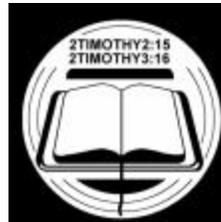


'Things most surely Believed'

Charles H. Welch

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‘Things most surely Believed’

by

Charles H. Welch

Author of

Dispensational Truth
The Apostle of the Reconciliation
The Testimony of the Lord’s Prisoner
Parable, Miracle and Sign
The Form of Sound Words
Just and the Justifier
In Heavenly Places
etc.

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‘THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED’

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The limits of a booklet have never made themselves so manifest as in the present case. It would be no exaggeration to say that we have omitted more than we have included. We ask the charity of every reader to judge us upon what we have written, and to refrain from deducing motives or meanings in connection with what we have omitted.

Certain subjects must, of necessity, take first place - the claims of the Scriptures, the Person and work of Christ, the special dispensation of the mystery, sin, salvation, and a protest against some popular ‘isms’. When these are dealt with very little room is left for other subjects. Should a second booklet be found necessary, we may then be able to deal with a wider scope of doctrine than has here been found possible.

A DECLARATION OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US

The method we have adopted is based on the following plan :

1. To make the declaration in plain terms.
2. To give, without comment, a series of Scripture quotations, that form the ground of such declaration.
3. To give briefly a reason for the hope that is within us, and to open up any important points, difficulties, translations and the like connected therewith.
4. To supplement these notes wherever necessary by references to articles in *The Berean Expositor* or to our books and booklets, where the awakened reader will find fuller exposition of the different themes. We feel quite free to do this as all our publications have been written to help the children of God, and have not been published with a view to financial profit.

We trust the booklet will be of service in answering the recurring questions, ‘What are you?’ ‘Where do you worship?’ etc., and pray that under the good hand of God some who read it may be led into fuller light and liberty by the acceptance of the truth and the repudiation of error.

‘Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech’ (2 Cor. 3:12).

‘ ... Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear’ (1 Pet. 3:15).

‘ ... Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints’ (Jude 3).

CHAPTER 2

THE SCRIPTURES

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe the original Scriptures to be fully and verbally inspired by God, and that they come to us with all the authority of ‘Thus saith the Lord’.

We believe them to be a revelation from God given through men chosen by Himself, and superintended by the Holy Spirit in such a way as to preclude all human error.

We believe the Scriptures to be the one and only authority for the Christian in matters of faith and practice.

We accept them unreservedly as the Word of God.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God’ (2 Tim. 3:16).

‘... No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost’ (2 Peter 1:20,21).

‘Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts’ (Heb. 3:7,8).

‘... This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake’ (Acts 1:16).

‘... All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me’ (Luke 24:44).

Moses ‘received the lively (living) oracles to give (them) unto us’ (Acts 7:38).

‘Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth’ (Jer. 1:9).

‘... Son of man ... go ... speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD’ (Ezek. 3:10,11).

‘The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and His word was in my tongue’ (2 Sam. 23:2).

3. AN EXAMINATION OF SOME OF THESE SCRIPTURES, AND A REASON FOR THE HOPE WITHIN US.

While it might be conceded that the doctrine of the Person and work of Christ, or the essentials of the gospel, are of greater importance to us as sinners needing salvation than the question of the inspiration of Scripture, nevertheless, it is true that we can only know Christ as He is revealed in the Scriptures, and the gospel as preached by Paul and the apostles from the same writings.

See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 for Paul’s attitude:

‘The gospel ... Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures* ... He rose again the third day *according to the Scriptures*’.

See 1 Peter 1:25 for Peter’s attitude:

‘The Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you’.

These testimonies of the two great apostles - the apostle of the Gentiles and the apostle of the Circumcision - are of great weight, but there is a still higher authority - the testimony of Him Who is Lord of all.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

It is both scriptural truth and common sense that the servant is not above his Lord. Every Christian who owns Christ as Saviour and Lord has no alternative but to believe what He says, and He has spoken explicitly as to the Old Testament Scriptures.

‘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 5:46,47).

How can we answer that question? Can we call Him Lord and Saviour, Prophet, Priest and King, Vanquisher of Death, Deliverer from Sin, and say, too, that He was mistaken about the law of Moses? The Lord met His first great temptation with three quotations from the book of Deuteronomy (Matt. 4:4,7,10). Throughout His ministry He quoted as authoritative, Law, Prophet and Psalm. Even in His dying hour He placed the fulfilment of prophetic Scripture in the very foremost place (John 19:28). And as the Risen One, when all possible limitation was for ever gone, He accepted the complete canon of the Old Testament, saying:

‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself’ (Luke 24:26,27).

‘These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me’ (Luke 24:44).

We pass from this most emphatic testimony to that of other witnesses to the same truth.

HOW SCRIPTURE WAS GIVEN

‘All Scripture is given by inspiration of God’ (2 Tim. 3:16).

‘Scripture’ is *graphe*, something ‘written’; ‘given by inspiration of God’ is *theopneustos*, ‘God-breathed’. In other words the *written* Word is the Word that God *spoke*, no interval being allowed for the imaginings of men.

HOW SCRIPTURE CAME

‘... No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost’ (2 Peter 1:20,21).

‘Private interpretation’ is the rendering of *idias epiluseos*, ‘of its own unfolding’. Prophecy did not originate in the mind or the will of man. The writers were ‘moved’ by the Holy Ghost, ‘moved’ as irresistibly as was the ship in Acts 27:15, where the same word is used - ‘We *let* her *drive*’.

In both of these basic passages, the thought of the Spirit is emphasized. So we read elsewhere:

‘... This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas’ (Acts 1:16).

‘... That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of (by *hupo*) the Lord by (through *dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 1:22).

‘But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled’ (Acts 3:18).

It is not our present purpose to do more than supplement our declaration with a brief ‘reason for the hope within us’, and what has been brought forward must suffice. ‘*Thy Word is truth*’.

For a more elaborate treatment of the subject, dealing not only with the question of Inspiration, but of the Canon of Scripture, together with an examination of a series of alleged inaccuracies, the reader is directed to a series published in *The Berean Expositor* Vols. 20-29, entitled *The Volume of the Book*, and now available as a book.

CHAPTER 3

THE RIGHT DIVISION OF SCRIPTURE

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe all Scripture to be inspired and profitable, but we also realise that while all Scripture is written for our learning, all has not been written *to* or *about* us. We see the need to distinguish between dispensations, to avoid confusing law and gospel, kingdom and church. In other words, we believe it fundamental to all true interpretation of Scripture to put into practice the injunction of 2 Timothy 2:15, *viz.*, rightly to divide the Word of truth.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

‘Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2:15).

‘And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent (margin - *that ye may try the things that differ*)’ (Phil. 1:9,10).

3. AN EXPANSION AND APPLICATION OF THIS IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION.

While we believe that the Scriptures are nothing short of miraculous in their origin, we do not believe that laziness, indifference or misdirected zeal in the reader are thereby encouraged. Throughout the record we find continual exhortation to meditate, ponder, learn, read, study and compare, remembering always that we are dealing with holy things, and that spiritual matters cannot be handled with carnal instruments. We believe the principle enjoined in 2 Timothy 2:15 to be fundamental to all true interpretation.

'RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH'

The word translated 'rightly dividing' was in use before Paul wrote his epistle to Timothy, for it is found in the LXX (Greek Version of the Old Testament compiled long before Christ) of Proverbs 3:6, where it is used for 'rightly dividing' a path - A.V. 'Direct thy paths'. While, as we have said, all Scripture is written *for* us, it was not all addressed *to* us or written *about* us, and before we consider the meaning of words or the grammatical construction of sentences, we must see to it that we do not confuse 'things that differ'.

Let us once more turn to the example of Him whom we call Master and Lord. In Luke 4:18,19 we have a quotation from Isaiah 61, but if the reader will compare these two passages he will find that the Lord shut the book half-way through a verse. He closed His quotation with 'the acceptable year of the Lord', for He was about to add: 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears' (Luke 4:21). Such a statement could not have been made, had the quotation been complete, for Isaiah goes on to speak of a day of vengeance. This day of vengeance is future, and between the two statements in Isaiah lies the bulk of Luke's Gospel. We do not meet with these days until the prophecy on the Mount is given: 'For these be the days of vengeance' (Luke 21:22).

Here, therefore, the Lord 'rightly divided' Isaiah's prophecy, allotting one portion to the days of His first advent, and the other to His second coming.

The ways of God with men are differentiated into dispensations. This word, used by Paul of the present dispensation of the grace of God to Gentiles (Eph. 3:1,2) means 'the administration of a household' or, as it is translated in Luke 16:2, 'stewardship'. The church at Jerusalem was compelled to recognise the distinctive 'stewardships' or 'dispensations' given to Peter and Paul (Gal. 2:6-10), and saw that the distinction involved not only 'apostleship' but 'gospel'. There are some, prompted we do not doubt by a zeal for the glory of God, who quote Galatians 1:8 against any who dare to suggest that there is more than one gospel in the Scriptures. They fail to see that they would need to quote this verse against the Council of the Church at Jerusalem. Let us see the passages together:

'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed' (Gal. 1:8).

'... Fourteen years after ... I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them THAT Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles' (Gal. 2:1,2).

'... When they saw that the gospel OF (not merely "to") the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel OF the circumcision was unto Peter ... they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen (Gentiles), and they unto the circumcision' (Gal. 2:7,9).

Paul's anathema is against any who preach to the Gentile Galatians any other gospel than that *of* the uncircumcision, for 'certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved' (Acts 15:1).

The gospel of the circumcision differs from the gospel of the uncircumcision in many particulars. What would Paul's gospel be without justification by faith, and reconciliation? Yet neither of these basic doctrines finds expression in Peter's ministry.

When a letter is delivered to our door by the postman, we usually look at the envelope before we open it and read the letter, for it may be addressed to another member of the family. When we open the Bible, we should also look at the envelope, for, though all the redeemed are one family, they have different spheres, different callings, different destinies. Some are to 'inherit the earth', others are to be 'seated together in heavenly places' and instructions sent to guide the one may not always fit the other.

Isaiah's prophecy is wonderfully evangelical, yet it is wise to note the inspired 'address' - 'Concerning Judah and Jerusalem' (Isa. 1:1).

Peter's epistles contain much precious truth, yet the believer called during the present dispensation of grace to the Gentiles would be wise to note that Peter does not transgress the bounds of his administration; he still ministers to the circumcision and addresses himself to 'the dispersion' - the people of Israel scattered among the nations. If this is noted, the Gentile reader may be saved from misappropriating the exclusively Jewish calling of a 'kingdom of priests'. 'A royal priesthood, a holy nation' does not describe the character of the church of the One Body.

The epistle of James is addressed to 'the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad' - (Jas. 1:1), and we therefore consider that no Gentile assembly or Gentile minister can find scriptural warrant from James 5:14 for anointing the sick with oil.

Other divisions of truth that are vital to its true understanding are:

The distinction between LAW and GRACE.

The difference between STANDING and STATE.

The distinction between SALVATION and SERVICE.

The difference between KINGDOM and CHURCH.

And there are many others which the earnest student will recognize as he pursues the truth through the Word.

Once again we must remember that our object here is to make a 'declaration', the explanation and defence being subsidiary. Each heading would demand a volume to itself if we would present it in any measure of completeness. We therefore must leave the matter here, with the declaration that *we most sincerely believe that to attain unto the truth of the Word of God, that Word must be divided rightly, especially with reference to its varied 'dispensations'. 'Distinguish the dispensations, and discrepancies disappear'.*

The interested reader will find the booklet, *United yet Divided, a Key to Holy Scripture*, by the same author and publisher, of help in this matter of right division.

CHAPTER 4

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that 'confessedly great is the mystery of godliness'. While God absolutely is Spirit and invisible, Whom no man has seen or can see, yet for the purpose of creation He assumed the limitations suggested by the titles, 'The Image of the invisible God', 'The Form of God', and 'The Word', and for the purpose of redemption He yet further limited Himself by being made flesh and tabernacling among us as the Only Begotten of the Father. In spite of all such limitations, and in spite of the problems arising out of His incarnation, we believe we may, with Thomas, fully and unreservedly bow at the feet of Christ, and say: 'My Lord and my God'.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... All things were made by Him ... the world was made by Him' (John 1:1,3,10).

'Before Abraham was, I am' (John 8:58).

'Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power ... Unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remainest' (Heb. 1:3,8,10,11).

‘Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created BY Him, and FOR Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist’ (Col. 1:15-17).

‘Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation’ (Phil. 2:6,7).

‘... The church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood’ (Acts 20:28).

‘... shall call His Name Immanuel - God with us’ (Isa. 7:14; cf. Matt. 1:23).

‘Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given ... and His Name shall be called ... The mighty God’ (Isa. 9:6).

‘These things said Esaias (Isaiah), when he saw His (Christ’s) glory, and spake of Him’ (John 12:41).

‘... Mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts’ (Isa. 6:5).

‘I am the LORD: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another’ (Isa. 42:8).

3. AN EXPANSION AND EXPOSITION OF SOME ASPECTS OF THIS MIGHTY THEME.

It has been pointed out that in the frescoes painted by Fra Angelico, the figure of the Saviour is much below the average, the reason being that when this artist attempted to portray his Lord, the solemnity and majesty of his subject overwhelmed him.

We have no place for pictorial representations of the Lord at all, but Fra Angelico’s difficulty expresses something of our own. How can we adequately express what the Lord Jesus is to us? If we are brief, it may seem that we have no reverence for our theme. If we are lengthy, all the pages at our disposal cannot touch the fringe of the subject. If we make no reference to false translations such as that of John 1:1, where some render the passage, ‘The Word was *a* God’, the omission may be misconstrued. If we load our pages with refutations and arguments, we may but put out our hand to stay the ark of God. Reasoning and logic are true only when employed within the sphere of our experience. It is true *for us* to say that nothing can be in two places at one and the same time, but such logic becomes untrue when taken into God’s sphere. We therefore content ourselves with the following brief exhibition of the scriptural grounds for our faith concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We most surely believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is both God and man - ‘God manifest in the flesh’.*

We believe that Christ as perfect sinless man was miraculously born of a virgin, thus becoming the Head of a new race, Himself untainted by the fall of Adam.

According to Scripture there are three outstanding attributes of God which He declares belong to no one else. These three attributes are unreservedly given by Scripture to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. CREATOR.

‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth’ (Gen. 1:1).

‘... in six days the LORD made heaven and earth’ (Exod. 20:11).

‘For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it ... I am the LORD; and *there is none else*’ (Isa. 45:18).

2. REDEEMER.

‘Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me *there is no God*’ (Isa. 44:6).

* We adhere to the A.V. of 1 Timothy 3:16 after a fairly comprehensive survey of the question, accompanied by photographic evidence that till recently was not available.

3. JEHOVAH - LORD.

'I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I *not give to another*' (Isa. 42:8).

In each of these statements the claim is exclusive. And we may now seek to shew that these exclusively divine attributes belong to Christ.

1. *Jesus Christ is the Creator.*

'All things were made by Him ... He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not' (John 1:3,10).

He made the world. Yet He was in the world. This chapter recognises the problem and solves it.

'... The Word was God' (John 1:1).

'... the Word was made (became) flesh' (John 1:14).

'... by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist' (Col. 1:16,17).

The range here is tremendous. Not only is creation attributed to Christ, but it is *for* Him, and held together *by* Him. Here instead of the title 'The Word', we have 'The Image of the Invisible God', and 'The Firstborn of every creature'. If the title 'Firstborn' be construed as meaning that the Lord had no existence before, how shall we explain its recurrence in verse 18, 'The Firstborn from the dead'? If we accept the inspired explanation which is given in the passage considered - 'The Beginning' - we shall understand its bearing upon creation itself. Christ is called, 'The beginning of the creation of God' (Rev. 3:14), not because He was the first One created, but because He created all things.

The first verse of Hebrews states that in times past God spoke by the prophets, but the second verse reveals a deeper truth - He has since spoken Himself, for the words are, 'Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son (*in Son*)'. The Son is addressed as 'God' and 'Lord' (Heb. 1:8,10), and the creation, including heaven and earth, is attributed to Him. As we read Isaiah 45:18 and the passages from John, Colossians and Hebrews already quoted, we have no alternative but to bow in the presence of the Saviour and say, 'My Lord and my God'.

2. *Jesus Christ is the Redeemer.*

There is no need to quote chapter and verse. All we need do is to remind the reader of Isaiah 44:6, and to affirm that Whoever is in a scriptural sense the Redeemer, is God.

3. *Jesus Christ is the Lord.*

'... Every tongue should (shall) confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father' (Phil. 2:11).

This is a quotation from Isaiah 45:23, and by reading the four previous verses in this chapter we learn that the One referred to as 'Lord' is God:

'There is no God else beside Me ... I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear'.

Isaiah 42:8 declares that the Lord will not give His glory to another. When we read that Jesus Christ is Lord, it means that He is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, the 'I AM' who was before Abraham.

John 12:41 declares that when Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up in the temple, he saw the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, while Hezekiah most emphatically affirms that the Lord of Hosts seen by Isaiah was 'God ... alone' (Isa. 37:16).

We can understand that the Creator is God, but that this is true of the Redeemer Who is necessarily man (for He must die) is at first sight a difficulty to many. Yet the question of the deity of Christ could be decided by this matter

alone, for He Who is a Redeemer in the scriptural sense must be God and must also be man. No one else can fill the position, for the Hebrew word for the Redeemer is *Goel*, meaning a kinsman (as in the story of Ruth). If Jesus Christ be not God, and if He be not truly man, we have no Redeemer.

Now the Redeemer has the following titles in Isaiah: - 'The Lord', 'The Lord of Hosts', 'The mighty One of Jacob', 'The Holy One of Israel', 'The Creator of Israel', 'Beside Me there is no God' (Isa. 41:14; 47:4; 49:26; 54:5; 43:15; and 44:6). Here, then, is the problem. How can God, the Creator, the Lord of Hosts, be 'next of kin' to man? Isaiah, whose emphasis upon the Godhead of the Redeemer creates the problem, supplies the solution:

'... Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isa. 7:14).

'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace' (Isa. 9:6).

'... Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us' (Matt. 1:20-23).

'... Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood' (Acts 20:28).

For a fuller discussion of this important subject, and a consideration of some erroneous views concerning the teaching of Scripture, the reader is referred to the booklet, *'The Deity of Christ'* - same author and publisher.

CHAPTER 5

THE NATURE OF MAN

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that the first man was Adam, and that he was created in the image of God. He was fashioned of the dust of the earth and made, for a little, inferior to angels, and though destined to a spiritual experience of life, yet at his creation was natural, that is, non-spiritual. In view of prevalent tradition we introduce into our declaration a negative. We do NOT believe that man has or is a never-dying or immortal soul, but that immortality is the gift of God in Christ, and entered upon only at resurrection.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth' (Gen. 1:26).

'And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul' (Gen. 2:7).

'Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God' (Luke 3:38).

'And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening 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' (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

'... Adam ... who is the figure of Him that was to come' (Rom. 5:14).

'For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man, that Thou visitest Him? Thou madest Him (for) a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour, and didst set Him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him. But we see Jesus, Who was made (for) a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man' (Heb. 2:5-9).

3. AN EXAMINATION OF PART OF THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE AS TO THE NATURE OF MAN.

The explicit testimony that many parts of the New Testament give to the literal accuracy of the record of the creation of man, makes it impossible for the followers of Christ to accept the many theories which are in circulation that have as common ground a denial of the historic accuracy of Genesis 1 and 2.

One of the most important aspects of the subject we are considering is the realisation of the place man occupies in the purpose of God. When we reach the record of the sixth day in Genesis 1, we read of a transaction that is in marked contrast with the whole of the previous account of creation. The creation of the first heaven and earth, the calling forth of light, the fashioning of the present heavens, the placing of the sun and the moon in their respective spheres, the creation of vegetable and animal life, all go forward at the fiat of the Creator; but the close of the fifth day introduces a marked change. A pause comes in the work. We read of a conference, and the first revelation of the nature of the Godhead is given.

‘And God said, Let us make man in our image’.

The creation of man and the purpose of God are intimately associated. Man is created in the image of God and after His likeness. Christ is the Image of God (Col. 1:15). The creation of man in God’s image does not indicate resemblance in the sense of physical likeness, but in the sense of Romans 5:14, ‘Adam ... who is the figure (or type) of Him that was to come’.

The likeness seems to be associated with dominion, and this element of rule for God is given a large place in the typical character of Adam. We have it in Psalm 8, in Hebrews 2, in 1 Corinthians 15, and it is alluded to in other places.

Another matter of importance which we learn from Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 is that Adam was made, ‘for a little, lower than (inferior to) the angels’. Subsequent revelation shows that the intention of God was that Adam and his seed should at some future time be raised above angels. Luke 3 tells us that Adam was the son of God; at one end of the genealogy is ‘Jesus the beloved Son’, at the other, Adam (Luke 3:22,23 and 38).

Genesis 2:4-25 supplements the account of Genesis 1, giving us fuller details of the formation both of Adam himself and of Eve. ‘And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground’. Man shares with the rest of the animal creation an earthly origin - ‘of the earth, earthy’.

There is however a difference to be observed.

‘And (He) breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life*’. This expression, a translation of *neshamah*, occurs 24 times in the Old Testament. These references are set out and examined in *The Berean Expositor* Vol. 19, pp. 66-69, and the conclusion arrived at from their consideration is that this ‘breath of life’ belongs only to God and to man, and not to the lower orders of creation. Man is separated from the rest of creation. He is, for a little, lower than the angels. He is in possession of the ‘breath of life’, a gift not possessed by any other creature on the earth. He is in the image and likeness of God.

The characteristics in which man is allied to the existing creation are expressed in the third statement - ‘And man became a living soul’ (Gen. 2:7). Tradition has it that this implies the immortality of the soul. Scripture declares that it indicates that Adam, as created, was non-spiritual.

‘... The first man Adam was made a living soul ... that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural’ (1 Cor. 15:45,46).

The point of the argument here is blunted by the translation. Our language possesses the two words, ‘spirit’ and ‘spiritual’, but not the words ‘soul’ and ‘soulish’. Now the word translated ‘natural’ is rightly ‘soulful’ if such a word could be permitted. All that Adam was and could give to his descendants was soulful and earthy; the Lord Jesus alone, as the last Adam and the second Man, can give spiritual and heavenly endowments. The words, ‘man

became a living soul', far from teaching man's spiritual and immortal nature, actually teach the reverse. The following passages taken from Genesis will prove this without any doubt:

'The moving creature that hath *life* (margin *soul*)' (Gen. 1:20).

'Every *living creature* that moveth (margin *living soul*)' (Gen. 1:21).

'Let the earth bring forth the *living creature*' (Gen. 1:24).

'Every thing ... wherein there is *life* (margin *a living soul*)' (Gen. 1:30).

The two words *nephesh* and *psuche*, the Hebrew and Greek respectively, for 'soul', occur 857 times in the Scriptures. Yet not one reference can be found that speaks of an *immortal* or *never-dying* soul. Consequently we reject such teaching as untrue. A reading of Genesis 3:22,23, moreover, shows that the tree of life was such that man by partaking of it could live for ever, but that as a result of sin, God took special precautions to prevent man from *living for ever*, by banishing him from the garden. Immortality can only be obtained through Christ, and will be entered upon at resurrection (1 Cor. 15:53,54).

The question is more fully discussed in a booklet, *Hell, or Pure from the blood of all men* - same author and publisher.

CHAPTER 6.

SIN AND ITS WAGES

1. THE DECLARATION.

Sin is the negation of law, righteousness, faith, and the whole purpose of man's creation. It was introduced into the world by Adam, through the temptation of Eve by the Devil. Sin is universal in its embrace so far as mankind is concerned, and its end is death. Death and destruction are the words that summarize its punishment, and eternal conscious suffering finds no warrant from Scripture. John 3:16 teaches that without eternal life men must perish. Hell is a misused and misunderstood term.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law' (1 John 3:4).

'All unrighteousness is sin' (1 John 5:17).

'... whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Rom. 14:23).

'... all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23).

'... the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23).

'... by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin' (Rom. 5:12).

'He that committeth sin is of the Devil' (1 John 3:8).

3. AN EXAMINATION OF THE SCRIPTURES ON THE QUESTION OF SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

There are three passages of Scripture that categorically assert the nature of sin:

Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Sin is unrighteousness (1 John 5:17).

Sin is anything not of faith (Rom. 14:23).

Sin is the negative of law, of righteousness, and of faith. Scripture defines sin, in the first instance, by what it is NOT. God alone is positive; evil is only able to deny, refuse, obstruct, disobey. It is darkness and death, the negatives of light and life.

There is a further negative in Romans 3:23, where sin is defined as ‘coming short’ of the glory of God. ‘Coming short’ is the essential meaning of the most important word translated ‘sin’ in the Scriptures, viz., *chata*.

‘Seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss’ (*chata* - sin) (Judg. 20:16).

Hamartano, the New Testament equivalent, is derived (according to Cremer) from two words meaning ‘failure to attain or to arrive’. This tragic failure, this missing of the mark by man, has entailed all the terrible aftermath of guilt and shame. The failure that marks initial sin is soon followed by deadly ignorance and alienation from the life of God (Eph. 4:18); life and its activities become purposeless toil; vanity, iniquity, deformity, deceit, ruin and death make up the tale. These words are not strung together at random or for effect; they are but a summary of the words used in Scripture to describe sin, and the interested reader will find a fuller examination in *The Berean Expositor* Vol. 16, pp. 183-191.

So far as man is concerned, sin is universal.

‘There is none righteous, no, not one ... all the world ... guilty before God ... all have sinned’ (Rom. 3:10,19,23).

Scripture declares that sin is of the Devil, who ‘sinneth from the beginning’, and that sin is abhorrent to the holiness of God.

Should the reader have come into contact with a course of teaching that seeks to include sin as a part of the ‘all things’ that are ‘of God’, he is earnestly recommended to read the booklet, ‘*Sin and its relation to God*’ - same author and publisher.

What are the wages of sin? ‘The wages of sin is death’ (Rom. 6:23). When the Old Testament writers speak of the wages of sin, they speak of destruction, of perishing, of being cut off, of being consumed. ‘Hell’ in the Old Testament is the translation of *sheol*, meaning the grave. This can be seen by referring to the following passages; Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29 and 31; Job 14:10-13; 17:13,16 (pit); Psalm 6:5; 30:3; 49:12-15. The New Testament speaks of death, destruction, perishing, punishment and torment. Where it speaks of hell, the original is either *hades* (the New Testament equivalent of *sheol*) or *gehenna*.

It has been taught that the words used by the Saviour ‘their worm’ and ‘the fire’ (Mark 9:44,46,48) - must imply conscious suffering. Seeing that He quoted from Isaiah 66:24, we are confident that no such implication was intended.

Throughout the whole of Paul’s recorded ministry, hell is mentioned once, and we must remember that he declared that he was ‘pure from the blood of all men’. His one reference is in 1 Corinthians 15:55: ‘O grave (margin, *hell*), where is thy victory?’

The references to the gehenna of fire are restricted to the scriptures that deal with Israel and the kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount, which contains the first reference to gehenna, uses it of Christians, which hardly fits the orthodox teaching concerning ‘Hell’. The only passage that contains the words ‘everlasting punishment’ is Matthew 25, where the judgment of the nations in connection with their treatment of the Lord’s brethren is in view. Some enter the kingdom; some are cast into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. Anyone who preaches eternal life on the terms set out in Matthew 25 can consistently use the warning of everlasting punishment as the alternative. But where the preacher announces that ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son’, the alternatives must be ‘perishing’ or ‘everlasting life’ (John 3:16). If he preaches, with Paul, salvation by grace, and declares that ‘the gift of God is eternal life’, then he must follow Paul in the omission of all reference to Hell, and plainly say, ‘The wages of sin is death’ (Rom. 6:23).

References to torment are as follows:

Matthew 18:34 Used of one that had been pardoned.

Revelation 9:5 Lasting five months.

Revelation 11:10 Inflicted by the two witnesses.

Revelation 14:9-11 Endured by the worshippers of the beast.

Revelation 18:7,10,15 Used of Babylon, which at the end 'shall be found no more at all'.

Revelation 20:10 Used of the Devil, the False Prophet, and the Beast.

The poverty of orthodox teaching is shown by these references. If torment is preached to-day, what violence must be done to the contexts of these passages.

The final word concerning the lake of fire in Scripture is that it is 'the second death'.

Further and fuller exposition of this and allied subjects, such as the soul and the word 'eternal', together with a concordance of the word translated 'Hell' (Old Testament and New Testament) will be found in the booklet, *'Hell, or Pure from the blood of all men'* - same author and publisher.

CHAPTER 7

SALVATION AND ITS TERMS

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that salvation is by grace, through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It constitutes the theme of the gospel, and while a message of unspeakable mercy to the sinner, it stands firm upon the basis of righteousness, God in His wondrous love providing the sacrifice for sin, whereby He might be a just God and a Saviour of all that call upon Him.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'... I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Rom. 1:16).

'... the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men' (Titus 2:11).

'... Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins' (Matt. 1:21).

'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us' (Titus 3:5).

'For by grace are ye saved through faith ... not of works' (Eph. 2:8,9).

'... a just God and a Saviour' (Isa. 45:21).

3. AN EXPLANATION AND EXPANSION OF THE SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK OF SALVATION.

While the law can only condemn where perfect righteousness cannot be produced, the gospel brings glad tidings of salvation for the ungodly, the sinner, and the lost. The reason that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth is that therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, which is unto all and upon all that believe.

While the whole Person and work of Christ forms the object of faith, the resurrection is specially stressed.

'... 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. 10:9).

Salvation cannot be merited; it is not of works, but the gift of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is above all else 'The Saviour', and salvation is ours because of His finished work. He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He suffered for our sins. He endured the cross that salvation might be complete, even to the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new. His precious blood cleanses from all sin, and in His resurrection the believer finds the power and pledge of a new and endless life. The fact that God is a just God and a Saviour, that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, that in the very salvation provided by His love He manifests not only His mercy but His righteousness; this is the believer's sure rock foundation. Salvation is all of grace; free, unmerited favour to the worthless and the lost.

We believe that, 'Once saved, always saved' expresses a glorious truth. This does not mean that unfaithfulness will not be reckoned, or that there is any encouragement to slackness on the believer's part, but that those for whom

the Saviour died can never perish, neither can any pluck them out of His hand. Salvation is the great covering term that stretches from the first awakening to the need of a Saviour to the time when the redeemed are presented faultless before His throne. Salvation includes justification by faith without works, forgiveness of sins, the gift of eternal life, and the hope of glory.

‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’ (1 Tim. 1:15).

CHAPTER 8

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that the work of the Lord Jesus Christ is fourfold :

- (1) His one sacrifice for sins for ever.
- (2) His resurrection, as the last Adam. Head and Lord of all.
- (3) His ascension to the right hand of God.
- (4) His second coming, reign and final triumph, when at the consummation of the ages, as a result of His cross, His resurrection, and His reign, God shall be all in all.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

‘I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do’ (John 17:4).

‘After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst ... When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His Head, and gave up the ghost’ (John 19:28-30).

‘Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God ... by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once ... This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God’ (Heb. 10:7-12).

‘Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God’ (Rom. 6:9,10).

‘Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin’ (Rom. 6:6).

‘Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification’ (Rom. 4:25).

‘He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things’ (Eph. 4:10).

‘... henceforth expecting’ (Heb. 10:13).

‘... He shall send Jesus Christ ... Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:20,21).

‘When Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory’ (Col. 3:4).

3. AN EXAMINATION AND EXPLANATION OF SOME ASPECTS OF THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST .

It is the unspeakable joy of the believer that the work of Christ on his behalf is finished. Man had utterly failed, both under the law of conscience and creation (Rom. 1:18-32, ‘without excuse’), and as favoured under the law of Moses (Rom. 2:1-29, ‘inexcusable’).

It is usual in considering the work of Christ to focus attention upon that supreme moment when the Lord Jesus offered Himself without spot to God, the one sacrifice once offered for ever. This we believe to be right, and all

that He will ever accomplish both for us, and in the outworking of the purpose of the ages, must take its root at the cross. While yielding to none our emphasis upon the place of the cross and the sacrifice there offered, we believe Scripture would have us remember that *all the work* of Christ is vital, and every phase complete. No one could lay a charge against the apostle Paul regarding his faithful witness concerning 'Jesus Christ and Him crucified', yet the very epistle that emphasizes the cross contains the following sweeping statement:

'... if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished' (1 Cor. 15:17,18).

It is well to remember that a more accurate translation of Romans 4:25 reads:

'Who was delivered BECAUSE OF our offences, and was raised again BECAUSE OF our justification'.

The resurrection of Christ is vital to the purpose of God.

As Zion's King He must be raised from the dead.

'I will declare the decree; the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee' (Psa. 2:7; cf. Acts 13:33).

'... David ... therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ' (Acts 2:29-31).

As the last Adam, the second Man, Christ must be raised from the dead, to give new life, to open the way to immortality and glory for all 'in Him' (1 Cor. 15:45-58).

As Head of the church, and Head of all things, He must be raised from the dead:

'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived (lived again), that He might be Lord both of the dead and living' (Rom. 14:9).

'And He is the Head of the body, the church: Who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence' (Col. 1:18).

Even when we have united the death and the resurrection of Christ, we have not exhausted the work which He finished. As we read John 17, we become conscious that one further step beyond resurrection is needful to complete the work.

'... I have finished the work ... and *I come to Thee*' (John 17:4,11).

'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, *and went to God*' (John 13:3).

The first message sent to His disciples by the risen Christ was this:

'... Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ASCEND ...' (John 20:17).

This ascension is vital not only for the church of the mystery (this question is examined on pages 33 to 38), but for the whole purpose of the ages.

'He ... ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things' (Eph. 4:10).

'... He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age), but also in that which is to come (the coming one): and hath put all things under His feet' (Eph. 1:20-22).

The ascension and the seated Priest speak of a finished work.

'... every priest *standeth* daily ministering and offering *oftentimes* the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this Man, after He had offered *one sacrifice* for sins for ever, *sat down* on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool' (Heb. 10:11-13).

It is the seated Christ of Whom it is written, 'from henceforth expecting'. He came from God, and He went to God, the Apostle (*sent from*) and High Priest (*went to*) of our profession. We would therefore remember His death on the cross, His resurrection, and His ascension as three phases of one mighty work. The present period at the right hand of God is of unspeakable blessing to His saints, for He is able to save to the uttermost, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

This period is but for a time. The moment will come when He Who is now hidden and veiled, the unseen and absent Christ, shall be manifested in glory. Then the church of the One Body will realize its blessed hope, the manifesting of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Tit. 2:13, Col. 3:4). He will then be revealed, coming with His mighty angels to execute wrath and judgment upon the anti-Christian world, and to deliver His people, both those who sleep and those who are alive at His coming. He will then set up His throne and reign with the saints whose calling associates them with earthly blessings for the thousand years, generally spoken of as the Millennium.

After the thousand years have expired He will sit upon the great White throne to judge the rest of the dead. This judgment is two-fold. First, a judgment out of 'the books' according to works, and then a judgment out of 'the book of life' deciding destiny. It is quite unscriptural to affirm that all who stand before the great white throne will be cast into the lake of fire. The word 'whosoever' in Revelation 20:15 is misleading, for the Greek here is in the singular number. After speaking of a vast multitude beyond computation, the record continues:

'And IF ANYONE was not found written in the book of life, HE was cast into the lake of fire'.

'The end' is now at hand and commences with the introduction of 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev. 21:1). No more sea is to be found here; no more death; no more sorrow; no more curse; the former things have passed away.

We now approach the glorious goal. He Who once hung upon the cross and said, 'It is finished', shall one day sit upon the throne and say, 'It is done' (Rev. 21:6).

'For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (the names in the book of life, and the principle given in Romans 9:6-8). But every man in his own order (so the two resurrections in Rev. 20): Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end (i.e., the goal, the object in view, not "the end rank") ... that God may be all in all' (foreshadowed in the tabernacle of God with men, in Revelation 21:3, and going on to the consummation of the age) (1 Cor. 15:21-28).

Before this consummation is reached, Christ must reign until every principality, authority, and power (same words used in Ephesians 1:21), are put down, and until all enemies are placed under His feet, the last being death (which we see cast into the lake of fire and so destroyed for ever - Revelation 20:14). Then when all things are subjected unto Him, the crisis of the age is reached, the supreme moment arrives: the Son, the mighty Victor, the glorious Redeemer, the Head over all, lays the restored kingdom at the feet of the Father, that God once more may be all in all.

Here is the finished work of Christ, blessed fruit of the cursed tree, blessed contrast to the death, sin and revolt brought in by the first man. Here no more shall sin rear its ugly head; no more shall the tempter seduce the children of God; no more shall the curse descend upon the earth. Redemption and resurrection have forged a bond stronger than creation. All things are new, all things are of God. Let us glory, therefore, in the finished work of Christ.

On the cross - 'It is finished'.

On the throne - 'It is done'.

'That God may be all in all'.

CHAPTER 9.

PENTECOST AND THE ACTS

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that Pentecost, with its accompanying miracles and the church of the Acts period, are to be differentiated from the church of the dispensation of the mystery. 'The signs following' belonged to that period when the people of Israel still remained before God as a 'people'. In Acts 28 they were set aside for the time being, and with them went all that pertained to Pentecost. Tongues, healings and such gifts have no place in the sphere of the church of the One Body.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'... this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel' (Acts 2:16).

'David ... being a prophet ... He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ... therefore being by the right hand of God exalted ... He hath shed forth this' (Acts 2:29-33).

'Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles' (Heb. 2:3,4).

'In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people ... wherefore tongues are for a sign' (1 Cor. 14:21,22).

'... God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings' (1 Cor. 12:28).

'... Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick' (2 Tim. 4:20).

'... use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities' (1 Tim. 5:23).

3. AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEANING OF PENTECOST.

The word Pentecost comes from *pentekonta* - 'fifty', and was the name given to the feast held fifty days after the morrow of the offering of the firstfruits (Lev. 23:15-21). It was one of the three feasts held at Jerusalem at which the attendance of every male was compulsory.

In Acts 2 we find Jews, gathered out of every nation, at Jerusalem for this feast. No Gentile would or could attend it unless he was already a proselyte. Peter declares that the day of Pentecost fulfils the prophecy of Joel 2:28,29, and links up the sevenfold outpouring of spiritual gifts with the now postponed sevenfold wonders in heaven and earth that belong to the day of the Lord and the book of the Revelation. Addressing 'men of Judaea', 'dwellers at Jerusalem', 'men of Israel', and 'all the house of Israel', he declares that in the capacity of the Seed of David and the Occupant of his throne, the risen Christ has shed forth 'this' which they see and hear. One has only to consider Peter's attitude upon being told to go to Cornelius (Acts 10), or the amazement of the church in Acts 11, to be sure that no church began at Pentecost in which Jew and Gentile were included on equal terms.

Without following the theme of the Acts step by step, we take it up again in the last chapter. There the conditions of Mark 16:15-20 are in full force; the hope of Israel still holds good (Acts 28:20), the Jew is still first (verse 17), and not until Israel in Rome reject the Messiah, as Israel in the land had done, do we read the words: 'The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it' (Acts 28:28).

The prison ministry of Paul follows, and in this ministry miraculous healings cease. Paul who previously cured disease by a handkerchief (Acts 19:12) now sends a prescription (1 Tim. 5:23). Yet he retains his faith to the end (2 Tim. 4:7). Miracles had a message for Israel and all who, as instructed by the Hebrew Scriptures, looked for the Messiah (Matt. 11:2-6). They were given to the Gentile churches during the Acts to provoke Israel to jealousy, if possible (Rom. 10:19; 11:11). When the olive tree was cut down in Acts 28, the Gentile branches could no longer

stand. A new movement from God was absolutely necessary to meet the new circumstances, and that new movement was the revelation of the present dispensation of the mystery, in which the hope of Israel and Pentecostal conditions have no place.

For the difference between the body of 1 Corinthians 12 and of Ephesians the reader is referred to *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. 18, p. 177.

CHAPTER 10.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that since the setting aside of Israel (Acts 28) God has ushered in a new dispensation, called the 'dispensation of the grace of God' to the Gentiles, and the 'dispensation of the mystery'. We believe that this new dispensation was originally revealed by God to Paul the prisoner, and that its teaching is to be found in his prison epistles alone. The company of believers called during this dispensation is called the church which is His Body, of which Christ is the Head.

Its sphere of blessing, its constitution, and its hope are unique, and neither the promise to Abraham, nor the characteristics of the Pentecostal church belong in any way to this new calling.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'... By revelation He made known unto me the mystery ... that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister ... to make all men see what is the fellowship (dispensation R.V.) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid (has been hidden since the ages) in God' (Eph. 3:3,6,7,9).

'... For His body's sake, which is the church: whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (complete) the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints' (Col. 1:24-26).

'Praying ... for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds' (Eph. 6:18-20).

'... blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation (overthrow) of the world' (Eph. 1:3,4).

'... The church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all' (Eph. 1:22,23).

3. AN EXPLANATION OF SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE DISPENSATION OF THE MYSTERY.

This present dispensation is connected with a series of facts that influence its character :

1. *Its chosen apostle and minister is Paul the prisoner.*

Paul, the prisoner, in Acts 28, spent a whole day with the leaders of Israel in Rome, and when it became evident that Israel of the dispersion were as obdurate as their brethren in the land, blindness settled upon the nation and the door of grace was opened wide to the Gentiles.

'... the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it' (Acts 28:28).

Israel's hope (Acts 28:20) and Israel's signs (28:1-9) did not cease with Matthew 28 or Acts 2, but remained to the end of the Acts. Till then, the Gentile believer had been but a wild olive graft into the stock of Israel. In Acts 28, the Israelite stock is cut down; the axe, so long laid to the root of the tree, does its work. A new dispensation with new terms is ushered in - the dispensation of the grace of God for the Gentiles committed to Paul the prisoner of the Lord (Eph. 3:1).

2. *Its special sphere of blessing.*

This church has a unique sphere of blessing. Israel's inheritance is the land of promise; Abraham and those who walk in the steps of his overcoming faith look forward to the Heavenly City; it is reserved for the church of the One Body to be blessed in heavenly places. These heavenly places are at the right hand of God, far above all (Eph. 1:20,21); the church of the One Body is spoken of, not merely as attaining that high place, of standing there, or serving there - unspeakable blessings as these would be - but of actually being 'seated together' there at the right hand of God. Nothing like this had ever been made known before.

3. *The time of its election is unique.*

Three times in Scripture do we read the words, 'Before the foundation of the world'. Two of these passages speak of Christ, viz., John 17:24 and 1 Peter 1:20. The other reference speaks of the election of the church of the One Body 'before the foundation of the world'.

The etymology of the word 'foundation', *katabole*, and its usage elsewhere (e.g., 2 Cor. 4:9; 2 Sam. 20:15 etc., etc.) lead us to adopt the rendering, 'Before the *overthrow* of the world'. Linking this passage with Genesis 1:1 and 2, and, by the analogy of faith, with Ezekiel 28, we discover that before the judgment upon Satan and his angels which involved the original earth in chaos, this church with its heavenly destiny was chosen.

4. *The time of its manifestation was deferred.*

This dispensation is called the dispensation of the mystery. We are told that it was 'hidden in God' from the ages and the generations, and was only made known when Israel failed and were temporarily set aside. This revelation completes the Word of God. Nothing further is to be expected, but from now until the end what has been promised shall in due time and order come to pass. Judged from the record of the rest of Scripture this dispensation of the mystery is a parenthesis in the outworking of the purpose of the ages, but from the standpoint of Him Who knows the end from the beginning, and worketh all things after the counsel of His will, the church of the One Body and its dispensation fall into their predestined place, and complete the whole.

5. *Its constitution is unique.*

The Gentile members of this church were told to remember that once they were hopeless, Christless, Godless and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. This church was no development, adjustment, or evolution of the company that was formed during the Acts (though, of course, many of the individuals who composed the early church passed over by faith into the other), but was a new creation.

'... for to create in himself of the two, one new man, so making peace' (Eph. 2:15, Author's translation).

In this new company there is an equality of membership never known before. Even when writing the epistle to the Romans, Paul speaks of 'the Jew first'. But in the new company we have an entirely new constitution:

'Fellow-citizens with the saints' (Eph. 2:19).

'That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of his promise in Christ by that gospel, whereof I (Paul) was made a minister' (Eph. 3:6, Author's translation).

6. *It is characterised by the supremacy of Christ Himself; the substance eclipsing and removing all shadows.*

In this dispensation there are no 'healings', 'tongues' and other supernatural sign-gifts. They ceased with the setting aside of the people of Israel. There is only one baptism in this church, that of the Spirit - not that of water. The baptism of the Spirit must not be confused with the earlier manifestation of spiritual gifts, but associated with the identification of the believer with His Lord in His death, burial and resurrection, which is not necessarily set forth typically by immersion in water. Water baptism is closely connected with Israel. Peter could never have said as did Paul, 'Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel' (1 Cor. 1:17), for Peter's gospel and baptism are inseparable.

The church of the mystery has no warrant to observe the Lord's Supper.* Its institution (Matt. 26) shows that it is directly linked with the New Covenant, in which the church of the One Body can have no place. The New Covenant is not a vague term to be spiritualized into any dimension. It is defined in Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 8 as being essentially to do with the restoration of the house of Israel and the house of Judah, a blessed theme, but with no relation to this church of heavenly places.

All fasts, feasts and observance of days find themselves fulfilled in Christ:

'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ' (Col. 2:16,17).

The prison epistles of the apostle Paul - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 2 Timothy - constitute the charter of this church of the mystery.

These epistles are written TO and ABOUT us. The rest of Scripture is absolutely necessary to us - just as the foundation of a building is necessary to its topmost stone - but these epistles are peculiarly our own. It is a misrepresentation of our teaching to say that we have reduced our Bible to four epistles. We might as well charge the whole Protestant Church with cutting the Bible in half, because it professes to be under grace and not under law.

7. *There is a sacred trust connected with this new calling.*

In Ephesians 4:3-6 we are enjoined to keep the sevenfold unity of the Spirit, of which Christ, the One Lord, is the centre.

One LORD

One HOPE. One FAITH.

One SPIRIT. One BAPTISM.

One BODY. One GOD AND FATHER.

In both 2 Timothy 1 and 2 Paul's teaching is the pattern: 'Which thou hast heard of me'.

In 2 Timothy 1:12 and 14 Paul speaks of 'that good deposit', a sacred trust of truth first of all 'committed' to Paul, then to Timothy, and subsequently 'to faithful men who should be able to teach others also' (2 Tim. 2:2).

It is to this commitment that we desire to respond. For this we seek grace, strength, understanding, and endurance. To this end we put pen to paper and publish books, seeking to buy up every opportunity of making known these unsearchable riches of Christ.

We know not when the last member of this blessed company shall be called and the church completed, but this we do know, that the signs of the times indicate to us that the end of the age draws near. We see the movement beginning among the 'dry bones' of Israel; we see the fig tree once more beginning to put forth its leaves, and the signs of the apostasy spoken of by Paul in 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy 3 and 4 appearing. We believe, therefore, that our hope draws nearer still. May we 'live ... looking for that blessed hope' (Tit. 2:12,13).

CHAPTER 11.

STANDING AND STATE

* See *The Dispensational Place of the Lord's Supper* - same Author and Publisher.

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that if we are to attain to truth, we must distinguish most clearly between :

STANDING	and	STATE.
HOPE	and	PRIZE.
FREE GIFT	and	REWARD.

Otherwise, by confusing things that differ we shall give no certain sound in our witness, and have no certainty in our work or walk.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

‘It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, 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’ (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

‘... Made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light’ (Col. 1:12).

‘Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ’ (Col. 3:24).

‘In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight’ (Col. 1:22).

‘... warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus’ (Col. 1:28).

‘In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him’ (Eph. 3:12).

‘... Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling’ (Phil. 2:12).

‘... I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 8:38,39).

‘Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain ... I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached (heralded) to others, I myself should be a castaway (disapproved)’ (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

‘Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 3:13,14).

‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness’ (2 Tim. 4:7,8).

3. AN EXPANSION AND APPLICATION OF THESE SCRIPTURES.

Much mischief is wrought among the children of God by teachers failing to distinguish between those things which belong to the believer in Christ as a free gift of grace, and those things which are held out to him as a reward in connection with his service.

Such words as prize, crown, reward, win and gain have no place in a salvation that is by grace, through faith, without works. It is impossible for the same believer at the same time and connected with the same thing to be confident and yet in fear and trembling. It is specially harmful to the truth of the One Body to attempt to teach from Philippians 3 that membership of that Body is held out as a prize to be won. It is equally untrue to speak of the prize of Philippians 3 as the hope of the church; for if we do, then we must also teach that Paul, when he wrote Philippians, had not then attained membership of the One Body, and was not certain of the blessed hope of resurrection. Leave Philippians 3 as the record of an *added* prize that may be won, associated with perfection and the high calling, and all is clear.

Let us examine some of the scriptural grounds for this distinction, taking as an example 2 Timothy 2:11-13. The subject here is twofold: living and reigning. Living is one thing; reigning is another. Now living with Christ depends upon our having died with Him, but reigning with Him depends upon suffering and enduring. In the realm of life - none can pluck us out of His hand; 'once in Him, in Him for ever'. No member of the One Body can ever forfeit his membership. The whole standing is by grace. We are chosen by God alone and assured of eternal security, so that it can even be said:

'If we are unbelieving, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself' (2 Tim. 2:13, Author's translation).

Once having died with Him, there can be no forfeiture or loss.

'Who died for us, that, whether we be watchful or sleepy, we should live together with Him' (1 Thess. 5:10, Author's translation).

Reigning, however, is quite another matter, and depends upon enduring. In this sphere, we can lose or forfeit. 'If we deny Him, He also will deny us'. These words must not however be made to contradict what follows in verse 13. The contradiction may be avoided if we distinguish the two spheres. Set out in line with the subject, the verses appear as follows:

- A v. 11. If we died with Him, we shall live. Life and free grace.
 B v. 12. If we endure, we shall reign.
 B v. 12. If we deny Him, we shall be denied. Endurance and reward.
 A v. 13. If we are faithless, He abideth faithful. Life and free grace.

Another passage that demands the same discernment is 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. The foundation, Christ Himself, once laid is unalterable. No 'if' can be admitted there. What a man builds, however, on that foundation is subject to quite a different principle. He may receive a reward or he may suffer loss; but even if he should suffer loss: 'He himself shall be saved: yet as by fire'.

The same principle of distinction obtains in 1 Corinthians 9:27. Paul had no thought that he could ever be a 'castaway' from grace or from Christ, but in respect of the prize he realized that the flesh was a danger to his hopes of winning it. He kept under his body, lest he should be disqualified regarding the prize, but no amount of keeping under of the body would ever save Paul or anyone else from the wages of sin.

The next chapter in the epistle (verses 1-5), with its contrast between 'all' and 'many', emphasizes the lesson. Moses was a man of God; he appeared on the mount of transfiguration, but he forfeited entry into the promised land. Every one of the Israelites whose carcasses fell in the wilderness had been redeemed by the Passover lamb.

So when we come to Philippians let us remember to keep it in its place. Referring to the structure given above of 2 Timothy 2:11-13, A.A. correspond to Ephesians, where we have boldness, confidence, acceptance. Philippians corresponds to B.B. of the same structure, where we have fear and trembling. Here we have an 'if' - 'if by any means'. Paul reaches out to attain the prize which God has attached to the high calling. Sir Robert Anderson has pointed out that those who quote Philippians 3:14 as 'the on-high calling', meaning thereby a summons that will call them up to glory, do not regard the implications of the whole verse. The words, 'the high calling of God in Christ Jesus', do not fit a future summons. The *ano* calling is the calling of the church of the One Body, and attached to it, but quite distinct therefrom, is a prize. This prize may or may not be attained, but in no case can the hope be forfeited or membership of the One Body lapse.

So with the two references to the inheritance in Colossians 1 and 3, already quoted in this section. In the first case God has made us meet; nothing remains for us to do to qualify for it. In the second it is the *reward* of the inheritance for faithful service. So with the two 'presentings'. In the first case we are presented through the death of Christ holy and unblameable, yet Paul warns and teaches that he may present every man perfect in Christ. Paul could not and did not touch here the presenting of Colossians 1:22.

It is most important that these things that differ should be clearly defined. Those who do not thus rightly divide the truth are preparing for disapproval and shame in that day (2 Tim. 2:15).

CHAPTER 12

DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that the closing days of this dispensation will be marked by a flood of 'isms' which will captivate the carnal Christian and the unsaved, and that these 'isms' are most surely of Satanic origin. We believe it is our first duty to 'preach the Word', 'instant in season and out of season', and to spend little time in combating error other than by direct and positive truth.

The solemnity of the days in which we live, however makes it imperative that we should give no uncertain sound with reference to errors that are spreading rapidly in the earth.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

'Now we beseech you, brethren ... that ye be not soon shaken in mind ... as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first (the apostasy), and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition ... whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders' (2 Thess. 2:1-9).

'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart (apostatize) from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils (demons); speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth' (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

'This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away' (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

'... the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (myths)' (2 Tim. 4:3,4).

'... Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness' (2 Cor. 11:14,15).

'And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? (for the living, should it seek unto the dead?). To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in (morning for) them' (Isa. 8:19,20).

'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist' (1 John 4:1-3).

'... no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. 12:3).

3. A FEW WORDS ON ONE OR TWO 'ISMS' THAT ARE ABROAD TODAY.

Spiritism

One doctrine that is necessary, according to the teaching of Spiritists themselves, before Spiritism can be accepted is that the soul is immortal. Another necessary doctrine is that the dead are in reality not dead, but living upon another plane. Anyone who accepts the teaching of Scripture concerning the dead, that they 'know not anything', that there is 'no device nor wisdom in the grave', and that the dead are asleep until the resurrection, are

armed against this subtle error, but Christians who believe that the soul of man is immortal, and that the dead are now alive, either in purgatory, paradise, or heaven, are exposed to this dreadful system of deceit. No man has ever received a message from the dead. What he has received is a message from demons, impersonating the dead and using the seance or the planchette as a means of introducing the doctrine of demons.

Spiritism is as old as mankind. Its first appearance is in Genesis 3, and a study of Satan's methods recorded there will illuminate Spiritism to-day: his method, deceit; his medium, a woman; his means, a lie instead of God's Word.

Modern Spiritism, or, as it is called, Spiritualism, dates from 1848, when in New York it made its first appearance. Since then it has spread over the earth like a plague. It was computed in 1894 that there were 60,000,000 Spiritists, and 200 journals and magazines published in the exclusive interests of Spiritism. There may be some who read this booklet who endorse the teaching advanced by an American publication which states, as to sin:

'The only scriptural, the only rational, the only true solution lies in the acceptance of God's grand dictum that *all* is *out* of Him, and *through* Him, and *for* Him'.

Apart from sin, according to this teaching, we should never have had the delicious sense of God's fatherly affection. And as to Satan, the same teaching has it, that he did exactly what God had planned he should do. We are glad to know that many who have endorsed this teaching out of a desire to glorify God, do most emphatically repudiate Spiritism, and in all Christian love we would ask such to ponder the words of a Spiritist in a book entitled, 'Whatever is, is Right':

'What is evil? Evil does not exist; evil is good'.

'What is a lie? A lie is truth intrinsically: it holds a lawful place in creation, it is a necessity'.

'What is virtue? 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 babes in Bethlehem, and Christ the Saviour of men'.

'Christ and the devil are both alike'.

'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'.

It is far from our intention to give the impression that those to whose teaching we have referred above can endorse such blasphemy, but we do ask any who have been attracted by it to see how it approximates in its logical issues with this monstrous doctrine of demons known as Spiritism.

Satan is both a liar and a murderer; that is the teaching of Scripture, and one who teaches that Satan did exactly what God planned he should do gets perilously near to endorsing the last quotation of the Spiritist given above.

Spiritism denies the Scriptures to be the Word of God, denies the Deity and true manhood of Christ, and denies His redeeming and atoning Blood. Spiritism leads to immorality, and prepares the way for the final great sowing of the 'tares', 'the children of the wicked one'; for it denounces what it is pleased to call 'sexual tyranny', and advocates the abolition of marriage, as Scripture has foretold:

'It is the sublime mission of Spiritism to deliver humanity from the thralldom of matrimony and to establish sexual emancipation'.

The fact that these matters are objectionable must not allow a false modesty to hide these solemn issues. On every hand these doctrines of demons are manifesting themselves, and we must 'cry aloud and spare not' if we would be faithful.

In every department of life 'emancipation' is the word that is uppermost. To be 'modern' one must throw aside all bondage. Thus we get New Art, New Music, New Literature, the essence of which is mainly rebellion against all accepted canons. In politics, in domestic affairs, in religion is sounded the same cry of 'emancipation', while all the

time those who shout the loudest are the most tightly bound slaves of Satan. 'The truth shall make you free'. All other 'freedom' is a snare.

Millennial Dawn

'Millennial Dawn' is the original title of the volumes published by Charles Russell, and his teaching is sometimes known by that name. The reader should be advised that Pastor Russell's works are published under a variety of titles. We give those we know. 'Millennial Dawn' was published in 1886. The same works were republished in 1911, as 'Studies in the Scriptures'. Other publications bear the mark of the 'Watch Tower and Tract Society', Brooklyn, N.Y., and 'Zion's Watch Tower', Pittsburgh, Pa. The followers of this teaching are known as the 'International Bible Students League' or 'Association' and should be carefully distinguished from the I.B.R.A. the International Bible Reading Association, with which it has nothing whatever in common. On the title page of each of the first three volumes is a statement concerning circulation:

Series I.	3,358,000	edition.
Series II.	1,320,000	edition.
Series III.	909,000	edition.

If you will not buy these publications they will be offered you gratis. It may be as well to give an idea of what they teach on some vital subjects:

The Lord Jesus Christ, before Bethlehem was a spiritual Being, and none other than the Arch-angel Michael.

The Lord Jesus, when He was in the flesh, was a perfect human being - nothing more.

Regarding the keynote of the gospel - the resurrection of Christ, Russellism teaches:

'The man Jesus is dead, for ever dead'.

We know nothing, they say, of what became of Jesus' body. It may have been dissolved into gas; having been supernaturally removed, it may be preserved somewhere as a grand memorial.

The above is enough for any child of God, but it may be as well to mention another harmful error. Russellism teaches that the second coming of Christ took place in October 1874. The end of the age was computed to be October, 1914. Since then Russell's followers have revised his chronology, and the last date for the rapture of the saints of which we have heard was, we think, 1927.

Christian Science

The fundamental principle of Christian Science is that sin and disease have no real existence. In fact, matter does not exist; mind is everything.

According to its teachings, God is an impersonal being; He is infinite mind. Prayer to a personal God is a hindrance; true prayer, according to Mrs. Eddy, being a soliloquy or auto-suggestion. The Lord Jesus Christ was the offspring of Mary's self-conscious communion with God. To accommodate Himself to immature ideas of spiritual power, Jesus called the body, 'flesh and bones'; which utterance shows the concession He was willing to make to popular ignorance. Concerning the resurrection of the Lord, we have the following blasphemy:

'The lonely precincts of the tomb gave Jesus a refuge from His foes', and there 'He met and mastered, on the basis of Christ Science, all the claims of medicine, surgery and hygiene'. When 'Jesus' students ... saw Him after His crucifixion' they 'learned that He had not died'. 'We were reconciled to God by the (seeming) death of His Son' (Science and Health, pp. 44 and 46).

As to sin, Christian Science teaches that it is an illusion, and as to the atoning efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, it is altogether denied. Mrs. Eddy states that the blood of Christ was of no more avail when it was shed upon the cursed tree, than when it was flowing through His veins in daily life.

Christian Science is one of the cults that deal in healing. Its aim and method is to persuade the patient that he is not ill, but that he only thinks that he is. Cures are effected, but they are of the same nature as those wrought at Lourdes, or at Pentecostal healing campaigns. Mrs. Eddy herself went to the dentist to have a tooth extracted, and even had local anaesthesia. A beloved fellow-worker in Christ, who is also a medical practitioner, said, 'Christian Science heals all the diseases *which do not exist*', and one has only to become acquainted with folk to know how many ailments are imaginary or mental. Christian Science has not succeeded in raising the dead. It did not prevent its founder from bowing to the death which comes upon all men, 'for that all have sinned'. These are limitations which cannot be surmounted.

'... they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men' (2 Tim. 3:9).

Pentecostalism and the Four Square Gospel

Pentecostalism differs from Christian Science, for it accepts the Word of God and believes the Scriptural testimony concerning the Person and work of Christ. Its danger lies rather in the fact that it is undispensational. Christians who would repudiate Christian Science in all its forms are not necessarily proof against Pentecostalism, for the majority have been brought up in the tradition that 'the church' began at Pentecost. This we have touched upon on page 31.

The leader of one very great Pentecostal organization is Mrs. McPherson. Like many other leaders of unscriptural cults Mrs. McPherson holds a high opinion of herself. In the early editions of the book, '*This is that*', she speaks of herself as follows:

'Then I looked and, behold, a new creation, as of a beautiful woman ... Her lips were pure and dropped as the honeycomb ... Her ears were kept for His alone, her lover, her bridegroom, her king. As she drew nigh I gazed with amazement into her face and saw that it was MYSELF. I heard the voice of the Master speaking unto me, saying, 'This is my beloved'.

Scripture is definite and clear with regard to the headship of woman in spiritual things (1 Cor. chapters 11 and 14; 1 Tim. 2:12-14).

Mrs. McPherson claims that her movement is the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the latter rain. Divine healing is to the fore in these meetings, and also the baptism of the Spirit, accompanied by speaking with tongues and other manifestations. Here is an extract which deals with the question from the writings of Dean Clifton L. Fowler of Denver, Colorado:

'I sent to Los Angeles and got all her printed material - books, pamphlets and tracts. I also subscribed to her magazine, ordering back numbers for a year ... Mrs. Fowler, or my secretary, attended nearly every meeting (held in Denver). We also attended the "tarrying meetings" for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We were present at a thousand or more of her "healings"; we investigated a large number of them; we heard her preach over and over again. I am compelled to give it as my calm, unbiassed judgment that outside of perhaps Mrs. Eddy, there has not been so dangerous a religious teacher in the United States in the past three hundred years. She talks about the blood very much, but when you hear her say, "SALVATION AND HEALING ARE BOTH BY WORKS", then you realise that "the blood" has very little power in her message. Her constant use of "the blood" is but a parrot-like repetition of a familiar religious phrase. It has neither significance nor weight in her plan of salvation. She talks very much about the "Holy Spirit" and about being "born again", but when she boldly declares before 14,000 people in the City Auditorium that "THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NEW BIRTH OR BEING BORN AGAIN" then the time has come for the child of God who knows his Bible to refuse to be identified with so wicked and unscriptural a movement ... She said she believed in the inspiration of the Bible from cover to cover, but she plainly showed that she did not believe the Bible in THREE different ways :

First. She said, "Paul is the only writer of the Bible with whom I *disagree*".

Secondly. In her printed writings which are at my office, she claims to put forth writings of which she is NOT THE AUTHOR, but which were given to her when she was "entirely under the power of the spirit". This is most

subtle. She rejects Paul's words and then writes messages which are equal with inspiration She gets her visions and revelations from the same place all the other false teachers get theirs ...

Thirdly. She mangles the parts of Scripture she does use until they suit her purpose. I could give you enough examples of her twisting Scripture to fill a dozen letters, but I must content myself with one or two. Here is one she uses over and over again - Matt. 10:7,8. In the first place the passage has absolutely nothing to do with the preaching of this age. It has to do with the preaching of the kingdom when Jesus was here and is predictive of the preaching of the kingdom during the great tribulation immediately before He comes again. To force Matt. 10 into this age is to disobey 2 Tim. 2:15 - "Rightly dividing the Word of Truth". Since she has decided to tear this passage out of a Jewish age and compel us to live under it, she has to doctor it up to suit herself. Here is the way she always quoted it - (vs. 8):

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye have received, freely give".

Now get down your Bible and see what she did to the verse. She left out, "raise the dead". She had an exceedingly good reason for leaving it out. She not only leaves those words out when she is preaching, but they are left out of the passage when she quotes it in her printed literature. I charge her with handling the Word of God deceitfully and consequently leading thousands astray.

But someone says, "You could not expect her to raise the dead". To which I must respond, "I beg your pardon. If that passage means this age, as she claims it does, then she has GOT to raise the dead, or the Bible is false! ...".

There is another passage which she uses almost constantly. It is Mark 16:17,18. She juggles this Scripture in the very same way she does the Matthew passage. She always reads it thus :

"These signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name they shall cast out demons, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover".

Get your Bible again, and see how she tricked her audiences. She deliberately cuts out the words:

"They shall take up serpents and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them ...".

The result of this wicked teaching is grievous. Cases are on record where young men and women remained all night in the meeting-house piled upon the floor. Many are the cases of terrible immorality and broken homes Other cases are on record of insanity and death resulting from receiving "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit".

Suffice it to say the horrid unscriptural thing which this woman teaches poor, earnest, deluded Christians to seek is the incoming of demons and NOT the baptism of the Holy Spirit'.

Here is the testimony of Dr. W.P. White, of the Extension Department of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago:

'Two Pastors of Eugene, Oregon, listened to Price tell of the great miracles wrought by Mrs. McPherson. Then he said, "You do not have to go to Los Angeles to see a miracle wrought. There is a man who lives five and a half miles north of this place, who, when he came on to the platform for healing at Albany, had a frightful cancer. The smell was almost unbearable. His face was so eaten away by cancer that you could see his teeth. I PRAYED OVER HIM AND HE WAS HEALED. There is now only a little red spot left where the cancer was, and that is fast disappearing. If you want to see for yourself, go and see". The two Pastors took Price at his word and drove out to the man's home. His wife came to the door, and when she heard of their mission said, "YES, HALLELUJAH, MY HUSBAND IS HEALED". When they went into the house the smell was terrible. The husband came from another room with a bath-towel on his shoulders on which the cancer had been running. His face was consumed so that you could not only see his teeth, but also his jaw bone. Using one side of his mouth he cried, "YES, HALLELUJAH, PRICE PRAYED FOR ME AND I AM HEALED!" The poor man had been so hypnotised that he believed that he was healed when he was dying with cancer!'

The writer gives another case of a supposed cure of blindness, and concludes by saying:

'I can get a hundred such testimonials from godly people in every town where Mrs. McPherson or Price has been'.

We are indebted for the testimony of Dean Fowler and Dr. White to the booklet written by Rev. W. E. Pietsch*.

Science: falsely so called

Another department in which the god of this age is active with propaganda is that of *Science*. Science is the modern idol before which all are called to bow. Science is, strictly, knowledge, but much that passes for knowledge is mere speculation and hypothesis.

Take, for instance, the idea that permeates the text-books of all scientific study today - that of Evolution. When the scientist approaches the Scriptures he excuses his apparent lack of reverence by the plea that science is concerned only with that which can be *demonstrated* and *proved*. Let us test the doctrine of evolution by the scientists' own standard. While the theories of Darwin are rapidly becoming discredited in the highest scientific circles, the ordinary scientist is still found quoting and asserting his doctrines. In Darwin's two principal works the expression, 'We may well suppose' occurs more than eight hundred times. It looks as though the scientific mind *wanted to believe* Darwin's theory at all costs.

Dr. Etheridge, of the British Museum, has said:

'Nine tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation and wholly unsupported by fact. This Museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of their views'.

It is safe to say that had Darwin known the researches and findings of Mendel, his 'Origin of Species' would never have been written.

Dr. Shaddock points out one cause for this unscientific eagerness to parade mere hypothesis as science:

'It is not so much where men came from as it is *where he is going*, that disturbs sinners. The front end of the Bible is not so offensive to the "modernist" as the last end. If God did not create man from the dust, He will not raise him from the dust (Dan. 12:2). Comparatively few men read with comfort of a "white throne" and opening books on the reckoning day of God, and it will comfort many if the first three chapters of the book can be so emptied of meaning that the last three will be upset with lopsidedness'.

It is not necessary that we should review the theories of the evolutionists. We are content to accept the scientist's own dictum, that science deals with that which can be *demonstrated* and *proved*, and the most ardent advocate of evolution is obliged to withdraw when this criterion is maintained.

The first chapter of the book of Genesis is fundamental to all Scripture. The occupant of a New York skyscraper maintaining that, living so high up, he was not at all concerned as to what was happening to the foundations, would be as unreasonable as would be a believer in the teachings of Ephesians, with its blessings in heavenly places, who said that we could afford to dispense with Genesis 1.

The beginning of Genesis is fundamental to *the Law*; its teaching is bound up with the ten commandments.

'For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is' (Exod. 20:11).

The facts of Genesis 1 permeate *the Prophets* (see Isa. 42:5). Notice how the special character of the 'heaven' made on the second day is reiterated in Isaiah (40:22; 44:24; 45:11-13). 'Firmament' is the translation of the Hebrew word *raqia*, and means thinness - 'something stretched out'.

The third division of the Old Testament - *The Psalms* - is full of references to Genesis 1 (see Psa. 8; 19; 95; 104; 136:5-9; 146:5,6).

* Originally published by The Bible Witness, Runnimead, Hounslow, Middlesex.

The New Testament retains unmodified the teaching of Genesis 1 (see Acts 14:15; 17:23-26; 2Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:8-11; Rev. 4:11, and 14:6,7).

The following extract from Appendix 5 of *The Companion Bible* may be useful:

‘The introduction to Genesis (and to the whole Bible) - Gen. 1:1 to 2:3, ascribes everything to the living God, creating, making, acting, moving, and speaking. There is no room for evolution without a flat denial of Divine revelation. One must be true, the other false. All God’s works were pronounced "good" seven times, viz., Gen. 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31. They are "great", Psa. 111:2; Rev. 15:3. They are "wondrous", Job 37:14. They are "perfect", Deut. 32:4.

Man starts from nothing. He begins in helplessness, ignorance, and inexperience. All his works, therefore, proceed on the principle of *evolution*. This principle is seen *only in human* affairs: from the hut to the palace; from the canoe to the ocean liner; from the spade and ploughshare to machines for drilling, reaping, and binding, etc. But the birds build their nests to-day as at the beginning. The moment we pass the boundary line, and enter the Divine sphere, no trace or vestige of evolution is seen’.

The reader who would appreciate the testimony of a scientist on this important theme should consider the writings of George McCready Price, M.A. ‘The Phantom of Organic Evolution’, originally published by Revell, is a good book with which to start.

CHAPTER 13.

SATAN AND THE CHURCH OF THE MYSTERY

1. THE DECLARATION.

We believe that Satan has no authority in the heavenly places to which the church of the mystery has been translated. Demon possession is attached to other spheres and callings. We believe that Satan’s one means of access to the believer is through ignorance of the truth, and that recovery from his captivity is by repentance and the acknowledging of the truth, which makes us free.

Conquerors do not go out to wage war against a conquered foe, neither are they haunted by the fear of his activity. We are more than conquerors in Christ. We are delivered and translated out of Satan’s authority. We have a command to withstand the spiritual forces of this world’s darkness and are provided with complete armour and with one weapon, the Word of God. We are assured that apart from lowering the shield of faith not one fiery dart of the wicked can reach us.

To sum up we would say that our attitude to the Satanic system is expressed first of all by our position in Christ as ‘far above all’; and that everything else is relative to the fact that we are ‘seated together’ there.

2. SCRIPTURAL GROUNDS.

‘Can ye be angry and sin not? (Author’s translation). Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil’ (Eph. 4:26,27).

‘Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil’ (Eph. 6:11).

‘... that ye may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age), but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all’ (Eph. 1:18-23).

‘Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son’ (Col. 1:13).

‘To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God’ (Acts. 26:18).

‘Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them ... I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly’ (Rom. 16:17,19,20).

‘In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will’ (2 Tim. 2:25,26).

‘Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil’ (1 Tim. 3:6,7).

3. SOME EXPLANATION AND APPLICATION OF THESE SCRIPTURES.

Some Christians seem to be so indifferent to the power of Satan and to minimise it to such an extent that they are easily blinded to his activities, and are a source of danger to the church through negligence. There are some, on the other hand, who appear to magnify Satan’s activity and authority out of all due proportion. Attending their prayer meetings or conferences one seems to hear the name of Satan almost as frequently as the name of God. Christians of this second class are usually the more earnest and zealous believers, and such are even a greater menace to the church in this regard than their indifferent brethren.

Our theme here is not Satan and the Satanic system, the casting out of demons, and similar subjects, but rather the more limited one - ‘Satan and the church of the mystery’.

We believe that the church of the One Body is a unique company, having a complete guide for its doctrine and practice, and all necessary knowledge in those writings, called for convenience, ‘The prison epistles’. While we cannot rule that a believer should not resort to the Gospels or the Epistles of Peter for instruction concerning Satan and other subjects, we do maintain that it is an evidence that something is wrong when a professed member of the One Body, who has apparently endorsed the distinctive dispensational position of the mystery, leaves the epistles of this calling and reverts for instruction on this great theme to the scriptures written to the Circumcision or to the Gospel records of a time before the Lord had overcome death, the Devil, and the grave.

Either the epistles of the mystery are complete, or they are deficient. So far as we are concerned we make the declaration unfeignedly, that we believe that God has included all necessary instruction for the church of the mystery within the pages of the ‘prison epistles’, and any doctrine or practice that takes its origin in Scriptures confessedly addressed to believers on other dispensational planes, stands thereby excluded and judged as error.

Paul makes ten references to Satan throughout the whole of his written ministry of fourteen epistles. Eight of these references belong to the epistles written before Acts 28. Two are found in the first Epistle to Timothy; and not one reference in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians or 2 Timothy.

Paul mentions *Diabolos*, ‘The Devil’, nine times in his epistles. Two of these references are in Titus and Timothy. ‘The aged women, likewise, that they be ... not false accusers (devils)’ (Tit. 2:3); ‘For men shall be ... false accusers (devils)’ (2 Tim. 3:2,3). The remaining seven references are found in Ephesians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Hebrews.

The other title of Satan, The Wicked, is used by Paul twice, both references being in Ephesians 6.

We believe that the whole matter of Satanic authority and demon possession, so far as the church of the One Body is concerned, is settled *positionally*. The very position of the church in Christ, far above all, raises that church above Satan’s province. This we now proceed to show from Scripture, and for convenience of approach to the subject we adopt the following headings :

1. PROMISE

In Romans 15:29 the apostle Paul made a statement containing, possibly, truth of which he was unaware when he penned the words:

‘ ... I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ’ (Rom. 15:29).

He had thought of visiting Rome a free man, and continuing his journey to Spain. He actually reached Rome a prisoner of the Lord, but as the prisoner of the Lord he received ‘the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ’ in a measure undreamed of during Pentecostal times.

Another similar statement is found in the next chapter:

‘And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly’ (Rom. 16:20).

There is here an undoubted allusion to the promise of Genesis 3, and Paul was looking forward to the millennial reign of Christ and His saints. That, however, did not transpire, but in its place has come a calling, of which Christ is the Head, with all things under His feet. Consequently it is true of the members of the church of the One Body anticipatorily now, as it will be actually true of the saints in that day, that Satan is under our feet. The context of Romans 16:20 is worthy of prayerful study. It speaks of division and contrary doctrine. It commends wisdom concerning good, and simplicity concerning evil. Some believers appear to be experts in Satanic things. But are they called thus to emulate our first parents in the knowledge of good and evil? Is it spiritually healthy? We believe it is not, and that it diverts into unscriptural and negative channels spiritual energy that should have been used in positive service along the lines of scriptural precept and example.

2. POSITION

The reader may or may not concur with our suggestion regarding the passage in Romans 16. There is one passage however, which does undoubtedly refer to the present dispensation that will indicate the second point we wish to consider, viz., the meeting of all Satanic activities *positionally*.

Paul not only received a commission to witness for Christ during the period covered by the Acts while he remained a free man, but he speaks of a second charge and a second ministry, this time associated with ‘bonds and imprisonment’ which awaited him (Acts 20:23,24).

These two ministries are referred to in Acts. 26:

‘ ... I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power (authority) of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me’ (Acts 26:16-18).

The most casual acquaintance with Colossians 1 will show a close parallel between this foreshadowing of the present dispensation and its fulfilment, and a more intimate acquaintance will abundantly confirm the connection between these two passages. Without pointing out all the parallels, we consider at once that which touches upon the relation of the church to the authority of Satan:

‘Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power (authority) of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son’ (Col. 1:12,13).

‘Who hath *delivered* us ... and hath *translated* us’. The apostle could say in his epistle to the Colossians:

‘Wherefore if ye be dead (died) with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?’ (Col. 2:20).

And can we not as truly say :

Wherefore, if ye have been delivered from the authority of darkness, and have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, why as though still living under the dominion of Satan are ye in so great fear of his activity?

It is written concerning Enoch:

‘By faith Enoch was translated ... and was not found, because God had translated him’ (Heb. 11:5).

What if Peter has to tell the believers among the dispersion that the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). He can no more ‘find’ a member of the One Body, than men could ‘find’ Enoch, for both are translated.

The position of the church is one that is ‘far above all principality and authority’, in a realm where Satan has no access, from which he was cast before the foundation of the world, and in which he has no authority to ‘walk up and down’. His sphere is confined to the heavens of the air (Eph. 2:2), and the earth (Job 2:2). Presently Satan will be cast out of the heaven he now occupies (Rev. 12:9), and another region of his malignant activities will be closed against him. The earth alone will then have cause to fear his evil work (Rev. 12:17), until the earth itself shall be rid of his dread presence during the Millennium and, with the exception of the ‘little season’, for ever (Rev. 20:2,3).

Christ, the Head of the church of the mystery, is ‘Head over all things’ to us, and ‘all things’ are under His feet. The church is blessed in and with Him there, at the right hand of God. If John could write to his readers, ‘He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not ... the whole world lieth in wickedness (the wicked one)’ (1 John 5:18,19), surely those who are blessed as Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 affirm, may evermore testify that ‘the wicked one toucheth them not’. Too much concern with the Devil’s activity has the appearance, at least, of an incomplete understanding of the majestic truth of the ascension of Christ, ‘far above all’, and of the fact that the church of the mystery is the first and only complete foreshadowing of the new creation where God shall be all in all.

3. THE POWER

What is the power at the disposal of the church of the One Body for all things - life, service, or warfare?

‘... The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age), but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all’ (Eph. 1:19-23).

That is the power that has already overcome Satan and all his activity so far as the super-heavenlies are concerned. Paul (so far as the inspired record informs us) never organised a prayer meeting to ‘resist the Devil’. Why attempt a thing so lacking in faith? If Christ as Head has all things beneath His feet; if the church’s sphere is far above the reach of Satan; if the church has been delivered from his authority and translated into a kingdom for ever shut against him, is it not the essence of unbelief to talk of Satan in the terms of 1 Peter 5:8, as true for this glorious and exalted company?

Are we to believe that Christians to-day are more spiritually alive to Satan’s activities, and more fully in touch with the mind of the Lord, than was the apostle Paul? And, if not, what of their phraseology, their attitude in prayer, and the prominence given to Satan and his activities in their view and teaching? Judging by the infallible standard of inspired Scripture we have no alternative but to say that it is not of God.

4. THE POINT OF CONTACT

Ephesians 2:2,3 makes clear the following facts: - Satan, as the prince of the power of the air, has authority over ‘the children of disobedience’ and the ‘children of wrath’. His point of contact is ‘their conversation’, ‘the desires (the wills) of the flesh and the mind’. Here too is the only vantage ground that Satan possesses over the believer. A comparison of Ephesians 2:2,3 and 4:17-27 will make this plain.

EPHESIANS 2	EPHESIANS 4
'We all had our conversation'.	'The former conversation'.
'The desires (wills) of flesh and mind'.	'The old man'.
'The lusts (desires) of our flesh'.	'Deceitful lusts (desires)'.
'In time past ye walked'.	'Henceforth walk not as other Gentiles'.
Now, 'dead in (to) sins'.	Then 'alienated from the life of God'.
Then, inwrought by the 'prince of the power of the air'.	Now, the possibility of giving 'place to the Devil'.

The flesh with its deceitful desires is the one point of contact between the member of the One Body and Satan. Paul's inspired exhortation is NOT to resist Satan, *but to put off* the old man with his conversation and corruption, and to *put on the new man*. If Satan can maintain God's children in an unscriptural conflict with himself, it will blind their eyes to the two all-important facts, in this connection :

- (1) That Satan is already dealt with by Christ for His church.
- (2) That the true opposition of the Christian should be directed against the activities of the old man.

A saint who loses his temper may regard this as a slight thing in comparison with holding the fort against the enemy, but *God* says, and we most resolutely stand by all He says:

'Can ye be angry and sin not? (Author's translation). Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the Devil ... let all ... wrath, and anger ... be put away' (Eph. 4:26-31).

Yielding to the old man is yielding to the Devil. Taking the scriptural attitude against the old man is depriving the Devil of his one point of contact. Fewer prayer meetings spending spiritual energy in waging war against Satan, and more prayer meetings seeking light and grace to act scripturally concerning the old man would result in a victory over the Devil and his plans such as transcends the hopes of the most sanguine of those who wage war against him.

There is a further connection with Ephesians 4 found in Ephesians 6. Both passages stress the need to 'put on'; in chapter 4, to 'put on the new man'; in chapter 6, to 'put on the whole armour of God'. That armour is specified as truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and the 'Word of God'. God has said that with that equipment, all, not merely some, of the fiery darts of the wicked shall be quenched. The words 'conquest', 'battle', 'fighting' and 'war', are never mentioned. Conquest and war in this sphere are as out of place as they would have been for Israel before crossing the Jordan. Our 'orders' are to 'stand', 'withstand', and 'wrestle'. Our conflict is neither with flesh and blood, nor in heavenly places, but with the spiritual wickedness that dominates this world's darkness. In case some should consider this a contradiction of Scripture, we present the translation of Ephesians 6:12 as follows:

'We wrestle NOT against flesh and blood (but ... spiritual wickedness) in heavenly places'.

The thought is that our wrestling is neither with flesh and blood, nor in heavenly places, but that it is confined to spiritual wickedness here and now.

We would here draw particular attention to the place of the 'truth' in connection with this subject. The Lord Jesus declared: 'The truth shall make you free'. The first piece of armour mentioned is the girdle of truth. Many become an easy prey to Satan because they do not know the truth. *Could* a man be held in bondage by Satan if he knew the truth of his deliverance and translation? (Col. 1:13). Every case of which we have heard where Satanic interference or demon possession was endured has been connected with those who had no clear understanding of the truth of the present dispensation. The new man we put on is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth, and we are enjoined to 'put away the lie' (not merely 'lying') (Eph. 4:24,25).

Some may say, How would you deal with one who was apparently under the power of Satan or his agents? Our reply would be that we have no warrant from Scripture to enter the field of service and ministry covered by the message of the Circumcision, or of things outside the sphere of the One Body, but that keeping within that sphere, we have a decided command as to our mode of action from Scripture, which says nothing of casting out demons, but speaks of delivering by means of the truth.

‘... the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will’ (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

It will be remembered that 1 Timothy 3:6,7 shows that the ‘snare of the Devil’ is a constant trap for the ‘novice’. How many there are in the Devil’s snare because of hastily conceived ideas of the truth of the One Body. Such are enemies, though unwillingly, of our faith.

The true method of attack upon Satan and his bondage is the wielding of the sword of the Spirit. We are obeying God’s explicit instructions when we ‘preach the Word’ and are using the sword of the Spirit. The more ‘truth’ we declare the more ‘truth’ is believed, and the more complete is our opposition to Satan. But to spend all day or all night in prayer warfare is something uncommanded; it results in prayer taking the place of the Scriptures; and it has no place in the life and witness of those whose first and last thought is that, both in matter and method their witness shall be in harmony with ‘Thus saith the Lord’.

5. PAUL’S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Personal experience may be good when appropriate, but it is out of place when it overbears the direct testimony of Scripture. Books may be written and crammed with experiences that prove nothing more than that such things were felt by the individual writer. Peter’s experience on the Mount of the Transfiguration was convincing to himself, but, he says, we have a ‘more sure’ word of prophecy (2 Pet. 1:19). Paul’s experiences, however, are woven intimately into the fabric of inspired truth, and can be safely given a place. We have found that those who are actively concerned in the warfare against Satan seldom hesitate to speak of all sickness among saints as the result of the attack of the Evil One. It seems strange to think that those who should rejoice in the complete victory of Christ over sin, Satan, and death, should be ready to concede so much power to the enemy over the bodies of those who belong to the Lord. Possibly such would have persuaded Martha and Mary that the death of Lazarus was the direct attack of the Devil, but they would have been mistaken. Possibly the man born blind entertained the same belief, but he, too, was mistaken (*See* Exod. 4:11). However, we know that one affliction that came upon Paul *was* of Satanic origin, but we find that he did not ‘resist’ it as an attack of the Devil.

This special affliction was sent to Paul, ‘lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations’ (2 Cor. 12:7). To have resisted this stake in the flesh would have been spiritually disastrous. Three times he prayed for deliverance, but we do not read that he engaged in prayer warfare. Then, meekly yet gloriously, he bowed to the Divine appointment, learning the blessed lesson of sufficient grace and perfected strength - a lesson that no amount of healing could have ever taught.

Was Timothy in his persistent weakness foolishly allowing Satan to attack him? If so, Paul would have been wiser to have advised a prayer conflict instead of the ‘little wine’ of 1 Timothy 5:23. Was Epaphroditus allowing Satan to have his own way with him? And Trophimus too? We have nothing to warrant such a conclusion.

Let us take as another example, Paul’s imprisonment. Who can but believe that behind the malignant hatred of the Jew was the hatred of the Devil? Prison meant an end of Paul’s missionary journeys. Does he resist? No. Two years of weary imprisonment under Felix, two years more at Rome, and never once through that time does Paul sign himself other than as the prisoner of the Lord, though he makes it plain that his imprisonment was attributable to the Jews’ antagonism (Acts 28:17-19). Had Paul ‘resisted’, should we have possessed his prison ministry? Did not Satan go too far? Was not Paul more truly a conqueror in his quiet confidence in the Lord, than if he had moved heaven and earth with his fervour?

'... in all these things (not exempt from them) we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:37-39).

Let none misunderstand us. Satan is the enemy of God and man. We hold no truce with him or his agents, but we refuse to engage in a warfare that denies that we are already more than conquerors. We refuse to give the slightest colour to the thought that Satan has any jurisdiction over those who are raised far above all in Christ. We refuse to lay down the sword of the Spirit, definitely given us of God as the one weapon, to engage in methods that approach perilously near the psychic travesty of Pentecostalism. We do not believe that we should see in sickness and disease among the members of Christ's church a denial of His Lordship. We prefer still to believe that it is as true of us as of those to whom John wrote, 'The wicked one toucheth us not'.

We do believe, however, that the believer may voluntarily lay aside the armour provided by God, and if he does so the fiery darts of the wicked will find him out. We do believe that ground is certainly given to Satan by not putting off the conversation of the old man, and by not putting on the new. These sad possibilities do not call for warfare; they call for 'repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth', and when recovery is made, and the believer again reaches his true position where he stands as 'delivered', 'translated', and 'seated' 'far above all', the promise of Romans 16:20 is fulfilled - Satan is beneath his feet. Time and opportunity can then be consecrated to positive testimony and strife need never be known. Troubles, afflictions, persecutions may come thick and fast - they are promised to all who will live godly. Such accompaniments do not call for 'resistance', but rather for the spirit of Matthew 11:26, or of 2 Corinthians 12:10.

Such is our 'persuasion'. So far as we are concerned, Satan is a beaten foe already cast out from the sphere of our calling. We seek to set our mind on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and not to be occupied either with earthly things, or with the foredoomed activities of Satan.

When we find chapter and verse in the Prison Epistles for changing this attitude it will be time to modify it. Till then we make our declaration. Every child of God has his own responsibility to the Lord, but we refuse to allow any to rob us of our blessed security and heritage which is found in Christ in the heavenly places, far above all.

CHAPTER 14.

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing pages we have sought to present to the reader a declaration of those things surely believed by us. In no sense have we sought to formulate a creed, or to attempt to fix upon any individual or meeting a man-made bond. Every reader will probably find that we have omitted some item of truth that he holds to be vital. The limitations of a booklet impose upon us the necessity for exercising choice between claimant doctrines, and we have given preference to those which touch upon the Scriptures, the Lord and His work, the nature of man, sin, salvation and punishment, the church of the mystery, and a brief word upon some prevalent errors that are abroad to-day.

The interested reader will find a wider variety of exposition in the books mentioned in passing, and in others published by the *Berean Publishing Trust*. We ask no favours from any reader. We seek grace to be unmoved by either frown or favour. If we have a conscience void of offence and are pleasing unto Him, and if what we hold and believe is in harmony with His Word, rightly divided, it is a small thing with us to be judged by man's judgment. He that judgeth us is the Lord.

Nevertheless we would hasten to add that not one word has been purposely written to injure or wound unnecessarily either saint or sinner, friend or foe. Above all things we trust the reader will emulate the Bereans, who 'searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so'. Then, our responsibility ends, and the reader's begins.

May the God of all grace be pleased to use this declaration to His glory and the enlightenment or confirmation of His believing people.

CONCLUSION