveness of sins.” “Inheritance among those having been sanctified.”	“The eyes of your heart having been enlightened” (Eph. i. 18). “Delivered us from the authority of darkness” (Col. i. 13). “The Prince of the authority of the air” (Eph. ii. 2). “The Rulers of the darkness of this world” (Eph. vi. 12). “Redemption the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. i. 7). “His inheritance among the saints (‘sanctified’)” (Eph. i. 18). “Meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints (sanctified) in the light” (Col. i. 12).
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Reverting for a moment to Acts xx., another most important item of truth appears in the apostle's words recorded in verse 32:--

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to THAT WORD OF HIS GRACE, which is able to *build you up* (Eph. ii. 20), and to give you an inheritance among all those having been sanctified.”

He is leaving these believers, never to see their faces again; he looks forward to his ministry of the gospel of the GRACE of God; he commends them to that word of His GRACE, and in Eph. iii. 2 follows his reference to being the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles by saying, “If ye have heard of the dispensation of the GRACE of God which is given me to you-ward”. It would seem that these Ephesian elders were prepared to anticipate in the unfolding of God's purpose some further revelation of His grace, and such indeed the epistle which bears the name “to the Ephesians” proved to be. Our suggestion is that the apostle does not refer the Ephesians to the Scriptures in general, but to that Word of grace shortly to be announced through this very apostle who was then on the eve of bonds and imprisonment.

In coming back to our original verse (Eph. iii. 1) we are better able to appreciate both the context which precedes and succeeds the statement that Paul was the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. Chapter ii. had made the profound revelation of the grace of God manifested to the far off Gentiles, so full, so rich, that such who were hopeless and Godless in the world become a holy temple in the Lord and the very body of Christ. Chapter iii. continues, as a direct outcome of the statement in verse 1, to speak of the new dispensation given to the apostle under which such blessings were alone possible, viz., “the dispensation of the grace of God”, “the dispensation of the mystery”.

#47. FOR YOU GENTILES (Eph. iii. 1). pp. 177 - 179

We have noticed the meaning and purport of the title of the apostle when he called himself the prisoner of Christ Jesus. This however is not a complete statement, he does not simply say that he was the prisoner of Christ Jesus, but that he was such “*For you Gentiles.*” This is equally true with regard to his next statement. In verse 2 he not only says, “since ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God”, but qualifies that statement with the words, “which is given me *to you ward*”. This was the apostle's one real mission, all else was subsidiary, preparatory and temporary.

In Acts ix. 15 Ananias is instructed concerning Paul, “He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles”. The first missionary journey of Paul, separated by the Holy Spirit for the work, was to the Gentiles—Galatians indeed of the southern portion of the province (Acts xiii., xiv.). His first miracle and his closing warning (xiii. 6-12, xiii. 45-48), emphasize the apostasy of Israel and the blessing of the Gentiles. After Acts xiv. until Acts xxi. the apostle works among the Gentiles, but in

fellowship with Jerusalem. This ministry ceased with his apprehension in the temple. After two years' imprisonment at Caesarea (not the wonders of the coming dispensation) the apostle sailed for Rome, where he made known for the first time the mystery which had been hidden since the ages.

Five is the number of Grace, and five times we read the word *Gentiles* in Ephesians.

Gentiles.

- A | ii. 11. What the Gentiles were by nature, aliens from commonwealth.
- B | iii. 1. Paul's prison ministry to the Gentiles.
- C | iii. 6. The threefold fellowship of the mystery.
- B | iii. 8. Paul's special evangel of the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- A | iv. 17. What the Gentiles were by practice, alienated from life of God.

Once only does the word occur in Colossians (i. 27), where in a context which emphasizes the church which is His body, the dispensation of God "given to me for you", "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations", Christ "the hope of glory". In I Tim. ii. 6, 7 the apostle speaks of Christ, "Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time", and says of himself in connection with this truth, "whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle (here he feels the necessity of a strong statement), I speak the truth in Christ and lie not, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth". The mystery of godliness includes in its rhythmic setting* the line "preached unto the Gentiles" (I Tim. iii. 16). In his final letter, written in view of martyrdom, the apostle reiterates his commission, ". . . . the gospel, whereunto I am appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher of the Gentiles" (II Tim. i. 11); and the deliverance which followed upon his first defence is not considered for its own sake, but for the opportunity for accomplishing his ministry:--

"At my first defence no man stood with me notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that BY ME the preaching might be fully known, and that ALL THE GENTILE might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (II Tim. iv. 16).

Thus he who standing at the threshold of the dispensation of the mystery counted not his life dear unto himself, but had just the one desire to finish his course, could say at the close, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith".

Although we have quoted just a few passages, the number of references which indicate the Gentile character of Paul's ministry are nearly fifty. Further, such expressions as, "which is come into all the world", "which was preached to every creature under heaven" (Col. i. 6, 23), "A ransom for all", "The Saviour of all men", "Who will have all men to be saved" (I Tim. ii. 4-6, iv. 10); and "the dispensation of the grace of God TO YOUWARD", "my sufferings FOR YOU", "the dispensation of God which is given me FOR YOU" (Eph. iii. 2, Col. i. 24, 25) must not be omitted from the number of references.

[NOTE: * - Some authorities consider this a quotation from an early hymn.]

Seeing that this subject with its many and wondrous outworkings constitute the theme of these portions of Scripture, is it any marvel that some, having seen these things, at least in part, feel more and more the burden of making known, by pen and by voice, the claim which, under God, the apostle Paul has upon the ears and the hearts of those who by nature are Gentiles? Is there not, consciously or unconsciously, on the part of many preachers, who otherwise, praise God, still hold fast to the inspired Word, is there not an unexplainable silence, a reticence, with regard to the distinctive message of the apostle to the Gentiles? How many a sermon is preached from a text in Matthew, or the Psalms, or Isaiah, and how vain it seems to hope for one even from Romans, to say nothing of Ephesians!

The day is far spent, the signs of the times indicate to the believer of prophecy that soon the Lord will take up the case and cause of His rejected and downtrodden Israel. If this be so, the opportunities of witnessing to the peculiar grace of God under the terms of the mystery are fast running out. Oh may we, who consider these things, buy up the opportunity, redeem the time, set forth the wondrous message of all spiritual blessings in the superheavenlies, revealed in the gospel as the peculiar blessings of this dispensation of the grace of God TO YOU GENTILES.

Studies in the Book of the Revelation.

#37. The Third Woe and its consummation. (xi. 14-19). pp. 11 - 15

The first *woe* was occasioned by the opening of the abyss (ix. 1-11); the second by the loosing of the four angels bound at the river Euphrates (ix. 12-21).

The first woe synchronizes with the fifth trumpet (ix. 1), the second with the sixth trumpet (ix. 13). We now approach the third woe and the seventh trumpet.

“The second *Woe* is past; and behold, the *third Woe* cometh quickly, and the *seventh* angel sounded.”

So far the parallelism is preserved, but when we read on we become conscious of a change in the order of narration. Instead of some more dreadful judgments falling, heaven rings with the joyful news that at long last:--

“the kingdoms (or sovereignty) of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for the ages of the ages.”

Such blessed news cannot constitute the third woe; we must search for further information. It may be remembered that when we reached the sixth seal “the heavens departed as a scroll.....the great day of his wrath is come.....” The opening of the seventh seal did not lead further into the future that lies beyond the day of wrath. After the solemn silence in heaven for about half an hour, the seven trumpet angels come forward, and again we follow the narrative step by step until the sixth trumpet and its second woe is past, and then again at the seventh the sequence is broken with the same purpose—the supplying of fuller detail concerning the end. Readers familiar with Daniel’s visions will remember the same phenomenon there. The seventh trumpet is evidently pregnant with meaning, for in x. 7 we are told:--

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be consummated.”

We observe here “in the days”, not merely the day, as though this seventh trumpet is protracted: and “when he shall begin, or be about to sound”, again indicating a period of time covered by the sounding of the trumpet. The question arises, if this sounding of the seventh trumpet brings the mystery of God to a conclusion, and places Christ upon the throne of the world, what place in the Divine programme do chapters xii.-xx. occupy? The answer is supplied from several considerations:--

1. We must find a place in this seventh trumpet for unprecedented judgment, for with it is associated the third woe; this would therefore reach forward and include the seven vials of wrath of chapter xv. 7.

2. Verse 18 gives a summary (see below) of the events that fill out the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which upon examination will be found to be chapters xii.-xx. in brief.
 - a. "The nations were angry, and thy wrath is come.
 - b. The time of the dead, that they should be judge.
 - c. And the rewarding of God's servants the prophets.
 - d. And the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great.
 - e. And the destruction of those which destroy the earth."

This summary is followed by the statement "that the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the Ark of His covenant". Then follow lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, earthquake, and great hail.

It will be evident that the time for judging the dead and giving rewards must reach over to chapter xx. The anger of the nations and the failing wrath, together with the destruction of those who destroy the earth, are also found in the chapters that follow. Some look upon chapter xv. 5 as the resumption of the subject, and place chapters xii.-xiv. as episodes, not strictly in chronological order, which lead up to the same point by other ways. We feel that this is unnecessary.

Upon the proclamation of heaven's King war would be made by Michael upon the Dragon. That this is no fancy is seen by reading xii. 9-12:--

"And the great Dragon was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him, and I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, *and the Kingdom of our Lord, and the power of His Christ*: FOR the accuser of our brethren is cast down.....Woe to the earth.....for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath."

Our search has not been fruitless: here we discover *the third woe*. The third woe, the proclamation of heaven's King, and the casting out of Satan therefore synchronize. This settles the position of chapter xii. We must not look upon it as a parenthesis—it is an integral part of the subject. We are also able to say, with tolerable certainty, when the seventh angel sounds, and what time the "days" will cover. Upon the casting down of Satan the woman flees into the wilderness for the space of three years and a half. For exactly the same period the outcast Satan gives his authority and throne to the beast from the abyss (xiii. 5). The aionian gospel will be published at this time also, for one of its statements is "for the hour of His judgment is COME". Again, the fall of Babylon, which occupies chapters vii. and xviii. and leads right on to the Hallelujahs of xix., is linked with these chapters, for another angel follows the herald of the aionian gospel announcing that *Babylon is fallen*.

Chapter xv. introduces the seven angels having the seven last plagues, and these are not poured out until after the beast has arisen (chap. xiii.), for those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name (all found in xiii.) stood upon the sea of glass having the harps of God. Immediately before chapter xii. we read, "and the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen the Ark of *His covenant*". In chapter xv. the wording is a little

different, “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened”. Under the “opening” of chapter xi., where the emphasis is upon the *covenant*, the Lord is seen succouring His own during the time of trouble through which they pass; under the “opening” of chapter xv., where the emphasis is upon the *testimony*, the Lord is seen visiting with unmitigated judgment the Beast and his followers.

Returning to chapter xi. we would draw attention to the R.V. which follows the best texts in verse 17, “We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast”. The A.V. wrongly adds “and art to come”. The Lord *had come*, and that portion of the ineffable name is fulfilled at the sounding of the seventh trumpet. For a fuller exposition of the theme the reader is referred to Volume VIII, pages 40-44.

The several statements, “the Lord, and His Christ”, “the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come”, refer back to the prophecy of Psa. ii.:--

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed.”

“Then shall He speak to them in His wrath.”

“Yet have I anointed my King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

The words of Dan. vii. 21, 22, and 26, 27, seem very fitting here:--

“And I beheld, and the same horn made war against the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.....but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end, and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an aionian kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

The following simple diagram may help the reader to realize the chronology of the seventh trumpet:--

The Time of the Seventh Trumpet, 3½ years.

The woman fed for 1,260 days (xii. 6).

A time, times and a half a time (xii. 14).

The beast has power 42 months (xiii. 5).

The Seven Vials (xv., xvi.).

Babylon falls (xiv. 8).

The final 3½ years of Daniel's to weeks (Dan. ix. 27).

If the above suggestion is true, then it would appear that the breaking of the covenant in the midst of the week (Dan. ix.) is answered by the opening of the temple containing God's covenant. The giving over of the throne and great authority of Satan to the Beast is answered by the proclamation of Heaven's King (xi. 15). It is the date also of the catching up of the man child to God and His throne (xii. 5). The Lord too may descend from heaven to the air immediately after the pouring out of the seventh vial—“and the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air”—and the hope of I Thess. iv. will be realized.

When Satan is cast out of heaven with his angels, the place will be occupied by the Church of the One Body, whose sphere of blessing and service is in the heavenly places, where at present wicked spirits are (Eph. vi. 12).

When Satan loses his authority of the air (Eph. ii. 2), the church of the Acts dispensation will occupy that region.

When Satan is taken and cast into the abyss, the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to Israel.

Thus each section attains its hope upon the ejection of Satan from their destined sphere of glory.

The Mystery of God finishes with the seventh trumpet. That mystery may have several phases and different planes, but all focus in the exalted pre-eminence of Christ.

Thus far we have considered the preliminary statement of the third woe and its consummation. We can now give attention to the various steps which lead to that blessed end, which we hope to do in our next article.

#38. The Man-child caught up to God (xii). pp. 43 - 46

A great sign in heaven appears in chapter xii. This is the first time the word “sign” (*sēmeion*) occurs in the Apocalypse. The sign is that of a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. A contrast is evidently intended with the woman of chapter xvii.:--

“And the woman was clothed (same word as in xii. 1) with purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls.....the woman whom thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the Kings of the earth.”

This city’s name is Babylon, and in it is brought to its head the mystery of iniquity (xvii. 5). Chapter xii. also has the sign of a woman, which also represents a city (and the system for which the city stands). The one is the false, the other the true, the one is supported by the beast, the other is attacked by the dragon. In Gen. xxxvii. 9 the sun, moon and eleven stars represent Jacob, his wife, and his eleven sons. The woman is Jerusalem, the city of David and of Israel. She is represented as being on the eve of giving birth to a child.

Another sign is seen in heaven: a great fiery red dragon, having the insignia of the final phase of Gentile dominion, stood before the woman, ready to devour her child as soon as it should be born. The sun, moon and stars, the woman’s emblems, seems to

indicate a power from heaven. This is in direct contrast with the seven heads and ten horns and the seven diadems, which plainly indicate the powers of the beast that support the woman of Rev. xvii. (*see* verse 3).

The dragon in the sign is said to draw the third part of the stars from heaven and cast them to the earth. This is taken by some to refer to the fall of Satan away back in the beginning, but we cannot see how this fact can come into the story here. There is no necessity to leave the period under view, for the reference to the stars is interpreted in verse 9, “and his angels were cast out with him”, viz., at the moment of the defeat by Michael. The chief interest of the passage however is the man-child that is born:--

“And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and His throne” (xii. 5).

To whom does this refer? Undoubtedly the words in the first instance are prophetic of Christ Himself, as we find them in Psa. ii. In Rev. ii. 26, 27 these words are quoted of the overcomer:--

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father.”

In Volume VII, pages 97-101, we pointed out the way in which the seven churches of chapters ii. and iii. were related to the rest of the book. The reader is referred to the article for the complete statement, argument, and illustration. We now merely extract the portion which bears upon our present study:--

THE THYATIRA CHURCH (ii. 18-29).—The woman Jezebel; the morning star; the rod of iron; the depths of Satan; keep works; faith and patience; false prophetess; her children killed.

THE THYATIRA PERIOD (xii. and xiii.).—The woman clothed with the sun; the twelve stars; the rod of iron; Satan; keep commandments; patience and faith; false prophet; God’s children killed.

The close parallel between the “church” and the “period” in each case provides a valuable key to interpretation. There in the future day to which Revelation refers this man-child is born. This cannot refer to Christ personally, but it can indicate that company of faithful overcomers who share the millennial reign of Christ. The catching up of this man-child to God and His throne precedes the tribulation, it is a complete escape from that day of trouble. In Matt. xxiv. 4-8 we have the beginning of the birth-pains, which are the false Christs, wars, famines, pestilences and earthquakes. These have already been indicated in the opening of the seals. They lead the way for the tribulation under the Beast and false Prophet, and when they reach their meridian, the man-child is born.

After the man-child is caught up the woman flees into the wilderness. So in Matt. xxiv., after the period spoken of as the beginning of birth-pains, which synchronizes with Rev. xii. 2, we hear of affliction and hatred, of offence and betrayal,

of false prophets who deceive. At the same time a gospel activity is indicated witnessing to all nations before the end come.

About this same time the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet will be set up in the holy place. This evidently refers to the image of the Beast, Daniel's prophecy indicates that the setting up of this abomination occurs in the midst of the final seven years there referred to. This would leave 3½ years for the tribulation to run until "the end". So, in perfect harmony, we read that the woman is fed 1,260 days (xii. 6), or (as in xii. 14), "a time, times and a half", in line with Daniel's cryptic utterance. Three years and a half therefore before the end, and before the revelation of the Lord, the man-child is caught up. This is the rapture of the overcomers. Some will be "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass" (Luke xxi. 36). The man-child caught up and escaping the tribulation, the woman who flees into the wilderness, and the remnants of her seed which are attacked by the dragon, cannot possibly represent the same company of people. There are the overcomers who are destined to rule; there is the woman, shielded, fed and protected in the wilderness; there are the seed that are left, who are persecuted. It is evident that some believers are left to endure the fierce wrath of the last days. Our attention however must be kept for the present upon the man-child. Verse 11 adds a detail as to the character of these overcomers:--

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

The *sign* is a child under the menace of Satanic destruction; the *reality* is the faithful testimony of those who loved not their lives unto the death. The dragon waiting to devour is interpreted in verse 10 as "accusing the brethren before God day and night". The moment of the rapture of these overcomers is at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:--

"NOW is come salvation and strength, and the KINGDOM of our God, and the power of His Christ, *for* the accuser of our brethren is cast down" (xii. 10).

The words "our brethren" attract attention. Who is it that say these words? The speaker ("I heard a loud voice saying in heaven") is unnamed, but it is clear, from all other similar references, that it *cannot be a man*. In Rev. xxii. 9 an ANGEL says to John:--

"I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy *brethren*, the prophets, and with them that keep the sayings of this book."

We adopt the translation given in the Diaglott. "I am a fellow servant of thee", sounds a contradiction in English. It means that the angel and John and the brethren are all upon one common level in this aspect. An ANGEL, therefore, appears to be the one who calls the overcomers "our brethren". These overcomers are to be identified with the Church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven (Heb. xii. 22). These have come to Mount Zion (so had the hundred and forty-four thousand, Rev. xiv. 1); and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. This is also said of the overcomers (Rev. iii. 12). These

had also come unto an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly. The casting out of the great dragon to the earth ushers in the third and last woe:--

“Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and the sea! for the Devil is come down, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time” (xii. 12).

The woman is carried away to a place prepared for her, and nourished in the wilderness for the rest of the period until the kingdom is set up on earth. To this period applies the LORD’S PRAYER. “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” These words will be the heartfelt utterance of this persecuted company, and while experiencing again the manna in the wilderness, they will pray with real understanding, and not with vain repetition, “Give us this day *the bread that cometh down upon us*”. The word rendered “daily” in the prayer occurs nowhere else in Scripture, nor, as far as we know, in any writing in the Greek language. It is a word which can only be fulfilled by the repetition of the miracle of the manna, and this is what does take place.

The Scriptures speak of several companies of believers, some ready, some unready, some watchful, some asleep, some like wise virgins, some like unwise, one taken, the other left, one child of the woman caught up to God and His throne, other of her seed suffering the wrath of the dragon, some sheltered in heaven and the secret of His presence, others sheltered in the wilderness. The Church of the One Body, while not connected with these phases of the great plan, should give heed to these differences and seek to profit thereby.

#39. The Two Beasts (xiii.). **pp. 71 - 74**

“The Devil is come down having great wrath”, and the most appalling programme of evil immediately ensues. The R.V. places the opening of chapter xiii. at the close of chapter xii., and follows the critical Greek texts by reading “and *he* stood upon the sand of the sea”, instead of the A.V. reading “*I* stood”. Before attempting to analyze the intricate details of this chapter it will be necessary to look at it as a whole. It is divided into two parts closely related:--

1-10	<i>speak of the beast that arises from the sea.</i>
11-18	<i>speak of the beast that arises from the earth.</i>

These two parts run parallel to one another in detail:--

- A | 1-. And I saw.
- B | -1. A beast rise up out of the sea.
- C | -1-2-. Like unto a leopard, etc.
- D | -2. His authority. Satanic.
- E | 3. The deadly wound healed.
- F | 7. War with the saints.
- G | 9, 10. a | "Let him hear."
- b | "Here is patience."
- A | 11-. And I saw.
- B | -11-. Another beast arise up out of the earth.
- C | -11. Like a lamp.
- D | 12-. His authority. The first beast.
- E | -12-15-. The deadly wound healed; the image worshipped.
- F | -15-17. Death for those who worship not.
- G | 18. b | "Here is wisdom."
- a | "Let him count."

Those who have read Dr. Bullinger's *Apocalypse* will have no difficulty in tracing the origin of this structure. We have altered it in a few minor details only. It will help us to observe these several features more closely. The first beast rises out of the sea, called up by the devil who stood upon the sand of the sea. The sea out of which the beast ascends is evidently the same as seen by Daniel in the vision recorded in chapter vii. of his book:--

"I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds strove upon the great sea; and four beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from the other."

In Rev. xii. one beast arises out from the sea. When the interpretation of this vision is given to Daniel we read:--

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the EARTH."

The "great sea" of the vision can be interpreted of the "earth". This is strange if the literal Mediterranean is intended, but if peoples and nations are symbolized here as in other places, the difficulty vanishes. Daniel next describes these beasts: the first was like a lion and had eagle's wings; the second was like a bear; the third was like unto leopard with four wings and four heads; the fourth was indescribable, it was dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, it devoured and broke in pieces the other three beasts, it was diverse from the others and it had ten horns. John in Rev. xiii. sees only one beast, but immediately we begin to read its description we realize that he saw the nondescript beast which devoured the other three, and is here found with all their characteristics merged into one huge combination of Satanic power:--

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard (third beast) and his feet were as the feet of a bear (second beast) and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (first beast)."

Both are said to have ten horns. Attention is drawn to the leopard having four heads, while the nondescript beast of Rev. xiii. has seven. This difference is accounted for simply by seeing that the other two are added to his own and the leopard's four. These

earlier beasts are *kings*, each having some special feature represented by the lion, bear, or leopard. The beast of Rev. xiii. will be a combination of all these and more.

There is to be observed here a similarity to the final phase of the same Gentile dominion as represented by the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. While *successive* monarchies are positively intended by the various metals (for Daniel thus interprets the parts), nevertheless, when the stone which is Christ's kingdom strikes the feet of the image, the whole image (gold, silver, brass, iron and clay) is smashed at the same time, indicating that at the time of the end Gentile misrule will be concentrated in one awful monster energized by the devil, and Babylon will be its seat of government. As at the beginning, the power, the throne and the great authority of the beast will be those received from Satan. These are given to the beast in exchange for the greatest thing that Satan covets—WORLD WORSHIP. Think of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Satan there shows Christ all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and says, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me". What a tragedy! How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning!

One of the heads of the beast was wounded, or "slain to death", and the deadly wound was healed. This travesty of the resurrection of Christ causes all the world to wonder after the beast, and to worship the dragon. The inner thought of the people is expressed by the words, "Who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him?" We do not wish to be fanciful, yet we are confident that Scripture fully anticipates the end. Military experts, as well as the man in the street, know that the next war is to be a war in the air. Britain's boasted isolation and ocean bulwark have been breached, the invasion of these islands has been considered well-nigh impossible; now we know that the introduction of aerial warfare has broken down all such frontiers. That nation, large or small, which has dominion of the air, will conquer the world. Satan is called "the Prince of the authority of the air" (Eph. ii.). Satan gives his great authority to the beast, the result being that all the world at once recognize his position; "Who is able to make war with him?"

There are indications that the beast will be small and obscure in its origin, but this will matter nothing then. Daniel sees among the ten horns another little horn, which emulates the beast that carries it by plucking up three of the horns by the roots, as the beast had devoured the three beasts before it:--

"The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth.....and the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise, and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. vii. 23-25).

The parallel in Rev. xiii. is remarkable:--

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power was given unto him forty and two months.....to make war with the saints, and to overcome them."

In the light of Dan. vii. we realize that the interest passes from the beast as a whole to “the horn that shall arise”. This is more fully dealt with in chap. xvii., the main outline being sufficient here. The second beast, who is called the false prophet (xix. 20), leads the world to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. This beast has power to perform miracles, he makes fire come down from heaven, and deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. An image to the beast is made, and life is given to it so that the image speaks, all who refuse to worship the beast are ordered to be killed. Who that reads these words does not think of the image in the plain of Dura, the dulcimers and the sackbut and all kinds of music, the command, “whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace”. We remember the noble answer of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego:--

“O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king: BUT IF NOT (what a marvelous lack of worldly wisdom! What a ruthless lack of compromise! *but if not*), be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image thou hast set up” (Dan. iii. 16-18).

The glorious testimony of these three, together with the equally glorious witness presently of Daniel himself under a similar trial (vi. 1-28), while being historic fact concerned personally with the four men named, is placed in the prophecy, illustrating for us more plainly than any vision could portray the days of the beast and the false prophet, and the sterling testimony of those who:--

“overcame because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

As Nebuchadnezzar testified that one like unto a son of God walked with the faithful three in the furnace, so angelic fellowship will be granted to those who are faithful even unto death.

The epistles of Paul speak of the end of this age in terms of apostasy and darkness. Let us not be merely moved as we read the splendid courage and faithful witness of these men of old, let us also in our day and generation hold fast the faithful word, even to the extent of saying the “But if not” of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

**#40. The Patience and Faith of the Saints (xiii. 10).
pp. 100 - 103**

We observed in our last paper that the personal incidents interwoven in Daniel's prophecy were in themselves prophetic. This is true of chapter iv. as well as of chapter iii. Nebuchadnezzar himself is smitten by the watchers, and during a period of seven times becomes to all intents and purposes a beast of the field. Had the event no prophetic meaning, the cryptic words "seven times" would not have been written; we should have read "seven years".

In the lycanthropy of the head of gold may be seen the nature of Gentile dominion in the sight of God. It is that of a beast, and as a monster it emerges at the close, including in its composite character all the cruelty, oppression, and power of the kingdoms that had passed away. We will not attempt a consideration of details in Rev. xiii. until we have seen one further connection, this time with II Thess. ii. We have seen that the whole chapter (Rev. xiii.) is devoted to the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth.

II Thess. ii. 1-12.

- A | 1-3. The day of the Lord, not yet.
- B | 3. The apostasy.
- C | 3. The revelation of the man of sin.
- D | 4. Showing himself that he is God (see Rev. xiii. 6-8).
- A | 5, 6. He holdeth fast, his own season.
- B | 7. The mystery of iniquity.
- C | 8. The revelation of the wicked one.
- D | 9. With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.

Again we acknowledge the help received from Dr. Bullinger's *Apocalypse* in making this comparison. Here we have one called "the man of sin, the son of perdition", and his recorded act is that he

"opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."

We believe this to be one individual, and not the whole beast of Rev. xiii. Antichrist is a person, the beast is a power. This surely is the abomination of desolation in the holy place, and is the signal for the believer to flee from Judea to the mountains. This is but the plain way of speaking about the woman carried on eagle wings and nourished in the wilderness.

The Thessalonians were informed that the day of the Lord could not have set in because several events had not taken place. The day could not come until the apostasy had set in. While "he holdeth fast" the final wickedness cannot be manifested, but as soon as Satan is cast out of heaven, comes down to the earth in great wrath and stand upon the sand of the sea, then is the moment for the final throw. God Himself is

challenged and the world worships the Dragon; truly a burning fiery furnace for the faithful few in those days. No wonder each of the seven Churches have special promises given to the overcomer. In Rev. xix. 20 we read:--

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast.”

Note this order, “he deceived them that HAD RECEIVED”, they *received* first, they were not deceived first. Now note II Thess. ii. 9-12:--

“Whose presence (*parousia*) is after the working of Satan with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: BECAUSE THEY RECEIVED NOT the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Here the same order is followed, they are deceived, because they would not receive, they will not believe the truth, they do believe *the lie*; not merely a lie, but *the lie*. John viii. 44, speaking of the Devil says, “he is a liar, and the father of IT”. Christ is the truth, the old man is the lie (Eph. iv. 21-25, “wherefore putting away *the lie*.”). All Satan’s works are “the lie”. With a lie he deceived our first parents saying, “ye shall not surely die”; with some similar lie he sets God aside in favour of himself and his false Messiah at the end. If all this iniquity finds its home in Babylon, it has but returned to its original home. Speaking of the Babylonian apostasy, Rom. i. 18-32 uses terms similar to II Thess. ii.

“They changed the truth of God into *the lie*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.”

“They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an IMAGE made like to corruptible man.”

The words of II Thess. ii. are further echoed in Rom. i. 32, where it speaks of those who “have pleasure in them that do them”. The miracles wrought by the energy of Satan are called “powers and signs and wonders of falsehood”. These three words are used in Heb. ii. 4 without the words “of falsehood” to describe the miracles of the Acts of the Apostles. This fact should be enough to teach us that the miracles performed by the false prophet will be real enough even as Jannes and Jambres were able in many instances to work miracles in opposition to the miracles of Moses. The peril with which many so-called *Pentecostal* movements are fraught becomes clear in the light of this fact. The work of Satan will be such a counterfeit of truth as to deceive if it were possible the very elect. “Here is the patience and faith of the saints.” In the somewhat confused state of the Greek text of Rev. xiii. 10, the safe course to follow is to turn to the Hebrew original to which this passage alludes:--

“And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword” (Jer. xliii. 11).

Rev. xiii. 10 therefore should be rendered:--

“If any one is for captivity into captivity he goeth; if any one is to be killed with the sword he is killed; here is the patience and faith of the saints” (*see also xiv. 12, 13 for similar thought*).

For forty-two months it will be given to the beast to make war with the saints and to OVERCOME them. Many will have the patience and faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego and say, “but if not.....we will not serve thy gods”. To this period belong such Psalms as Psalms x.:

“Why standest Thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest Thou Thyself in a time of trouble? *The wicked* in his pride doth persecute the poor.....*the wicked* boasteth of his heart’s desires.....*the wicked* through pride of his countenance will not seek after God.”

The Psalm closes with the coming of the Lord:--

“To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that THE MAN OF THE EARTH may no more oppress.”

Again, Psalm xi. says:--

“If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?”

The answer is supplied in the next verse:--

“The Lord is in His Holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven: His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men, the Lord TRIETH the righteous.”

“Here is the patience and faith of the saints.”

“Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.”

Here we have in one verse the awful outpouring of wrath detailed in the Revelation. Psalm xii. again deals with the same period of trial:--

“Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.....*the wicked* walk on every side, when the vilest of the sons of men are exalted.”

Psalm xiv. sums up the great man of Satan’s right hand.

“The FOOL hath said in his heart, let God not be.”

Doubtless in that day of darkness the “fools” will be, apparently, those who trust in a God who saves them not, who cry to a God who is afar off. “Here is the patience and faith of the saints”, “the just shall live by his faith”, “yet a little while and He shall come, and will not tarry”. Do we wonder that, patient as they were, John, who was their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, records the cry:--

“How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

John expresses the one great cry that will go up to the throne on high from that awful arena, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus”.

“Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down” (Isa. lxiv. 1).

#41. 666, the number of his name (xiii. 18). pp. 129 - 135

The mark of the beast, what visions this calls up! *The number of his name*, on this theme what volumes have been written! Yet must we add our effort in the endeavour to understand what God has written for our learning.

Those who will not worship the beast will be put to death; the refusal of the mark, the name, or the number will be punished by hunger and ostracism, a living death. We must first bring together in some sort of order the references to this name, mark and number, and observe anything that will lead us on in the understanding of the problem.

Mark.

“And he causeth all, even the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, to receive a *mark* on their right hands, or upon their foreheads, that no man should be able to buy or sell except he who had the mark.” (xiii. 16, 17).

“If any one worshipped the beast and his image, and receiveth *his mark* on his forehead, or on his hand, even he shall drink of the wine of God’s fury” (xiv. 9).

“And there broke out a noisome and grievous sore upon the men who had the *mark of the beast*” (xvi. 2).

“The miracles.....with which he had deceived them that had received the *mark of the beast*” (xix. 20).

“And whosoever did not worship the beast.....and did not receive the *mark* on their foreheads and on their hands, both lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (xx. 4).

NOTE.—The words “and from his mark”, in xv. 2, are omitted by G.L.T.Tr.A., W.H. and R.V. This gives 6 occurrences of the word.

The Mark of his Name.

“They have no rest day and night.....whosoever receiveth the *mark of his name*” (xiv. 11).

The Name.

“That no one should be able to buy or sell except he who has the mark, or the *name of the beast*” (xiii. 17).

The Number of his Name.

“That no one should be able to buy or sell except he who has.....the *number of his name*” (xiii. 17).

“Those who had gotten the victory.....from the *number of his name*” (xv. 2).

It will be seen that while the mark and the name are spoken of separately, both the expression “the mark of his name” and “the number of his name” point to the fact that in both cases it is the NAME that signifies. Before going further into “the number of his name” we shall learn a little by contrast from the emphasis laid in this book upon the name of the Lord and the application of that name to the believers of the period:--

The Name (the Lord Himself).

“Hast not denied My name” (iii. 8).

“He had a name written that no man knew” (xix. 19).

“His name is called the Word of God” (xix. 13).

“On His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords” (xix. 16).

The second reference demands a moment’s consideration before proceeding. The Vatican MS reads in xix. 12, “many diadems having names written, and a name written, which no one knows except Himself”. The reading of the Vatican MS are of the highest importance and for the most part correct. This gives us our first contrast:--

The Beast.	Christ.
“Upon his horns ten diadems and upon his head names of blasphemy” (xiii. 1).	“Upon His head many diadems, having names written” (xix. 12).

Surely it is patent to all that the name written on the many diadems of Christ will be the exact contrast to those blasphemous names written on the heads of the beast. If “blasphemy” sums up the seven names of the beast, the words “holiness to the Lord” will sum up the names on the diadems of the King-Priest of God. Another name, written on the thigh of the coming Christ, is “King of kings, and Lord of lords”. This name is in direct contrast to Gentile domination. Daniel uses the words in his interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar of the head of gold, “Thou, O King, art a KING OF KINGS.....ruler over all” (Dan. ii. 37, 38), and we meet it again in Rev. xvii. 18, “and the woman (supported by the beast).....is that great city, which reigneth over the KINGS of the earth”.

The Name (the believers).

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.....and I will write on him THE NAME of My God.....and My new name” (iii. 12).

“An 144,000, having His name, and the name of His Father on their foreheads” (xiv. 1).

“And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads” (xxii. 4).

Here is a most evident contrast with the devotees of the beast. The world at that time will be divided into two classes, the huge majority, those that receive the mark of the beast; the persecuted minority, those that deny not the name of the Lord, and who receive the name of the Lamb on their foreheads. Here we must examine a second contrast which is instructive.

The Beast.	Christ.
The name of the BEAST upon the foreheads of those that dwell on the earth.	The name of the LAMB upon the foreheads of 144,000.

Christ in His twofold character in this book is Lamb and Lion. The Beast in his composite character is a combination of Leopard, Bear, and Lion. The Lion in both represents kingship, and this is common to both (*see* quotation from Dan. ii. above). The Lamb is the *Redeemer*, the Leopard and the Bear the *Destroyer*. Some are marked with the name of the Redeemer, others are numbered among those that destroy the earth; the former in harmony with that name are “redeemed” from among men (xiv. 4), the latter in harmony with their mark are “destroyed” (xi. 18).

We now look at the “number of his name”. As we have received help by placing Christ in contrast with the Beast, we will continue to do so as we examine this number. The reader is probably aware that both the Hebrew and the Greek alphabets serve for both letters and numbers. The name “Jesus” in Greek characters is written IESOVS. The numerical value of each letter in order is 10, 8, 200, 70, 400, 200, which added together give the great contrast to the number of the beast, 888. In the same way Lord (*Kurios*) = 800. We have already had occasion to refer to the typical character of Daniel and his three friends. It is highly significant that their Hebrew names give the very same number as the name Jesus!

DANIEL.	95	\	
HANANIAH.	120	\	Total
MISAEEL.	381	/	888
AZARIAH.	292	/	

Without pursuing this feature further we feel that in this recognition of the lordship of “Jesus”, and the absolute refusal to bow down and worship the image of the beast, the contrast with the number of the name of the beast is manifested, and by the contrast the character of the beast is brought to light.

Before proceeding further we pause to observe that Irenaeus tells us that some ancient copies of the Apocalypse in his day read 616 instead of 666. While there is no doubt that 666 is the true reading, the fact that such a number as 616 found advocates suggests that there was a reason for the alteration, and that it must not be attributed to carelessness on the part of the scribe. It will be remembered that when the Apostle wrote to the Thessalonians concerning the advent of the beast in II Thess. ii. he uses rather cryptic language, referring to something he had told them which he would not commit to writing. Again, when Jeremiah wished to refer to the King of Babylon he refers to him as *Sheshach* (Jer. xxv. 26). The *Massōrah* explains that this word stands for Babel. The system upon which this is worked is the reversal of the Alphabet; thus, since “b” is the second letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, and “sh”, the *second from the end*, “sh” stands for “b”; so with the place of “l” and “ch”, respectively. Jeremiah, Paul, and John use cryptic methods when speaking of the beast.

The suggestion that John in the Apocalypse refers to the Hebrew is not to be despised. In the Talmud and other Rabbinical writings the words *Neron*, *Kesar* (the Caesar Nero) often occur. The gematria of the Hebrew words are 666. If, however, this name be written in the Latin way, *Nero Caesar*, it amounts to 616, the alternative reading of Irenaeus' reference. Now, if Nero was intended by John and by Paul, we can understand how convenient at the time the method of Jer. xxv. 26 would be. Moreover, if some wrote the name after the Latin fashion they would be tempted to consider 616 to be correct and not 666.

The reader by this time may be asking, Does this writer of this article believe that Rome is the Beast of Rev. xiii.? We will answer that question by asking another. Was John the Baptist Elijah? John the Baptist, when asked the question said *he was not* (see John i.); Christ when asked the question said *he was*:--

"I say unto you that Elias is come already.....then the disciples understood that He spake of John the Baptist" (Matt. xvii. 12, 13).

"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, AND IF YE WILL RECEIVE IT, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. xi. 14, 15).

"He shall go before Him in the *spirit and power* of Elias" (Luke i. 17).

John was Elias, IF.....! Rome would have been the Beast of Rev. xiii., IF.....! the "if" here was the repentance of Israel. Israel however did not repent, and the nation was set aside, and Rome was not the beast. When the Lord Jesus commenced His ministry He could say "THE TIME is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15). Had Israel repented (we speak after the manner of men) there must have been at hand all material ready for the final sphere of Gentile dominion. Surely the times that could produce a Herod (Acts xii. note carefully) could produce the Antichrist! surely the age that could see the rise of such as Nero could produce the Beast!

One of the objections to Rome is that it never really held possession of Babylon. This is not by any means a difficulty, neither is it a valid objection. Jerusalem, not Babylon, is the Key. Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, each in turn held JERUSALEM, and that fact constituted it the successor in Gentile dominion. Rome it was that compelled the mother of Christ to travel to Bethlehem, Rome's penny it was that was shown to the Lord, Rome it was that crucified Christ, Rome's soldiers that guarded His tomb, Rome itself was the final place of appeal of the Apostle Paul. Upon the failure of Israel the prophetic Image of Daniel enters into mystery. The first three dynasties are named, Babylon, Persia, Greece, the rest remained unnamed. Rome succeeded to the domination of Jerusalem, and after Rome came the Turk. This lasted until the taking of Jerusalem by General Allenby. The Gentiles are nearing the end of the period foreshadowed by Nebuchadnezzar's image.

<i>Head.</i>	<i>Gold.</i>	<i>Babylon.</i>
<i>Breast.</i>	<i>Silver.</i>	<i>Medo-Persia.</i>
<i>Thighs.</i>	<i>Brass.</i>	<i>Greece.</i>
<i>Legs.</i>	<i>Iron.</i>	<i>Rome.</i>
<i>Feet.</i>	<i>Iron.</i>	<i>Turkey (A.D. 636 to Nov. 1918).</i>
<i>Toes.</i>	<i>Clay.</i>	<i>League (Final phase, now shaping).</i>

STONE, THE KINGDOM OF THE LORD, THE 7th TRUMPET, (Rev. x., xi.).

We are aware that the imagination has run riot with the gematria of names. Names as disconnected as those of Napoleon, Mahomet and Martin Luther! finding their places in the list. Rome however does not come in this fanciful category.

Apart from the computation of the number of the name we can learn something more concerning the character of this final phase by the occurrences of the number elsewhere and its significance. Take for example the revenue of Solomon in one year (I Kings x. 14), viz., 666 talents of gold. Surely we can see something more than a hint in this that one of the gods of Gentiles dominion will be Mammon:--

“The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet and all thyine wood, &c.” (Rev. xviii. 12, 13).

From the battle of Actium (B.C. 31) to the Saracen conquest (A.D. 636) the period of Rome's *domination of Jerusalem* is 666 years. Again, we still speak of 360 degrees of the circle, 60 minutes, 60 seconds. This is a survival of the Assyrian system of reckoning, which has 6 as its main factor. Strangely enough Rome's numerals, which we still use on our clock dials, inscriptions, etc., are *six* in number, i. v. x. l. C. D. (the M for thousand is a composite figure), and their numerical value is 666. Six is the number of man. Man was created on the sixth day; for six years Athaliah usurped the throne of David (II Kings xi.; II Chron. xxiii.), six words are used of Man in the Bible. Goliath, one of the many foreshadowings of the beast, was 6 cubits high, had 6 pieces of armour, his spear's head weighed 600 shekels. Nebuchadnezzar's image which he set up was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits broad, introduced by 6 instruments of music. Dr. Bullinger tells us that the gematria of the Hebrew words of Dan. iii. 1, which describe the setting up of the image, is 4,662, the facts of which are 7×666 .

One further remark before closing. We do not use the word *Antichrist* when speaking of the beast of Rev. xiii. The word does not occur in the Revelation. The Antichrist is spoken of by John in his first epistle. The beast will be the great world power at the end, the Antichrist will be the great apostate false Messiah. The beast of Rev. xiii. is not a false Messiah, it is a political power, Nero well foreshadows the Beast, Herod the Antichrist. *The Antichrist* will sell the people of Israel and help on the time of trouble, he will be a renegade Jew; Judas the betrayer was called “the son of perdition”. By confusing these two titles (Antichrist and Beast) we are apt to mystify ourselves and misunderstand the Scriptures. The number of man, the number of the name of the beast, apart from the cryptic reference to the individual himself, tell us that he will be the climax MAN, deified, worshipped—and destroyed with the brightness of the appearing of the Son of God. The League of Nations is preparatory to the development of the ten Kings, the ten toes of the image.

Praise God for the blessed hope that is even nearer than that awful time.

**#42. The 144,000 and THE LIE (xiv. 1-8).
pp. 160 - 163**

In immediate succession, and as we have seen in designed contrast, to the reference to the enforcing under penalty of death of the mark of the beast comes the vision of the 144,000, having the name of the Lamb and of His Father in their foreheads. In chapter vii. we have the sealing of the number; in chapter xiv. the relation between the two companies is shown. The 144,000 are “firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb”; the great multitude is the harvest that follows.

The elect company are seen standing upon mount Zion. Zion, or Sion, means a stronghold; upon Zion God will yet set His King (Psa. ii.); “out of Zion” shall come the Salvation of Israel (Psa. xiv. 7), strengthening (xx. 2), the shining of God (l. 2), the rod of Messiah’s strength (cx. 2), blessing to, and from, the Lord (cxxviii. 5, cxxxv. 21), and the law (Isa. ii. 3). It is evidently central, a place of administration and of strength.

The epistle to the Hebrews in chapter xii. speaks of two companies which bear a relation to each other very parallel with that of the firstfruits and harvest here. The first part of Heb. xii. speaks of sons, the second of the *first-born*, introduced by the reference to Esau and his birthright. One of the statements made concerning their position is that they had “come unto Mount Sion”. In both places mount Sion is connected with the overcomers, and their victory is the theme of the new song (which none could learn by rote, but only through experience) before the throne.

Singing is with understanding, and the nature of their victory is explained in Rev. xiv. 4, 5, “they are virgins”. In our English language a virgin always means a female, but in the Greek it is not necessarily so. Here in Rev. xiv. 4 it cannot be so, for the passage reads, “these are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins”. We do not wish to enlarge upon this, but feel we must warn our readers against spiritualizing the passage away. Rom. i. 18-32, the history of Israel from Balaam’s stumbling-block to Solomon’s shame, the prophetic utterances of Paul, Peter, and Jude concerning the character of the end, and the testimony of the Revelation itself, all go to show that moral uncleanness, Satanic religion, doctrines of demons, and idolatry go hand in hand.

The transition from the truth to the lie is strongly marked in Rom. i. 18-32, “the lie” being the one great covering title of the whole Satanic programme, which includes uncleanness and a reprobate mind. One need have but the slightest acquaintance with the undercurrent of life in great cities to know that should immorality ever receive the sanction of religion, devotees would flock in their millions to its shrine.

These 144,000 sealed ones have been preserved from the doctrines of Balaam or Jezebel; “they are virgins”; “in their mouth was not found (the) LIE, for they are blameless”. All the best texts read *lie* instead of “guile”, they are blameless with regard to the LIE. The lie is believed as a result of not receiving the love of the truth

(II Thess. ii.). The overcomers who repudiate the lie stand on mount Zion; those who cannot enter into the city, the holy Jerusalem, include everything common or that maketh an abomination and a LIE. Those written in the Lamb's book of life alone have access. Only those thus written are able to refuse the mark of the beast:--

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, each one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain” (Rev. xiii. 8).

While truth wears different aspects and presents itself under different forms according to the dispensation under which it appears, it is nevertheless one; the same is true of *error*. The truth had ever been the mark of God's children, and the *lie* the mark of the devil's; “the devil.....is a LIAR, and the father of IT” (John viii. 44); God is “a God of *truth*, and without iniquity” (Deut. xxxii. 4); He is a God that cannot lie (Titus i. 2). The apostasy of the Revelation is spoken of in Isa. xxviii. 15 as a covenant with death and an agreement with hell and a refuge of *lies*. The poor and needy of that day, the Lord's own flock, they find in the Lord “a refuge from the storm” (Isa. xxv. 4). “His truth shall be their shield and buckler” (Psa. xci. 4). The doctrine of the Antichrist is summed up by John in his first epistle as a lie, and those who teach it as liars:--

“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that NO LIE is of the truth: who is THE LIAR, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is THE ANTICHRIST, that denieth the Father and the Son” (ii. 21, 22).

If we turn to the epistles of the Mystery the same teaching is present:--

“But you have not thus learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him, and were taught by Him, as the TRUTH is in Jesus (namely) to have put away from you the former manner of life, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and to have put on the new man which according to God has been created in holiness and righteousness of TRUTH; wherefore, having put off THE LIE, speak every man TRUTH with his neighbour” (Eph. iv. 21-25).

Here the lie is the old man and his deeds. This is fundamental. The blasphemy of the beast, the denial of the antichrist, the well-nigh universal apostasy of the end, are all so many manifestations of MAN as he is. The regeneration of Israel, the overcomers who enter the city, the membership of the One Body, these are various manifestations of the *new man*, the new creation. Rev. xiv., therefore, while speaking primarily of that future day of trial, speaks to us now. All that goes to make up the lie we must repudiate, all the truth we must embrace. Our armour will be useless if our loins are not first girded with truth, our gospel will be powerless if it is not “the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation”. Righteousness and holiness will be fictitious if they be not of the truth. The worldliness of modern Christendom is the lie, and those who are of the truth have no place other than OUTSIDE. We are not to assume to ourselves the blessings and privileges of the 144,000, but we have our own victory and its blessed results in view. Where we are at one with all people of God through all dispensations is in our attitude towards the truth, the lie and the overcoming.

Sin. Its Origin and Entry. pp. 170 - 173

A question of the deepest gravity, and one that reaches up to the very throne of God Himself, is the question of the origin of sin and its entry into the creation of God.

Starting from a point that is not only revealed in the Scriptures, but is within the scope of our understanding, we learn that:--

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom. v. 12).

That *one man* is ADAM (verse 14), and Adam is the one who by his disobedience introduced sin and death into the world over which he had been placed. While this clearly answers the question as to how sin entered the world, it still leaves unanswered the question why it should have been allowed, and who was its originator. The idea of incriminating God is repulsive to our spirit of sonship. Whatever we may have yet to learn, we have learned the fundamental fact that sin is hateful in the sight of God:--

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. xxxii. 4).

God has a purpose, and that purpose will stand against all opposition: but we must not reduce the opposition to a fiction and unreality in our emphasis upon the supremacy of the power and will of God. One school of teaching presents to us a God whose wisdom and power is seriously called in question by the way in which it represents His relation to sin. Another school, to rescue the character of God from such charges, declares bluntly that sin was planned by Him, that He is the creator of moral evil, that in fact God is *doing evil that good may come*. To write such words is not pleasant, but hurtful, yet we do not believe we have misrepresented the case.

As in many cases, the truth lies midway between these extremes. Scripture tells of an enemy at work within the universe of God. When we ask the question as to the origin and the entry of sin, we may reply in the language of Christ, “*An enemy hath done this*”. The lesser instance may help us to understand the greater. The Lord had come declaring that the kingdom had drawn nigh; He had presented Himself as the anointed King; suddenly after centuries of silence the heavens had opened and God had borne witness to His beloved Son; mighty miracles were wrought that would have brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance, but the people of Israel believed not. In the parables of Matt. xiii. the Lord explains some of the reasons why He had been rejected, and among the causes which He enumerates is the activity of AN ENEMY. That enemy is the devil.

If the sin of unbelief (John xvi. 9) was real, if God in Christ really meant what was preached, then, however much we magnify the fact that God knew that Israel would reject His Son, we must not do so in such a way as to represent their action as other than sinful. We have not given place enough for the activity of “the enemy”, and though we

rejoice to know that this foe is already judged and his execution is certain, yet we must not minimize his opposition, or call sin, his product, by any name that would lead the thought that Satan's work was God's. In the 1st epistle of John we read:--

“Little children, let no man deceive you he that committeth sins is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning, for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might undo the works of the devil” (iii. 7, 8).

Here it is clearly taught that sin originates from the devil, and they who practice sin are said to be “of the devil”. This is somewhat different from the idea that man falls as a result of his nature just a stone falls, for a falling stone is *obedient* to the law of gravitation, whereas “sin is lawlessness”. Whoever would dream of punishing a stone for falling? And unless the wrath of God, His hatred of sin, His utter inability to countenance iniquity, be all taken as something other than mere theatricals, then something criminal is involved in the idea of sin. Scripture definitely declares sin to be of the *devil*, further, the *devil sinneth from the beginning*. Whenever this period may have been, we know that THERE lies the origin of sin, and Satan is the originator. The children of God and the children of the devil have the mark of their father upon them:--

“Whosoever hath been begotten of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he is unable to sin because he hath been begotten of God; by this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil Cain was of that wicked one and slew his brother” (I John iii. 9-12).

We are told that Christ was manifested, not to bring God's plan regarding sin to perfection, but to take away our sins, and UNDO the works of the devil. Instead of looking upon sin as a necessary part of God's purpose it is viewed as the work of an enemy, to undo which required the utmost strength of the Son of God, and to triumph over which the Father's exceedingly great power.

No writer of the Scripture appears to feel any need to defend God when speaking of this enemy and his works. Take for example the words of Gen. vi. 5-7:--

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it REPENTED the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it GRIEVED Him at His heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created for it repenteth Me that I have made them.”

So far as language is concerned, we may admit that we are dealing here with the figure of speech called *Anthropopatheia*. In the words of “Figures of Speech” (Dr. E. W. Bullinger), figurative language “is never used except to *add* force to the truth conveyed, emphasis to the statement of it, and depth to the meaning of it”. If sin was a part of God's purpose, if His mighty plan would have for ever lacked by its omission, how comes it that He has explained His thoughts and motives that brought about the flood (a dreadful reality, and no mere figure) in language that speaks of repentance and grief over the wickedness of His creatures? If sin is the work of His enemy all is clear, if sin is His handmaid all is confusion.

It appears therefore that a careful study both of the nature of sin itself and of Satan is necessary to the consideration of the origin and entry of evil into the universe of God. To this study therefore we must apply ourselves, and hope at some future date to present to the reader, as fully as circumstances will allow, the nature of sin, its origin, course, and end together with the history of Satan and the Satanic system as revealed in the Word of truth.