

## Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth (Second Series)

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## #1. Deuteronomy. Structure of the Book.

We have now reached the fifth book of Moses, called in our version *Deuteronomy*. The name given by the Hebrews is usually taken from the opening sentence: *Elleh debarim*, “These be the words”. The title *Deuteronomy* was taken by our translators from the Vulgate *Deuteronomium*, which in turn was taken from the Septuagint, where, in Deut. xvii. 18, the words, “A copy of this law” (Hebrew: *Mishneh Hat-Torah*) are translated by *Deuteronomium*, meaning, “A repetition of the law”. This title indicates very clearly the general purpose of the book, which is devoted mainly to a rehearsal of the law upon the threshold of the land of promise. Of all the suggested outlines and subdivisions that we have examined, none seems to keep so close to the actual subject-matter as that given in *The Companion Bible*.

The literary structure given in *The Companion Bible* is as follows:--

- A | i. 1-5. Introduction.
- B | C | i. 6 - xxxii. 47. The Tribes. Their administration.
  - D | xxxii. 48-52. Moses. His death announced.
- B | C | xxxiii. 1-29. The Tribes. Their blessing.
  - D | xxxiv. 1-7. Moses. His death accomplished.
- A | xxxiv. 8-12. Conclusion.

This outline has the advantage of placing all the spoken words of Moses together in one member:

(B | C | i. 6 - xxxii. 47),

with the exception of the blessing pronounced upon the nation in xxxiii. 1-29, which stands alone. As these articles have in mind readers who may not be able to weigh over the “pros and cons” of those structures which deal with a wide range of subject-matter, we devote this opening article to an expansion and verification of the outline given in *The Companion Bible* for the second member in the scheme above (C | i. 6 - xxxii. 47).

### Analysis of the addresses of Moses to Israel (From *The Companion Bible*):

- C | E | G | i. 6 - iii. 29. Possession East of Jordan. Retrospective.
  - H | a | iv. 1 - v. 33. Injunctions *in* Horeb. Retrospective.
    - b | vi. 1 - xi. 25. Injunctions on entry. Prospective.
  - J | c | xi. 26-28. Blessings and curses.
    - d | xi. 29-32. Gerizim and Ebal.
- F | xii. 1 - xxvii. 10. Laws IN the Land.
- E | J | d | xxvii. 11-26. Gerizim and Ebal.
  - c | xxviii. 1-68. Blessings and curses.
- H | a | xxix. 1-17. Injunctions *plus* Horeb. Retrospective.
  - b | xxix. 18 - xxx. 20. Injunctions re Dispersion. Prospective.
- G | xxxi. 1-8. Possession West of Jordan. Prospective.
- F | xxxi. 9 - xxxii. 47. Laws and Song: IN and OUT of the Land.

The opening member is retrospective and deals with possession East of Jordan; the balancing member is prospective and deals with possession West of Jordan. These members we shall now consider more in detail, so that the reader may see for himself that these things are so.

The first member is retrospective, for Moses turns the attention of his hearers back to that day thirty-eight years earlier, when God had commanded the nation to go up and possess the land. He reminds them of the sending of the spies and the awful result. Chapters ii. & iii. speak of Israel’s journeys through the lands “this side of Jordan”, lands held by Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites. Chapter iii. refers to the inheritance of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, also on

“this side of Jordan”. This is sufficient, we trust, to establish the headline of the structure; and we now turn to the corresponding section, Deuteronomy xxxi. 1-8.

This section is a short one occupying but eight verses. It opens with the fact that Moses was one hundred and twenty years old, that he was no longer as active as hitherto, and that he was forbidden by the Lord to go over Jordan. But though Moses the leader had failed, Jehovah the Lord had not: “The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee . . . . and Joshua, he shall go over before thee” (xxx. 3). The opening section dealt with Og and Sihon and so, in this balancing section, we find: “And the Lord shall do unto them, as He did to Sihon and to Og” (xxx. 4). Words of encouragement addressed to Joshua are then given; these are repeated in Joshua i., emphasizing that the point of view is now prospective, looking forward to the crossing of Jordan and the entering of the land.

We now examine the next pair of members, iv. 1 - v. 33 and xxix. 1-17. Both are said to be retrospective, and associated with Horeb. The second differs from the first in that it is said to be “*plus* Horeb”. This we must test. Israel are reminded of what took place at Baal-peor (iv. 3), of what happened to Moses (iv. 21) and of the manifestation at Sinai and in Egypt (iv. 33, 34). The association with Horeb is found in iv. 15 and v. 2. The parallel passage (xxix. 1-17) is both retrospective and additional to the covenant terms of Horeb. Moses opens with the retrospective words, “Ye have seen” (xxix. 2-4); and this is resumed in verses 16 & 17: “For ye know . . . ye have seen”. The words of xxix. 1: “These are the words of the covenant . . . . *beside the covenant* which He made with them in Horeb” speak of an important fact that must be taken into consideration whenever the “covenant” is mentioned. For the moment, however, we have to test the structure given *on page.235* (page above). We turn, therefore, to the next pair of members, vi. 1 - xi. 25 and xxix. 18 - xxx. 20:--

Injunctions on entry. Prospective.

Injunctions re dispersion. Prospective.

Deuteronomy vi. opens with the words:--

“Now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, *that ye might do them in the land* whither ye go to possess it . . . . thou and thy son, and thy son’s son” (vi. 1, 2).

Chapter vii. 1 continues in the same strain: “When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land”. And so with viii. 1, ix. 1 and xi. 10, 11; the whole passage, however (xxix. 18 - xxx. 20), has to do with the possibility of the people being deprived of the land and scattered:--

“The anger of the Lord was kindled against the land . . . . and the Lord rooted them out . . . . and cast them into another land” (xxix. 27, 28).

“If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven” (xxx. 4).

The central members of the structure are concerned with blessings and curses, Gerizim and Ebal, and the laws in the land.

Chapter xi. 26-28 deals with a blessing and a curse:--

“Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse” (xi. 26).

Deuteronomy xxviii. 1-68 balances this section, verses 3-14 detailing a series of blessings, and verses 15-68 a series of curses. Chapter xxvii. 11-26 is taken up with the pronouncement of blessings and curses by specified tribes on either Gerizim or Ebal.

This leaves us with xii. 1 - xxvii. 10 and xxxi. 9 - xxxii. 47:--

Laws IN the land.

Laws and songs IN and OUT of the land.

Deuteronomy xii. opens with the words:--

“These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do *in the land*, which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.”

These statutes and judgments deal with idolatrous places, images, clean and unclean foods, false prophets, sabbatical years, passover and other feasts, the administration of justice, the desire for a king, the Levites, war, agriculture, property, marriage, women, men, offerings and tithes.

Chapter xxxi. 9 speaks of Moses writing “this law” and xxxi. 19 continues with a command to write “this song”. The song gives a prophetic picture of Israel’s history from their original call and election to the establishing at last of the kingdom.

We trust that sufficient has been said to justify the structure given in *The Companion Bible*, and with this survey we must conclude. In subsequent articles we hope to single out a few essential features for consideration, but the bulk of the book we shall have to pass over unnoticed. The book is long and, to some extent, a repetition, and our studies in this series are not intended to give a detailed exposition of every chapter, but rather to draw attention to features that are fundamental to the working out of the purpose of the ages as exhibited during the varied dispensations.

## **#2. Deuteronomy. Possession East of Jordan.**

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

Two things stand out in this structure:--

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

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

### Deuteronomy i. - iii.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

First, let us observe one difference between these two classes. Esau was the brother of Jacob; Ammon and Moab were both the sons of Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Sihon, on the other hand, was an Amorite (ii. 24), and Og one of the remnant of the “Rephaim”; the former was a Canaanite (Gen. x. 16), the latter one of the evil seed whose origin is indicated in the opening verses of Genesis vi. The first thing, then, to remember is that here are the two seeds — Israel, Esau, Moab and Lot belonging to one line; Sihon, Og, the Canaanite and the Rephaim belonging to the other. In one case God gives possessions and preserves; in the other, He deprives of possessions and destroys.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **#3. Deuteronomy xxxii. The song of Jehovah's Name.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ye rulers of Sodom ... ye people of Gomorrah" (Isa. i. 10, & Deut. xxxii. 32).

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

"Thou, Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**The Song of Moses (Deuteronomy xxxii.).**  
*Being a proclamation of the name Jehovah,*  
*the covenant-keeping God of Israel, in His twofold character:--*

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

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

**ISRAEL SET ASIDE.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect” (verse 4).

“He . . . . lightly esteemed the Rock of His salvation” (verse 15).

“Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful” (verse 18).

“Except their Rock had sold them” (verse 30).

“Their rock is not as our Rock” (verse 31).

“Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted” (verse 37).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **#4. Deuteronomy. The blessing of Moses (xxxiii. 1-29).**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Naphtali.* — “The West.” The inheritance of the tribe is clearly defined in [Josh. xix. 32-39](#).

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

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

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

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

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

## **#5. JOSHUA. The end of the law . . . . . Newness of life (i. 1, 2).**

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

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

## The Structure of the Prophets.

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

The most superficial study of these eight books shew an unfolding purpose. At either end stands one named Joshua, the first a Captain, the second a High Priest. The name Joshua and the name Jesus are the same (*see* Heb. iv. 8, margin), and we are immediately aware of the foreshadowing of a greater “Captain” (Heb. ii. 10) and a greater “High Priest” (Heb. iv. 15) who is to lead many sons, not only into the land of Canaan, but to “glory”.

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

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

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

The peopling of the promised land with the chosen race is one of the chief factors in the salvation of the nations of the earth, and it is because this spot of earth is the chosen geographical centre from which light and blessing, rule and law shall flow out to the ends of the earth that it occupies such an important place in the Divine plan. And further, Joshua is pre-eminently a type of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the experiences of Israel as recorded in this book have been “written for our learning”. The whole history foreshadows the present experience of the redeemed, and their entry into the inheritance in God’s own time. While, therefore, we shall give attention to the actual historic facts that are here recorded, we shall

be more concerned with the light they throw upon the purpose of the ages and our association with it. Of course the dispensation of the mystery finds no foreshadowing in O.T. types; it was hid in God until revealed through the apostle Paul. But the walk and warfare of the redeemed in all ages have much in common, and though the paths trodden lead to widely different destinies, they are nevertheless in many respects parallel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Get thee up into the top of Pisgah . . . . and behold it with thine eyes; for thou *shalt not go over* this Jordan. But charge Joshua and encourage him, and

strengthen him; for *he shall go over* before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see” (Deut. iii. 27, 28).

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

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

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

And when at length Israel did pass over Jordan, it was in many respects a repetition of the earlier experience of the crossing of the Red Sea (Josh. iii. 17). The typical teaching of this repetition will be better appreciated when we have surveyed the intervening chapters. It can, however, be seen to have a distinct bearing upon the typical teaching we have already noticed. The meaning, too, of Jordan will be better understood when we arrive at chapter iii.

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

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

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

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

In these words we have foreshadowed the end of the law, and its inability to save or to lead into an inheritance; the new sphere of life and activity opened up by the resurrection of Christ; the repetition of the Red Sea crossing, making the division occasioned by redemption our own experimentally; and the fact that the glory that lies ahead is ours in gift and promise.

May it be ours to follow our true Joshua closely, fully and utterly, so that we shall not only know the bliss of salvation, but also the added joy of His “Well done”.

## **#6. JOSHUA. Good success and the Book of the Law.**

Before pursuing the typical teaching of the book of Joshua further, we must endeavour to get some idea of its teaching as a whole. The great subject is the possession of the land of promise, and everything bears upon this one theme.

The death of Moses leaves the way clear for Joshua, and he is commanded to lead the children of Israel across the Jordan and on to victory. The history of this advance is a chequered one. Defeat and failure are chronicled, as well as victory and success. The presence of failure, and the fact that the children of Israel did not entirely drive out the inhabitants of the land, preclude the idea that the crossing of the Jordan can symbolize actual death and resurrection, or the entry into Canaan the entry into heaven itself. We shall discover in the history of this people a full-length portrait of ourselves — our failures and their causes, our victories and their causes — and if we are simple and truly wise, we shall, as a result of the study of these historical events that have been recorded for our learning, be the better prepared for the pursuit of the prize of the high calling.

## **The Book of Joshua as a whole.**

The purpose of the record:--

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the LAND which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them REST round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Josh. xxi. 43-45).

### **The Structure of the Record.**

A | i. 1. THE DEATH OF MOSES.

B | i. 2 - vii. ENTRY INTO THE LAND.

The land.--To be divided (i. 2-18). | Be strong and very courageous.

Observe law of Moses.

Turn neither to right nor left.

The land.--Espied (ii.).

| Rahab. The Scarlet Thread.

The land.--Entered (iii.-vii.).

| Jordan, Circumcision.

Jericho and Victory.

Achan and Defeat.

C | viii.-xii. CONQUEST OF THE LAND. | Ai, Ebal and Gerizim.

The Thirty-one Kings.

"So Joshua took the whole land according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war" (xi. 23).

B | xiii. - xxiv. 28. | POSSESSION OF THE LAND.

The land.--To be possessed (xiii.-xxii.) | Much left to possess.

Caleb the Overcomer.

Seven Tribes still without Inheritance.

Cities of Refuge.

Two and half tribes' inheritance.

The land.--"I have divided" (xxiii.).

| Be very courageous.

Keep the law of Moses.

Turn neither to right nor left.

The land.--Of the Amorites (xxiv. 1-28). | Promises to fathers fulfilled.

A | xxiv. 29-33. THE DEATH OF JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR.

As will be seen in the structure, there are certain features common to the Lord's command to Joshua in chapter i. and Joshua's command to the people in chapter xxiii. The parallel we set out below so that its significance may be understood:--

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses My servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. i. 7).

"Be ye, therefore, very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside there from, to the right hand or to the left" (Josh. xxiii. 6).

The words "courage" and "be courageous" we naturally associate with the leader of an expedition, and principally in connection with the execution of the attack and the conquest of the foe. Courage, however, in the book of Joshua has more to do with resolution of heart to keep God's Word than with fighting and conquest. So we find the word "courage" used once of actual conflict and victory, and four times of faithful adherence to the Word of God (Josh. x. 25, and i. 6, 7, 9, 18).

There is in the original of the word "courage" an element of obstinacy, as may be seen, for instance, in Deut. ii. 30: "Made his heart obstinate". And the servant of God needs this element of obstinacy in his spiritual make-up, so that he may not be easily turned aside from the teaching of the Word of God. This can be seen very clearly in the character and example of the apostle Paul, who combined the tenderness of a nursing mother (I Thess. ii. 7) with an inflexible resolution (I Cor. ii. 1, 2; Acts xx. 24).

In Josh. xxiii. 6, the words "Be courageous" are the translation of another word in the Hebrew, meaning "to bind tight". This idea may be seen in II Sam. xviii. 9 where the reference is to Absalom whose hair "caught" in an oak (Septuagint: "entwined"). It appears again in Isa. xxviii. 22, where the idea is that of "tightening bands", and in Isa. xxii. 21, "girding with a girdle". It is used in opposition to "relax", a literal rendering of Isa. xxxv. 3 being: "Tighten the relaxed hands, make them tense" (*see Parkhurst*). Joshua, and all who would follow in his steps, need resolution and girding. We must "gird up the loins of our mind" (I Pet. i. 13); and have the "loins girt about with truth" (Eph. vi. 14).

In spiritual conflict there is but one weapon--"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Eph. vi. 17). Joshua's equipment resembles our own, in that he was enjoined to utter faithfulness regarding the Word of God. We are at times tempted to relax regarding some phase of the truth, in order to win an apparent victory, to retain a fellow-servant's sympathy or fellowship, or to advance in some way the cause we have at heart. This, however, must be resisted as of the Devil. No apparent success can ever justify departure from what is written. I Timothy ii. 12 is an instance of a case where the difficulties of service and the state of the times make loyal obedience sometimes appear a definite hindrance. Nevertheless we all acknowledge, when in the presence of the Lord, that no departure from His explicit commands can ever be blessed with "good success".

The "courage" of verse 7 was to be exhibited in "turning not from the law, to the right hand or to the left" (Josh. i. 7). This, we submit, is at the root of obedience and of success:--

"Then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. i. 8).

In Josh. i. 7 & 8 the one word *sakal* is translated "prosper" and "have good success". The root idea of the word is "to act wisely", "to be wise". It occurs in Gen. iii. 6, and is variously translated by words indicating wisdom, prudence, understanding and skill. True prosperity and good success are the outcome of wisdom, and wisdom that leads to good success is found in adherence to the Word of God. The failures that are recorded in the book of Joshua may all be traced to one source — disobedience to the Word of God. This is a lesson that is not peculiar to one age or dispensation; it is inherent in Genesis iii., in Joshua i., in Ephesians and in the Revelation.

Let us take to heart the language of Josh. i. 2-9. The Lord promised that He would not fail Joshua, but that put no premium upon disobedience. The same Lord Who said, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee", also said:--

"Every place *that the sole of your feet shall tread upon*, that have I given unto you" (Josh. i. 3).

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for *then* thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and *then* thou shalt have good success" (Josh. i. 8).

In Joshua's day there were no Scriptures other than the law of Moses, called the "book of the law" (Josh. i. 8). Moses is named fifty-seven times in Joshua, and the law nine times (the references to Moses being fairly evenly distributed throughout the record from chapter i. to chapter xxiv.). To-day we possess "all Scripture", including the record of the coming of the Saviour, His death, resurrection and ascension, together with the revelation of the mystery that is so peculiarly our own. As we stand upon the threshold of Ephesians, and contemplate "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places", let us remember that to "possess our possessions" it is necessary that we hold fast the faithful Word. Above all, let us resist the dreamer of dreams, the man who "feels" certain things, or has had certain things "revealed" to him. Nothing can take the place of the Word of God, and all substitutes are ultimately, as they are originally, antichristian.

## **#7. JOSHUA ii. Faith, the substance of things hoped for.**

The story of the spies and Rahab the harlot recorded in Joshua ii. reverts to a period prior to i. 1-9. This is evident if we compare the statements of i. 11 and ii. 16.

In i. 11 we read that "within three days" Israel were to pass over Jordan; and in ii. 16 that the spies were lying hid for three days, apart from the time occupied in going and returning. This agrees with the marginal reading of Josh. ii. 1:--

"And Joshua the son of Nun *had sent* out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho."

One of the many evidences of the different authorship of Joshua from that of the books of Moses is found in the spelling of the name Jericho. In the law it is spelt *Yarecho*, but in Joshua it is spelt *Yericho*. The interest, however, of this chapter centres around the faith and deliverance of Rahab.

Some commentators have sought to soften the description of Rahab's character given here by observing that the word *zanah* might possibly be rendered "innkeeper". Alas, the testimony of over 90 occurrences removes all doubt as to Rahab's evil character, and if this were not enough, the references to her in Heb. xi. 31 and James ii. 25 use the word *porne*, which cannot be translated other than "harlot". Rahab, however, was not saved by her moral character; she was saved, as all are saved, by grace through faith. The name Jericho is derived from a word meaning the moon, probably because it was worshipped here under the form of Ashtoreth; if this is so, it would explain why Rahab was a harlot, and lived in such a prominent place on the wall.

When Rahab received the spies with peace, and sent them out another way, she acted by faith, as Heb. xi. 31 and James ii. 25 make clear. Yet even though she believed God, and acted accordingly, she told falsehoods. This is not mentioned against her in the N.T. any more than the failures, sins and mistakes of countless millions of believers since her day will be remembered against them. Nevertheless we must be careful to differentiate between that which was of faith in Rahab and that which was of the flesh: the one we are enjoined to follow, the other we should seek grace to avoid.

The grounds of Rahab's faith are worthy of note for they are fundamental:--

"And she said, I KNOW that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have HEARD how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, HE IS GOD in heaven above, and in earth beneath . . . . give me a true token . . . . thou

shalt bind this line of SCARLET thread in the window which thou didst let us down by . . . . . and she bound the scarlet line in the window" (Josh. ii. 9-21).

"*I know . . . . . for we have heard.*" — This is faith's conclusion. Notice, however, the change of person, "I" and "we". Not all who hear believe, but all who believe must have heard:--

"How shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? . . . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 14-17).

The mighty deeds of the Lord that accompanied the exodus of Israel could not be kept from the ears of the surrounding nations. Indeed it was a part of the Lord's purpose that this should be so:--

"And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My Name may be declared throughout all the earth" (Exod. ix. 16).

Rahab knew the name of the Lord, for she said: "I know that the Lord hath given you the land" (the title Lord here is Jehovah). Moreover, Rahab acknowledged the Lord as God: "For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. ii. 11).

Similar statements are recorded of Nebuchadnezzar:--

"Your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings" (Dan. ii. 47).

"Ye servants of the Most High ..." . . . . . "Blessed be the God of Shadrach ..." (Dan. iii. 26-28).

"I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever ... He doeth according to His will in the army of *heaven*, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. iv. 34, 35).

(See also the proclamation of Darius and Cyrus: Dan. vi. 26, 27 and Ezra i. 1-3).

Moses had sung at the Red Sea, some forty years before the incident of Joshua ii., these words:

"The people shall hear and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina ... all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away" (Exod. xv. 14-18).

The confession of Rahab shews their fulfilment. Two of the wonders mentioned by Rahab are the drying up of the Red Sea, and the destruction of Sihon and Og. She was thoroughly convinced that the Lord was God, that the land was given to Israel and that her own people were under sentence of destruction. Realizing this, she had but one thought — "What must I do to be saved?". We hear no theological disputation with the spies as to the rights and wrongs of the case. Rahab is a true type of the sinner seeking salvation.

"*Give me a true token.*" — It is important to remember that it was the same cord that was used to let down the spies to safety that became the token of Rahab's salvation:--

"Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window *which thou didst let us down by*" (Josh. ii. 18).

It is as though the spies were acting out Paul's statement that the gospel that saved him was the gospel that must save all. The preacher must always point to the means of his own salvation as the only way of salvation for all the world. Scarlet is used repeatedly in the law to set forth redemption by the shedding of blood (*see* for example Lev. xiv. 4, 6, etc.). The scarlet thread in Rahab's window which saved her and her house from destruction, and the sprinkled blood on the doorpost and lintel at the time of Passover were both "tokens" of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:--

"Give me a true token ... this line of scarlet thread in the window" (Josh. ii. 12, 18).

"And the blood shall be to you for a token" (Exod. xii. 13).

Rahab, moreover, manifests a true spirit in that she does not merely ask her own safety; in fact she only mentions herself incidentally:--

"Since I have showed you kindness, swear that ye will also show kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token. And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death" (Josh. ii. 12, 13).

"And she bound the scarlet line in her window" (Josh. ii. 21).

It is impossible to believe without acting upon that belief. Faith without works is dead. Rahab's trust was not in her kindness to the spies, nor in the mere possession of the scarlet thread. "She bound it in her window". It is idle to speculate as to what would have become of her if she had failed to exhibit this token; it is sufficient that she obeyed and was saved. This is sound doctrine; anything else is but vain jangling of words to no profit.

The word translated "line" (*tiqvah*) in Josh. ii. 18 and 21 occurs here for the first time in the Scriptures. Although it occurs in the O.T. some 34 times, it is never translated "line" again; but "hope" 23 times, "expectation" 7 times, "thing that I longed for" once, and "expected" once. In Joshua, *tiqvah* is used figuratively, the figure called *Metonymy*, where one name is used instead of another, to which it stands in some relation. In this case, it is the Metonymy of the adjunct, where something pertaining to the subject is put for the subject itself. Without the figure being translated, Josh. ii. 18 and 21 would read:--

"Thou shalt bind this HOPE of scarlet thread in the window" (Josh. ii. 18).

"And she bound the scarlet HOPE in the window" (Josh. ii. 21).

She had asked for a "true token" and she received it. Rahab figures in Hebrews xi. as an example of those who had faith such as is explained in Heb. x. 1: "Now faith is the substance of things *hoped for*".

The scarlet line in Rahab's window thus become a type of the faith which confidently expects God to honour His Word.

The reader will doubtless expect some reference to be made to the presence of Rahab in the genealogy of the Saviour. Matthew i. 5 reads: "and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab". The only other reference to Rahab in the N.T. are found in Heb. xi. 31 & James ii. 25, and in both these cases she is called "Rahab the harlot" even though at the time of which these writers spoke Rahab was a woman of faith. The only references to Rahab in the O.T. are in Joshua (ii. 1 & 3; vi. 17, 23 & 25); and in these five references she is three times called "the harlot", even though there could be no possibility of confusion. There is no record in the O.T. that Salmon married Rahab the harlot. We have simply assumed that the Rahab mentioned in Matt. i. 5 must be the same person as is mentioned in Joshua, Hebrews and James. If the reader consult *Young's Analytical Concordance*, he will find that there are seven entries under Rahab, divided into two sections:--

"(1) A woman of Jericho who received and concealed the two spies, B.C.1452.

(2) The wife of Salmon, and mother of Booz."

It is evident, therefore, that Dr. Young felt it wise to keep the two references separate.

In the Babylonian Gemara\* (\* - See articles on "The Volume of the Book", volume XXI, pp.127,128), the tradition is preserved that Rahab "being made a proselytess, was married to Joshua". This is also asserted by *Kimchi* when speaking of Joshua vi. Some scruples, however, were entertained as to how Joshua could marry Rahab, when it was not lawful for any Israelite to contract marriages with the Canaanites, even though they became proselytes. If it would have been sinful for Joshua to have married a Canaanite, would it have been less sinful for Salmon to have done so? It seems best where the Scripture is silent that we should remain silent too. Had the reference in Matt. i. 5 followed the other

references and said plainly, "Rahab the harlot", all doubt would have been removed. As it is, there is no necessity to explain the presence of a Canaanite in the genealogy of the Saviour, unless we are to assume that only one person ever bore the name of Rahab, which would be absurd.

Rahab the harlot stands out for all time as a type of the sinner who, realizing the truth and the fact of destruction, flees for refuge to the only hope that is set before us, the precious blood of Christ.

## **#8. JOSHUA iii. 1 - v. 1. The significance of the crossing of Jordan.**

After the interlude of the visit of the spies to Rahab, we return to the time at which the Book of Joshua opens. In chapter i. we read the command:--

"Arise, go over this Jordan ... within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan" (Josh. i. 2, 11).

In chapter iii., in obedience to this command, we read:--

"And Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over. And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host" (Josh. iii. 1, 2).

The passage of the Jordan is dealt with in iii. 1 - v. 1, but the subject is too great to be dealt with as a whole. In this article we shall devote our attention to that section which deals with the actual crossing of the Jordan, leaving the teaching of chapter v. to be considered separately.

### **The crossing of the Jordan. Joshua iii. 3 - v. 1.**

A | iii. 3-6. Command people. The Ark.

B | iii. 7. "This day will I begin to MAGNIFY thee."

C | iii. 8. Command to Priests.--"Stand still."

D | iii. 9 - iv. 10. Testimony to Canaanites and to Israel.--  
"Hereby ye shall know."

The waters, E | iii. 13-17. Waters on an heap.

stones and F | iv. 1-10. | a | People pass over.

people. b | Twelve stones.

c | What mean ye?

b | Twelve stones.

a | People pass over.

A | iv. 10-13. Speak to people. The Ark.

B | iv. 14. "On that day the Lord MAGNIFIED Joshua."

C | iv. 15-17. Command to Priests.--"Come up."

D | iv. 18 - v. 1. Testimony to Israel and to Canaanites.--  
"That all the people of the earth might know."

The waters, E | iv. 18. Waters return.

stones and F | iv. 19-23. | a | People come up.

people. b | Twelve stones.

c | What mean?

b | These stones.

a | Ye passed over.

The structure of the passage throws into relief those features that are of chief importance, and the time spent upon its discovery is more than compensated for by that approximation to "the full assurance of understanding" which in some small measure a grasp of the general trend of any passage provides. The theme is fourfold. (1) The Ark. (2) The magnifying of Joshua. (3) The Priests. (4) The testimony to the Canaanites and to Israel. As the material before us is rather great in bulk, it will simplify matters if we take each section separately and seek to discover its significance.

THE ARK. — The ark of the Covenant figures in four great episodes in Joshua:--

- (a) The crossing of the Jordan (iii., iv.).
- (b) The taking of Jericho (vi.).
- (c) The discovery of Achan's sin (vii.).
- (d) The recital of the blessings and the cursings (viii.).

The teaching that relates to the ark in the first episode is perhaps crystallized for us in the opening reference: "When ye see the ark . . . . go after it" (Josh. iii. 3).

The full statement should be read:--

"And they commanded the people saying, When ye see the *ark* of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it."

This command implies a resumption of the relationship that had been broken by the disobedience and failure of Israel in the wilderness:--

"And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey: and the *ark* of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them" (Numb. x. 33).

This happy condition was interrupted by the failure so quickly manifested (*see* Numbers xi.) and the last reference to the ark in the book of Numbers is that of xiv. 43, 44:--

"Ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you. But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the *ark* of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp."

A glance at the verses shews the intimate association of the presence of the Lord with the ark: "The Lord will not be with you . . . . the ark . . . . departed not out of the camp" (Numb. xiv. 43, 44).

From this time until the close of the wilderness wandering we find no mention of the ark of the covenant. The resumption of favour is indicated in Deuteronomy xxxi. where Moses, at one hundred and twenty years of age, speaks these words to Israel:--

"The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee, and He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said" (Deut. xxxi. 3).

Continuing the account in Deuteronomy, we read:--

"And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage; for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee: He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed. And Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, *which*

*bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord*, and unto all the elders of Israel" (Deuteronomy xxxi. 7-9).

"Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of *the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God*, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (xxx. 26).

When Israel, therefore, were called upon to follow the ark, they had the consciousness that it contained the covenant engagement of the Lord to lead them triumphantly into the land of promise. All inheritance, whether enjoyed on earth or in the heavenlies, is by promise, and cannot be disassociated from the great propitiation for which the Mercy Seat stands. Moreover, the Mercy Seat was made of one piece with the Cherubim, and the Cherubim link the purpose of grace here with the promise made at Eden's gate (Genesis iii.) and the fall of the anointed Cherub\* (\* - See Index to volumes I-XX for a series of notes under the heading CHERUBIM) before Adam was created (Ezekiel xxviii.). The crossing of the Jordan, and the fall of Jericho take upon them fuller and deeper meanings as we see them in the light of the great purpose of the ages.

There are ten references in Joshua iii. & iv. to the "ark of the covenant"; and seven other references in which it is described either simply as "the ark" or by some title other than the "ark of the covenant". It may be useful to tabulate these seven references in which the "covenant" is not referred to:--

"The ark" (iii. 15 twice and iv. 10).

"The ark of the Lord, the Lord of the whole earth" (iii. 13).

"The ark of the Lord your God" (iv. 5).

"The ark of the Lord" (iv. 11).

"The ark of the testimony" (iv. 16).

There is an undoubted reference in Hebrews xiii. to the confidence that the presence of the ark of the covenant inspired, and the promise of the Lord never to leave or forsake. The chapter also emphasizes death and resurrection, which the crossing of the Jordan typified:--

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee . . . . Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant . . . ." (Heb. xiii. 5, 20).

A space of two thousand cubits was to separate the ark and the people following. The reason for this is given: "That ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Josh. iii. 4). The student of Scripture will immediately think of the words of John xiv.: "I go to prepare a place for . . . . How can we know the way? . . . . Arise, let us go hence".

The Lord Jesus fulfils all that the ark, the priests and Joshua enacted on that triumphant day.

Among the significant words spoken to or about the priests that bare the ark are the following:--

"Ye shall *stand still* in Jordan" (iii. 8).

"And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord *stood firm* on dry ground in the midst of Jordan" (iii. 17).

"The priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan until *everything was finished*" (iv. 10).

"When all the people *were clean passed over*, the ark of the Lord passed over" (iv. 11).

"Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony, that they *come up out of Jordan*" (iv. 16).

"When the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land, the waters of Jordan returned unto their place" (iv. 18).

The words "stand still" and "stood firm" are translations of the same word. To us, who look back upon the great work of Christ, the significance of words "Stood firm . . . . until everything was finished . . . . all were clean passed over" needs no explanation. We rejoice that in the finished work of Christ, we have a sure and safe passage through Jordan to the other side, where all the promises of God await fulfilment.

The command "to come up out of Jordan" is also significant. The people, as well as the priests with the ark, "came up out of Jordan" (iv. 19). And the next occurrence of the word is descriptive of victory: "And the people shall ascend up" (vi. 15). It is the same triumphant word that is used in such passages as:--

"God is *gone up* with a shout" (Psa. xlvii. 5);  
"Thou hast *ascended* on high" (Psa. lxviii. 18).

And also in that tragedy of presumption when the ark was not with the people and "they presumed to *go up* unto the hill top" (Numb. xiv. 44).

With Christ, we stand firm, we ascend, we triumph. Without Christ, all is vanity, failure and destruction.

Of all the significant features, however, that are associated with the crossing of the Jordan, the one that we must now consider is surely of the first importance:--

"And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped ('baptized', LXX) in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap *very far from the city Adam*, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho" (Josh. iii. 15, 16).

There is marginal reading here of the Massorites that suggests as the true meaning: "Very far off, at the city called Adam". As a piece of topographical information the passage has little value, for the site of the city called Adam is unknown, and the site of Zaretan is only a conjecture. Its significance lies in its typical teaching, which becomes clear when we read it in the light of such passages as I Cor. xv. 22, Rom. v. 12, and the passage in Col. ii. 12 which refers to baptism (closely associated with circumcision, as we find also in Joshua iv.). Here is set forth in wonderful type, the canceling of the condemnation that comes down to us from Adam. This condemnation has one natural end, the death and destruction so vividly set forth by the Dead Sea into which the waters of Jordan run. The passage sets forth in type the burial and the resurrection of the saints by virtue of union with the Son of God. The priests are a type of Christ, the ark is a type of Christ, and Joshua is a type of Christ. Each sets forth one special aspect of that great work wherein the old man is reckoned dead and buried, and the new man put on.

We had hoped to have dealt with the four sections contained in the structure. We have found, however, that one alone has been of sufficient fulness to demand all the space at our disposal. We commend this section dealing with the ark and with Adam to the people of God, believing that a prayerful study will yield rich food for the spirit, and provide new matter for praise and thanksgiving.

## #9. JOSHUA iii., iv. The twelve stones for a Memorial.

It may be remembered that the structure of Joshua iii. & iv. threw into prominence four main subjects. We have already considered the first of these, the ark, and with it the third, the reference to the priests. The second subject, the magnifying of Joshua, speaks for itself. At that same river God began to magnify the Lord Jesus, saying: "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased". The magnifying of the Son of God was completed at the resurrection when He was declared "Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 4). The word *archomai* that is used in the LXX of Josh. iii. 7: "I will *begin* to magnify thee", is also used by Luke in the passage that should be translated:--

"Jesus was about thirty years of age when He *was beginning*" (Luke iii. 23).

We take up for our present study the fourth subdivision of the structure:--

"Testimony to Canaanites and to Israel" (D | iii. 10 - iv. 9 and D | iv. 18 - v. 1).

The miracle of Jordan had two opposite effects on the people concerned. In the Canaanite it produced terror; in the Israelite assurance:--

"And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Gergashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites" (Josh. iii. 9, 10).

"And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel" (Josh. v. 1).

Something of the same effect upon the spiritual Amorites and Canaanites is revealed in Col. ii. 15:

"And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

The testimony to Israel in this miracle of the crossing of Jordan is contained in the twelve memorial stones that were set up in Gilgal and in the midst of Jordan itself. We naturally associate the number twelve with Israel, and we are right in doing so here:--

"Now, therefore, take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man" (Josh. iii. 12).

"Take you twelve men out of the people, and of every tribe a man" (Josh. iv. 2).

"Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man. And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel" (Josh. iv. 4, 5).

"And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there" (Josh. iv. 8).

The above passages reiterate the association of the twelve stones with the twelve tribes. Two other passages complete the record, making six references to the number twelve in this section:--

"Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night" (Josh. iv. 3).

"And Joshua set up twelve stones ('other twelve stones' LXX) in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day" (Josh. iv. 9).

Several points call for notice in the above account. First of all, observe that what the twelve representative men did, is said to have been done by "the children of Israel" (Josh. iv. 8). We find the same principle at work in the record of the Passover, where, although the head of the house was the one who actually killed the passover lamb, yet, as it was a representative act, we read: "And the *whole assembly* of the congregation of Israel shall kill *it* in the evening" (Exod. xii. 6). Not only is the representative principle manifest in the reference to Israel, but also in the fact that the many passover lambs slain that night are spoken of as "it", plainly looking forward to the great Antitype. It is well to see this fact clearly, for there are some who would rob us of this glorious ground of acceptance.

We next observe that the twelve stones were not gathered from any part of the river bed that was most accessible, but had to be taken "out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm". Moreover Joshua set up twelve more stones in the midst of Jordan, in exactly the place from which the first twelve were taken. When we are dealing with stones, it is not possible for them to be in two places at once, but when we consider God's people, we learn that they are buried with Christ, and also raised together with him.

Again, we observe that it was *Joshua*, not the twelve men, who placed the twelve stones in the river bed, and it was *Joshua*, and not the twelve men who pitched them in Gilgal. We have symbolized in these two sets of stones a twofold work, that remained unexplained until Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans.

The special significance of Gilgal where the rescued twelve stones were pitched by Joshua will become apparent on reading Joshua. This chapter forms the second half of the crossing of Jordan, and is to be considered in our next article.

We can, however, deal with one point at once — the meaning of the word "pitch" in the passage: "Did Joshua *pitch* in Gilgal" (Josh. iv. 20). The word does not mean "pitch" as in "pitching a camp". For the pitching of a camp the word is *chanah*, or *natah*; but the word here is *qum*, which means to "stand up", "arise" — see the article "Joshua #1", on the words: "Moses is dead; now therefore *arise*" (Josh. i. 2). The stones brought from the depths of the waters of judgment now "stand up" as monuments of grace.

The typical character of the stones is indicated by the fact that provision is twice made for the time when the children should ask "What mean ye by these stones?" (Josh. iv. 6, 21).

On twelve different occasions we read of certain things or events being "for a memorial" to Israel. Eleven are found during the administration of Moses and Joshua, the twelfth appearing at the restoration of Israel described in the prophet Zechariah. All in their measure look forward to Christ.

#### 1. THE PASSOVER.

"This day shall be unto you *for a memorial*" (Exod. xii. 14).

#### 2. THE UNLEAVENED BREAD.

"This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign ... and *for a memorial* ..." (Exod. xiii. 8, 9).

### 3. THE DESTRUCTION OF AMALEK.

"Write this *for a memorial* in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus.xvii.14).

### 4. THE STONES ON AARON'S SHOULDERS.

"And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders *for a memorial*" (Exod. xxviii. 12).

### 5. THE STONES OF AARON'S HEART.

"And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place *for a memorial* before the Lord continually" (Exod. xxviii. 29).

### 6. THE ATONEMENT MONEY.

"And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be *for a memorial* unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls" (Exod. xxx. 16).

### 7. THE BLOWING OF TRUMPETS.

"In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, *a memorial* of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation" (Leviticus. xxiii. 24; Numb. x. 10).

### 8. THE OFFERING OF JEALOUSY.

"He shall put no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an *offering of memorial*, bringing iniquity to remembrance" (Numbers v. 15, 18).

### 9. THE BRAZEN CENSERS.

"The brazen censers . . . . and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar, *to be a memorial* unto the children of Israel before the Lord" (Numbers.xvi.39,40).

### 10. THE CAPTAINS' OFFERING.

"And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it unto the tabernacle of the congregation, *for a memorial* for the children of Israel before the Lord" (Numb. xxxi. 54).

### 11. THE TWELVE STONES.

"These stones *shall be for a memorial* unto the children of Israel for ever" (Josh. iv. 7).

### 12. THE CROWNS OF SILVER AND GOLD.

"And the crowns shall be . . . . *for a memorial* in the temple of the Lord" (Zech. vi. 14).

Here we have memorials of redemption, atonement, intercession, acceptance, joy, victory, sin, death, resurrection and glory. The last but one of these memorials is that of the twelve stones raised up at Gilgal by Joshua. The twelfth and last is the pledge of the coming of the great King-Priest, Who shall

bear the glory, as He once bore sin, and shall sit as a priest upon a throne, in Whom all the hopes of all men are centred.

## **#10. JOSHUA v. The essentials of victory.**

We have seen something of the typical teaching that is inherent in the name of "the city Adam" (Joshua iii. 16), also the symbolic meaning of the twelve stones in Gilgal and in the river bed. We now learn the reason why the place was named Gilgal, and its significance as a type of good things to come.

A problem that now seems beyond our power to solve is whether the name Gilgal, that occurs some thirteen times in Joshua, refers to one or more places of the same name. We know that Gilgal of Joshua.iv. was not so named until the act of circumcision took place there, and therefore the passages in Deut. xi. 30 and Josh. xii. 23 cannot refer to the same site. Moses speaks of Gilgal as being in the vicinity of Ebal and Gerizim, and so thirty miles from the Gilgal of Joshua iv. The word is sometimes rendered in the LXX by "Galilee", and is comparable with the term "Galilee of the nations". We could bring forward a number of authorities ancient and modern, Josephus, the Maccabees, Lightfoot and others, with reference to this problem, but for us the strict geography of the narrative is not so important as its significance. So that, with the obvious exception of Josh. xii. 23 which speaks of the "king of the nations of Gilgal", we shall take the name Gilgal throughout the book of Joshua to indicate the truth made known in chapters iv. & v., the rolling away of the reproach of Egypt in the rite of circumcision. Whether we are dealing with the same place always, or possibly another of the same name near Antipatris, and now called Jidjulah, is a matter which is difficult to decide, and is not for our purpose very important.

It is quite in keeping with the typical nature of the book of Joshua, and of Gilgal in particular, that the references of Gilgal in this book, so far as Israel is concerned, are exactly twelve in number. Further, it is the opinion of some authorities that "Gilgal" and "Golgotha" are both derived from the same Hebrew root. This would add to the symbolism of the name and the circumcision that took place there.

We have discussed the true significance of circumcision in volume XIX, page 156, and also in volume XXIV in the series on Colossians (Col. ii. 11-13), which the reader should consult if information on this matter is needed. It will suffice here to say that circumcision implies "no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3) and "the putting off of the body of the flesh" (Col. ii. 11), and is closely associated with burial, baptism, and resurrection union with Christ, much as we have seen set forth in Joshua iii. & iv.

*"The second time."* — We must not suppose from Josh. v. 2 that the same persons submitted to the rite a second time; but rather, as is explained in verses 4-7, that it refers to the children that had been born in the wilderness "by the way as they came forth out of Egypt" and had not been circumcised. "The second time" is balanced by the words of verse 7: "Their children, whom He raised up in their stead". There had been "a breach of promise" (Numb. xiv. 34). The carcasses of the murmurers fell in the wilderness — "but your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised" (Numb. xiv. 29-31). This was fulfilled when Joshua led the people into the land.

The lesson for us is that conquest, victory, growth, the possessing of our possessions, are impossible apart from the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new. It is surely not without significance that it was at Gilgal that Samuel hacked Agag the Amalekite to pieces — another symbol of the utter repudiation of the flesh (For notes on "Amalek" see volume XV, page 177).

"The second time" also suggests the attainment of God's purpose for Israel:--

"And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again the *second* time to recover the remnant of His people, which are left, from Assyria and from Egypt . . . ." (Isa. xi. 11).

This element is characteristic of Israel's typical history. Joseph was at first rejected by his brethren, but received the second time: "And at the *second* time Joseph was made known to his brethren" (Acts.xvii.13). Moses was rejected the first time: "This Moses whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer" (Acts vii. 35).

The same principle is seen in Israel's attitude to Christ. At His first coming they rejected Him; at His second coming, they shall look on Him Whom they pierced and mourn for Him:--

"And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the *second* time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28).

Thus this "second time" of Joshua v. is typical of Israel's final entry into her possessions.

We have already observed that when Joshua "pitched" the stones in Gilgal, the Hebrew word *qum* (meaning "rising in resurrection") is used, so emphasizing the typical teaching of the passage. We notice in the chapter now before us that the word translated "were whole" is *chayah*, "to live", "to be made alive", "to revive": "They abode in their places in the camp until they *were whole*" (Josh. v. 8).

This word in one of its forms is nine times rendered "quicken" in Psalm cxix. In other forms it is translated "save alive" (Josh. ii. 13; vi. 25), and "restore" (II Kings viii. 1, 5, where a dead body is restored to life). This further emphasizes the fact that Israel, brought up from the depths of Jordan, set forth in type the believer in newness of life. This, then, is the first principle that we may learn from the typical history of this typical people.

The reproach of Egypt has now been rolled away. God's people are free, not only from Egypt and its bondage, but from its reproach that clung to many even in the wilderness. While that reproach of Egypt clung to them, they were even willing to follow a captain back to their bondage (Numb. xiv. 4). But now they are ready to follow their true Captain, Joshua, who is himself a type of the Lord, the Captain of our salvation (Heb. ii. 10), Who leads many sons, not into Canaan, but to glory. Before the chapter ends, this true Captain reveals Himself to the worshipping presence of Joshua (Josh. v. 13-15).

We have, therefore, in this chapter, four great principles that underlie all true success and victory:--

- (1) The repudiation of the flesh . . . . . CIRCUMCISION (v. 9).
- (2) The blood of Christ . . . . . PASSOVER (v. 10).
- (3) The Word of God . . . . . FOOD (v. 11, 12).
- (4) Christ as Lord . . . . . THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST (v. 13-15).

There was only one Passover — which took place in Egypt. All others have been memorial feasts looking back to that wonderful night, and celebrating the covenant that the Lord had made (Exod.vi.3-8; Jer. xxxi. 31, 32). The first memorial passover feast was kept by Israel under Moses in the wilderness of Sinai (Numb. ix. 1, 2). The second was observed under Joshua after the circumcision at Gilgal. The first baptism of Israel was unto Moses at the Red Sea; the second was in the waters of Jordan. The first baptism was followed by the gift of manna; at the second, the manna was discontinued. While the typical teaching of Joshua is not primarily concerned with salvation from sin -- this was already set forth in type when Israel were redeemed out of the bondage of Egypt — it nevertheless unscriptural to imagine that those who are blessed in heavenly places have no need to be reminded of Christ their Passover. It is sufficient to glance at Ephesians i. to discover in verse 7 a very full recognition of "redemption through His blood". This is parallel with the observance of the Passover by the victorious nation, newly come up out of Jordan.

On the morrow after the Passover, the unleavened cakes were made of the old corn of the land, and the day after, the manna ceased. The barley harvest began with the Passover [and it will be remembered that "Jordan overflows all its banks all the time of harvest" (Josh. iii. 15)], and not until the morrow after the Paschal Sabbath, and when the sheaf of the firstfruits had been waved, could Israel partake of the new corn. The Companion Bible draws attention to the fact that at the conclusion of the feast on the 21st day of Abib at even, exactly forty years had passed since the night of Exod. xii. 41, 42. During those forty years Israel had failed and wandered in the wilderness; but now in the plains of Jericho, a fresh start is made. Some thirty-eight years earlier Joshua and Caleb had brought back the bunch of grapes from Eshcol and reported upon the fruit of the land. At last their faith and loyalty are rewarded: "They did eat the fruit of the land of Canaan that year."

The cessation of the manna emphasized the fact that it was a miraculous gift. If we may draw an analogy between the experiences of Joshua iv. & v. and those of the believer who has passed through Romans vi. and stands now in Colossians ii., we may learn from the cessation of the manna that the miraculous elements that abound in the "forty years" interval of the Acts period, while the Lord stretched forth His hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people, must not be expected in the present dispensation. We would interpose a word here lest any reader should feel that the typical teaching of Joshua in any sense nullifies the statements of the prison epistles as to the exclusive character of the mystery.

We have taught over and over again that the mystery does not consist in the doctrines of redemption and justification, nor even of spiritual circumcision and newness of life with Christ. These are fundamental to the mystery, but do not constitute the mystery. They are all found in the epistle to the Romans, and are vital doctrines. But the mystery is not the doctrinal teaching even of Ephesians or Colossians. It is that exclusive revelation of the purpose of the ages concerning the Church which is the Body of Christ, which was chosen in Him before the overthrow of the world, and which is seated with Him at the right hand of God far above all principality and power. This phase of truth is not to be discovered in the typical teaching of Joshua, nor in any other O.T. book. But the underlying doctrine and its accompanying manner of life are illustrated by type and shadow throughout the history of the chosen people.

Joshua now has a vision. He was "by Jericho", and the thought is suggested that he was meditating upon the task before him of taking this stronghold, when, lifting up his eyes, he sees a Man standing over against him, with a drawn sword in His hand. He reveals Himself as the Captain of the Lord's host. Joshua falls on his face in worship, and the Captain of the Lord's host says to him: "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy" (Josh. v. 15).

The Lord had promised that as He had been with Moses, so would He be with Joshua. Moses saw a burning bush that was not consumed, and was told to take off his shoes (Exod. iii. 5). Moses' need was not so much a Captain to lead to victory, as a power that would endure. In Exodus iii. "the Angel of the Lord" appeared; in Joshua we read that "there stood a Man". There are some who are confident that in both cases we have a theophany of the Lord Jesus Christ. Others believe that the Angel of the Lord was Michael (*see* Dan. xii. 1). The whole of Israel's history is accompanied by angelic ministry:--

"The Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" (Exod. xiv. 19).

"Behold, I send an Angel . . . . to bring thee in the way which I have prepared. Beware of him, obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for My Name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an

adversary unto thine adversaries. For Mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites . . . . and I will cut them off" (Exod. xxiii. 20-23).

This second quotation is, we trust, explicit enough to settle the matter for us. It so exactly fits the circumstances of Joshua v. that we cannot but conclude that Joshua v. is the fulfilment of this promise.

Angelic hosts led by Michael shall yet war in heaven (Rev. xii. 7), and there shall be an overthrow of Satan's power in that day, of which the overthrow of Jericho will prove to be a type, in all of its essential features. This theme now lies before us. With the preparation of Joshua iii.-v. now complete, we can go on to consider the victory of faith.

## **#11. JOSHUA vi. The taking of Jericho.**

The section of the book of Joshua which now lies before us is twofold, viz., (1) The taking of Jericho and (2) The trespass of Achan. The two subjects are interrelated, as are the crossing of Jordan and the subsequent circumcision at Gilgal.

In this article we must limit ourselves to the account of the taking of Jericho. This again may be divided into two parts: first, the actual investment and taking of the city, and secondly, the devotion of all to the Lord. In the case of the inhabitants and their cattle this devotion to the Lord meant utter destruction; but the gold and silver, brass and iron, were saved and placed in the treasury of the Lord. Rahab, also, and her household were spared from destruction on account of her faith. The twofold division of the subject may be exhibited in the structure:--

### **Joshua vi. The taking of Jericho.**

A. vi. 2-16. The city given.

A. vi. 17-26. The city devoted and cursed.

A consideration of the following outline impresses one with the fact that this is no private and personal conquest by Joshua or Israel, no sacking and looting of a city without discrimination. The city was devoted to the Lord. The city was given to Joshua by the Lord, and He alone had the disposal of all within its walls.

#### **A | THE CITY GIVEN. |**

A | 2. I have given into thine hand Jericho.

B | 3. Compass the city six days.

C | 4. Compass the city on the seventh day.

D | 5. Shout.

B | 6-14. Compass the city six days.

C | 15. Compass the city on the seventh day.

D | 16. Shout.

A | 16. The Lord hath given you the city.

#### **A | THE CITY DEVOTED AND CURSED. |**

E1 | 17. Only Rahab and her house shall live.

F1 | 18, 19. Devoted things, as gold, not to be kept privately.

F1 | 20, 21. Utter destruction of all else.

E1 | 22, 23. Rahab and her house brought out.

E2 | 24. The city burned with fire.

F2 | 24. Devoted things placed in treasury.

F2 | 25. Rahab saved and dwelling in Israel.

E2 | 26. The city. Cursed be the builder.

The solemn encompassing of the walls of the city for the six days must have been a severe test of the people's faith; and had they not had the crossing of the Jordan fresh in their minds, their hearts might have failed them.

The sounding of the trumpets on the seventh day at the completion of the seventh time of encircling the city by the seven priests is prophetic. The fulfilment of the type is found in the Revelation:--

"In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (Rev. x. 7).

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever . . . . The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come . . . . there was seen in His temple the ark of His testimony" (Rev. xi. 15-19).

Another and important point is the special type of trumpet which the priests were commanded to blow. The trumpets used here must not be confused with the *chatsotserah*, the straight trumpets used of war:--

"Make thee two trumpets of silver . . . . for the calling of the assembly . . . . if ye go to war in your land against the enemy . . . ." (Numb. x. 1-9).

The trumpets used at the fall of Jericho are called trumpets of rams' horns, or better, "trumpets of Jubilee". They were used for announcing the Jubilee, and it is the typical fulfilment of Israel's Jubilee that is impressed upon us here at the fall of Jericho.

The word "Jubilee" is a translation of the Hebrew word *Yobel*. Its first occurrence is in Exod. xix. 13, and the last in Josh. vi. 4-13. The remaining occurrences are all found in Leviticus and Numbers, and are all translated "Jubilee".

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month . . . . ye shall proclaim liberty . . . . ye shall return every man unto his possession . . . ." (Lev. xxv. 8-19).

The fall of Jericho at the end of the seventh day and at the sounding of the seven trumpets, looks forward to the day when the seventy times seven years shall eventuate in the overthrow of Babylon and Satanic opposition, and the final restoration of Israel to their rightful place in the purpose of God (Daniel ix. 24-27). The sounding of the trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month is the "last trump" of Israel's typical year. "The last trump" in I Cor. xv. 50-57, the "trump of God" and "voice of the Archangel" in I Thess. iv. 16, and the sounding of the seventh angel in Revelation x., xi. all belong to the same period, and fulfil the type of the Jubilee. Only those who endeavour to adjust I. Corinthians. xv. and I. Thessalonian. iv. to the hope of the Mystery will find any difficulty in accepting this as truth.

This is not the place to introduce archæology. Much work of great interest has been done on the site of Jericho, and when the details are complete, we may be able to pass on some of them to the reader. We believe what God has said in Joshua vi., however, without having to await archæological confirmation. We pass on, therefore, to the second division of the subject: "The city devoted and cursed":--

"And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the Lord ... And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord: they shall come into the treasury of the Lord" (Josh. vi. 17-19).

The English reader is likely to be misled by the words "curse" and "accursed". The Hebrew *cherem* means "to devote", whether it be to destruction or to holy uses. To translate *cherem* "accursed" is to decide at once which of the two purposes of "devotion" is implied in the context.

Let the reader ponder the use of the word *cherem* in the law.

"But the field, when it goeth out in the Jubilee, shall be holy unto the Lord, as a field *devoted*" (Lev. xxvii. 21).

"Notwithstanding no *devoted* thing, that a man shall *devote* unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every *devoted* thing is most holy unto the Lord" (Lev. xxvii. 28).

"None *devoted*, which shall be *devoted* of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death" (Lev. xxvii. 29).

"*Devoted*" (Numb. xviii. 14).

"*Cursed* thing" (Deut. vii. 26; xiii. 17).

When we examine the references in Leviticus xxvii., we are struck by the close association between the Jubilee and this "devoting" of things to the Lord; and the "devotion" of Jericho and its possessions falls into line.

If we continue our examination, and are not content with mere references, we shall be rewarded with full and positive teaching. We are all too prone to be impressed with a string of references, and yield to the temptation of "taking them as read". To do so with the above references to Deuteronomy is to lose valuable help. We have purposely adopted this method of arrangement, to stimulate the true Berean spirit of "search and see" for which this magazine stands:--

"Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof of every whit, for the Lord thy God: and it shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again. And there shall cleave nought of the *cursed thing* (i.e. devoted thing) to thine hand" (Deut. xiii. 15-17).

The city of Jericho had been "devoted" to the Lord. Apart from the specified exemptions (the silver and gold, etc., and Rahab and her household) nothing was to be spared. The warning given in Deuteronomy xiii. 17: "There shall cleave nought of the *cursed thing* to thine hand" is echoed by the words of Joshua: "And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the *devoted* thing . . . . when ye take of the *devoted* thing" (Josh. vi. 18).

Jericho was a kind of firstfruits, and belonged wholly to the Lord. The words of Moses: "It shall be a heap for ever; it shall not be built again" are echoed in the words of Joshua:--

"Cursed (*arar*, quite different from *cherem*) be the man before the Lord (contrast, 'devoted' to the Lord in verse 17), that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho. He shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it" (Josh. vi. 26).

The word "build" implies fortification, for the city was given to Benjamin, and had been partially restored (compare Judges iii. 13 with Deut. xxxiv. 3).

What is the lesson of this chapter of Joshua? We learn that God at His own appointed time will fulfil the prophecy of the Jubilee, and at the sounding of the seventh trumpet accomplish both the overthrow of the citadel of evil, and the setting up of the kingdom of the Lord. We learn that this will never be accomplished by human strength. Soldiers marched round Jericho, but the Jubilee trumpets of the priests and the shout of the people were the only external agents in its overthrow. To the believer comes a solemn warning against letting his hand "cleave" to any of the things of this world, which are surely devoted to destruction. As with Abraham and the spoils of Sodom, we must rather forego even our legitimate dues, so that no advantage be given to the enemy over us.

In the sad story of Achan and his trespass, we shall learn something of the effect upon the overcoming life of the Lord's people of complicity in these devoted things. May the Lord keep us from "troubling" His people, and from reaping "trouble" for ourselves (Josh. vi. 18; vii. 25).

## **#12. JOSHUA vii. Achan, the troubler of Israel.**

Achan, the son of Carmi, brought the dreaded "trouble" upon Israel (Joshua vi. 18). "Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day" (Joshua vii. 25). In I Chron. ii. 7 we read: "And the sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed". Here the spelling is *Achar*. In the original, we discover that the word *Achar* is also the word "trouble". By name and by deed this man is set forth as an example of all those who are "troublers", who cause defeat where victory should have been achieved, and who will be found wherever the Church exists, until all trouble and troublers are no more.

The valley in which Achan was stoned was named after him "Achor" ("Trouble"). This valley comes into prophecy in Hos. ii. 15, a passage which we must consider later.

No one saw Achan take the gold, silver and raiment, no one reported the theft to Joshua; yet it soon became evident that something was wrong. Joshua sent men to view Ai, and as a result of their spying out the land, and apparently in view of the way in which Jericho had been overthrown, they suggested that it was not necessary to send all the people to take it, but that two or three thousand would be quite sufficient. So they went full of confidence. But to their consternation the men of Ai, far from being defeated, smote thirty-six of Israel, and Israel fled from before them. Instead of the hearts of the men of Ai melting in fear of Israel (Joshua ii. & iii.), we read that "the hearts of the people (Israel) melted, and became as water" (Josh. vii. 5). At this news, Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth before the Ark. Not knowing the cause of the defeat, he expostulates with God:

"Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast Thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!" (Josh. vii. 7).

In these words of Joshua, we hear an echo of the words of unbelief that brought about the failure of Israel in the wilderness:

“Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword ... were it not better for us to return into Egypt?” (Numb. xiv. 2, 3).

At that time Joshua, the son of Nun, had stood firm, and had been threatened with stoning for his faithfulness. Now we see him lying on his face before the Lord, not so much to enquire where the evil lies, but echoing the murmur of unbelief. This is a faithful book. It does not flatter any man, and in its pages we may see ourselves. Dear reader, at times of defeat and failure, have we not sometimes acted as Joshua? Have we not implied that God was using us unfairly, that His promises were not being honoured, that we had a grievance against Him?

Joshua continues before the Lord, speaking of His great name, when the Lord cuts him short. “Get up ... Israel hath sinned”. Every defeat of the believer must be attributed not to the Lord, but to some hidden sin or failure.

Just as there had been the national circumcision at Gilgal, so there had to be the more individual clearing of the people at Achor. The intended parallel between Achor and Gilgal we shall see presently.

The Lord now reveals the sin that had brought defeat upon Israel:

“Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed (devoted) thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put *it* even among their own stuff” (Josh. vii. 11).

“*The children of Israel* committed a trespass in the accursed thing: *for Achan* ... took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against *the children of Israel*” (Josh. vii. 1).

How this emphasizes the fact that no one lives, dies, sins or suffers to himself alone. We are related as parts of a whole and any failure on my part or yours reacts upon the spiritual advance of the whole church.

The LXX Version shows, by the use of the word *nosphisasthai*, that the N.T. counterpart of Achan is Ananias. The passages in the LXX and the Acts read:

“But the children of Israel committed a great trespass, and *purloined* part of the accursed thing” (Josh. vii. 1).

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and *kept back* part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts v. 1, 2).

The charge of “lying to the Holy Ghost” made by Peter in Acts v. 3 is closely parallel with the Hebrew words translated “committed a trespass”, *maal maal le Jehovah*, the word here implying treachery and unfaithfulness. In both cases covetousness was at work, and in both cases the end was death.

Achan’s confession is as follows:

“Indeed i have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have i done: when i saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then i coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it” (Josh. vii. 20, 21).

Years later, Saul spared Agag and the flocks and herds, instead of destroying them as the Lord had commanded. We are all prone to allow our baser nature, with its lusts and coveting, to betray both ourselves and our brethren.

In the Epistles, those against whom the apostle warns the church in Philippians iii. have much the same characteristics as those of Achan (Philippians iii. 17-19). And it will be remembered that the apostle himself realized that the flesh could rob him of the prize (I Cor. ix. 24-27).

The fall of Achan, after the taking of Jericho, is even more tragic than the failure of undisciplined Israel in the wilderness. Achan had passed through Jordan and the experiences of Gilgal, with its repudiation of the flesh, and had been present at the taking of Jericho — and yet he fails.

The Book of Joshua, if it has nothing to say of the church as a whole, cannot be set aside by any who seek to “press toward the mark”, for it is full of analogies and illustrations invaluable to the believer who has the prize of the high calling of God in view.

Achan is spoken of as a “troubler” (Josh. vii. 25). His own name means “trouble”; and “Achor”, the valley named after him, has the same meaning. The LXX uses the words “to destroy” to translate the Hebrew word for “trouble”. The Church has had these “troublers” from the beginning. They are with us yet, and are the cause of much failure and defeat. Let us see that we do not follow them in their evil ways.

Both Achan and Ananias failed to realize the spirit of their calling. They “kept back part of the price”. Let the reader go through the epistle to the Philippians with that one thought in mind. He will recognize at every turn the characteristics of one who was the exact opposite of Achan and Ananias. The apostle Paul yielded up all. Not only liberty and self-defence, but life and all boasting in self. Neither fulness nor poverty could tempt him. For him “to live was Christ, and to die, gain”.

The epistles of the mystery equally with the rest of Scripture warn against the evil of “covetousness” (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5; II Tim. iii. 2); as does the epistle of the overcomer (Heb. xiii. 5).

Finally, there is an intended parallel between the repudiation of the flesh set forth in the circumcision at Gilgal, and the repudiation of the flesh in the punishment of Achan:

“And they raised over him a heap of stones unto this day” (Josh. vii. 26).

The word “heap” is *gal*, from the same Hebrew root as *Gilgal*. Twelve stones were taken from the bed of Jordan and made to stand up at Gilgal. Circumcision, carried out with “knives of stone” (v. 2) at Gilgal, the heap of stones in the valley of Achor; these things speak aloud to us who, though redeemed and members of the Body of Christ, have not yet reached in actual fact those heavenly places where neither the spiritual Canaanite nor the spiritual Achan shall trouble us any more for ever.

### **#13. JOSHUA viii. Ai and Ebal.**

While he may be keenly interested in all things pertaining to the exposition of the Word, the reader cannot be expected to retain in his memory all the many details involved in a complete visualization of any particular book. And so the fact that we have arrived at chapter viii. of the Book of Joshua may mean nothing more to the reader than progress from chapter vii. We have, however, arrived at a new and important division of the book, and as the recognition of this is necessary, if we are to appreciate fully the teaching it contains, we must acquaint ourselves with the general disposition of subject-matter as revealed by the structure. The structure of the book as a whole has been given in volume XXV, p.15. We will not repeat the whole structure here, but will be content with a synopsis, indicating the main themes.

## Joshua as a whole

A | i. 1. THE DEATH OF MOSES.

B | i. 2 - vii. ENTRY INTO THE LAND.

Divided, espied, entered.

C | viii. - xii. CONQUEST OF THE LAND.

B | xiii. - xxiv. 28. POSSESSION OF THE LAND.

Possessed, divided, fulfilled.

A | xxiv. 29-33. THE DEATH OF JOSHUA.

The land has been entered and divided (chapter i.-vii.), and our present study deals with the opening chapter of the section devoted to its conquest. This section contains five chapters (viii.-xii.) in which we have the conquest of Ai at the beginning, and the conquest of the thirty-one cities and their kings at the close. Two kinds of league are recorded, the league made with the Gibeonites (ix. 15), and the confederacy formed against the Gibeonites and Israel (x. 1 - xi. 17). All scripture is profitable, and we shall find much that is written for our learning as we meditate on the history of these early people — how they suffered defeat or were victorious, how they were deceived or enlightened, according to whether they walked in their own strength, or trusted in the Lord.

Origen says, when writing on these chapters:

"What are these things to me? What good is it for me to know that the inhabitants of Ai were conquered? As if many other battles of far greater note had not been fought."

The answer is that we are here being taught by analogy. In the conquest of Canaan, the believer of another dispensation can see a picture of himself, his foes, and his only ground of victory.

The account of the conquest of Ai, with which chapter viii. is concerned, opens with a word of encouragement:

"Fear not, neither be thou dismayed: take all the people of war with thee, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land. And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst unto Jericho and her king: only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves: lay thee an ambush for the city behind it" (Josh. viii. 1, 2).

These words must be read in conjunction with what is previously recorded in chapter vii.:

"The men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai. And make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few" (Josh. vii. 2, 3).

Whether these were words of faith, or, as some think, words of fleshly pride we cannot say. The three thousand that went up against Ai were defeated, and the hearts of the people melted. The reason for the defeat is given in the latter part of chapter vii.; it is not the pride of those who had viewed Ai that is mentioned, but the sin of Achan. When, therefore, that sin had been dealt with, the Lord, Who knew how the defeat at Ai and the exposure of Achan would react upon the faith of the people, gives the encouraging words with which this chapter opens. He does not demand of them that they shall trust their fortunes again with a few men, but commands that all the people of war shall go up, and not only so, but that the method to be adopted shall be that of an ambush.

A superficial reading of viii. 3 & 4 gives the impression that 30,000 men were commanded to lie in ambush, whereas in verse 12 the number is said to be 5,000. A comparison of verses 9 & 12 will show that the place of ambush is the same in both cases. Some have supposed a mistake in the numbers;

others have imagined that the 5,000 were an extra number detailed off to support the 30,000. While nothing is too hard for the Lord, and we believe He can as completely hide thirty thousand men as he can three, the fact that an ambush was adopted here shows that miraculous interposition was not intended. And the difficulty of hiding as many as 30,000 men between two cities, without being discovered, cannot be lightly set aside. The solution of the problem seems to lie in the method often adopted in Scripture, of giving a short account of an occurrence, and then returning to supplement with fuller detail. All that verses 3 & 4 actually tell us is that, in obedience to the Lord's command, all the people of war arose, that 30,000 were chosen and sent away by night, and that the ambush was arranged. Subsequently we learn that the number thus left in ambush was 5,000. The plan adopted was to give the appearance of defeat and so lure the enemy out to accomplish their destruction. A rather similar method is recorded in Exod. xiv. 2 in connection with the overthrow of Pharaoh.

Our eyes turn away from Ai to a place called Calvary. There, was enacted what appeared to be the greatest defeat that the world had seen. Yet, with the complete N.T. before us, we know that the Cross was the greatest of all triumphs. Instead of representing a victory for Satan, it became the symbol of his defeat. Instead of the King of Ai triumphing over the fleeing Israelites, the battle ended with his own death and ignominy. *The King of Ai was hanged upon a tree.* Surely it is not without the deepest significance that we find the same words "hanged on a tree" (LXX version) used in the N.T. of Christ Himself (Acts v. 30; x. 39; Gal. iii. 13).

Another important point in the record of the conquest of Ai, is the subsequent journey to Ebal and the fulfillment, not only of the commandment given by Moses, but of the earlier promise given there to Abraham himself. To some commentators, the journey of all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones (Josh viii. 35) to Ebal at this time, is an impossibility, and unbelieving criticism has not spared the knife. If, however, we have come so far with Israel, what hinders us from taking one more step? True, the land was in the hand of enemies, and Ebal was situated some twenty miles to the north of Ai and Bethel. It would ordinarily have been an act of folly for any man to have thus exposed the whole nation to the possibility of surprise and defeat. But Joshua was acting under orders, and he had experienced enough of the power of the Lord on Israel's behalf to realize that in obedience was wisdom and safety, while in fleshly precaution lay defeat. How absurd, speaking naturally, to circumcise an army at such a critical moment as the crossing of Jordan. How absurd to invest a city with marching priests, and to expect its overthrow by the blowing of trumpets. Yet these events were still alive in their memories.

The command of the Lord to Joshua, through Moses, is given in Deuteronomy xxvii.:

"On the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister. And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law ... in Mount Ebal ... And there shalt thou build an altar ... These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali" (Deut. xxvii. 2-13).

Then follow, in Deuteronomy xxvii. & xxviii., the curses and blessings that the Levites were to pronounce. It is a legitimate question to ask at this point, "Why were these curses and blessings pronounced at Ebal and Gerizim, and what was the reason for which Joshua had to hasten to that region so early in the conquest of Canaan?". The answer appears to be that, when Israel passed over the Jordan into the land of their inheritance, they reached a stage in their development where fuller responsibility had to be assumed. A patient examination of the curses and blessings in Deuteronomy xxvii. & xxviii. will leave us all with a profound sense of imminent failure. The curses pronounced in

Deuteronomy.xxviii. anticipated the day when Nebuchadnezzar would subjugate Israel, and also the future oppressor whose deeds are recorded in Daniel viii.-xii. What nation could ever hope to hold the land of Canaan on such terms? It was the purpose of God in the giving of the law, to show Israel, and through Israel all mankind, that no flesh, however much helped by miracle and hedged by law, could ever attain perfection. Is the record, then, to end in dismal failure? By no means. Human failure cries out for God, for grace, for someone who shall triumph where man has failed. This is one of the lessons we learn from Joshua viii.

For a moment let us leave Joshua, and turn back to the day when Abraham, at the command of God, left kindred and country and entered the promised land.

“And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. (And the Canaanite was then in the land.) And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land. And there builded he an altar unto the LORD, Who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD” (Genesis xii. 6-8).

A reference to Deut. xi. 29, 30 will prove that Gerizim and Ebal were “beside the plains of Moreh”. Joshua, therefore, was but retracing the steps of Abraham, travelling in the reverse order. Abraham started at Sichem, and ended at Ai and Bethel. Joshua started at Ai and Bethel and journeyed to Sichem. Both men built an altar, but in Abraham’s case there was no plaistering of the stones and writing of the law upon them. The true commentary on these two men, standing upon the same ground, and associated with the same promise of the same land, is found in Galatians iii. We stand with Joshua and hear the curses and blessings pronounced from Ebal and Gerizim. We look upon the “handwriting of ordinances” and our hearts sink within us.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. iii. 21, 22).

“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Gal. iii. 19, 20).

What is the meaning of the last sentence? It means that the very presence of a mediator indicates two contracting parties. Such is the nature of the law. But in the case of Abraham there was no mediator, for there was no contract. God simply and unconditionally promised the land to Abraham and to his seed, and that promise remains untouched by Israel’s inability to comply with the terms of Sinai, Ebal or Gerizim.

“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. iii. 17, 18).

Such is the lesson of Joshua viii., a lesson needed not only by Israel, and the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. iii. 29), but by the saved and called of every dispensation from the highest to the lowest, from the Church seated in heavenly places to the last believer in the “ends of the earth”. None shall ever stand upon a foundation of law or works. Grace alone can avail, operating through righteousness and

the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Joshua's altar, with the added plaistered stones containing the law, may have looked more impressive than Abraham's, standing alone; but Abraham's altar speaks of peace and completion, while Joshua's tells of failure and disappointment.

The Book of Joshua is to Israel, what Philippians is to the Church of the Mystery, and Hebrews to the Church of the Acts. Each of the three books addresses a redeemed people and speaks of conquest, a prize and a crown. In each case, attainment is by grace through faith, and the law is resolutely set aside. May we be ready to learn the lessons that await us in this Book of Joshua, heeding its warnings, rejoicing in its victories, and emulating the faith of those who, like Caleb and Joshua, wholly followed the Lord.

#### **#14. JOSHUA ix. Gibeon and Gilgal.**

Had Joshua hesitated to obey the command of the Lord to journey to Mount Ebal, his fears would have cost him dear. His act of faith turned out to have been the wisest policy, for soon after the staggering blow struck at Ai, the neighbouring kings recovered from their momentary paralysis, and gathered themselves against Joshua with one accord. Before we read of any fighting, we are introduced to another phase of attack which is often disastrous than any actual combat, the "cunning craftiness" and "wiles of the Devil".

How many times has history repeated itself along these lines. Baalam, who failed to curse Israel, afterwards devised a means at Baal Peor of accomplishing their demoralization and destruction. When the enemies of Nehemiah found that he could not be intimidated by threats, they resorted to "conferences" and "open letters". Many who speak loudly of victory and conquest, are most accessible to deceit. The downfall of the believer is Satan's object and the means employed is a matter of indifference.

"And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wilily" (Josh. ix. 3, 4).

The Canaanites were devoted to utter destruction; and the Gibeonites, being Hivites (ix. 7) were therefore condemned. While Israel were commanded to exterminate the Canaanites, they were restrained from meddling with the affairs of others (Deut. ii. 5, 19). The Gibeonites evidently were aware of this, and so they dressed themselves with old shoes and old garments, carried old and badly rent wineskins and dry mouldy bread, in order that they might deceive the Israelites with their tale that they had come "from a very far country" (Josh. ix. 9). **Deceit cannot be justified, and the Gibeonites lied and deceived. Yet when we look at the history of the Lord's own people, who will be the first to cast a stone? Abraham, the friend of God, knew all too well what a refuge lies may be; and Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac, even though their aim was to secure the promises of God. Rahab the harlot, who was saved at the destruction of Jericho, told lies without any apparent qualms of conscience.** The Gibeonites when questioned by Joshua as to why they had beguiled the Israelites, replied:

"Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing" (Josh. ix. 24).

Apart from the deception involved, this is a very complete confession of faith that the Lord had made a promise which He was well able to perform.

Israel were forbidden to make any covenant with the Canaanites lest they should be ensnared in their idolatry and wickedness (Exod. xxiii. 32, 33), and were commanded to destroy them utterly.

“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee” (Exod.xxxiv.12).

“And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them” (Deut. vii. 2).

The reason for this merciless campaign is to be found in the peculiar origin of the Canaanites. Scripture reveals that the “sons of God”, the angels that kept not their first estate (Genesis vi. & Jude.6), became the parents of the Nephilim, or “giants” of Gen. vi. 4 & Numb. xiii. 33. Og, king of Bashan was one of them, and so also were the Canaanites. The latter are mentioned in Gen. xiv. 5 & xv. 18-21, including, as we see, another name associated with this evil seed, the Rephaim, variously translated elsewhere “dead” (Isa. xxvi. 19), “deceased” (Isa. xxvi. 14) and “giants” (Deut. ii. 20). These were Satan’s tares sown by him in God’s field. These tares never become wheat, any more than the “washed sow” of II Pet. ii. 22 could become a “sheep”. Sheep do not cease to be sheep even when they are “lost”. If these elementary facts were kept more in mind, the doctrine of the two seeds that we discover in the Scriptures would be better understood. Satan’s seed have never had their names written in the Book of Life.

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (the beast), whose names are NOT WRITTEN in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. xiii. 8).

In spite of the intensity of the judgment that shall fall upon the earth in the last days, men will not repent, but will rather blaspheme God.

Another lesson awaits us in Joshua ix. which is of great importance.

“And they received the men by reason of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of LORD” (Josh. ix. 14).

Israel were as dependent upon the Lord at the moment they met the Gibeonites, as when they were bondmen in Egypt. Their salvation by the blood of the lamb, their passage through the Red Sea, their miraculous maintenance during all the years of wilderness wandering, their triumphant crossing of Jordan, the victory of Jericho and Ai, all these things did not give them the slightest warrant to assume any wisdom of their own. **However advanced a believer may be, however long his acquaintance with the Word may be, however varied his experiences, nothing can ever take the place of “Thus saith the Lord”. If only the Lord’s people would believe this, how many false steps and evil alliances would be avoided.** The Gibeonites seem to be very much in evidence today. At every turn we are invited to become associated with various "movements". If we trust to our own wisdom, or experiences, or victories, we shall fare no better than did Joshua. Let us ever “ask counsel at the mouth of the Lord”, and know no other leading or guidance.

When the children of Israel discovered the trick that had been played upon them, they wanted to break the agreement (ix. 18); but covenants solemnly made must be kept at our own expense. Ishmael should never have been born, and Abraham lived to realize this; but he never stooped so low as to think of repudiating his responsibility to Ishmael, and the Lord honoured his prayer for Ishmael’s blessing (Gen. xvii. 18).

We read in Josh ix. 6 that the Gibeonites “went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal”. If we consult the Gazetteer, we shall discover that four different places bore that name.

- (1) The place near the Jordan and near Jericho where Israel spent the first night after crossing the river (Josh. iv. 19).
- (2) A city between Dor and Tirzah (Josh. xii. 23).
- (3) A city North of Joppa, near the sea (now called *Jidjulah*). Near Antipatris (Josh. ix. 6; x. 6, 7, 9, 15, 43).
- (4) A place twelve miles South of Ebal and Gerizim (now called *Jiljilah*) (II Kings ii. 1; ix. 38).

The first of these we have already noticed. The second reference speaks of the “nations of Gilgal”. This may refer to a miscellaneous company of tribes, corresponding to the N.T. “Galilee of the Nations”, Galilee being derived from the same root as Gilgal. The third is pure conjecture; and it is far more likely that Joshua would have pitched his camp at Gilgal no.4 in the very vicinity of Ebal and Gerizim, than at a city North of Joppa.

Commentators have said that it is impossible to think of Joshua going back to the original Gilgal, and that he must have chosen the one situated nearer the sphere of his operations. All this, however, is pure speculation. What Joshua did, or ought to have done, was not regulated by normal rules. It was not normal conduct to circumcise an army of invaders; it was not normal conduct to walk round a besieged city seven times; it was not normal conduct to penetrate as far as Ebal after the conquest of Ai; but Joshua was under Divine instruction and the movements of his army were spiritual pictures. Whether Joshua went back to the original Gilgal, or pitched in another spot of the same name, is a question no living man can answer, but the underlying spiritual fact contained in the reference to Gilgal is plain for all to see. Joshua’s camp, the centre from which his movements originated, was the place where “the reproach of Egypt” was rolled away.

Gilgal for us is interpreted in Colossians ii. and Philippians iii., where, through spiritual circumcision, “the body of the flesh” is repudiated and there can be “no confidence in the flesh”. It is of the utmost importance that all who enter *their* promised land, should not only experience Gilgal once, but that “No confidence in the flesh” should be *their* continual watchword. The histories of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, and of all the saints, exemplify this necessity. We can only walk “in newness of life”. We can only serve “in newness of spirit”. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God. We triumph only through the cross of Christ; and that cross robs us of all confidence in the arm and wisdom of the flesh.

Whatever, therefore, the geographical necessities of the case may have been in the days of Joshua, and whether he actually returned to the shore of the Jordan, or pitched his camp at a more convenient spot, the fact remains that Gilgal was the name of the centre of all his activities until the conquest of the land was complete.

May we, who read the account to-day, take to heart the lesson it conveys.

## **#15. JOSHUA x. The five kings and the valley of Ajalon.**

The destruction of Jericho and Ai, together with the league made by the great city of Gibeon, caused great fear to take hold upon the king of Jerusalem, whose city appeared to be the one that would probably be next attacked by the conquering Israelites. His name, Adoni-zedec, reminds us of Melchisedec, who in Abraham’s day was “king of Salem”, and was associated with Abraham’s victory over another alliance of kings (Genesis xiv.). Adoni-zedec calls upon four other kings in the vicinity to join with him in the punishment of Gibeon. These five kings are called “the five kings of the Amorites” (Josh. x. 5), all of them belonging to the “devoted seed” of the Canaanites. The Gibeonites, seeing their peril, call upon Joshua, saying:

“Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us” (Josh. x. 6).

If there had been in the hearts of Joshua or Israel any of the cruelty that those who have criticized their obedience to the Divine command to destroy the Canaanites have imputed to them, we might reasonably have expected that the perilous venture to which the Gibeonites called them would have been refused, and the Gibeonites left to their enemies. The ready response of Joshua and the mighty men of valour, together with the Lord’s approval and promise of victory, seem to refute such a criticism.

The record of Joshua’s victory over these five kings is chiefly remarkable for the miraculous lengthening of the day:

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, **and he said in the sight of Israel**, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day” (Josh.x.12,13).

Here is the record of a stupendous miracle which, taken literally, involves numerous lesser miracle in its fulfillment. What are we to say to these things? First let us notice that, whatever our attitude may be to the record of Joshua x., we cannot escape the necessity of believing or rejecting other similar miraculous interferences with the sun and moon, and also the stars. What shall we say of the miraculous going back of the shadow on the sun dial (II Kings xx. 11 & Isa. xxxviii. 8)? How shall we explain the statement of Amos viii. 9, that the Lord will cause the sun to go down at noon? Is not this as miraculous and as far-reaching as the miracle of Joshua x.?

In Isaiah xiii. we read of the sun being darkened and the stars “not giving their light”:

“The stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine” (Isaiah xiii. 10).

The context of the passage is concerned with the punishment of the world for its wickedness.

Again, in Zechariah xiv., at the coming of the Lord, we read:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light” (Zech. xiv. 6, 7).

It is clear that, if we should set aside the miracle of Joshua x. as “impossible”, there are many more such miracles awaiting us. If we believe that the sun, moon, stars and earth are all the work of the Creator, that belief must include His supervision and disposal of His works. The so-called "Laws of Nature" as stated by man are but the faulty records of his observations, always subject to alteration and revision as discovery widens his horizon. What God can or cannot do is a subject outside the scope of the human mind. If **He** has been pleased to give us a glimpse of His ways, should we not gladly and thankfully receive it, realizing that nothing is too hard for the Lord?

If we go back to the time of Egypt and the plagues, it will be remembered that "the gods" of Egypt were included in the Divine judgment poured out on Pharaoh and his land. The frogs, the darkness, the miraculous transforming of the Nile, and the other plagues, touched the national religion at every point. Again, when we remember that Nineveh was the "Fish City" and that Jonah’s God mighty enough to compel a “great fish” to do His will, we perceive at once a special reason to justify the miracle. Not far

from Ajalon was a city called Beth-Shemesh, "The House of the Sun", and Jericho itself was the City of the Moon. The Lord had already displayed His power in the earth, at Jordan and at Jericho. Rahab had confessed that the Lord was God "in *heaven* above, and in *earth* beneath" (Josh. ii. 11): and in the valley of Ajalon His supremacy in heaven was set forth.

After having seen that there can be no legitimate objection to this miracle, if we are to believe God at all, let us remember also that God is not merely a worker of wonders. We are distinctly told that the miraculous drying up of the Red Sea was brought about by a strong east wind that blew all night (Exodus xiv. 21). When Israel murmured because they had no flesh to eat in the wilderness, the Lord supplied their needs, not by creating flesh miraculously, but we read: "There went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea" (Numb. xi. 31).

The O.T. uses two distinct Hebrew words for the "sun" and two for the "moon". For the sun, the words are *shemesh* and *chammah*; and for the moon, *yareach* (whence "Jericho") and *lebanah*. *Shemesh* indicates the light of the sun, *chammah* the burning sun itself. *Yareach* refers to the light of the moon, *lebanah* to its white disc. Parkhurst, speaking of *chammah*, writes:

"As a N. fem, *chammah*, *The solar flame or fire* as distinguished both from *cheres* the *orb* of the sun (Job 9:7), and from *shemesh*, the *light* flowing from it. And for this latter reason it is (i.e. *chammah*), in the only three passages where it is used in this sense, constantly joined with *lebanah*, the *white of the moon*, never with *yareach*, the *stream from it*. Occ. Cant. 6:10; Isa. 24:23; 30:26."

To any one who has accepted the Scriptures as a revelation from God, and has accepted the God revealed in those Scriptures, the problems arising out of the miracles recorded do not exist. It is just as easy for us to believe that God stopped the clockwork of the universe at the prayer of Joshua, as that He caused an axe-head to swim or a widow's cruse of oil never to run dry. At the same time we have the Scriptures themselves as witness that the Lord uses means; and any acquaintance with the works of God in creation impresses the observer with the extraordinary adaptation of means to end, and the extreme economy of power and material. We are therefore well advised to give heed to the fact that the different words used for sun and moon convey different ideas. Urquhart uses the following illustration, as it bears upon this miracle and its explanation, we quote it here:

"Place a shilling in the bottom of a basin and go back till the shilling disappears from sight. Let a little water be then poured into the basin, and the shilling will once more come into view. Go back still further, till it once more disappears. It will appear again, if more water is poured into the basin. This is explained by the bending or refracting of the rays of light. The more dense the medium is through which the rays pass, the greater is the refraction. We see the sun on the horizon, for a short time after it has really sunk beneath it. The Creator might surely have been able so to modify the atmosphere that the sun and the moon might still stand over Gibeon and over Ajalon. There was one incident which was quite in harmony with this suggestion. I refer to the fearful hailstorm which overtook the fleeing foe. 'A wave of intense cold', says Dr. Harper, 'in that hot country produced this terrible hail-storm. Such occurrences are not uncommon even now in Syria. It is always at a time of *intense* cold that refraction of the sun appears. Travellers in the Polar regions give many instances when the sun is seen for *several days*, when they know the orb is one degree below the horizon'."

Protracted daylight is all that Joshua desired; the way in which it was accomplished was entirely in the hands of the Lord. By analogy with other miracles and from the evidence of His methods in creation, we feel that the type of explanation given above satisfies all that is required, besides giving due attention to the particular words used for "sun" and "moon".

In our last article we drew attention to the fact that when Joshua went from Ai to Ebal, he was travelling in the reverse direction to that in which Abraham entered the land of promise. In Genesis.xiv. we find that there were five kings confederate together, Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

Abraham fights against the enemies of these kings, rescues Lot, refuses the reward offered by the king of Sodom, sees to it that Aner, Eschol and Mamre, with whom at the time he was associated, were rewarded, and meets with Melchisedec king of Salem, and receives his blessing. In Joshua's day, all this is reversed. The five kings are now enemies: Adoni-zedec king of Jerusalem, Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Laschish, Debir king of Eglon, "five kings of the Amorites". Instead of being confederate with these Amorites, Joshua is expressly forbidden to enter into covenant with them at all, and is told to destroy them. Abraham refused to accept reward, or to appear in any sense a conqueror. He was a pilgrim, a tent-dweller, sojourning in the land. In Joshua's case it is different. He is taking the land in possession, and he calls upon the leaders of Israel to come and put their feet upon the necks of the captured kings, before they are slain and hanged on a tree.

Abraham's attitude is the one which fits the present period, while we are all "pilgrims and strangers on the earth" and our heavenly citizenship still awaits us. To the Romans the apostle wrote: "The God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). In the meantime, the Romans are instructed to act as pilgrims and strangers. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (xiii. 1). "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (xii. 18). Just as the taking of Jericho was prophetic, not of any present-day victory, but of the future overthrow of evil and the coming of the Lord, so the destruction of these five kings does not speak of our attitude at the present time, but looks forward to the day of victory when all enemies shall be placed under His feet, when the world in which we now have to live (as Abraham lived in peace with the Amorites) shall pass away, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.

The many references to sun, moon and stars in connection with the day of the Lord, the second coming of Christ, and the end of the age, help us to see that the typical teaching of the valley of Ajalon points forward to that yet future time, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.

## **#16. JOSHUA xi. - xiii. Taking the land, and possessing it -- a difference.**

The confederacy of the five kings of the Amorites, recorded in Joshua x., is followed by another confederacy, recorded in chapter xi. These two confederacies must be carefully distinguished from each other, and typify two different phases of the conflict of the ages.

Adoni-zedec, "Lord of righteousness", leads the first confederacy (Joshua x.); Jabin, "Intelligence", leads the second (Joshua xi.). The overthrow of the first, in Gibeon, is accompanied by signs in the sun and moon suggestive of the Second Coming of Christ. The second confederacy assembles at Merom ("High Place"), a word that comes very significantly in the prophetic passage in Isaiah:

"The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones (*marom*) that are on high (*marom*)" (Isa. xxiv. 21).

Kings of the earth are not the only enemies that are to be dealt with in that day, and "the high ones that are on high" are typified by this second confederacy of Joshua xi. The wording of Josh. xi. 4, 5, is so like that of Rev. xx. 7-9 that the parallel cannot be other than intentional.

"And they went out, they and all their host with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many. And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel" (Josh. xi. 4, 5).

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together into battle: the number of whom is

as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from heaven and devoured them” (Rev. xx. 7-9).

In the twenty-third verse of Joshua xi. we read:

“*So Joshua took the whole land*, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.”

Yet the thirteenth chapter opens with the words:

“Now Joshua was old and well stricken in years; and the Lord said unto him, Thou art old and stricken in years, and *there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.*”

A superficial reading of these two verses has led quite a number of critics to conclude that there is a mistake here. It is assumed that every city must have been actually taken or destroyed and every individual Canaanite slain, before it could be truly said: “Joshua took the whole land”. But this is not a true interpretation. The taking of the land by Joshua is said to be “according to all that the Lord said unto Moses”. In Joshua xxiii. we read:

“Ye have seen all that the Lord God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is He that hath fought for you. Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward. And the Lord your God, He shall expel them from before you” (Josh. xxiii. 3-5).

It is evident from this passage that the taking of the land, the giving of the land for an inheritance, and the dividing of the land by lot, must not be confused with actual “possession”. After the statement of xi. 23 where we read “Joshua took all the land”, we read in xiii. 1 that there was very much land still to be “possessed”. Surely we can perceive the truth here. The Lord had given the land, Joshua had subdued all his opponents, and even though much yet remained to be “possessed”, the whole land was theirs. Is there no parallel here with the fact of “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” being ours in Christ, and its relation to our experimental “possession” of them? Yet, is it right for a member of the Body to limit the gift of God by his own experiences?

The statement, “According to all that the Lord said unto Moses” takes us back to Exodus xxiii.:

“I will send My fear before thee, and will destroy all the people TO WHOM THOU SHALT COME, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.”

This is what the Lord had said unto Moses, and this was fulfilled. The promise continues:

“I will not drive them out from before thee IN ONE YEAR; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. BY LITTLE AND LITTLE I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land” (Exod. xxiii. 27-30).

Instead, therefore, of any discrepancy existing between Josh. xi. 23 & xiii. 1 all is exactly in line with the promise of God.

Joshua, whose age is remarked upon in xiii. 1, was reminded that he need not wait until all the land was “possessed” before it was “divided” (verse 7). There are parallels in N.T. doctrine to the principle

manifested here that should be carefully traced. For example, the “old man” was crucified with Christ, as Rom. vi. 6 testifies, and there are those who teach from this passage the complete eradication of sin in the believer. This is confusing the gift of the land in the promise of God, and the actual possession of it at any one time. If Joshua had assumed the complete eradication of all his foes, he would speedily have been taught the truth by bitter experience. It is true of us, as it was true of Israel, that it is “little by little”, “until thou be increased”, even though in Christ we are already “new creatures”, and “seated together” in the heavenlies.

In both Joshua xi. 23 & xiv. 15 we read that “the land rested from war”. The conquest was achieved and full possession awaited the children of Israel.

We must not omit from our review of all that the Lord had said unto Moses, the passage that speaks of the possibility of Israel failing to drive out the Canaanites.

“If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass that those which ye let remain shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them”  
(Numbers xxxiii. 55, 56)

When, therefore, we read that the land was taken according to *all* that the Lord had said to Moses, we must remember that He had said many things. Had Israel gone on conquering, had they pressed onto their inheritance, they would have enjoyed a far vaster tract of country than that which eventually became theirs, and this would have been according to what the Lord had said unto Moses. When they failed to press on to the full end of their calling, the failure to possess all that was given to them was still according to what the Lord had said unto Moses. And when they not only failed to possess all, but actually became affiliated with the Canaanites of their land, their total loss of all things, instead of invalidating the promise of God, only fulfilled another part of what the Lord had said to Moses.

Grace is a wonderful word, and runs through the epistle to the Ephesians like a thread of gold, yet so is Faith, and that too interpenetrates the same epistle. The assurance of Col. i. 22 does not make the warning of Col. i. 28 unreal or unnecessary.

The twelfth chapter of Joshua sums up the conquest of the land, and on both sides of Jordan the land is said to be “possessed” (xii. 1, 7, 8). This constituted an assurance and a pledge of the fuller “possession” mentioned in chapter xiii. Thirty-three kings are enumerated, two from the east side of Jordan, and thirty-one from the west. Eleven, the number of misrule (being one less than twelve), and three, the number of Divine perfection and resurrection, are here brought together in the figure 33.

The way is now clear for us to consider the third and largest section of Joshua — chapters xiii.-xxiv., which deals with the possession and dividing of the land.

## **#17. JOSHUA xiv. & xv.**

### **The difference between “the inheritance” (Col. i. 12) and “the reward of the inheritance” (Col. iii. 24) illustrated.**

The reader may not have very vividly in mind the fact that the structure of Joshua is concerned very largely with “the land” and its division and possession, and as we are now entering upon the third great sub-division of the book. An abbreviated outline of the whole structure may perhaps be appropriate.

## Joshua as a whole.

- A | i. 1. DEATH OF MOSES.
- B | i. 2 - vii. ENTRY INTO THE LAND.
  - (a) Divided.
  - (b) Espied.
  - (c) Entered.
- C | viii.-xii. CONQUEST OF THE LAND.
- B | xiii. - xxiv. 28. POSSESSION OF THE LAND.
  - (a) To be possessed.
  - (b) I have divided.
  - (c) Of the Amorites.
- A | xxiv. 29-33. DEATH OF JOSHUA AND ELEAZAR.

In our last article we drew attention to the difference between “taking” the land, and “possessing” it. Something of the truth implied in this distinction can be seen by comparing together the following passages:

“So Joshua took the whole land” (Josh. xi. 23).

“How long are ye slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?” (Josh. xviii. 3).

Here we have a glimpse of an important principle found not only in the Old Testament but also in the New. Christ has conquered. He is the great Overcomer. Nevertheless slackness on the part of the believer robs him of much that he might otherwise enjoy.

Immediately following the words quoted above from Joshua xviii., comes the command to Israel to choose “three men for each tribe”, to be sent by Joshua to go through the land, and describe it upon their return. It is not surprising, when we know something of the construction of Scripture, to find that between the statements of Josh. xi. 23 & xviii. 3 comes the record of one who had previously spied out the land — Caleb the Overcomer, whose story is the very antithesis of the “slackness” condemned by Joshua.

The word translated “slack” is the Hebrew *raphah*. In II Sam. xxi. 16, 18, 20 & 22 it occurs as a noun and is translated “giant”, as though it were the Hebrew word *rapha*, from which *rephaim* is derived. Both the A.V. and the R.V. seem a little uneasy about translating this word “giant”, for both state in the margin that the Hebrew word is *raphah*. We believe that the word conveys a deeper meaning than appears in these translations. If *raphah* the verb means “to slack”, *raphah* as a noun could mean “The Appaller, one who makes others faint or fail”. This is the view taken by Parkhurst, and it is certainly borne out by the effect upon the ten spies, as their own words testify.

“There we saw giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Numb. xiii. 33).

The play upon two like-sounding words *rapha* and *raphah* is a common feature in the Hebrew O.T.

There is one fundamental of dispensational truth which we have reiterated almost to the weariness of our readers. We have often referred to the distinction between the “hope” and the “prize”, between that which is a question of sheer grace and that which, though still by grace, is in the nature of a reward, and has to do with conflict and overcoming. We have stressed the difference between the position of Ephesians with its “boldness with confidence” and that of Philippians with its “fear and trembling”. We have drawn attention in the Epistle to the Hebrews to the fact that while Abraham had the land of promise given to him as a gift by an unconditional covenant, he also had, although this is not revealed in the O.T., the promise of the heavenly city as a reward for his faithfulness (Hebrews xi.-xii.). This same

kind of distinction we shall find again as we consider the teaching of Joshua xiv. & xv. In these chapters we have the division of the land and the portion that fell to Judah in accordance with God's promise, and also the special Overcomer's portion, the added "reward of the inheritance" (Col. iii. 24), the "prize of the high calling" (Phil. iii. 14) claimed by Caleb and Othniel.

The account in the section before us — Josh. xiv. 6 - xv. 63 — alternates between Judah the tribe and their inheritance, and Caleb the Overcomer and his inheritance.

**Josh. xiv. 6 - xv. 63.**

- A1 | xiv. 6. JUDAH comes to Joshua in Gilgal.  
B1 | xiv. 6-15. CALEB, THE OVERCOMER.—  
The promise made in Kadesh-Barnea. Hebron. Rest.  
A2 | xv. 1-12. JUDAH.—Inheritance divided among families. The borders.  
B2 | xv. 13-19. CALEB, THE OVERCOMER.—  
Sons of Anak driven out.  
A3 | xv. 20-62. JUDAH.—Inheritance divided among families. The cities.  
B3 | xv. 63. NOT LIKE CALEB.—Not overcomers.  
Did not drive out the Jebusites.

It is suggestive that Joshua is found at Gilgal when the division of the inheritance is to be put in hand. Gilgal was the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, and we are again reminded that there is no inheritance either in earth or in heaven that is not associated with the Cross of Christ.

Before the tribe as a whole come forward to receive their portion, Caleb is heard and rewarded. Caleb makes his appeal to Joshua and bases everything upon "the thing that the Lord said". He refers to an oath sworn by Moses. Most marginal notes refer back to Deut. i. 34-36, but the words quoted by Caleb in Josh. xiv. 9 are not found in this passage. This need not cause us a moment's anxiety, for it is exactly in line with the fact that nowhere in the O.T. do we read that Abraham had any knowledge of the heavenly Jerusalem, yet Hebrews xi. assures us that he had.

Caleb was forty years old when the promise was made to him in Kadesh-Barnea, and now he is eighty-five. The Lord had kept His word. Although, as Psalm xc. tells us, those who fell in the wilderness averaged about threescore years and ten (and any reaching fourscore years would only find labour and sorrow), yet Caleb found the Lord his Shield and Buckler, and was delivered from "the snare of the fowler" and the "noisome pestilence". He had had no need to fear the "terror by night", nor the "arrow that flieth by day". A thousand might fall by his side and ten thousand at his right hand, but no harm could come near him. With long life the Lord had promised to satisfy him, and so at eighty-five years of age he can say:

"As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me; as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in" (Josh. xiv. 11).

To Caleb was given the mountain which included the city named Hebron. This city had hallowed associations. After Abraham's separation from Lot and the command, "Arise, walk through the land", he removed his tent to the "plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron" (Gen. xiii. 18). Here also Sarah died, as we read in Gen. xxiii. 2: "And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan". In Hebron, also, in the cave of Machpelah were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah (Genesis xlix. 29-33). We are reminded both in Genesis xxiii. and in Joshua xiv. that Hebron had borne another name, Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba, one of the Anakims, or Giants. At the time of which we are speaking, it was in the possession of three sons of Anak who were driven out by Caleb (Josh. xv. 14).

There is an important statement in Josh. xiv. 15 which we must now consider: "And the land had rest from war". The same words are found in Josh. xi. 23, when Joshua "took the whole land". The Companion Bible, in Appendix 50/iv. has the following note:

"The 'Wars of the Lord' end. Joshua then relinquishes his leadership to Eleazar the Priest (Josh. xiv.). 'And the land had rest from war'. (Josh. xiv. 15).  
The First Sabbatic Year of Lev. xxv. 1-7."

Here we have brought together two features of great importance. The first is the association of Joshua from this time onward with the Priest. The immediate necessity for the intervention of Eleazar was probably the fact that he only could divide the country "by lot" as the Priest alone had the "Urim and Thummim". There is, however, something more than this to be learnt. We have here a prophetic foreshadowing of the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall fulfil the words of Zechariah:

"He shall sit and rule upon His throne: and He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. vi. 13).

The Gospel according to Matthew sets forth the Lord first as the Son of David, the King (Matthew i. - xvi. 20), and then (Matthew xvi. 21 - xxviii.) as the Son of Abraham, the Offering (and also the Priest). In the Book of the Revelation these offices are combined, for He Who is "Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. i. 5) is seen also as the Great High Priest (Rev. i. 12, 13).

The second feature of prophetic importance is the fact that the statement, "The land had rest from war" (Josh. xiv. 15) is made during the first sabbatic year of Israel's history, and is a pledge and foreshadowing of the "rest that remaineth to the people of God", the thousand years of peace before the end (Revelation xx.).

The structure of Joshua xiv. & xv. alternates the whole tribe of Judah and the allotment of their inheritance, with Caleb the Overcomer; and at the end the whole tribe are placed in contrast with Caleb, for they fail as Overcomers in the matter of the Jebusites.

Joshua xv. 1-12 is of importance as a legal document, but we do not feel that a detailed examination of these geographical boundaries would justify the space involved. We draw attention, however, to the following points, which are of interest to all the people of God.

(1) No writer who did not possess first-hand information would expose himself to detection as the writer of Joshua xv. had done. The detailed account of the country, the names of the cities and the added comments are evidence that the Book of Joshua cannot have been a "pious forgery".

(2) The size of the territory allotted to Judah was a piece of country about 45 miles in length by 50 miles in breadth, and it is clear from the chapter that the land literally teemed with people.

Colonel Condor writes:

"The geographical chapters (of Joshua) are most clearly explained by the aid of the long list of 119 towns conquered by Thothmes III in Palestine before the Exodus. We thus are able to prove that many of them were standing long before the Hebrew conquest. Others are mentioned in the Canaanite letters (found at Tel-el-Amarna) as already detailed."

*(See Volume VI, page 140 for fuller details).*

(3) Some of the names of these cities indicate their strength as fortresses, e.g., Azmon (Josh. xv. 4), while others reveal the nature of the false worship carried on, e.g., Adar (Josh. xv. 3), which means "Fire God", Beth-Shemesh (Josh. xv. 10) meaning "House of the Sun", and Chesil or Cesil (xv. 30), which refers to the star group Orion. The name of the city Kirjath-sepher (Josh. xv. 15) is important, as the word means "Book Town".

This point leads us to the record of Othniel, Caleb's brother or nephew, who went up to Kirjath-sepher, also called Debir ("Oracle"), and smote it. This is a most suggestive lesson and must be associated with Caleb's faithful following of the Lord, when we consider him as a type of the Overcomer. All true overcoming is intimately concerned with the Word of God. The fight is the fight of faith. The contention is for the faith once delivered to the saints. The Lord Himself has left us His own glorious example, for He overcame temptation in the days of His flesh by an appeal to "It is written" (Matthew iv.). And in the days of His glory He will appear riding out of heaven as the King of kings and Lord of lords, still bearing the title: "The Word of God". So also it is written of the Overcomers in Revelation xii.:

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev.xii.11).

The failure of Judah to drive out the Jebusites from Jerusalem may teach a deeper lesson than the inability of many of God's children to overcome their spiritual foes. Caleb drove out the Anakim from Hebron, and Othniel took Kirjath-sepher. Fellowship (Hebron) was thus restored, and the false teaching of the enemy (Sepher = "Book") destroyed. This, however, does not touch the seat and origin of iniquity. That is enthroned in the royal city Jerusalem. It was left for David the King, and type of Christ, to drive out the Jebusite from the royal city. Let us, however, not undervalue the lesser victory of faith, for David was crowned King in Hebron before he reigned as King over all at Jerusalem.

As he contemplates the nature of Joshua's foes, the awful character of their idolatry (including as we find in Josh. xv. 8 the savage worship of the valley of Hinnom, the "Gehenna" of the Gospels), the essential features of the Overcomer, the Priest-King suggested by the co-operation of Joshua and Eleazar, the sabbatic year, and the failure to expel the Jebusites, the reader will not fail to appreciate how fully these records of Israel's history foreshadow the spiritual conflict of practically every believer throughout the ages.

In conclusion, may we once more emphasize the necessity to try the things that differ and to distinguish between the inheritance which all Judah received *as a gift*, and that special portion which Caleb of the tribe of Judah received *as a reward*. The same principle underlies the Epistle to the Ephesians (the free gift) and the Epistle to the Philippians (the prize), and those who ignore this distinction are bound to suffer themselves and mislead others.

## **#18. JOSHUA xviii. - xxiv. Shadows of good things to come.**

We have already given some attention to the record of Joshua xiv. & xv., where the allotment of Judah's portion of the land is described. Joseph's double portion comes next, and, according to promise, this is divided between Ephraim and Manasseh.

In Joshua xvi. we observe the sad fact that: "The Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute" (Josh. xvi. 10). This proved to be a fatal compromise for Ephraim, and in later years the prophet Hosea uses the name Ephraim as representing the two sins of covetousness and idolatry.

"Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17). "He is a merchant (Heb. *Canaanite*), the balances of deceit are in his hands" (Hos. xii. 7; *see also* xii. 14, xiii. 1).

The tribute that was paid by the Canaanites really put the Ephraimites themselves under tribute, instead of their occupying their rightful place as children and heirs of God. Any complicity with our spiritual Canaanites, however apparently advantageous, must of necessity prove the undoing of our spiritual life and service. When the woman possessed by the spirit of Python cried after the apostles:

“These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation” (Acts.xvi.17), her words were true; and had the apostle been of the same mind as the Ephraimites, he might have accepted the testimony. However, as we read in Acts xvi, he would not tolerate any fellowship of this kind, however superficially true, and said: “I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her” (Acts xvi. 18). As a result the apostle received ill-treatment and imprisonment, but the fruits of his faithfulness in his first witness to Europe are ours to this day.

We noticed in a previous article, when speaking of Caleb and his claim, how he based it all upon the word of the Lord to Moses, and in the passage before us, we find the same thing with the daughters of Zelophehad (Josh. xvii. 3, 4).

In Josh. xvii. 12-18, we find Joshua administering a well-deserved rebuke to Manasseh, and the passage contains a lesson that is true for all time. At the beginning Manasseh could not drive out the Canaanite. This meant lack of faith, for God had promised that all that was needed was faith in Himself. When “the children of Israel waxed strong”, instead of using their strength to fulfil the Lord’s command, they fell instead into the same snare as Ephraim, and put the Canaanites under tribute. In spite of their failure we find that “the children of Joseph” came to Joshua and boasted of their greatness and blessedness, and asked why they had received but one lot and one portion.

“And Joshua answered them, If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee” (Josh. xvii. 15).

True greatness will always find room for expansion. There will always be territory to reclaim from the enemy until the day of glory dawns. We have our inheritance, and with that as the base, we shall find countless opportunities, as did Caleb and Othniel, of realizing something of the mighty power that is towards those that believe.

We cannot, of course, consider in detail the many chapters devoted to the settlement of the tribes in the land, but if we take a bird’s eye-view of the section, we shall find an alternation of the “civil” and the “sacred”. The “sacred” sections are lettered “B” in the structure below and are concerned with the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh and the setting apart of the “cities of refuge” and the “cities of the Levites”.

#### **Joshua xiii. - xxii.**

A | xiii.-xvii. Land divided among the tribes.

B | xviii. 1. The tabernacle at Shiloh.

A | xviii. 2 - xix. Land divided among the tribes.

B | xx.-xxii. Cities of refuge and of the Levites.

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them” (Josh. xviii. 1).

This gathering of the people and the division of the land is an anticipation of the day spoken of by Jacob in Gen. xlix. 10: “Until *Shiloh* come: and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be”. *Shiloh* means “Peace”, and is practically at the centre of the land of Palestine, about 20 miles north of Jerusalem.

We learn from the narrative of Joshua xviii. that seven tribes still remained without inheritance, and that three men of each tribe were sent to make a survey and to report thereon:

“And the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities into seven parts in a book, and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh. And Joshua

cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions” (Josh. xviii. 9, 10).

This survey made a kind of Doomsday book and mapped out the portions of each division so that no doubt should exist in future days as to the bounds of each inheritance.

The feature that is typical and of importance to us is contained in the statement: “And the land was subdued before them” (Josh. xviii. 1).

We have here an echo of the words of Gen. i. 28: “Replenish the earth and subdue it.”

And we have the authority of the N.T. for associating together Genesis i., Psalm viii., and the day when all enemies shall be subjected under the feet of Christ (Heb. ii. 6-8, I Cor. xv. 24-28) — showing how fully the occurrences in Joshua are shadows of things to come. Although the individual tribes might fail in taking full possession of their inheritance, yet at Shiloh, in the tabernacle of the congregation and before the Lord, the land was subdued.

The tabernacle remained at Shiloh until the days of Eli (I Sam. iv. 12). We hear of it at Nob in the days of Saul, and at Gibeon in the days of Solomon. Reference to the transference of the ark from Shiloh to Jerusalem is found in Psalm lxxviii., where the historic truth of Joshua xviii. is endorsed:

“They provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this He was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel: so He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh . . . . He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim” (Psa. lxxviii. 58-60, 67).

From Josh. xviii. 11 to xix. 50 the inheritances of the remaining seven tribes, together with Joshua’s own portion are described. While we must not stay to consider the passages dealing with the seven tribes and their portions, the inheritance of Joshua himself calls for attention. Caleb receives his inheritance first (Joshua xiv.) and, although Joshua had as much right as Caleb, it is not until “an end of dividing the land” has been accomplished that Joshua enters into his own. The wording here is remarkable:

“The children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them” (Josh. xix. 49).

Above and beyond the evident meekness and unselfishness of Joshua personally, we certainly have here a foreshadowing of the greater Joshua. Joshua himself had nothing to leave or to give up, but the Lord Jesus laid aside His glory that He might find a dwelling-place among His people. The city for which Joshua asked was called Timnath-serah, a word which means, according to Gesenius, “A portion that was over and above”. In Heb. i. 1-3 we have revealed something of the glory of the Lord Jesus, which He laid aside when He stooped to die. And verse 4 continues:

“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Why does this passage assure us that Christ is so much better than angels? Such a statement seems, at first sight, hardly necessary. **But the point of Heb. i. 1-4 is that what was His *by right*, is His now *by merit or inheritance* — and therefore, that what could never have been shared by man before, can now be shared by all His own.** The true Joshua receives an inheritance from His people, and comes and builds a dwelling-place for Himself among them.

The name of Joshua’s city in Judges ii. 9 is given as Timnath-heres, meaning “A portion of the sun”. The Rabbins have not been slow to interpret this as being due to the representation of the sun on Joshua’s grave, in memory of the miracle at Gibeon. This is highly improbable, the simpler explanation

being that the letters “s” and “h” have been transposed, an occurrence that frequently happens when copying a manuscript, and of which there are several examples in the Scriptures.

Joshua xx. is taken up with the appointing of the cities of refuge. The same God Who had commanded the extermination of the Canaanites, provides for the safety of the man-slayer — i.e., one not guilty of willful murder. The “avenger of blood” was not permitted to touch the man-slayer when once he had found refuge in one of these cities. He remained there until the death of the High Priest\* (\*This is referred to in Heb. ix. 27, 28. For a fuller explanation, *see* volume XVI, pages 54, 55).

These cities of refuge were so situated as to be accessible to all the tribes. The three cities on the West of Jordan — Kedesh, Shechem and Hebron — had been closely associated with the history of the people. Kedesh was near the scene of Joshua’s great victory over the confederate kings, and so, in type, is associated with the final glorious victory of Christ (Joshua xi.). Shechem was the place where Abraham built his first altar in the land of Canaan (Gen. xii. 7). And Hebron was associated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as well as with the overcomer Caleb.

After the appointing of the cities of refuge, the Levites came to Eleazar the Priest and to Joshua, and reminded them of the command of the Lord that they should have cities to dwell in and suburbs for their cattle (Josh. xxi. 1, 2). These were settled by lot, a total of forty-eight cities, and with this allotment, the Scripture sums up:

“There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass” (Josh. xxi. 45).

The time had now come for the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh to be permitted to cross the Jordan and enter into the inheritance which they had chosen in the land of Gilead (Josh. xxii. 9). Joshua recognizes that they have fulfilled their agreement to stand by the rest of the tribes until all have received their inheritance; and, with an exhortation to be diligent in giving heed to the commandment and the law, to love the Lord and to walk in all His ways, Joshua blesses the people and sends them on their way (Josh. xxii. 5, 6).

And now a strange thing happens:

“And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to” (Josh. xxii. 10).

Immediately this news reaches Shiloh, all Israel gather themselves together for war against the two and a half tribes. And Phinehas demands an explanation of their action, reminding them of the judgment that fell at Peor, and suggesting that if the land of their choice be deemed unclean because of its separation from the Tabernacle, Israel would willingly find room for them in the land—

“But rebel not against the Lord, nor rebel against us in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God” (Josh. xxii. 19).

The two and a half tribes vehemently repudiate the charge of rebellion, and deny that there had been any intention of using the altar for sacrificial purposes; it had been built in order that their children in days to come should realize that they still had part with the tribes across Jordan.

“Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you” (Joshua.xxii.28).

This explanation satisfies Phinehas and he says:

“This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord” (Josh. xxii. 31).

How are we to regard this question of the building of the altar? The Law of Moses most certainly forbade the offering of sacrifice anywhere else but at the door of the tabernacle (Lev. xvii. 8, 9). Were the two and a half tribes justified in partly transgressing this commandment? With the fact of the history of Israel before us, and the knowledge of how easily they lapsed into idolatry, we cannot but feel that the erection of this altar was a sad mistake, and that no policy can justify departure from any commandment of the Lord. *The Companion Bible* expresses no opinion on the question. Some commentators are very much in its favour, others strongly condemn. It is difficult, perhaps, to avoid the charge of being uncharitable, but we cannot help feeling that, however good the intentions of the builders might have been, the whole action was a mistake. Anything in the nature of putting out one's hand to stay the ark of God, however, well intentioned, is wrong. The whole trouble seems to have been the natural fruit of their initial act of self-will. In Numb. xxxii. 1 there are arguments that remind us strongly of Lot's fatal choice, and Moses denounces their choice as but a repetition of the false action of the ten spies (Numb. xxxii. 14). It is true that an agreement was made with these tribes, and that the land of their choice was granted to them; nevertheless, we have learned both from experience and from the Scriptures that self-willed choice, even if it is permitted, generally ends in disaster. In all this history there is much that reminds us of those in Philippians iii., who minded earthly things, instead of being willing to forego all inheritance until over Jordan and in the land of promise.

The Book of Joshua concludes with an address by Joshua to all the people, in which he warns them of the results of departure from the Lord, and encourages them to adhere closely to all that had been written in the law. The passage ends with a solemn covenant on the part of the people, and the setting up of a great stone as a witness.

At the age of one hundred and ten years Joshua dies and is buried in the border of his inheritance. The bones of Joseph are buried in Shechem; and Eleazar the Priest is buried in mount Ephraim.

“And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that He had done for Israel” (Josh. xxiv. 31).

There is something about this verse that makes one anticipate the sad departure that set in later, which is characteristic of the Book of Judges. The LXX has an addition to the last chapter of Joshua, and tells us that the sons of Israel worshipped Astarte and the gods of the nations round about them, and that the Lord delivered them into the hands of Eglon the King of Moab, who ruled over them eighteen years. While, therefore, the Book of Joshua is full of valuable teaching for the believer to-day, it is also a revelation of the utter failure of all men apart from the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is significant that its last words record the death of the High Priest. None but He Who ever liveth can save His people to the uttermost; all others, though types and shadows of the true, must ever fall short of perfection.

## **#19. JUDGES. The Book as a Whole (i. - xxi.).**

### **“There was no king in Israel”.**

The first reading of the book of Judges leaves the reader with a feeling of perplexity. What is the purpose of the book? Upon what plan has it been written? That it reveals an awful state of affairs is most evident, and it is also obvious that this terrible condition arose directly out of the fact that “There was no King in Israel, every one did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges xxi. 25).

While somewhat detailed accounts are given of such judges as Gideon and Samson, of others, though their names and the number of years of their judging of Israel are recorded, not a single event in their lives is chronicled. For example:

“And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar, and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim. And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir” (Judges.x.1,2).

From such an entry, we gather that in this book we are dealing with actual history, but from the evident selection of incident we also conclude that the books is not only historical but also typical in its teaching. All Scripture is “profitable” for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, therefore that man of God who knows not the teaching which is associated with such names as Othniel, Barak, Gideon or Samson will not be “thoroughly furnished”.

Upon making a list of the names of those who judged or ruled Israel, we are immediately struck with the ominous fact that there are thirteen. Twelve of these were raised up by God, and one, Abimelech, a usurper, likened, in Jotham’s parable, to a Bramble, evidently foreshadowed the Antichrist.

Before giving an analysis of the book as a whole and pointing out its moral, let us set out the names of these judges, together with any features suggestive of their typical teaching.

- (1) OTHNIEL.—Enemy, Mesopotamia. Rest 40 years (iii. 9-11).
- (2) EHUD.—Left-hand. Dagger. Enemy, Moab. Rest 80 years (iii. 15-30).
- (3) SHAMGAR.—Ox-goad. Enemy, Philistines (iii. 31).
- (4) DEBORAH.—Tent peg. Enemy, Canaan. Rest 40 years (iv.-v.).
- (5) GIDEON.—Lamps and Pitchers. Enemy, Midian. Rest 40 years (vi.-viii.).
- ABIMELECH.—“Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou and reign over us” (ix. 14).
- (6) TOLA.—He judged Israel twenty-three years (x. 1, 2).
- (7) JAIR.—He judged Israel twenty-two years (x. 3-5).
- (8) JEPHTHAH.—The rash vow. Enemy, Ammon (xi. - xii. 7).
- (9) IBZAN.—He judged Israel seven years (xii. 8).
- (10) ELON.—He judged Israel ten years (xii. 11).
- (11) ABDON.—He judged Israel eight years (xii. 13, 14).
- (12) SAMSON.—Jawbone of ass. Enemy, Philistines (xiii.-xvi.).

Abimelech is not given a number, as he was self-chosen, and therefore not appointed by God.

Preparatory to a closer study, let us now take a survey of the book, noticing its broad outlines. In the opening chapter we find a recognition of the Lord.

“The children of Israel asked the Lord, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?” (Judges i. 1).

Judah is chosen and, for a time, there is progressive victory. As we proceed, however, we find marks of failure.

- (1) “He could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron” (i. 19).
- (2) “The Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem” (i. 21).
- (3) “The Canaanites would dwell in that land” (i. 27).
- (4) “They put the Canaanites to tribute and did not utterly drive them out” (i. 28).
- (5) “The Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites” (i. 32).
- (6) “The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley: but the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Ajalon and in Shaalbim” (i. 34, 35).

Here is a solemn progression in failure. The chariots of iron, though formidable, had been spoken of by Joshua, who had said “For thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong” (Josh. xvii. 18). Thus it is clear that all that Israel lacked was faith in the Word of the Lord. Instead of maintaining their separate position, Israel began to allow the Canaanites to dwell with them, and put them under tribute. But in course of time the process becomes reversed, and we find the Asherites dwelling among the Canaanites, words eloquent in typical teaching. Finally, the Amorites assume the role of conquerors. They are the ones that use force, and the humiliation is all the more pronounced that it takes place at Ajalon, the scene of such a mighty triumph under Joshua (Josh. x. 12).

In Judges ii. 6-20 we read in solemn language the Divine synopsis of the whole book:

“The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua . . . . And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel . . . . they forsook the Lord God of their fathers . . . and served Baal and Ashtaroth . . . . He delivered them into the hands of spoilers . . . . He raised up judges which delivered them . . . . yet they would not hearken.”

In these circumstances, instead of driving out the nations from before Israel, the Lord said He would use them to “prove” Israel, much as He had used the experiences of the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness (Deut. viii. 2).

From this point to the end of Judges xviii. we have the history of the judges, and the closing chapters depict the fearful condition, both spiritually and morally, into which Israel had fallen. As, in these closing verses, we three times hear the sad refrain, “There was no king in Israel” (xviii. 1; xix. 1 & xxi. 25), so the subject of kingship will be found running throughout the story of the judges. Gideon’s brethren “resembled the children of a king”. He himself was invited to rule over Israel but refused, and his son Abimelech, born of a concubine, in Shechem, usurped the kingdom. Again, Jephthah is invited to be head over all Gilead, and the sad confession is made in the days of Samson: “Knowest thou not that Philistines are rulers over us?” (Judges xv. 11).

Equally with the absence of the true king in all this turmoil and misrule, is felt the absence of the true priest. Even Gideon made an Ephod to the undoing of Israel (viii. 24-27). This finds an echo in the Ephod made by Micah (xvii. 5). Truly the whole sad history cries out for the one King-Priest after the order of Melchisedec, even the Lord Jesus Christ. At every turn its typical teaching illustrates the condition and character of the world and of the church, while He is absent, or while He is not recognized as Lord over all to the church.

With this review of the book in mind the reader will perhaps the better appreciate the following structure of the book as a whole, which places the items we have surveyed in their respective places, and demonstrates the design of the book and the intended lesson.

### **Judges. --- The Book as a whole.**

- A | a | i. 1-15. "The children of Israel asked the Lord."  
b | i. 16 - iii. 9. FAILURE. | Judah and the Canaanites.  
Not destroyed utterly.  
Wives taken.
- B | iii. 10 - viii. 32. THE JUDGES. | The form of a King (viii. 18).  
Rule over us (viii. 22).  
The Ephod (viii. 24-27).

#### *The need for the King-Priest felt.*

- C | ix. ABIMELECH.—THE ANTICHRIST. | The Olive, Fig, Vine.  
The Bramble.  
Reign thou over us.
- B | x. - xviii. THE JUDGES. | Be our head (xi. 8).  
Philistines rule (xv. 11).  
No King in Israel (xvii. 6).  
The Ephod (xvii. 5).

#### *The need for the King-Priest felt.*

- A | b | xix. - xxi. 24. FAILURE. | Judah and Benjamin.  
Destroyed too many.  
Wives refused.
- a | xxi. 25. "No King in Israel:  
every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

### **#20. JUDGES i. 1 - iii. 9. The root cause of failure.**

Before we come to the exploits of the judges, we must make a closer acquaintance with the section that introduces us to their history, viz., i. 1 - iii. 9. We are distinctly told that, after the death of Joshua and the elders that outlived him, Israel went astray, so that we must be prepared to find the seeds of departure even in the opening chapter.

What could be more reasonable, one might ask, than the opening request in chapter i.: "Who shall go up against the Canaanites first?" (i. 1).

But we must remember that *all* Israel were commanded to fight, and that the Canaanites were one nation out of *seven* that were specified as their enemies (Josh. iii. 10). After Judah had been commanded to go up against the Canaanites and the Canaanites & the Perizzites had been delivered into their hand, we read: "And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek" (Judges i. 5). Now we must remember that God Himself had commanded the utter destruction of the Canaanites:

"And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee: thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them" (Deut. vii. 2).

"Of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. xx. 16).

These commands included Adoni-bezek, but, like Saul who spared Agag, Judah spares Adoni-bezek from utter destruction. Doubtless there were some who questioned God's command. Perhaps, with some glimmerings of His love, they argued, as some do to-day, that utter destruction of any of His creatures would be a contradiction of this wonderful attribute of love. There are some to-day who teach that there is no such thing as the destruction of body and soul in Gehenna, and offer translations to prove

the salvation of Judas and the restoration of Satan. With all such reasoning we have nothing to do. What God has said should settle the matter for us all.

Adoni-bezek was caught, and his thumbs and his great toes were cut off (Judges i. 6). This was a practice in those barbaric days calculated to render captives incapable of further warfare. Adoni-bezek acknowledged that he had himself so treated seventy other kings. At the time of their consecration, the thumb and great toe of Aaron and the priests were touched with blood, so that the cutting off of these members in the case of Adoni-bezek would seem to indicate incapacity for the Lord's service. It is interesting to notice, in passing, that in Exodus xxix. and Leviticus viii. the *right ear* is mentioned first indicating that, without obedient hearing, hand and foot could not be truly consecrated.

The name "Adoni-bezek" means "The Lord of lightning", and is a figure of Satan. Satan disabled the nations of the earth, which were reckoned as seventy in number (Deut. xxxii. 8 & Genesis x.) and he himself is to be imprisoned for a thousand years. At the end of that period he is found to be as bad as ever, and is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Inasmuch as both Death and Hades are cast into this same fire, it is evident that the intention is destruction.

Here, in this first chapter of Judges, we have the beginning of all the future troubles of the people of God. Implicit, unquestioning obedience would have meant victory, peace and prosperity. Instead, one compromise led to another, resulting eventually in failure and defeat. It is scarcely necessary to point the moral. Each heart knows its own bitterness, and its natural tendency to spare or only partially mutilate what God has said must be destroyed.

Before we go into further detail, it will help us to see the general disposition of the subject-matter in structural form.

### **Judges i. 1 - iii. 9.**

- A | i. 1-20. |
  - a1 | i. 1-4. Judah and Simeon fight against the Canaanites.
    - b1 | i. 5-7. Adoni-bezek. Jerusalem.
  - a2 | i. 8-11. Judah fights against Jerusalem, Kirjath-arba and Kirjath sepher.
    - b2 | i. 12-15. Othniel. Kirjath-sepher.
  - a3 | i. 16-19. Judah and Simeon slay the Canaanites.
    - b3 | i. 20. Caleb. Hebron. Three sons of Anak.
- B | i. 21-26. Benjamin fails to drive out the Jebusites.
  - The man of Luz perpetuates idolatry.
- C | i. 27. Neither did Manasseh.
  - i. 29. Neither did Ephraim.
  - i. 30. Neither did Zebulun.
  - i. 31. Neither did Asher.
  - i. 33. Neither did Naphtali.
- B | i. 34-36. Amorites force Dan into the mountains.
  - Joseph exacts tribute.
- A | ii. 1 - iii. 9. |
  - a | ii. 1-5. Angel of the Lord. Nations as thorns.
    - I will not drive them out.
  - b | ii. 6-10. Joshua and all that generation.
  - b | ii. 10-13. Another generation that knew not the Lord.
  - a | ii. 14 - iii. 9. Anger of the Lord.
    - I will not drive them out. Left to prove Israel.

In Judges i. 10-15 and i. 30 we have a re-statement of what has already been recorded in Josh.xv.13-19. Caleb was an overcomer, and so also was his younger brother Othniel. The story is repeated here in order to show the root cause of Israel's failure. They did not wholly follow the Lord as did Caleb; they did not utterly destroy the seed of the wicked one but spared them, and dwelt with them, and took tribute of them. All this would be acclaimed as very human and humane, very worldly-wise and civilized, but after all disobedient and ruinous.

Just as Adoni-bezek is a type of Satan, so Kirjath-arba and Kirjath-sepher are types of Satan's activities. Kirjath-arba is associated with the Giants, the sons of Anak. These were the seed of the Wicked One, and, like the "tares" in the parable, were devoted to destruction. Kirjath-sepher means "The City of the Book". Its name was changed to Debir which means "Oracle", as Kirjath-arba was changed to Hebron, which means "Fellowship". The doctrine of demons, the false gospels and teachings that form part of Satan's propaganda, must be destroyed if true success is to be achieved. God's oracle, the inspired Scriptures (Debir) must take their place, and fellowship with the Lord (Hebron) must be our strength—and not the "strength of Baal", which is the meaning of the name Arba.

In contrast with this uncompromising attitude which characterizes all true overcomers, is the incident connected with the man who was an inhabitant of Bethel. The name Bethel, or "The house of God", had been given to the place by Jacob, but it had still retained its original name of Luz. Worldly wisdom would have commended the action of the tribe of Joseph. The spies see a man coming out of the city and promise him mercy if he will show them the entrance into it. The city is taken and the man and his family spared. Instead of accepting the change, however, and remaining as one of the first citizens of the renamed city of Bethel, we read:

"The man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day" (Judges i. 26).

Paul's comment seems apposite here:

"If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (Gal. ii. 18).

"How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?" (Gal. iv. 9).

We next come to the central section of the structure: Judges i. 27-33. The repetition of the word "Neither" here is a solemn witness of failure.

"The Canaanites *would* dwell" (Judges i. 27).

The word rendered "would" is the Hiphil form of *yaal*, and is variously translated in the A.V. "begin", "be content", "please", "assay", and "would". Perhaps in the passage under consideration the modern phrase "made overtures" gives a fairly good idea of the Canaanites' attitude. The Canaanites expressed their willingness to pay tribute or do anything asked of them in exchange for permission to dwell in the land; and counsels of worldly wisdom and that much praised quality "humanity" prevailed.

"The Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites" (Judges i. 32).

This is ever the sequence. First the world comes into the church; then the church finds its place in the world. Give the Canaanite an inch and he will soon claim a yard, for the yard has already been conceded in principle. The word "among" is *gereb*, which is elsewhere translated "bowels", "heart", and "inward part", indicating how complete was Israel's failure. The subsequent decline and fall described in the succeeding chapters of Judges is incipient in these tragic verses of chapter i.

"The Amorites forced the children of Dan" (Judges i. 34).

Here the full tale of degradation is told, for the word translated "forced" is the word used in Exodus.iii.9:

“I have also seen the *oppression* wherewith the Egyptians *oppress* them.”

Israel, redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, and beyond both the Red Sea and the Jordan, enter again into bondage. The N.T. equivalent is found in Galatians:

“But now, after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. iv. 9).

Paul’s “No, not for an hour” (Gal. ii. 5) is as vital to-day as it was in his own time, and as it would have been in Judges i.

“And the Angel of the Lord came from Gilgal to Bochim” (Judges ii. 1).

Gilgal was the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away, where the rite that set forth “no confidence in the flesh” was performed. Bochim means “Weepers” and was so named by Israel (ii. 5).

The Lord sworn that He would never break His covenant with Israel, but many forget, when they criticize His change of attitude, that a covenant implies two parties, and when Israel had grievously broken their part of the contract, the covenant obligations of the Lord at once ceased. The terms of the covenant included the condition that Israel should make no league with the inhabitants of Canaan, and in this they failed.

“Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you . . . . that through them I may prove Israel” (Judges ii. 3-22).

The changes that is observable between Ephesians and II Timothy suggests something of a parallel, and explains the presence of so much evil in and around the church.

“For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (I Cor. xi. 19).

Even Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” takes on a fuller meaning when seen in the light of Judges ii.

We will conclude this article by giving the necessary expansion of the two members

A | a | ii. 1-5. and A | a | ii. 14 - iii. 9. in the structure set out on page 168.

A   a   <b>Judges ii. 1-5.</b>	A   a   <b>Judges ii. 14 - iii. 9.</b>
<p>A   a   ii. 1. The angel of the Lord came ... and said.</p> <p>b   ii. 1. BOCHIM.</p> <p>B   ii. 1-3.  </p> <p>c   I said, I will never break My covenant.</p> <p>d1   Ye shall make no league. Ye shall throw down their altars.</p> <p>d2   Ye have not obeyed My voice. Why have ye done this?</p> <p>c   I also said, I will not drive them out.</p> <p>d3   They shall be as thorns. Their gods shall be a snare.</p> <p>A   a   ii. 4. The Angel of the Lord spake these words.</p> <p>b   ii. 5. BOCHIM.</p>	<p>A   a   ii. 14. The anger of the Lord was hot.</p> <p>b   ii. 14. He delivered them to spoilers.</p> <p>c   ii. 16-18. He raised up judges which delivered them.</p> <p>B   ii. 19. Israel followed other gods to serve them.</p> <p>C   d   ii. 20-23. Nations left to prove. General.</p> <p>d   iii. 1-4. Nations left to prove. Particular.</p> <p>B   iii. 6-7. Israel served their gods . . . . Baalim.</p> <p>A   a   iii. 8. The anger of the Lord was hot.</p> <p>b   iii. 8. He sold them to the King of Mesopotamia.</p> <p>c   iii. 9. He raised up a deliverer, Othniel.</p>

Space will not permit a fuller investigation into these opening sections. We trust sufficient has been indicated to kindle the reader’s interest, and we can confidently leave the application of much searching “correction and instruction in righteousness” to the Spirit Himself.

## #21. JUDGES iii. - xiii. “Lo-Ammi”. A prophetic principle examined.

Among the many items of dispensational importance in the Book of Judges, one question of outstanding interest is the way in which Israel and Israel’s affairs influence the computation of times and dates. The question at first seems simple enough. All one has to do is to add up the periods of the judges’ rule and the intervening years of rest, and the thing is done. As there is no better way of producing conviction than to try things out for oneself, let us set about this calculation and see what results are obtained.

	<b>Judges.</b>	<b>Years.</b>
FIRST SERVITUDE.—Mesopotamia.	iii. 8.	8
OTHNIEL.—REST.	iii. 11.	40
SECOND SERVITUDE.—MOAB.	iii. 14.	18
EHUD.—REST.	iii. 30.	80
THIRD SERVITUDE.—CANAAN.	iv. 3.	20
DEBORAH and BARAK.—REST.	v. 31.	40
FOURTH SERVITUDE.—MIDIAN.	vi. 1.	7
GIDEON.—REST.	viii. 28.	40
TOLA.	x. 2.	23
JAIR.	x. 3.	22
JEPHTHAH.	xii. 7.	6
IBZAN.	xii. 9.	7
ELON.	xii. 11.	10
ABDON.	xii. 14.	8
FIFTH SERVITUDE.—PHILISTINES.	xiii. 1.	40
Total: --		369

It will be observed that we have put down all the periods concerned, whether they be periods of servitude or of rest.

Turning now to the N.T. we find that the Apostle Paul has something to say about this period, and we therefore turn to Acts xiii. 16-22, in order to check our total.

	<b>Acts.</b>	<b>Years.</b>
WILDERNESS WANDERING.	xiii. 18.	40
PERIOD OF JUDGES.	xiii. 20.	450
SAUL’S REIGN.	xiii. 21.	40
Total: --		530

Ignoring, for the moment, the years in the wilderness and the reign of Saul, we observe that Paul’s statement regarding the period of the Judges differs from our own conclusion by 81 years, a difference too great to be covered by the suggestion that the Apostle is using round numbers when he says “about the space of 450 years”.

There are other checks, however, that we must take into account. Jephthah, who lived at the very period under discussion, tells us (Judges xi. 26) that the disputed territory had been held by Israel for 300 years, dating from the end of the 40 years’ wandering. Solomon also speaks very definitely about the number of years that intervened between the Exodus from Egypt and the year in which he began to build the Temple of the Lord. He speaks of this year as “the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt”, and the fourth year of his reign (I Kings vi. 1). If we compare Solomon’s period with that given by Paul in Acts xiii., we find a difference of 93 years, which, again, in conjunction with the period covered by Solomon’s account.

	<i>Years.</i>
WILDERNESS WANDERING.	40
PERIOD OF JUDGES.	450
SAUL'S REIGN.	40
DAVID'S REIGN.	40
SOLOMON'S FIRST THREE COMPLETE YEARS (I Kings vi. 1).	3
	573
DEDUCT — SOLOMON'S COMPUTATION.	- 480
TOTAL TO ACCOUNT FOR: --	93

Let us now look back over the list of items given in the chronology of the Book of Judges ([above](#)). We observe that there are five periods of servitude, varying in length from 7 years to 40. Adding these periods together we have the following:

	<b>Judges.</b>	<i>Years.</i>
FIRST SERVITUDE.	iii. 8.	8
SECOND SERVITUDE.	iii. 14.	18
THIRD SERVITUDE.	iv. 3.	20
FOURTH SERVITUDE.	vi. 1.	7
FIFTH SERVITUDE.	xiii. 1.	40
	Total: --	93

This is indeed a revelation. The very number of the years of Israel's servitude is equal to the difference between the accounts of Solomon and Paul. If we look more attentively at Solomon's statement, we find that he does not say that the total number of years that intervened between the two points was 480, but that "in the 480th year" the Temple was commenced. The number is ordinal (480th), not cardinal (480), showing that while Paul was ([not](#)) using the calendar of the Lord, and in that calendar no notice is taken of periods when Israel are in bondage. From this emerges a principle. When Israel are *Lo-ammi*, time is not counted prophetically.

Before proceeding let us endeavour to understand clearly what is meant by the *Lo-ammi* periods of Israel's history. The term is borrowed from Hosea i. 9 where we read there Hosea's son was named *Lo-ammi*, meaning, "Not My People", the name being prophetic of Israel's long night of rejection. This period of rejection is also predicted in Hosea iii. 3-5:

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king . . . .  
Afterwards shall the children of Israel return."

Before applying this principle further, one other detail demands consideration. We read in Judges.x.8 that the children of Ammon and the Philistines "vexed and oppressed the children of Israel" for 18 years. Why is this period not included in the list given above? The reason is that it was confined to "the other side of the Jordan" until the close of the 18 years (Judges x. 8, 9), and so cannot be reckoned as a *Lo-ammi* period for all Israel.

The important principle enunciated above has a profound influence upon the interpretation of Daniel ix. In this chapter we have a period of 490 years in which all the purposes and promises of God for Israel are to be fulfilled. Inasmuch as this promise was made to Daniel some 490 years before Christ, it is manifest that something is intended other than the normal reckoning of 490 years on the calendar of the world. Since Acts xxviii. Israel have been *Lo-ammi*; the prophetic clock has stopped and will not begin again until Israel's day once more dawns. Moreover, during the captivity of Israel in the time of Daniel, Israel were as much *Lo-ammi* as they were under the servitude at the time of the Judges. The 490 prophetic years of Daniel ix. cannot include the period when Jerusalem was a ruin, the Temple unbuilt, and the walls and gates destroyed. Consequently we can appreciate the reason why

the angel did not give Daniel a simple period of years in Dan. ix. 25, but broke it up, the *Lo-ammi* period of seven weeks (49 years) being occupied with the restoration of the city, while the threescore and two weeks commenced when the city and people were back again into favour. This has already been discussed in volume VI (which has recently been reprinted in volumes XXV & XXVI) and the reader is referred to the article in volume XXVI, p.232, together with the diagram.

This principle also has a solemn application to ourselves individually. While the believer can never be “lost” I Cor. iii. 15 makes it clear that he may “suffer loss”. This applies both to the period of the Acts and to the dispensation of the mystery, and is found in Col. iii. 24, 25, & II Tim. ii. 11, 12. When one ponders the years of so-called service that one has rendered, and then considers how much may fail to stand the test, the history of Israel and the omission of centuries of time from their calendar assumes a solemn aspect, and prompts us to pray: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psa. xc. 12).

Some expositors see in the various oppressors of Israel during the period of Judges, types of the great spiritual enemies of the Church.

MESOPOTAMIA.	Judges iii. 8.	THE WORLD.
MOAB.	Judges iii. 14.	THE FLESH.
CANAAN.	Judges iv. 3.	THE DEVIL.
MIDIAN.	Judges vi. 1.	EARTHLY THINGS.
PHILISTINES.	Judges xiii. 1.	CARNAL RELIGION.

Whether these suggestions can be justified only patient study will reveal. We give them, however, for what they are worth, praying that we may all be made wiser by these examples written for our learning, and experience more of the triumphs of faith and the periods of rest, and less of the dark days of servitude when prophetic time ceases and nothing but “loss” is registered.

## #22. JUDGES viii., ix. The thirteen Rulers of Israel. Abimelech the Antichrist.

There are thirteen rulers mentioned by name in the Book of Judges. This is an ominous number, but is quite in keeping with the general tenor of the book. The last verse of the last chapter is in a sense a summary of the whole book:

“There was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

If we add to this the two occasions when the making of an Ephod played an important part in the downgrade movement of the book, the antichristian character of its prophetic and typical teaching becomes evident.

Twelve of Israel’s judges were called of God; the thirteenth was Abimelech, a usurper, and an evident type of the Man of Sin. Moreover, we observe that Abimelech, the usurper, is the sixth name in the record. The number 6 is “the number of man”, and is associated with Goliath, Nebuchadnezzar and the Beast of the last days.

Dr. Bullinger went to the trouble of adding up the numerical value of the names of the twelve judges and found that it was a multiple of 8; whereas the title of Abimelech, *Ben Jerubbaal*, is a multiple of 13.

It is sad to think that Gideon was the father of Abimelech and that Abimelech was the offspring of a concubine:

“And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. And his concubine that was in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech” (Judges viii. 30, 31).

“And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal (i.e. Gideon) went to Shechem”  
(Judges.ix.1).

It seems that, by this time, Shechem had become a centre of apostasy. And yet it was at Shechem that God had first appeared to Abraham in Canaan (Genesis xii. 6); and at Shechem Jacob had built his altar (Gen. xxxiii. 20). Here also had been pronounced the blessings and cursings from Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. And here, after the death of Gideon, is established the worship of Baal-berith (Judges.ix.4).

In the opening verses of Judges ix., Abimelech suggests to the men of Shechem that Gideon’s seventy sons are seeking dominion over them. This was a most unreasonable and unlikely suggestion, but it suited Abimelech’s plan to give it currency.

“And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother’s brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother’s father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh” (Judges ix. 1, 2).

Abimelech’s words had the desired effect, and the men of Shechem made him king. Sixty-nine out of the seventy sons of Gideon were slain at Ophrah “upon one stone”. Possibly this refers to the rock that figures so prominently in Judges vi. 21-26. If so, this would indicate another blow at the worship of the true God, and the triumph of Baal. Moreover, the place chosen by the men of Shechem for making Abimelech king was “by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem”. Here Joshua had made a covenant with Israel (Joshua xxiv. 1-26), and had set up a great stone under the oak (see margin of Judges ix. 6), declaring that this stone would be a witness against them if they denied their God. Here, too, the sanctuary of God had stood, as we see from Josh. xxiv. 26. It is evident, therefore, that Abimelech’s coronation was a direct attack upon the sovereignty of the Lord. And yet in Abimelech we have *Israel’s first king*, a tragic foreshadowing of the time of the end.

One Son of Gideon escapes death, and his name is Jotham, meaning *Jehovah is Perfect*. The bearing of this name will be evident when we observe how Jotham uses the very word “perfect” in Judges.ix.16:

“If ye have done truly and sincerely (perfectly).”

The connection is confirmed when we notice that at this same spot, Joshua had said:

“Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity (perfectly)”  
(Joshua.xxiv.14).

The Lord had said to Abraham, “Walk before Me, and be thou *perfect*” (Gen. xvii. 1) and had called upon Israel saying: “Thou shalt be *perfect* with the Lord thy God” (Deut. xviii. 13). An examination of the contexts will leave us in no doubt as to the meaning of the term.

There is one further point which is perhaps more important than everything else. Abimelech had been made king at the very place where the sanctuary had stood. At this place, therefore, the priest would have received answer by Urim and Thummim. Now the word Thummim is the word “Perfection” put into the plural. There is but one King that will successfully rule and reign for God on earth, and He will be a *King-Priest* “after the order of Melchisedec”. There will be but one Kingdom on earth that will receive Divine approval, and that will be a “Kingdom of Priests”. In this lies the secret of all human failure in this respect. Man desires a King. Even Israel would have taken Christ and made Him King; but External law, however righteous and good, breaks down before the impotence of unregenerate hearts. A Priest as well as a King is needed to put away sin, and to write the laws upon the hearts of a saved people. Gideon apparently had some inkling of this truth:

“The men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son’s son also ... And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you” (Judges viii. 22, 23).

Gideon nobly repudiates Kingship here, but the next verse records what is apparently a strange action. He requests the golden ear-rings that had been taken as a prey, and we read:

“Gideon made an Ephod thereof, and put it in his city, even in Ophrah. And all Israel went thither a-whoring after it, which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house” (Judges viii. 24-27).

Gideon apparently felt the need of priestly service, but he transgressed the will of the Lord in providing a substitute for the real thing — always a fruitful cause of failure and sin.

The reader may remember that the structure of the book as a whole given in volume XXVII, p.131, places the Ephod of Gideon and the Ephod of Micah in correspondence.

We must return, however, to Jotham and his parable. The actual word “parable” is not used in Judges ix., but this is evidently what is intended. In Matthew xiii. “the parable of the sower” is not *called* a parable specifically, but it is a parable nevertheless. Just as the Lord spoke to the people in parables, because He had been rejected by them (see Matt. xi. 20-24; xii. 6, 41, 42 and the articles on the parables in volumes II, III, IV, V & VI), so Jotham uses the same method after Israel’s rejection of the Lord as King.

“Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth on a time to anoint a King over them: and they said unto the OLIVE TREE, Reign thou over us. But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said to the FIG TREE, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the VINE, Come thou and reign over us. But the vine said unto them, Should I forsake my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said all the trees unto the BRAMBLE, Come thou and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me King over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon” (Judges ix. 7-15).

It may be very true that in Scripture the Fig, the Olive, and the Vine foreshadow and typify three phases of Israel’s blessedness. It may be that the Fig represents Israel’s national privileges, the Olive their religious privileges, and the Vine their spiritual privileges. All this may be true, but it is not necessarily true in the parable of Jotham. In this parable, the three trees are separate entities, and they each refuse in turn to leave the work to them by God. It is impossible to apply the answers of these three trees to any period of Israel’s failure or acceptance. The point of the parable is in the self-assertion of the Bramble. The other trees speak humbly of their “fatness”, their “sweetness”, their “wine”, and of the ministry of honour and cheer that each afforded in fulfilling his appointed service. The Bramble, however, has no such humble conception of his office. He does not speak of oil, or wine, or even of sweetness. He says nothing about honour to God or to man, but vaingloriously usurps the Divine prerogative and says: “Put your trust in MY SHADOW.”

In the prophetic utterance of Moses in Deuteronomy we read:

“He is the Rock, His work is perfect . . . . Where are their gods, their rock in whom they *trusted*?” (Deut. xxxii. 4, 37).

And in that beautiful record of faithfulness in a period characterized by utter lack of faith, we read in the Book of Ruth:

“The Lord God of Israel, under Whose wings thou art come to *trust*” (Ruth ii. 12).

As the Psalmist writes:

“Is it better to *trust* in the Lord than to put confidence in man” (Psa. cxviii. 8).

The opposite course is described in Isaiah xxx. in relation to Egypt:

“Woe to the rebellious children . . . . that take counsel, but not of Me . . . . to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to *trust in the shadow* of Egypt” (Isa. xxx. 1, 2).

The same words that are rightly used of the Lord, both “trust” and “shadow”, are boldly appropriated by Abimelech, the Bramble. It is the spirit of Antichrist manifesting itself in the nation of God’s choice, a prophetic foreshadowing of the awful days to come. The Bramble speaks of his shadow, but in fact he had none. He provides neither honour, sweetness, nor cheer, and serves only as fuel for the fire. The word for “bramble” is translated “thorn” in Psalm lviii. 9, where the passage refers to the boiling of a pot over a fire.

In the Gospels we read:

“Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” (Matt. vii. 16).

As the Lord spoke these words, the parable of Jotham would come to the minds of many of His hearers. When He spoke, also, of the seed being choked with thorns and so not bringing forth fruit unto *perfection* (Luke viii. 14), those of his hearers who knew the Hebrew meaning of Jotham, and of his use of the word “perfect”, would again think of the degeneracy of the days of the Judges and of the danger of their recurrence. When the apostle used the figure of the land bringing forth thorns and briers and being nigh unto cursing (Heb. vi. 8), his hearers would no doubt go back in mind to this same parable.

We will not pursue the sad story of Abimelech’s reign. He died an ignominious death, at the hand of a woman, although he saved his face by calling upon his armour-bearer to thrust him through, so that no man should say “A woman slew him” (Judges ix. 54). He was, moreover, slain by a millstone, another mark of degradation in those days (see Judges xvi. 21); and by the breaking of his skull. If we read the account of the death of Sisera we find a repetition of very similar circumstances. Is it fanciful, therefore, with these things in mind, to see both in Jael and in *the seed of* the Woman that shall bruise the serpent’s head? And to see in the tent-peg and in the millstone allusions to the final overthrow of Satanic dominion.

## #23. JUDGES iii. - v. The Six Deliverers of Israel. Othniel, Ehud and Barak.

While there were five complete servitudes of Israel — resulting in 93 years being eliminated from God's reckoning of the national calendar (see the article: *"Lo-ammi, or a Prophetic Principle Examined"* pp.207-211 of volume XXVII) — there was also a partial servitude which necessitated the call of Jephthah, and this must not be omitted. The fact that there were six servitudes and six deliverances prepares one for a record of failure, for six is the number of man. We shall expect that each deliverer will possess some good quality that will foreshadow the one true Deliverer of Israel, the Lord Himself, but that each will also show many evidences of human frailty and failure, so turning the heart of the believer away from all types and shadows, to trust freely and only in the great Deliverer Himself.

### The Six Deliverers of Israel.

- A | OTHNIEL.—The Lion of God (iii. 9).
- B | EHUD.—Union. The Fords. Gilgal. (iii. 15).
- C | BARAK.—Lightning. Deborah a prophetess. Under a palm tree (iv.-v.).  
*"I will surely go with thee"* (iv. 9).
- C | GIDEON.—The Hewer. A man a prophet. Under an oak tree (vi.-viii.).  
*"Surely I will be with thee"* (vi. 16).
- B | JEPHTHAH.—The Opener. The Fords. Mizpah. (xi. - xii. 7).
- A | SAMSON.—Like the Sun (xiii.-xvi.).

We do not propose to devote a separate article to each of these six deliverers, but rather to provide sufficient information for the reader to be able to explore their typical histories for himself.

We give below a list in structural form of the enemies of Israel from whom they were delivered by the judges. It will be seen that three of Israel's foes were related to them by blood, Moab and Ammon through Lot, and Midian through Keturah and Abraham (Gen. xix. 37, xxv. 2). The reader will not fail to note the important lesson here.

It will also be noticed that the Amalekites are associated with Midian; and together they represent the flesh, which, in its various manifestations, brings the redeemed of the Lord into bondage.

The King of Mesopotamia, and the Philistines, and the Canaanites were descendants of Ham — a people connected with Babylonian idolatry and high-handed rebellion. Altogether a formidable host.

### The Six Foes of Israel.

- A | CHUSHAN-RISHATHAIM.—The Cushite of Double Evil.
- B | EGLON.—A Bull Calf. A Fat Man.  
Moab related through Lot and associated with Amalek.
- C | JABIN.—Intelligence. Canaan the Cursed Seed.
- C | MIDIAN.—Contention.  
Associated with Amalekites, and with Israel through Keturah.
- B | AMMON.—Fellow-countryman. Related to Israel through Lot.
- A | PHILISTINES.—Related to Cushite (Gen. x. 14). Migrator.

The "double evil" of the first oppression seems to cover the last also, indicating that both the King of Mesopotamia and the Philistines represent the same evil thing, namely the world as opposed to God. Moab and Ammon clearly represent the flesh, for both are associated with Lot and his daughters. Midian also, as well as Israel, could claim descent from Abraham, but they were never "in Isaac" and so were not "counted for the seed". They, too, represent the claim of the flesh intruding into the realm of the spirit. Canaan are particularly the people of the curse, a people not to be evangelized or tolerated,

but to be exterminated. They stand for the Devil and all his works. Israel's six foes, therefore, represent most clearly the three elements of the redeemed — the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

The weapons used by the deliverers, although insignificant and weak in themselves, are of importance in their typical teaching.

In the case of Othniel and Jephthah no weapon or instrument is mentioned. All that the Scripture records is:

“The spirit of the Lord came upon him . . . . . and the Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia, into his hand” (Judges iii. 10).

“Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah . . . . . and the Lord delivered them into his hands” (Judges xi. 29-32).

Apart from the jaw-bone of the ass, Samson accomplished his deliverance of Israel by a power whose source was not evident to the outward eye. With regard to Ehud, we read that his weapon was a dagger with two edges, and that he was a left-handed Benjamite. The name “Benjamin” means “Son of my right hand”, yet in spite of this the Hebrew of Judges iii. 15 records that Ehud was “shut of his right hand”. Here we have a picture of grace and the power of the Spirit, in contrast to all the boasted powers of the flesh — looking forward, surely, to the “weakness of God” that was stronger than men, manifested at the Cross of Calvary.

Sisera was slain at the hand of the woman by means of a tent-peg. In the case of Gideon, trumpets, pitchers and lamps were all that were used by his depleted army of 300 men to rout the host of the Midianites.

Let us now, as briefly as is consistent with clarity, consider some of the chief points that are recorded in connection with these three Judges.

The record of Othniel's triumph is simple, and is to the Book of Judges what the triumph over Jericho is to the Book of Joshua. It was the ideal victory, though followed alas by faulty behaviour on Israel's part subsequently. Othniel, as the Lion of God, foreshadows the complete emancipation which will be accomplished under the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Coming, in the capacity of “the Lion of the Tribe of Judah”.

Ehud sets out to attack what represents the flesh in type. Eglon, the King of Moab, is described as “a very fat man” (Judges iii. 17). Such fatness is unhealthy; and symbolizes the flesh. The same word is used by Asaph of the ungodly, who prosper in this world, “whose strength is *firm* (margin *fat*)” (Psa. lxxiii. 4). It was this fat that sealed Eglon's doom, for we read that “the fat closed upon the blade” (Judges iii. 22) (compare Psa. xvii. 10: “They are enclosed in their own fat”, and Psa. lxxiii. 7: “Their eyes stand out with fatness”).

While we naturally expect a king to have some outward signs of his high rank, there seems to be some particular reason for the Spirit to record the fact that the summer parlour where Eglon was slain had been made “for himself alone” (Judges iii. 20). It seems to be an added witness to the selfish and fleshly character of this enemy of Israel.

What moved Ehud were the “graven images at Gilgal” (Judges iii. 19 margin). At Gilgal the “reproach of Egypt” had been rolled away by the rite of circumcision and “the flesh” had been repudiated (Phil. iii. 3, Col. ii. 11 R.V.). Yet at this same spot the “graven images” had been set up. Ehud's action sets forth the mortifying of the members, using the two-edged sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.

Passing on now to Barak, it seems strange at first sight to find, in the record of his call by Deborah, the interpolation of Judges iv. 11:

“Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, the father-in-law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim which is by Kedesh.”

We learn, however, from verse 17 that there was peace at that time between Jabin and the house of Heber the Kenite, so that when Sisera fled, he turned his steps in the direction of Heber’s tent.

Jael’s action is praised without reservation by Deborah.

“Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be. Blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen’s hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead” (Judges v. 24-27).

In the previous chapter, before Barak had started his campaign, we have Deborah’s prophecy:

“The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman” (Judges iv. 9).

It appears that when Sisera was first received by Jael it was in perfectly good faith, for her husband at that time was at peace with Jabin. After Sisera had entered, however, Jael seems to have been moved by God to destroy this enemy of Israel, and Deborah’s words suggest a miraculous power above and beyond the strength of Jael’s own arm. Ehud, too, it will be remembered, first gave Eglon a present, and then turned back after he had got as far as Gilgal. The league between Heber and Jabin was a wise move on the part of Israel’s foes, but no covenant made by man can thwart the purposes of the Most High. In the very tent of Heber, Sisera dies.

Jabin, meaning “Wisdom”, and Hazor, meaning “Power” represent the strength of our spiritual foes, while the “stake” in the hand of Jael stands for the Cross of Christ, in which true wisdom and power were manifested. Jael was but another type illustrating the basic prophecy of Gen. iii. 15.

Deborah’s song should be compared with the “Magnificat” of Mary in the Gospel of Luke:

“Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be” (Judges.v.24).

“Blessed art thou among women” (Luke i. 28, 42).

“All generations shall call me blessed” (Luke i. 48).

Is it not also significant, when we think of Jael and Mary, that Heber is not mentioned except as the husband of Jael? The tent is called “The tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite”.

It is not possible, in the space at our disposal, to complete our survey by dealing with the exploits of Gideon, Jephthah and Samson, and we must therefore leave these for another article. Meanwhile let us ponder these lessons that speak so eloquently of our spiritual foes, the world, the flesh and the Devil: and let us glory in the Cross of Christ, having no confidence in the flesh.

## **#24. JUDGES vi. - xvi. The Six Deliverers of Israel (*cont.*). Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.**

### **Gideon.**

The reader will remember that we were unable to complete our survey of the account of the six deliverers of Israel in the last article (pp.54-58 [see above](#)) of this series when we compared them with each other and gave some attention to the more outstanding details that are recorded of the first three. We now proceed to consider the outstanding typical features of the exploits of the remaining three, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson.

The oppression of Israel by the Midianites and the execution of Zeba and Zalmunna by Gideon are referred to by later writers of Israel, as being of prophetic interest.

“For Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in *the days of Midian*” (Isa. ix. 4).

“And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to *the slaughter of Midian* at the rock of Oreb” (Isa.x. 26).

“Do unto them as *unto the Midianites*; as to Sisera, as to Jabin, at the brook of Kison . . . . Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb, yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna” (Psa. lxxxiii. 9, 11).

These references indicate the necessity of a knowledge of the record of Judges if the prophecies given later in the Word are to be appreciated.

The oppression of the Midianites was very great. Israel were driven to dens and caves of the earth, while much that they had sown in the fields was consumed by their enemies. Before Gideon was raised up as a deliverer, a prophet was sent who reviewed the history of Israel's defection and their sad departure from the Lord, in spite of His deliverance of them from the oppression of Egypt. The appearance of the prophet seems to indicate the failure of the priest, and this is borne out by the history of the time. Following the prophet, came the angel of the Lord, and Gideon asked for signs in order that he might be assured that his commission was of the Lord. His first act of deliverance was the breaking down of the altar of Baal which his own father had set up (Judges vi. 25). This earned for Gideon the title Jerubbaal (Judges vii. 1), or “Let Baal plead”. The argument of Joash concerning Baal pleading for himself is like that of Elijah at Mount Carmel.

The host of the Midianites and the Amalekites is likened to locusts, or the sand of the sea, for multitude, whereas the total number of Gideon's men is said to be, in the A.V., 32,000. Had an army of even this size vanquished the Midianite host the victory would have been a signal one, but the Lord, Who knew the heart of men, said to Gideon.

“The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me” (Judges vii. 2).

Gideon was therefore instructed to issue a proclamation allowing all who were fearful to withdraw, and twenty-two thousand men took advantage of the release and withdrew. But there were still too many, and the remainder were subjected to a test which only 300 of the 10,000 passed.

“By the three hundred men that lapped will I saved you” (Judges vii. 7).

The principles underlying this selection seem to be that:

- (1) In all our dealings with the enemy, only the glory of God, and not the magnifying of self, or faith, or suffering, or anything, apart from the cross of Christ, can be permitted as a *goal* or accepted as a *means*.
- (2) Only those who “use this world as not using it to the full” (I Cor. vii. 31), can be trusted with victory. To all others victory would be worse than defeat.

In view of Judges vii. is it not folly to boast in numbers?

Before leaving verse 3, we draw attention to a most difficult yet important matter, namely the true principle of Hebrew numerical computation. The A.V. of Judges vii. 3 tells us that the number that returned of Gideon’s army was “twenty and two thousand”, and it has been assumed that this is just the same as “twenty-two thousand”. This however is by no means the case. Indeed it is necessary to undertake a fairly exhaustive analysis of the Hebrew Bible before even competence to express an opinion can be gained. This matter of numbers has often been made the starting point for hostile attack upon the Scripture, whereas the attack should have been directed against the attempt to compute ancient sums upon modern lines.

In English, “twenty and two thousand” does not usually mean “two thousand and twenty”, but it is only custom that has so decided, for twenty and two shillings is the same as two and twenty shillings. Not the actual wording in the Hebrew decides the matter but the custom of the times which therefore must be ascertained. Let us turn to another passage which provides a good example of the problem of Hebrew computation. In I Sam. vi. 19 we read that “fifty thousand and three score and ten men” were slain. Do we realize that this figure represents about twice the population of a town like Brentwood in Essex, or about the same as the town of Luton in Bedfordshire? and that this terrible destruction fell upon the men “who looked” into the ark of God? Is it also remembered that the ark stood in “the field” of Joshua the Beth-Shemeshite, and have we attempted to estimate how long it would take for this vast concourse to walk past the ark? In short, what a set of complicated problems have been set by those who have decided to add up Hebrew figures by modern methods!

The actual words and their order in the Hebrew, are “seventy men, fives and thousand men”. The word translated “fives”, if used in the singular, means simply “five” as in verse 4 of this chapter, but why the plural form should mean that five is multiplied by ten, no living man can now decide: all that can be done is to accept the fact and work accordingly. Dr. Robert Young, whose knowledge of Hebrew and of Oriental languages is such as to command universal respect, renders the passage thus: “He smiteth among the people seventy men — fifty chief men”. Twice the word “men” occurs and twice Dr. Young uses it. The word *eleph*, translated 1000, also means a family, a tribe, and the head of a tribe, examples of which can be found by anyone able to use a Concordance. If therefore 50,070 can be the alternative of 70, of which 50 were chief men, are we not right in saying that the whole subject needs serious investigation?

All we will do at the moment is to suggest that 2,020 and not 22,000 men returned from mount Gilead, and that the number that fell at the fords of Jordan (Judges xii. 6) was 2,040 and not 42,000, a number that exceeds the census of the whole tribe that is recorded in Numb. xxvi. 37, even if we take the figure of 32,500 as given in this version.

Emphasis upon the small and the despised is found in the record of the battle itself, first in the dream of barley loaf, and secondly, in the use of pitchers and lamps in place of weapons. The dream is as follows:--

“Lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, and the tent lay along”  
(Judges.vii.13).

The interpretation is:

“This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host” (Judges vii. 14).

Dr. Thomson, in “The Land and the Book” page 447, says:--

"Nothing is more common for the poor of Canaan at this day to complain that their oppressors have left them nothing but barley bread to eat; and if the Midianites, were accustomed to call Gideon and his band ‘eaters of barley bread’, as their successors, the haughty Bedouins, often do to ridicule their enemies, the application would be more natural."

Upon hearing the dream Gideon called upon his little band to arise and prepare for victory. He divided them into three companies and provided each man with a trumpet, a pitcher and a torch. The pitcher is a symbol of the human body in its frailty (Eccles. xii. 6). Eastern watchmen often carried a smouldering torch in an earthen vessel so that when a blaze was needed it could be withdrawn and waved in the air. These simple instruments find their parallel in the Apostle's words when he wrote:--

“For God who commanded the LIGHT to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in EARTHEN VESSELS, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of ourselves” (II Cor. iv. 6, 7).

And so in the case of Gideon, the Lord says:

“Lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me” (Judges vii. 2).

When victory over Midian was complete, the men of Israel said to Gideon: “Rule thou over us”, but he refused, saying, “The Lord shall rule over you”. He, however, made a request which resulted in the making of an Ephod, which became a snare to Israel. It is evident that the priests of Israel were lax in their high duties, and as Gideon had already been permitted to offer a sacrifice, so he ventured to make an Ephod, probably with the idea that by its means he would, in future, be able to consult the Lord as to His will.

A great temptation in days of failure is to make do with substitutes, but such makeshifts are not according to the will of the Lord. Nothing can take the place of the finished work of Christ, and it is better to walk in a solitary path, without the slightest external evidence of faith or hope, than attempt the smallest substitution, in matters of worship and service, for that which the Lord has commanded. Thus every “denomination” has been formed in the spirit here exhibited by Gideon. Those who instituted them meant well, yet they have but furthered the schism of the church and veiled the supreme glory of the risen Christ.

“Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (I Sam. xv. 22).

### **Jephthah.**

We have already considered the story of Abimelech, and seen how he made capital out of the degraded character of his birth. Jephthah, too, was the son of an harlot, but, instead of being allowed to remain to stir up strife, he was thrust out of home by his father's other sons who said: “Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman” (Judges xi. 2). He then appears to have become an outlaw, and his followers are described as “vain men”. Now the word “vain” means empty, and is employed to describe the “empty pitchers” of Gideon (Judges vii. 16), but where it is used of men it always means vain. Such was the type of men hired by Abimelech (Judges ix. 4), and gathered together by Jeroboam, and they are further described as children of Belial (II Chron. xiii. 7).

Jephthah, by reason of his birth, was classed with the Ammonite and Moabite (Deut. xxiii. 2, 3), so that his employment in Israel's deliverance and his acceptance by the men of Gilead indicate how far the priests and leaders of the people had failed in their office.

The cause of Ammon's antagonism to Israel was ostensibly the question of the land that had been taken by Israel at their entry into Canaan.

"Jephthah's argument is one that would be advanced now in a Court of Law. If the lands are yours, why have you not claimed possession during the 300 years they have been held by us? (Companion Bible, Appendix 50/iv.)."

We now turn to what has unnecessarily been made one of the most difficult features in the book of Judges, viz., the vow of Jephthah. Various suggestions have been put forward as solutions of the moral difficulties created by the vow. First there is the acceptance, as a fact, of the idea that Jephthah did actually offer up a human sacrifice — his own daughter. We are reminded of the wild state of the times, and of the prevailing ignorance of God's law and character. That Jephthah was an outlaw, and had been leading the life of a Rob Roy or Robin Hood, and that we must, therefore, not expect to find that he possessed too nice a sense of what is righteous or holy in the sight of God. The fact that the spirit of God came upon him for the work of delivering Israel, no more sanctified his every action, or rendered him infallible, than did the coming of the spirit upon Samson mean that all his actions were acceptable unto the Lord.

Against this acceptance of the record as it appears on the surface, is the objection that Jephthah is included in the examples of faith in Hebrews xi., a fact indicative of something more personal and sanctified than the equipment of a leader of an expedition.

Even if it be admitted that so rash a vow had been made, there is weighty objection to the idea that God would allow it to be carried out. Indeed Scripture, in such passages as Lev. xviii. 21 or xx. 2-5, forbids such an act.

Some commentators have supposed that the words of Judges xi. 31, "and I will offer it up for a burnt offering", might be rendered, "or I will offer", etc., thereby indicating that the vow was of an alternative character. *Either* he would *dedicate* the first person who came out of his home to meet him on his return, *or*, if he were met by an animal, he would *offer it up as a burnt offering*. But most Hebrew scholars are against the idea that *vav* (the word translated "and") can be translated "or" here, though it is sometimes found with the meaning "or" where there is no opposition, as for example.

"From the sheep *or* from the goats" (Exod. xii. 5).

"He that smiteth his father *or* his mother" (Exod. xxi. 15),

but the usage is not comparable.

Having considered these opinions let us come to the touchstone of Scripture and examine the original Hebrew of Judges xi. 31, "And I will offer it up for a burnt offering". The Hebrew equivalent of "for a burnt offering" is *l'olah*, *l* meaning "for" and *olah* "burnt offering". Any enquirer can see this usage for himself by looking at the original of such a passage as Lev. v. 7, "for a burnt offering". But to our amazement, we discover that in Judges xi. 30, there is no *l* before *olah*. "For a burnt offering" therefore is an error of translation. What Scripture says is: "And I will offer it up a burnt offering."

In Gen. xxii. 2 where we read "offer him up *for* a burnt offering" the Hebrew explicitly reads *l'olah*. There, the Lord, having accomplished His object of proving Abraham's faith, intervened to prevent the actual slaying of Isaac.

Thus encouraged we look again. The word translated "it" is *huah*, and while it can stand for the third person in either the masculine, feminine or neuter gender it is usually masculine in significance. The passage can therefore read: "And I will offer *Him* a burnt offering". We look once more. The A.V.

reads: “shall surely be the Lord’s”, and we find that the name Jehovah is prefixed with *lamed* (l’) and so reads “to the Lord”. The meaning is quite clear in a similar passage in I Sam. i. 11 where *l’Jehovah* is translated “unto the Lord”.

Putting together these findings we can now see that Jephthah’s vow may be translated as follows:--

“If Thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,  
Then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet  
me, when I shall return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be for  
the Lord, and I will offer Him a burnt offering” (Judges xi. 30, 31).

It is, we trust, now clear that the problem we have been considering existed only in the translation of the passage and not in the Scripture itself.

Jephthah’s distress on seeing his daughter and realizing his rashness is fully explained by the words: “beside her he had neither son nor daughter”. Yet in spite of his grief he recognized the sacredness of the vow and said: “I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back”. In this attitude his daughter nobly supported him, saying: “Do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth”. She then asked as a favour, permission to bewail her virginity for a period of two months, and at the end of the time returned to her father who did according to his vow, that is, he devoted her to the Lord, “and she knew no man” (Judges xi. 39).

Let us note the confirmatory character of this conclusion. What sense would there be in saying of a young maid who was offered up as a burnt sacrifice, “and she knew no man”? If on the other hand the devotion of Jephthah’s daughter to the Lord involved the renunciation of all hope of being a mother in Israel, the words are poignant with significance. Moreover, while at this time there may have been laxity in the observance of the law, the book of Ruth proves that there were some who knew it and sought to put it into force. In view of the publicity of Jephthah’s vow, even if he had rashly vowed to offer his own daughter as a burnt offering (which we have made plain is not our belief), can we believe that there was no priest or Levite, who, neither for love nor for lucre, would inform Jephthah, that for thirty shekels (Lev. xxvii. 1-4), he could redeem his daughter from the consequences of his impetuosity?

In Judges xi. 39 we read: “And it was a custom in Israel”: the margin says “or ordinance”. Actually the passage reads, “And it became a statute in Israel”. What became a statute? “That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year”. Here the word “lament” perpetuates the original error. In the Hebrew it is *tanah*, the meaning of which the margin gives as “to talk with” and refers to Judges v. 11, where the future tense is translated “shall they rehearse”. These yearly visits seem to have been the only relief allowed to the daughter of Jephthah in her separation unto the Lord, but it is conclusive proof that she lived out her life and had not been sacrificed.

Thus we see that there is no necessity to find extenuating circumstances for the barbarity of literal human sacrifice or strain the meaning of “and” by making it read “or”. In dealing with the matter we have but followed the obvious course of passing by demonstrably inaccurate translations and seeing for ourselves just exactly what is stated in the Scriptures. No great learning is called for in doing this: only the ability to recognize the presence or absence of the Hebrew letter *lamed*; yet how many pages have been written on the subject, based upon inaccurate versions of the passage!

Except for one point, the rest of the story of Jephthah’s life must be left to the reader to study. That exception is in connection with Judges xii. 6, “Say now Shibboleth”. The inability of the men of Ephraim to pronounce “Sh” in the word “Shibboleth” finds confirmation in the Tel-el-Armarna tablets. The entire district occupied by the men of Ephraim had been Amorite territory (Joshua x. 1-5). The Tel-el-Armarna tablets show that the substitution of “S” for “Sh” was a peculiarity of the Amorites. “Shiloh” for example appears as “Silu”. Conder says:--

"This has always presented the difficulty, that the "S" is not the proper representative of the Hebrew "Sh". Perhaps, as in the other cases, the peasant pronunciation represents the Amorite rather than the Hebrew sound."

The Ephraimites, by continual contact with the Amorites, had fallen into their manner of speech, and these ancient tablets have been preserved to bear their witness to the fact in our day.

### **Samson.**

We now come to the last of the Judges (Samson) whose acts of deliverance are recorded in this book. He foreshadows Christ, in that his birth was foretold by an angel: "Thou shalt conceive and bear a son" (Judges xiii. 3; Isa. vii. 14; Luke i. 31), and that he was a Nazarite, though it is hardly necessary to say that that state was fully exemplified only by Him Who was, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26).

Samson's exploits are twelve in number, and are the probable origin of the Greek story of the twelve labours of Hercules. These twelve exploits are associated with three women, and fall into three groups of four, as follows:--

#### **Samson's Twelve Exploits in Judges.**

- A | WIFE, A WOMAN OF TIMNATH.
  - a | The lion rent (xiv. 5).
  - b | Thirty men slain (xiv. 19).
  - a | Jackals and firebrands (xv. 4, 5).
  - b | Philistines smitten hip and thigh (xv. 7, 8).
- B | HARLOT OF GAZA.
  - a | Cords become like burnt flax (xv. 14).
  - b | A thousand slain with jaw bone (xv. 15).
  - b | He drank of water that came out (xv. 19).
  - a | Carried the gates of Gaza to hill top (xvi. 3).
- C | DELILAH, PROBABLY A JEWESS (see Josephus).
  - a | Seven green withs (xvi. 8).
  - b | New ropes (xvi. 11).
  - a | Seven locks of hair (xvi. 13).
  - b | Over 300 slain at his death (xvi. 27-30).

Samson's first act, the slaying of the lion, the production of sweetness from its carcase, and the evident humility that restrained him from telling his parents, are a clear foreshadowing of the work of Christ. The attitude of the men of Judah who said: "Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?" (Judges xv. 10, 11), and their attempt to deliver Samson over to the Philistines is parallel with the attitude of the Jews who said: "We have no King but Cæsar" (John xix. 15), and who delivered the Lord up to their Roman rulers.

Samson however develops vanity and self-praise, and although in his own person he is still used, he becomes less and less a type of the Lord.

Delilah is not spoken of as a Philistine. She betrayed Samson for eleven hundred pieces of silver (Judges xvi. 5), exactly the same sum as was used to make the Ephod, and which finally became a curse to Samson's own tribe (Judges xvii. 2). The name Delilah means effeminate, or enfeebling, qualities which are the opposite of the Nazarite character. Three times over did Delilah tempt Samson, and three times over did he rebut her with lies. What a contrast with Christ, Who met the threefold temptation in the wilderness, with a quotation from the Word of truth! Samson, having so far departed from the spirit of a Nazarite, was deprived of its outward symbol, his long hair, and was taken, blinded, and degraded.

On a set day the Philistines called for Samson to be brought out in order that they might make sport of him (Judges xvi. 25), just as the Lord was blindfolded, mocked and abused before His death.

Whilst Samson's last prayer is for vengeance,

“Strengthen me, i pray Thee, only this once, O God, that i may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” (Judges xvi. 28),

that of Christ was for the forgiveness of His murderers:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke xxiii. 34).

The analysis of Samson's acts is rendered difficult by the strong intermixture of the flesh with the leading of the Spirit.

Samson “began to deliver” (Judges xiii. 5), but it was left to another, Samuel, more completely to realize the true type of deliverer. He also was dedicated to the Lord before birth, but did not fall from his high calling by giving way to the lusts of the flesh as did Samson. The strongest man, and also the weakest man, of the book of Judges is Samson. What a lesson for ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in “God that quickeneth the dead!”

No treatment of Samson's life and deeds can be considered complete that does not deal with the meaning and purpose of the Nazarite vow. Insufficiency of space, prevents our giving the subject consideration here, but we refer the interested reader to the article on the subject in the series entitled “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” in volume XXII, p.123.

## **#25. RUTH. The book as a whole: and the loss of the inheritance (i. 1-22).**

The Book of Judges ends on a sad note:

“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges xxi. 25).

It would be difficult to exaggerate the deplorable condition of Israel during many of the years covered by the Book of Judges. On the other hand it would be a mistake to paint the whole picture in the same somber colours. In Judges x., for example, we have the names of the two men who judged Israel for a period of 45 years, and there is nothing recorded of that period except the fact that Jair had 30 sons, who rode 30 colts and possessed 30 cities, so that it would appear that during this period things were fairly normal. The Book of Ruth gives us a glimpse of one of these periods “when the judges judged” (Ruth i. 1).

The book of Ruth fulfils several purposes:

- (1) It reveals that even during the dark days of the Judges, there were some who lived their simple lives in the fear of the Lord.
- (2) The example of utter faithfulness presented by the story of Ruth the Moabitess, stands out in bold relief against the dark background of the times, and gives encouragement to us in our own day of darkness and apostacy.
- (3) The book supplies an important link in the genealogy of Christ as the Son of David.
- (4) The introduction into that genealogy of a Moabitess illuminates the character of the God of all grace, prefiguring the acceptance of the Gentile, and indicating something of the gracious work of the Saviour.
- (5) But perhaps more important than all is the light this book throws upon that most important typical figure, the Kinsman-Redeemer.

If we turn to Ephesians i., we find there a twofold presentation of redemption:

(1) REDEMPTION FROM BONDAGE.

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. i. 7).

(2) REDEMPTION OF A POSSESSION.

“Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. i. 14).

In the first passage the word *aphesis* (“forgiveness”) is used, meaning “setting free from bondage” (See Luke iv. 18). In the second passage, sin and bondage are not in view. The figure is an “earnest” *now* in view of a “possession” *then*; and as the possession has been forfeited, redemption is essential. It is this second aspect of redemption that finds so beautiful an illustration in the Book of Ruth, and makes its study so profitable.

The central and longest portions of the book (Ruth ii. 1 - iv. 13) revolve round the figure of Boaz as the Kinsman-Redeemer (*Gaal*). The word *gaal* and its derivatives, which are variously translated “redeem”, “right”, “right to redeem”, and “kinsman” occur no less than twenty times in these central chapters.

The simplest analysis of the book seems to be as follows. The first chapter simply puts us in possession of the circumstances that involved the forfeiture of the inheritance, while the closing verses of the fourth chapter reveal its redemption.

A		A		i. 1-18.	\	Sons dead.
					}	No more sons possible.
		B		i. 19-22.	/	Inheritance suspended.
B		C		ii. 1-23.		Kindness to living and dead.
		C		iii. 1 - iv. 13.		Name of dead not cut <i>off</i> .
					/	Kinsman-Redeemer.
A		B		iv. 14-18.	\	Better than seven sons.
					}	Genealogy to David.
		A		iv. 19-22.	/	Inheritance redeemed.

In this article we propose to clear the way by examining Ruth i., so that the central chapters (i.e. ii. 1 - iv. 13) may be considered together as a whole next time.

We are not told why Elimelech should have felt constrained to move from Bethlehem owing to famine, for there must have been many families similarly stricken. Perhaps the names of his children indicate that they were very delicate, for *Mahlon* means “Sickly” and *Chilion* “Pining”. There is more significance, however, in this than the merely physical. In direct contrast with the names meaning “sickly” and “pining” we have *Boaz*, “Strong”, who alone is able to redeem that which by weakness and death the two sons of Elimelech had lost. The reader will realize that in the Apostle’s reference to “the weak and beggarly elements”, in contrast with Christ the Redeemer, we have a continuance of the same lesson in New Testament terms.

The name Elimelech means “My God is King”, a splendid name during the dark days of the Book of Judges, when there was “no king in Israel”. It balances the close of the book, where, in the last verse, we read of David, the first king of God’s choice. There is also significance in the fact that *Bethlehem* means “The House of Bread” and *Ephratha* “Fruitful”, though neither of these titles were fulfilled in the case of Naomi, until the advent of the Kinsman-Redeemer. Again, Naomi’s name means “Sweetness”, and here the book itself assures us that it has a typical meaning. In Ruth i. 20 we read that Naomi changed her name to *Mara*, meaning “bitter”. This word is used of Israel in Exod. i. 14, and also of their initial experience as the redeemed of the Lord in Exod. xv. 23, where, at the waters of Marah, sweetness was produced by the application of a tree — an obvious type of redemption.

The Book of Ruth is read by the Jews in their synagogues at Pentecost, the period of harvesting, since much of the book is concerned with reaping and gleaning. Pentecost is the prophetic pledge of the final restoration of Israel, and the two houses, Judah and Israel, are typified by the two loaves baked with leaven (Lev. xxiii. 17). This twofold character of the restoration is set forth in Zech xi. 7 under the symbol of the two staves “Beauty” and “Bands”. In case the reader should wonder what this has to do with the Book of Ruth, it must be explained that Naomi, “Pleasant”, is the same word as “Beauty”, while “Bands”, meaning “Pledge”, is linked up with the idea of a “Surety”, as the parallelism of Prov. xx. 16 shows. All this may not be very obvious to the Gentiles reader, but the Hebrew mind would seize upon these associations and see in the restoration of Naomi at Pentecost by a Kinsman-Redeemer, a prophecy of the future restoration of all Israel.

The structure of the opening verses focuses our attention upon the *two sons*.

### **Ruth i. 1-3. From Bethlehem to Moab.**

<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>		i. 1-3.	
		a1		A certain man.	Unnamed at first.
		b1		Bethlehem-Judah.	
		c1		Sojourn.	Moab.
		a1		He and his wife.	
				d	TWO SONS.
		a2		Names given.	
		b2		Bethlehem-Judah.	
		c2		Continued.	Moab.
		a2		He died.	
				d	TWO SONS.

After the death of Elimelech, the two sons married two women of Moab, and lived together for ten years. In both cases the marriages were childless, and at the death of the two sons, the three widows were faced with a serious problem. Elimelech's inheritance which passed on to Mahlon and Chilion was temporarily suspended owing to the fact that no child had been born to either of the two sons. This gives point to the otherwise rather strange reference that Naomi makes to the idea of the two widows waiting until she, Naomi, might re-marry and have further sons — a far-fetched argument to our ears, but not so when read in the light of the law of Moses, to which we must make reference later. We do not propose to give here the full outline of this first chapter, but pass on to the fourth member which is as follows:

### **Ruth i. 8-18.**

<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>		i. 8-18.	
		d1		Ye dealt kindly with me.	
		e1		“Rest” in house of husband.	
		e1		“Tarry” for husband.	
		d1		The Lord against me.	
				f	Orpah. Kissed.
					Ruth. Clave.
		d2		She has gone back.	
		e2		Her people. Her gods.	
		d2		Intreat me not to leave.	
		e2		Thy people. Thy God.	

In those days the lot of an unmarried woman was such that marriage with almost anyone, however irksome, was preferable. Naomi speaks of Orpah and Ruth “finding rest” (*menuchah*) in the house of a husband. The same word is repeated in Ruth iii. 1: “Shall I not seek rest for thee?”. This figure, too, is

prophetic; for in Isaiah we find marriage terms employed to describe the glory of that future day when Israel shall be restored. In Isaiah lxii. we read that Israel shall be called *Hephzi-bah*, “My delight is in her”, and the land *Beulah*, “Married” (Isa. lxii. 4). Again, in Isa. xxxii.:

“And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings,  
and in quiet resting places (*menuchah*)” (Isa. xxxii. 18).

The contrast between Orpah and Ruth is most marked. Orpah “kissed” her mother-in-law; but Ruth “clave” to her. Orpah went back to “her people” and to “her gods”, but Ruth chooses Naomi’s “people” and Naomi’s “God”.

The beauty of the words of Ruth as recorded in Ruth i. 16 & 17 will move the heart so long as the world endures. They are comparable with the lowly act of love which the Saviour said should be remembered wheresoever the gospel was preached (Matt. xxvi. 13).

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me”  
(Ruth i. 16, 17).

And so these two took the long road back to Bethlehem, and arrived there at the beginning of the barley harvest. **There are no accidents in God’s providence.** His hand guided; His heart planned, and Boaz, all unwittingly, was awaiting his appointed time and work.

We are now ready to take up the great story of the Kinsman-Redeemer as it is unfolded in the central section of this beautiful little book. May the faithfulness of Ruth be an inspiration to each of us in these days when so many seem to do “that which is right in the sight of their own eyes”.

For the sake of those readers who appreciate structural outlines in detail, and wish to have them as complete as possible, we give below the structure of verses 19-22.

#### **Ruth i. 19-22.**

A		B		i. 19-22.	
		g		Came to Bethlehem.	
		h		Is this Naomi?	
		i		Call me not Naomi.	
		j		Call me Mara.	
				The Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.	
		k		I went out full.	
		k		Brought back empty.	
		i		Why call me Naomi?	
		j		The Lord testified against me.	
				The Almighty hath afflicted me.	
		g		Came to Bethlehem.	
		h		Beginning of barley harvest.	

## #26. RUTH ii. 1 - iv. 22. The Kinsman-Redeemer.

The central sections of the Book of Ruth are mainly concerned with the Kinsman-Redeemer. It is evident, therefore, that before we can rightly appreciate the narrative of Ruth ii.-iv., we must be well acquainted with the teaching of Scripture concerning this important office.

Ruth ii. opens with the statement: “And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband”, and this note is repeated with variations throughout the section. In verse 3 we read that Ruth’s “hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was *of the kindred of Elimelech*”.

In verse 20, when Ruth returns to her mother-in-law with her gleanings, we find that Naomi links up the thought of kindness to the dead, with that of nearness of kin:

“Blessed be he of the Lord, Who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen” (Ruth ii. 20).

There are four words used in connection with Boaz and his kinship with Naomi, which may be set out as follows:

- (1) He was a “kinsman” of Elimelech (Ruth ii. 1). Here the word translated “kinsman” is *moda*, derived from *yada*, “to know”. The word implies very intimate knowledge, as the usage of Gen. iv. 1 indicates, and is used in Isaiah liii.: “By His *knowledge* shall My righteous servant justify many” (liii. 11). When we realize the relationship between this word and the “Kinsman” and “Kinsman-Redeemer” we begin to see a fuller reason for its use in Isaiah liii., and a deeper meaning in many of the N.T. references to “knowledge”.
- (2) We also read that Boaz was of the “kindred” of Elimelech (Ruth ii. 3). Here the word translated “kindred” is *mishpachah*, from the root *shapach*, “to join” or “associate”. *Mishpachah* is translated “after their kinds” (Gen. viii. 19), “after their families” (Gen. x. 5); and is the word “family” in Ruth ii. 1. Ruth uses the word twice in ii. 13 in reference to herself as a “handmaid”. Once again profound doctrine is resident in these facts. To be redeemed one must be of the same “family” or “kind” as the redeemer. It was a necessity, therefore, that the Lord from heaven should become man and that the Word should be made flesh.
- (3) In Ruth ii. 20 Naomi says of Boaz: “The man is near of kin to us”. Here the word translated “near of kin” is *qarob*. Readers who depend upon Young’s Analytical Concordance should note that this reference is omitted both under “Near” and “Near of kin”. The verb *qarab*, “to come near”, is used in the same intimate sense as the verb “to know” (see Gen. xx. 4), and once again the instructed reader will appreciate the fuller meaning behind the N.T. references to drawing near, both on the part of the Saviour Himself, and of those whom He has redeemed.
- (4) This is perhaps the most important reference and is found in Ruth ii. 20: “The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen”. Here the margin informs us that the passage may be translated: “One that hath right to redeem”. The word here is *Goel*\* (\* - In the Concordance, *Goel* is found under *Gaal*, “to redeem”), or “Kinsman-Redeemer”.

The “Kinsman-Redeemer” played an important part in the Hebrew economy and is referred to in Leviticus xxv., where we find the first statement of the law concerning the redemption of land. Under the law of Moses it was not possible for a man to sell the land that formed part of his true possession “in perpetuity”. In every transaction with regard

to the sale of land, it was compulsory to “grant a redemption” (Lev. xxv. 23, 24). If a man had “sold away” any part of his possession, on account of poverty, his “next of kin” had the right to redeem it. A special provision was made for the safeguarding of the inheritance to the rightful family, which is set out at length in Deut. xxv. 5-10:

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife, then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband’s brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her: then shall his brother’s wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”

This law was certainly in the minds of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, and its recognition makes the reading of Ruth ii.-iv., vivid and plain. Before turning to Ruth, however, we must mention the other aspect of the Kinsman-Redeemer's work — that of the “avenger of blood”. The word *Goel* is translated “avenger” or “revenger” in 13 passages, and we are told in Numbers xxxv. that cities of refuge were provided so that a man could get a hearing and a trial in the event of having slain another without premeditation. This aspect of the Kinsman's duty does not, however, come into the story of Ruth.

With the information we have gathered, both as to the various words used for kinship and the law concerning the kinsman and his brother's widow, let us return now to Ruth and read the story again in the light of these facts. First of all let us see the structure of the passage.

**Ruth iii. 1 - iv. 13.**

A | iii. 1-9. | a | c | Shall I not find rest for thee?  
d | Is not Boaz of our kindred?  
b | e | When Boaz finishes eating and drinking.  
f | Mark the place where he shall lie.  
g | Uncover his feet.  
h | Lay thee down.  
i | He will tell thee what to do.  
i | All that thou sayest I will do.  
e | When Boaz had eaten and drunk.  
f | He went to lie down.  
g | Uncovered his feet.  
h | Laid down.  
a | c | Who art thou?  
b | j | I am Ruth, thine handmaid.  
k | Spread thy skirt over.  
j | Thou art a near kinsman.

B | iii. 10-13. Boaz explains about the nearer kinsman. Promises to redeem.  
C | iii. 14-18. Ruth assured.

B | iv. 1-6. Boaz advertises the other kinsman. Fulfil his promise to redeem.

A | iv. 7-13. The inheritance secured. Ruth becomes wife to Boaz.

We have not felt justified in setting out the whole of the passage in detail. We have given the sections, and set out the first one as an example, so that the reader should find little difficulty in completing the structure if it be deemed necessary.

Naomi's words in chapter iii. find a parallel in Ruth i. 9:

"The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband" (Ruth i. 9).

"My daughter, shall i not seek rest for thee, that it may be will with thee?" (Ruth iii. 1).

No longer has Naomi to speak of a possible husband and future sons (Ruth i. 12, 13) for now she can say: "Is not Boaz of our kindred?" (Ruth iii. 2).

It was the custom at threshing time for the owner to remain all night on the threshing-floor, until the harvest was safely gathered. Naomi knew this and instructed Ruth how to act. Judged by modern standard of morality Ruth would probably be condemned, but Boaz bears testimony that "all the city of my people dost know that thou art a virtuous woman" (Ruth iii. 11).

When Ruth said: "Spread thy skirt over thine handmaid for thou art a near kinsman" (or, one who has the right to redeem) (Ruth iii. 9). Boaz knew that she was asking him not only to redeem the land that had been lost, but also to marry her and so save the name of the dead husband from being blotted out. Boaz is touched by the fact that Ruth had not followed after young men, but had let her choice fall upon one who was apparently many years her senior.

Boaz was not Ruth's brother-in-law and was, therefore, under no compulsion in the matter, for the law of Deuteronomy xxv. is concerned with the "husband's brother", and the case of "brethren dwelling together" (Deut. xxv. 5, 6). By removing to Moab Elimelech had made impossible the second of these conditions, and Boaz, though of the kindred of Elimelech, was not the deceased husband's brother.

We find this practice of the marrying of the brother's widow in operation before the giving of the law (*see* Gen. xxxviii. 8), and we have records of its existence in Athens, in Persia, in Tartary and Circassia, and among the Druzes. Niebuhr writes:

"It does indeed happen among the Mohametans that a man marries his brother's widow, but she has no right to compel him so to do."

We shall discover in the Book of Ruth a blending of the law of Moses and also the more ancient custom referred to above.

Boaz was obliged, in fairness, to defer complying with Ruth's request, for, said he: "It is true that i am thy near kinsman, howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than i" (Ruth iii. 12). However, Boaz probably guessed that the marrying of the Moabitess would be a stumbling-block in the other kinsman's way, and promises to perform the office of the kinsman himself, should the nearer kinsman fail.

It is interesting to note that, while Ruth's virtue could not apparently be called in question, and neither she nor Boaz had any cause for shame, they did not in anyway flaunt their innocence, but sought rather to preserve their good name from the smallest suspicion of evil:

"Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor" (Ruth iii. 14).

Naomi's immediate question: "Who art thou, my daughter?" (Ruth iii. 16) does not mean that she was unable to distinguish Ruth owing to the early hour of the day, but rather expresses her intense desire to know what had transpired (compare Judges xviii. 8). In Ruth ii. 19 Naomi had enquired where Ruth had gleaned, and when she was shown the ephah of barley she immediately perceived that the Lord's

hand was in it. So here, when she sees the six measures of barley, she expresses her confidence that Boaz will not rest until the matter is settled.

In Ruth iii. 15 the A.V. reads: "And she went unto the city". This, however, is incorrect, the true rendering being: "And *he* went into the city". Boaz meant to lose no time in bringing the matter to a head. Sitting down in the gate where all public transactions were carried out, he hails the other kinsman and, in the presence of the ten men that had been secured to make the transaction legal, he says to him:

"Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's. And i thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that i may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee: and i am after thee. And he said, i will redeem it. Then said Boaz, what day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."

While the nearer kinsman was quite willing to redeem the parcel of land, he was not willing to marry the Moabitess and he therefore relinquishes his right. Boaz and the other kinsman then follow a custom that was even then ancient in Israel, whenever redeeming and changing were to be confirmed:

"A man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel" (Ruth iv. 7).

To place one's shoe upon anything was a symbol of possession. To take off one's shoe and pass it to another was a symbol of transference. The spreading of the skirt already alluded to was another symbol of transferred authority. Even to this day it is the custom to associate old boots with weddings, and although this is now simply a piece of harmless fun, the custom has its origin in these distant times.

It would seem that the nearer kinsman who failed probably sets forth the failure of man to redeem either himself or his brother, and that the transference to Boaz is an indication that Christ's alone is strong enough to undertake the task.

We next read that Boaz calls upon the elders and the people to witness that he has bought all that was Elimelech's, Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi, and further, that he has purchased Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, to be his wife, and that he intends to play the kinsman-redeemer's part and to "raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off". In reply, the people not only declare themselves witnesses, but also express their pleasure by adding words of blessing. There is pointed meaning in the reference they make to "Pharez whom Tamar bare unto Judah", for in Genesis xxxviii. we have the story of one who, by refusing to do the kinsman's part, not only involved himself in death, but his brother's widow in immorality. Boaz, it is implied, represents the reverse of all this.

We now reach the conclusion of the book:

A		B		iv. 14-17.	
		a		The Woman.	
		b		Blessed be the Lord . . . . a kinsman to thee.	
		c		Name famous in Israel.	
		d		Nourisher.	
		d		Nurse.	
		a		The Women.	
		b		A son born to Naomi.	
		c		Name Obed (Jesse, David).	
A		iv. 18-22.		e	
				The generations of Pharez.	
				Pharez begat . . . . David.	

Not only is Ruth, the Moabitess, graciously brought under the wing of the God of Israel, and her temporal needs satisfied by the love and wealth of Boaz the Strong, but a link is also made in the chain that binds Adam to Christ, and Ruth finds an honourable place not only in the line of David, but in the genealogy of David's greater Son (Matt. i. 5).

When we remember that the Scriptural redeemer must be a kinsman and an Israelite, and also that the Redeemer of Israel is set forth as Israel's Lord and God (*cf.* Isa. xli. 14; xliii. 14; xliv. 6, 24, etc.), we are confronted with a problem which can only be solved in the light of the person of Christ as "God manifest in the flesh".

With this delightful story the O.T. narrative passes on from the days of the Judges to the times of Samuel. We can but be thankful for the presence of this interlude of simple faith and love in the midst of much that is a record of failure and departure. It would almost seem that the God of Israel points to the faith of the Moabitess here in much the same way as, when in the flesh, He drew attention to the faith of the centurion (Matt. viii. 10, 11).

Blessed be God for every one that can say with Job: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth*".

## **#27. The Book of SAMUEL. The Closing Days of the Judges. (I Samuel i. 1 - viii. 3).**

Rather in the same way as the Book of Ruth establishes a link between the days of the Judges and the days of David, so the opening book of Samuel begins with the days of the Judges and ends with the death of Saul. The books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles form a complete whole, and were apparently written by the three prophets, Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

"Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, with all this reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the countries" (I Chron. xxix. 29, 30).

It is evident that the prophets often wrote the history of their own times, for we read:

"Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and write it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (I Sam. x. 25).

The prophet Gad comes into touch with David just after his escape from the cave of Adullam (I Sam. xxii. 5), and is called "David's seer" in I Chron. xxi. 9. Nathan also was closely associated with David, and continued on into the days of Solomon.

"Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the books of Nathan the prophet?" (II Chron. ix. 29).

The records contained in the first four books of Kings are, therefore, the work of these three prophets, Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

The reader may, perhaps, be surprised at the phrase we have just used: "The first four books of Kings". The name of the book we are now studying is given in the A.V. as "The First Book of Samuel, otherwise the First Book of Kings". The books that are now called I & II Samuel were always reckoned by the Hebrews as one book, the present sub-division being derived from the Septuagint. That there was no break between the two books is evident from the *Sedarim*, or cycles for public reading. The twentieth *Sedarim* begins with I Sam. xxx. 25 and ends with II Sam. ii. 6, without showing the slightest break.

As to the purpose of these records, we are assured that beyond the mere preservation of the historical facts there was a more important purpose served. Speaking of the rejection of Christ and His Second Coming, Peter refers to the testimony of the prophets as follows:

“Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days” (Acts iii. 24).

In several ways Samuel stands to David as John the Baptist stands to the Lord. Both were born to mothers who were naturally barren. Samuel was dedicated as a Nazarite all his days, while of John it was said: “He shall neither drink wine nor strong drink”. Samuel anointed David as King, while it was the special office of John the Baptist to testify at the baptism of Jordan that the Messiah had come. Samuel was rejected by the people, while John “decreased” until at last he suffered death in prison.

Hannah’s song at the birth of Samuel has often been compared with Mary’s song in Luke i. 46-55, but few seem to have noticed the close parallel between Hannah’s song and that of Zacharias. Of Samuel, also, it is written: “And the child Samuel grew before the Lord” (I Sam. ii. 21), while of John we read: “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit” (Luke i. 80). As Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets, so John was the last of the prophets and the first of the disciples.

The first seven chapters of I Samuel take us back to the days of the judges and show us the sad state of the times, the failure of the priests, and the great need for a wise and firm ruler. With the opening of chapter viii., we find Samuel aged and his sons made judges; but alas, they follow in the footsteps of Eli’s sons rather than in those of Samuel their father. The result of this is that Israel demand a king. They were certainly wrong to do so, but it was the misrule of Samuel’s sons that was the main cause.

It is evident, as one reads I Sam. viii. 1-3, that there is an intended parallel here with the record of Eli and his sons.

“And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (I.Sam.viii.1-3).

“Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel . . . . I hear of your evil dealings by all this people” (I Sam. ii. 22, 23).

The nature of our exposition, the amount of the material before us, and the necessity to make some selection, make it impossible for us to deal with the lovely story of Hannah’s faith, and young Samuel’s innocence. Neither can we give detailed structures; if we were to do this, it would be fairly safe to say that we should be dealing with these Books of Kings for the remainder of our days. In this series we are simply endeavouring to point out the more important features in the onward movement of the purpose of the ages, and to give enough material to guide the earnest seeker into a fuller understanding of the passages under examination. We cannot, therefore, attempt a detailed analysis. The reader will find much to his hand in the margin of *The Companion Bible*.

Leaving the structure set out in *The Companion Bible*, we give instead the following analysis, which, as the reader will see, has the merit of focusing the attention upon the essential features, but, of course, omits much more than it can include.

### I Samuel i. 1 - viii. 3.

- A | i. 1 - ii. 21. Hannah. Her son.  
The song.  
Exalt the horn of His anointed.
- B | ii. 22-26. Eli. Very old. His sons' evil dealings.
- A | ii. 27 - vii. 17. A man of God. Eli's son.  
The prophesy. "Faithful Priest."  
"Before Mine Anointed."
- B | viii. 1-3. Samuel. Old. His sons turned aside.

Hannah's song, in the first section of the structure, demands our attention. While its origin is the birth of Samuel, its burden is prophetic. It speaks of the enemies of the Lord being silenced and, as the song nears its conclusion, its Messianic character becomes more and more apparent.

"The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces. Out of heaven shall He thunder upon them; The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His Anointed" (I Sam. ii. 10).

With this song should be compared Mary's song and the prophecy of Zacharias in Luke i. — particularly the words of verse 69: "And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David".

There is no need to enlarge upon the abominable actions of the sons of Eli, but we might notice in passing the way in which the sad story is punctuated, as it were, by the record of Samuel's growth:

"And the child Samuel *grew* before the Lord" (I Sam. ii. 21).

"And the child Samuel *grew on*, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men" (I Sam. ii. 26).

"And Samuel *grew*, and the Lord was with him" (I Sam. iii. 19).

It has been objected that Samuel was but a Levite, and not a Priest, and that therefore his offering of the sacrifices was illegal. There are two good answers to this objection:

- (1) When the Ark was in its place, and the worship of the Lord centralized, the specific duties of the priests could be enforced; but at this time the Ark was taken by the Philistines and Israel were without it for a period of twenty years (I Sam. vii. 2).
- (2) In the days of apostacy the Lord has the right to suspend his laws to replace them by others. This does not, of course, give man the right to change the ordinances of the Lord on his own initiative.

The people had become so degraded that the ceremonial service, that should have enabled them to see the truth of atonement and sanctification, had degenerated into an unclean superstition, and Samuel was raised up, much like the prophets that succeeded him, to tell the people that incense so offered was an abomination.

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifices and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam. xv. 22).

Two very suggestive names occur in this section of Samuel, namely Ichabod and Ebenezer. When the punishment fell upon Hophni, Phinehas and Eli, and the Ark of the Lord was taken by the Philistines, the news brought to the wife of Phinehas at a critical time, for "she was with child, and near to be delivered" (I Sam. iv. 19). When she heard what had happened she bowed herself and gave birth to a son.

“And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel; because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband” (I Sam. iv. 20, 21).

The second name, “Ebenezer” means a “Stone of Help”. The stone was erected to commemorate deliverance and was so named when the Philistines were obliged to return the Ark whose capture had been associated with the name Ichabod. In these two symbolic words we have a summing-up of the whole of Israel’s history. No glory while the Presence of the Lord is removed from them, but when at last that glory returns, as we find in the closing chapters of Ezekiel, the sadness of the cry Ichabod will be turned to rejoicing and the people will say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.

The reader will already be acquainted with the incidents of Samuel’s early boyhood, and with the things that happened to the Philistines while they retained the Ark of the Lord, so that he will be able to supplement these notes as the occasion demands. We have but cleared a path through these opening chapters, leading up to the section which deals with the choice of Saul and the history of his reign. This section we must consider in our next study.

## **#28. I SAMUEL viii. 4 - xv. 35. The King Demanded, Tested and Rejected.**

We surveyed in our last article the opening section of the First Book of Samuel, covering the last days of the Judges, and were saddened to observe that even Samuel seems to have failed at the end of his life, in relation to his sons. The parallel between I Sam. viii. 1-3 and I Sam. ii. 22-25 is too plain to be ignored. Yet such is the testimony of Scripture: no man is perfect. We find this fact stressed throughout the Scriptures, from Adam onwards. Noah, for example, a sort of second Adam, the eighth person, is brought through the day of wrath, and re-occupies the earth, but he is found drunk and one of his sons is the father of Canaan, Cush and Nimrod. Abraham is the father of the faithful, the friend of God, the one through whom all families of the earth are to be blessed, yet we know that he wavered, that he was untruthful, and he begat Ishmael. Moses, the great prophet and type of Christ, with whom God spoke face to face as a man speaks to his friend, forfeited entrance into the land because he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. And so the story grows. Neither Joshua, nor David, nor any other prophet, priest or king was perfect. Together with their outstanding typical qualities, there was always evidence of frailty, failure and sin.

We come now to the next section of the book of Samuel, in which we discover another principle that is characteristic of the ways of God. Contrary to all human expectation, God is *second*, not *first*. Saul is king before David. Moses is accepted the second time. Joseph is acknowledged the second time. Cain lives and Abel dies. Esau comes before Jacob, Ishmael before Isaac, Antichrist before Christ, the kingdoms of this world before the kingdom of the Lord. The reason is simple. God is dealing with responsible moral creatures, and he teaches them through the exercise of their own choice and the experience of their own efforts. Had Adam never been allowed to exercise his choice, the human race would probably have been convinced that man could stand unassisted against all temptation. Had Israel not failed so signally, man would doubtless have believed that it was within his power to accomplish a righteousness by works. Had government never been entrusted to man, the nations of the earth would never have been convinced that the only true king is the King appointed by heaven.

And so here, in the Book of Samuel, we are to see one more example of the working out of this principle, and we shall, therefore, have to consider Saul, the people’s choice, before studying David, the “man after God’s own heart”.

Let us make one observation at the outset. No one was coerced into demanding Saul. No predestination compelled men, against their better judgment, to this decision. The failure of Samuel's sons, and the natural tendency of man to trust in himself, were sufficient.

Saul's history occupies I Sam. viii. 4 to II Sam. i. 27 and falls into three sections:

- (1) I Sam. viii. 4 - xv. 35. The demand for a king, his testing and rejection.
- (2) I Sam. xvi. 1 - xxvi. 25. The anointing of David, and his persecution by Saul.
- (3) I Sam. xxvii. 1 - II Sam. i. 27. Saul's sin and death.

We shall find that the consideration of the essential features in the first of these sections will occupy all the space we have available in this article, and once again, as with the first eight chapters, we must refrain from presenting anything like a complete structure.

The following is an analysis of the outstanding points:

### **I Samuel viii. 4 - xv. 35.**

#### **The demand for, and the rejection of, Saul.**

- A1 | viii. 4-9. | a | A king demanded by the people.
  - b | The Lord rejected.
  - c | Reference to history since Egypt.
- B1 | viii. 10-22. The manner of the king.
  - C1 | x. 8. The Test. | Tarry seven days.
    - I will offer sacrifice.
- A2 | x. 18, 19. | c | Reference to history since Egypt.
  - b | God rejected.
  - a | A king demanded.
- B2 | x. 25. The manner of the kingdom.
  - C2 | xi. 3-13. The Test. | Give us seven days.
    - Saul hewed yoke of oxen.
- A3 | xi. 15 - xii. 12. | a | Saul made king.
  - c | Reference to history since Egypt.
  - b | Lord God rejected.
- B3 | xiii. 1. The reign of Saul. One year.
  - C3 | xiii. 8 - xv. 19. The Test. | He tarried seven days.
    - Saul's disobedience. The offerings.
    - Saul's oath. The spoil.
    - Saul's disobedience. The offerings and the spoil.
- A4 | xv. 26. | b | The word of the Lord rejected.
  - a | Saul rejected from being king.

Taking this outline as our guide, let us consider the teaching corresponding to the letter "A" in the structure. This aspect of the subject occurs four times, and in three of the passages the people are reminded of the attitude of their fathers since the exodus from Egypt. In the personal dealing with Saul himself, however, in chapter xv. this item is not repeated. Saul was there being dealt with because of his own iniquity.

It is evident from the Scriptures, that whoever at any time chooses any king other than the Lord Himself is making a wrong choice. On the other hand, as in case of divorce, some things were permitted because of the hardness of man's heart. The reader may perhaps remind us that there was a definite law made by Moses to regulate the choice of a king and his subsequent conduct. This is perfectly true, but is not the whole truth. The passage referred to is Deut. xvii. 14-20, and the law is prefaced by the words:

“When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me . . . .”.

This passage makes it clear that the desire for a king did not spring from a true conception of their calling, for the reason — “like as all the nations” — was entirely contrary to the revealed will of the Lord. If, however, Israel did desire a king, the Lord would not permit them to transgress all His will. He would not permit a stranger to be king, and by prohibiting polygamy and wealth, and by commanding that the king should write a copy of the law, He would keep the people in check.

The ominous phrase “like all the nations” is found in Israel’s demand in I Sam. viii. 5, and constituted the rejection of the Lord:

“They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (I Sam. viii. 7).

Then comes the reference to Egypt:

“According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day” (I Sam. viii. 8).

These three features are repeated in x. 18 & 19, but come in the reverse order from the opening passage (see structure “A2”):

“Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you, and ye have this day rejected your God, Who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations: and ye have said, Nay, but set a king over us” (I Sam. x. 18, 19).

This threefold reference occurs once again in xi. 15 - xii. 12 (see structure “A3”):

“And there they made Saul king . . . . Behold I have hearkened unto your voice in all ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.”

“Now, therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord which He did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob was come out of Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the Lord, the Lord sent Moses and Aaron . . . . and the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel” (The Revised Syriac reads “Samson”).

Instead of crying to the Lord, when Nahash the king of the Ammonites came against them, Israel turned away from the Lord to a king of their own choice:

“Ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king” (I Sam. xii. 7-12).

In these three passages we have the root of Israel’s failure.

One can also see in the words of the Lord, His sense of Israel’s ingratitude. This thought frequently recurs, and several Psalms (e.g., Ps. cvi. 13) refer to it. Jeremiah, also, refers to the breaking of the covenant by Israel when the Lord led them out of Egypt. The same spirit, alas, persists into the N.T., when we read the awful words: “We have no king but Cæsar” (John xix. 15).

The opening chapter of Isaiah also speaks of Israel’s ingratitude, and in Hosea xi. 1-5 we read of Israel’s apostacy and the dominion of the king of Assyria.

Ever since they refused their Messiah, the children of Israel have been robbed and persecuted by the kings of the earth, and they will find no rest, until they say: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. xxiii. 39).

Returning to our structure (see above), we have now to consider sections “B1” and “B2” — “The manner of the king” and “The manner of the kingdom”. The word “manner” is *mishpat*. The primary meaning is “judgment, law or right”, but it can also mean “usage, manner or custom”. So in I Samuel we find the following: “the priest’s *custom*” (I Sam. ii. 13); “perverted *judgment*” (I Sam. viii. 3); “the *manner* of the king” (I Sam. viii. 9 and 11); “the *manner* of the kingdom” (I Sam. x. 25); and “*manner*” and “*ordinance*” in xxvii. 11 and xxx. 25.

*The manner of the king* (I Sam. viii. 10-18). — Samuel told the people plainly what they must expect if a king were placed over them. Their sons would be taken “for his chariots, and his horsemen”, and he would commandeer their labour in the field and at the forge. After a long list of other exactions, Samuel warns them:

“And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king which ye shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day” (I Sam. viii. 18).

*The manner of the kingdom* (I Sam. x. 25):

“Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.”

The “manner of the kingdom” expresses what is *de jure*; the “manner of the king”, what is *de facto*.

Instead of the word “manner” being repeated a third time, we have in its place a reference to the first year of Saul’s reign, when all seemed to be going well — until the opening of the second year, when he began to manifest those traits that darkened his whole reign.

One further point is emphasized in the structure, and that is the thrice-repeated test of “seven days”.

*The first test* (I Sam. x. 8):

“And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, i will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till i come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do.”

Saul was warned that he could not start his reign with any hope of success, unless he were wholly devoted to the Lord (the burnt offering) and fully reconciled to Him (the peace offering) — and further, that this devotion and reconciliation were beyond his own power to effect, and that he must humbly wait for the Lord Who, through Samuel, would bring it to pass.

*The second test* (I Sam. xi. 3-13).

The second test of seven days, occurs in chapter xi. The reader may remember that in Judges xi. the people of Gilead were involved in a controversy with the Ammonites, on account of a grievance felt by the Ammonites at the possession by Israel of the land beyond Jordan. When Nahash the Ammonite heard of the possible appointment of a king over Israel, he came and besieged Jabesh Gilead. When the men asked that they might enter into a covenant with him as servants, Nahash consented upon the condition that they should suffer the loss of their right eyes. They then asked for a seven days’ respite, and Saul responded to their call for help:

“And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them . . . . by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen” (I Sam. xi. 7).

As a result, Nahash was beaten, and the people said,

“Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death” (I Sam. xi. 12).

*The third test* (I Sam. xiii. 8 - xv. 19):

“As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering.”

Saul was sorely tried. We dare not condone his sin, but how many of us would not have acted in the same way? The Philistines were gathered together to fight, and the people, seeing they were in a strait, began to hide or fly. Those who followed Saul, did so trembling. He waited with much anxiety until the seventh day, and then broke down. Had he endured to the end the Lord would have established his kingdom (I Sam. xiii. 13), but as it was, he lost the kingdom, and another man, after the Lord’s own heart, was sought. It was under this awful shadow that Saul lived until his tragic end, and it was because of this promise concerning another, that he persecuted David.

We find that, while Saul did not render full obedience to the Lord, either in the matter of Gilgal, or in the commission to destroy the Amalekites (I Samuel xv.), he was very determined to keep his own oath, even though it were foolish to do so (I Samuel xiv.). Saul’s dreadful end was perceived by Samuel to be incipient in his early disobedience, for he said: “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft” (I Sam. xv. 23); and it was for resorting to witchcraft that Saul died (I Chron. x. 13). He Who knows the hearts of all men, saw what was hidden from the human eye. At the beginning Saul was meek, forbearing, generous, just as his antitype, the Antichrist at the time of the end, shall come in peaceably with flatteries. The reader will remember that, at the anointing of David, Samuel was told not to look upon the outward appearance.

However the matter may appear on the surface, and not forgetting the mercy extended by Saul (I.Sam.xi.13), it still remained true, as Samuel said in the succeeding chapter, that by making Saul king, they had rejected the Lord.

“And when ye saw that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king” (I Sam. xii. 12).

Such is the gist of this first section of the life of Saul. Where Saul failed, the Lord Jesus overcame. Tempted to seek the kingdom and the glory by a short cut He repudiated the offer, and was content, though rejected by the cities that had seen his mighty works, to wait God’s time, saying, “Even, so, Father”.

We commend the study of this section to the reader, believing that the outline supplied will enable him to consider the intervening detail without losing sight of the main argument. If we have contributed in any way towards making that argument clear, we are indeed thankful. The task before us in these books of the kingdom is formidable, and were it not for the consciousness that we have a work to do, we might well feel the burden to be too great. However, when He commands He also enables, and so we trust that we shall continue, ever being able to say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”.

## #29. I SAMUEL xvi. 1 - xxvi. 25. David, Anointed and Persecuted.

We have already seen that Saul's record is divided up into three sections, as follows:

- (1) I Sam. viii. 4 - xv. 35. The demand for a king, his testing and rejection.
- (2) I Sam. xvi. 1 - xxvi. 25. The anointing of David, and his persecution by Saul.
- (3) I Sam. xxvii. 1 - II Sam. i. 27. Saul's sin and death.

This is not only the actual order of events in Saul's career, but it also foreshadows the great history of Christ and the Antichrist. Christ, as the true Anointed, has already been chosen and is believed in by His people, but He and they are for the time being in such places as the Cave of Adullam, or, as Hebrews puts it, "outside the camp" ("without the camp", xiii. 11 & 13). At the close of this period of persecution, "Antichrist" comes to the fore, but his association with demoniacal powers is now evident and he dies "without hand" (cf. I Chron. x. 13, 14).

In the present article, we must concentrate our attention on the period of David's persecution, and once again we must ask our readers to remember that the amount of material concerned is too great to deal with in detail in an article of this type. All we can do is to point out the main features, leaving the reader to supplement as the Lord gives grace. This method must not, however, be misconstrued as implying either indifference or laziness. The amount of concentration necessary for arriving at an outline of this kind can only be appreciated by those who have attempted its discovery.

The following analysis provides a thread by which the main argument of this very full section may be followed without losing one's way among the many explanatory details.

### I Samuel xvi. 1 - xxvi. 25.

- A | xvi. 1-23. THE LORD'S ANOINTED.
- B | xvii. 1-54. GOLIATH. His sword (51).
- C | xvii. 55-58. Whose son is he? The son of JESSE.
- D | xviii. 1-4. JONATHAN. "Stripped himself."
- E | xviii. 5 - xix. 17. | SAUL seeks DAVID'S life.
  - TWO ATTACKS. The Javelin (11).
  - The Philistines (17-27).
- D | xix. 18-24. SAUL. "Stripped off his clothes."
- C | xx. 1-42. THE SON OF JESSE.
- B | xxi. 1-9. GOLIATH. His sword (9).
- E | xxi. 10 - xxvi. 25. | DAVID spares SAUL'S life.
  - TWO OCCASIONS. Skirt (xxiv. 4).
  - Spear (xxvi. 12).
- TWO CONFESSIONS. I know (xxiv. 20).
- Prevail (xxvi. 25).
- A | xxvi. 23. THE LORD'S ANOINTED.

Let us now become a little more acquainted with the various links in this chain. First and foremost comes the record of David's anointing (xvi. 1-23). There are seven occurrences of the verb "to anoint" in this first book of Samuel, four having reference to Saul (ix.16; x.1; xv.1 & 17), and three to David (xvi. 3, 12, 13). It is noticeable that whereas Saul is said to be anointed captain twice, and king twice, neither of these titles is used of David in connection with this initial anointing. The words are simply:

- "Anoint unto Me" (xvi. 3).
- "Anoint him for this is he" (xvi. 12).
- "Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren" (xvi. 13).

While it was the purpose of the Lord that David should be both king (xvi. 1) and captain (xiii. 14), that purpose was not made known at the beginning either to Jesse, or to his sons, or to David himself. David simply knew that, for some reason, Samuel had been sent, and that he had been selected. Not until the death of Saul do we find David actually anointed “King” (II Sam. ii. 4). In the series of articles entitled “Light for the Last Days”, volume XXVII, p.61, we have drawn attention to the principle found in Rev. xi. 15, that the Lord can only reign as King, when the usurping kingdoms are no more. We shall also see, when considering the section relating to Goliath, that David’s action portrayed the prophecy which was made later by Daniel as recorded in Daniel ii.

We must leave to the reader the pleasure and profit of a personal study of the narrative of David’s first anointing, and pass on to his first great act. Just as the Lord passed from the anointing at Jordan (Matthew iii.) to the conflict in the wilderness (Matthew iv.), so we find David passing from his anointing by Samuel to the conflict with Goliath. In passing, mention is made of the fact that, upon his anointing “the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward”, while “the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him”. There is every likelihood that the incident described in I Sam. xvi. 14-23 did not take place before the events of chapter xvii., but that it is inserted here as a concrete illustration of the change that came over Saul. (See *The Companion Bible* here and in the margin of xvii. 1).

In I Samuel xvii. 4 Goliath is called “The champion”. The Hebrew here is *Ish-habbenayim* or “The man between the two”. We may compare this with Psalm viii., which concludes with the word “Muth-labben”\* (\* - In the A.V. this appears in the super-scription of Psalm ix. For further explanation, see *The Companion Bible*, Appendixes 64 & 65), meaning “The death of the man between”. In this psalm, having overcome the enemy, David looks back to the dominion forfeited by Adam and forward to the Lord Himself, of Whom he was so wonderful a type.

In I Samuel xvii., the various pieces of Goliath’s armour are enumerated: helmet, coat, greaves, target, spear and shield — six pieces in all. His height is given as six cubits and a span, and his spearhead as weighing 600 shekels of iron. In a later record, where the brother of Goliath of Gath is mentioned, and another giant of the same place, he is said to have had on both hands and feet, six fingers and six toes. The connection between these numbers and the prophetic forecast of Rev. xiii. 18: “six hundred, threescore and six” seems irresistible.

David’s exclamation: “What have I now done?” (I Sam. xvii. 29) will need no explanation to any reader who has been one of a large family, particularly if he has been the youngest of a number of brothers.

There is a further point in connection with Jesse’s family that may perhaps present a difficulty. While I Sam. xvii. 12 states that Jesse had “eight sons” and xvi. 10 that “seven of his sons” passed before Samuel before David was called, yet I Chron. ii. 13-15 gives the names of Jesse’s sons, ending with “David, the seventh”. In I Samuel we have the historical record, whereas in I Chronicle ii. we have the genealogy, and for some reason unexplained, one of Jesse’s sons could not be reckoned in the genealogy, either because he was the son of a concubine, or because he had died young. It is, however, no accident that David should be both seventh and eighth. We have a corresponding problem in Rev. xvii. 10, 11, where we read that there are “seven kings”, and yet there is an “eighth”, who is of “the seven”. For an explanation of this problem the reader should refer to volume XIII, p.91.

The fact that Goliath had presented himself for forty days before David took up the challenge, is also suggestive. The number 40 is the symbol of test and probation. It was after the forty days’ fast that the Saviour, Who had just been anointed, met the temptation of the Devil (Matt. iv. 2).

Why does the record so particularly explain that the instrument of Goliath’s overthrow was one of the five “smooth stones out of the brook”? If we think for a moment of these stones, and of the fact that they were not fashioned by hand, we at once recall the passage in Daniel ii., where the colossus seen by

Nebuchadnezzar was destroyed by “a stone cut out without hands” (Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45). David was enacting on the battle-field in Ephraim (which, according to Aaron Pick, means “nothing but blood”) what Christ Himself will accomplish in reality by the blood of His cross.

It is pitiable to see Saul’s response to David’s simple faith. Saul was concerned with the fact that Goliath had been a man of war from his youth, but David was relying on the fact that the Lord, Who had delivered him from the paw of the lion and of the bear, could and would deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine. In reply to this challenge of faith, Saul says: “Go, and the Lord be with you” (I Sam. xvii. 37), but he immediately spoils it by dressing young David up in the armour of a man who stood head and shoulders above his fellows! How ridiculous any of us look when we stand up in second-hand armour — relying on second-hand faith, or preaching second-hand sermons. We are glad that David had the sense to say: “i cannot go with these; for i have not proved them” (xvii. 39).

When the champion of the Philistines was slain, Saul remembered that he had promised to give his daughter to the victor (I Sam. xvii. 25). He therefore enquires of Abner: “Whose son is the youth?” and Abner replies that he cannot tell. Saul then asks David: “Whose son art thou, young man?” — a question which makes us think of the similar question asked concerning Christ in the Gospels. The structure given on page [above](#) shows that this question is important.

One can never read the account given in the next section of the book without being moved, for it is one of the few instances recorded in Scripture of utter and selfless affection. Jonathan had every reason, speaking after the manner of men, to hate David, for it very soon became apparent that he was destined to occupy the throne. Yet it is written:

“The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (I Sam. xviii. 1).

As a result of this love, Jonathan and David made a covenant (I Sam. xviii. 3) — a covenant which is mentioned on four other occasions in this book, twice by name (xx. 8 & xxiii. 18) and twice by implication (xx. 16 & 42). Saul and Jonathan set forth in type the two classes among Israel, whose true character was manifested by their reaction to Christ. Saul represents the persecuting and unbelieving Jew, who went out in blindness and hardness of heart, and Jonathan the believing remnant who crowned the Saviour in their hearts, during the time of His rejection, in anticipation of the day of His glory. Saul’s javelin was directed not only at David, representing Christ, but at Jonathan also, the type of the believer (see the six occurrences: I Sam. xviii. 10, 11; xix. 9, 10, 18; and xx. 33).

We read that Jonathan “delighted much” in David (xix. 2), and that he “spake good” of him (xix. 4). On numerous occasions he interposed on David’s behalf, even at the risk of his own life. Almost the last of his recorded acts is found in I Samuel xxiii.:

“And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God” (I Sam. xxiii. 16).

And in the next verse we read:

“Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee” (I Sam. xxiii. 17), a passage which is parallel with the Lord’s promise to the faithful in Rev. iii. 21.

It is written in Scripture that “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians ii.). There are some who find in this passage an argument in favour of the final reconciliation of all, universally. To such we would commend the two sections indicated in the Structure as follows:

D | xviii. 1-4. JONATHAN. “Stripped himself.”

D | xix. 18-24. SAUL. “Stripped off his clothes.”

Jonathan stripped himself of his robe, and “gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (I Sam. xviii. 4). This, in symbolic language, is what Paul did when he counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. iii. 8, 9). When the soul is knit to the Lord, when we love Him as our own soul, then that love cannot be satisfied until it yields up its all. We read in the next chapter that Saul also “stripped” himself. He had heard of David’s escape from the trap which he had set, and now, when he learned that David was at Naioth in Ramah, he sent messengers to take him. These messengers, however, failed in their errand and joined the ranks of those who were prophesying. This happened three times over, so that eventually Saul himself went to apprehend him. But in verses 23 & 24 we read:

“The spirit of God was upon him also and he went on, and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night” (I Sam. xix. 23, 24).

Jonathan’s act was voluntary, Saul’s was involuntary. The A.V. reads: “He lay down naked”, but the margin tells us that the Hebrew is the word “fell”, and refers the reader to the case of Balaam in Numb. xxiv. 4 — “*Falling* into a trance” — where the same word is used. Neither Balaam nor Saul *voluntarily* obeyed the Lord. All men, whether prompted by love, or driven by power, must one day recognize the Lordship of Christ. All men must be stripped of self-righteousness, but all such stripping will not be voluntary and will not therefore necessarily involve union with the Saviour. All men will at length recognize their sinnership, but although Saul three times uttered the words: “I have sinned” (xv. 24, 30, & xxvi. 21), it was not a confession that accompanied salvation. He did not forsake his sin or truly turn to the Lord.

The reader should examine for himself those sections indicated in the structure by references to “the son of Jesse”, “the sword of Goliath”, and “the Lord’s anointed”. We shall have to pass these passages by without comment, so that space may be found for the sections indicated by the letters E and E. These two sub-divisions occupy a very considerable part of the whole passage, viz., xviii. 5 - xix. 17, and xxi. 10 - xxvi. 25.

In chapter xviii. we find that Saul’s jealousy was aroused by the song of the women: “Saul hath slain his thousands: And David his ten thousands” (I Sam. xviii. 7). His first attempt upon David’s life was by a clumsy attack with a javelin. When this failed, he planned, on two occasions, to involve David in battle with the Philistines — by making this a condition for the winning of his daughter’s hand, although he had actually promised this as a reward for the destruction of Goliath. In this, too, Saul failed.

Not only did Saul make these two attempts upon David’s life, but on two occasions it is recorded that he realized that “the Lord was with David”:

“And Saul was afraid of David, *because the Lord was with him*, and was departed from Saul” (I Sam. xviii. 12).

And again, in verse 28 of the same chapter:

“And Saul *saw and knew that the Lord was with David*, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet more afraid of David: and Saul became David’s enemy continually” (I Sam. xviii. 28, 29).

In the sections E and E in the Structure, the two attacks made upon David by Saul, are balanced by the two occasions on which David spared the life of Saul:

“Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul’s robe privily” (I Sam. xxiv. 4).  
“So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul’s bolster” (I Sam. xxvi. 12).

It is significant that on both these occasions Saul was asleep. In the second reference, this fact is emphasized by the words: “A deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them” (I Sam. xxvi. 12).

On seven different occasions Scripture records the fall of a “deep sleep” (Heb. *tardemah*). These references, which are given below, seem to indicate that the Lord uses this “deep sleep” when He wishes to deal with man in some great crisis.

- A | Gen. ii. 21. ADAM. For blessing.
- B | Gen. xv. 12. ABRAHAM. Righteousness by faith.
- C | I Sam. xxvi. 12. SAUL. To warn.
- B | Job iv. 13. JOB. Is mortal man righteous?
- C | Job xxxiii. 15. JOB. To hide pride from man.
- A | Prov. xix. 15. SLOTH. \ Judicial blindness
- Isa. xxix. 10. JUDGMENT. / (Rom. xi. 8).

In this deep sleep Saul received from God his final warning. He is so far moved as to confess: “I have sinned” (I Sam. xxvi. 21) and to acknowledge that David should “prevail” (I Sam. xxvi. 25), but this does not prevent him from resorting to the Witch of Endor.

Balancing the two confessions of xviii. 5 - xix. 17 in the Structure, we have the two confessions of xxi. 10 - xxvi. 25. One of these we have already quoted above, and the other is found in xxiv. 7-12.

Although much of interest has necessarily been passed by without comment, we trust that the main theme of our passage has been discovered and presented, and we therefore conclude with Saul’s confession in chapter xxiv.:

“And he said to David, thou art more righteous than i: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas i have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand thou killest me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? Wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, i know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now, therefore, unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father’s house. And David sware unto Saul.”

### **#30. SAMUEL. Saul’s last act of rebellion and death. (I Sam. xxvii. 1 - II Sam. i. 27).**

The story of Saul now draws to its terrible end. If the record had been the invention of man, an epic poem with David as the hero and Saul as the villain, many passages would have been either omitted, or completely altered. The Scriptures, however, are a true record, and there is only one man whom they set forth as being perfect, the Man, Christ Jesus. David, was, indeed, a man after God’s own heart, but he was by no means perfect. He sinned and fell, more than once, though his repentance was deep and genuine. Neither Aaron (Deut. ix. 16-20), nor Samuel (I Sam. viii. 1-3), nor David (I Sam. xxvii. 1-12), were without fault; the three types of Christ, as Priest, Prophet and King were all found wanting.

David’s history in this section is closely associated with Ziklag. According to Dr. Young, Ziklag means “bending”. For David it was a place of humiliation and shame, but it was also the place to which there came in the days of his humiliation, those who afterwards were numbered among his mighty men. As always, the type, while teaching certain truths, displays also certain weaknesses, a principle common to all the typical characters of the O.T. from Adam onward. One has only to think of Adam, Noah and

Abraham to see examples of this. If Ziklag means “bending”, it would seem that the word, in connection with David, has a twofold significance — in the first place, the true “bending”, in humiliation and suffering at the hands of Saul; and secondly, the false “bending”, when, moved by fear, he compromised with the ungodly.

Originally Ziklag had belonged to Judah (Joshua xv. 31), but it subsequently passed to Simeon (Joshua xix. 1-5), and in the days of Saul it had fallen into the hands of the Philistines. It would therefore seem to suggest the believer’s failure to “possess his possessions”, and the subsequent need for humbling before victory can be assured.

It will be seen from the structure below that the section before us is primarily a simple alternation of the story of David at Ziklag, and the association of Saul with the witch of Endor and his consequent death.

### **I Samuel xxvii. 1 - II Samuel i. 27.**

- A1 | I Sam. xxvii. 1 - xxviii. 2. DAVID AT ZIKLAG. Amalekites destroyed.
- B1 | xxviii. 3-25. SAUL AT ENDOR. The Witch.
- A2 | xix. 1 - xxx. 31. DAVID AT ZIKLAG. Servant of Amalekite spared.
- B2 | xxx. 1-10. SAUL AT GILBOA. Death and dishonour.
- C1 | xxxi. 11-13. The kindness of the MEN of JABESH-GILEAD to SAUL.
- A3 | II Sam. i. 1-16. DAVID AT ZIKLAG. Amalekites killed.
- C2 | i. 17-27. SAUL and JONATHAN lamented by DAVID.

Let us now examine these sub-divisions and seek to learn the lessons that await us. Beginning at the first verse, we read:

“And David said in his heart, i shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul; there is nothing better for me than that i should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines” (I Sam. xxvii. 1).

It would be difficult for any writer to speak words of censure or condemnation with regard to David’s attitude, without at the same time censuring and condemning himself. Only as we treat of these passages with an eye upon our own frailty can we dare to speak of them truthfully. It is in the spirit of Gal. vi. 1 “considering our own selves”, that we speak here of David’s declension.

In chapter xxiv., we find Saul halting in his persecution, and confessing that he is wrong. David cuts off part of Saul’s skirt, and expostulates with him, and Saul seems to repent. Soon, however, he is once more seeking David’s life. On one more occasion David spares the king’s life, and once again expostulates with him as in chapter xxiv. Again Saul makes a wonderful confession, but David is growing weary, and feeling sick at heart. “And David said in his heart, i shall now perish one day at the hand of Saul”. We can surely sympathize with David here, even if Scripture forbids that we should condone. We should probably have given up long since.

David now goes to Achish King of Gath, with his two wives, and asks for and received Ziklag as a residence. It is interesting to notice here that, although we read of David finding grace in the eyes of Achish, there is no mention of the Lord. David and his men now invade the Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites and destroy their cities. It is true that these cities were originally devoted to destruction (Josh. xiii. 13; xvi. 10; and I Samuel xv.), but David did not answer Achish truthfully when he asked, “Whither have ye made a road to-day?”. We read that David “saved neither man nor woman alive”, so that no tidings should reach Gath and thus imperil his relationship with Achish. “And Achish believed David.” How sad to think that David should be so compromised with evil, and how he must have shrunk inwardly when Achish manifested his trust so far as to make him “keeper of his head for ever” (xxviii. 2).

From David's temporary lapse, we now turn to the fatal step taken by Saul (I Sam. xxviii. 3-25). Samuel was dead, and so could not be consulted, and Saul had put away the wizards and those that had familiar spirits. When he enquired of the Lord, "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets". In his despair he takes the plunge foreseen by Samuel when he warned Saul at the beginning that "rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft" (xv. 23). "Then Saul said unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit." Such a woman was found at Endor, and Saul, disguising himself, went by night, and demanded that her familiar spirit should be brought up. There has been considerable debate as to whether Samuel himself actually appeared to Saul, or whether a spirit impersonating him gave the message. It is impossible for anyone to be absolutely certain. All that we can do is to seek to understand what is written according to the analogy of the faith. Scripture teaches that the dead "know not anything", and that there is no knowledge in the grave. At death, the body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit returns to God Who gave it. There is no consciousness between death and resurrection. If it should be objected that on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah were most certainly present, we would reply that both were special cases. Moses is specially mentioned in Jude as one over whose body Michael and the Devil contended (showing that he was bodily present on the Mount), and in the case of Elijah, we know that he was caught up to heaven by a whirlwind, so that he cannot be compared with the generality of men. Samuel had died and had been buried in Ramah. When Saul said "Bring me up Samuel", we do not know whether he really expected Samuel himself to appear, for he had gone by design to one that had a "familiar spirit", and had previously said, "Divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring him up whom I shall name unto thee". The general attitude of the Scriptures towards the diviner is one of unreserved condemnation, together with the assurance that he deals in lies:

"That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh *diviners* mad" (Isaiah. xlv. 25).

"Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your *diviners*, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers . . . . for they prophesy a lie unto you" (Jer. xxvii. 9, 10).

"Let not your . . . . *diviners* deceive you" (Jer. xxix. 8).

"*Diviners* have seen a lie" (Zech. x. 2).

Turning to the N.T., we read, in connection with Saul's great antitype, the Man of Sin:

"After the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish . . . . God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie" (II Thess. ii. 9-11).

Here we find that, while Satan is said to work with lies and deception, God can and does sometimes intervene, and ensure that certain people shall be made to believe a lie. On one occasion we read of a "lying spirit" being sent by the Lord in punishment (I Kings xxii. 21-23; II Chron. xviii. 19-24), and it is obvious that if this could also be done to fulfil the word of the Lord concerning Saul. In the case of Ahab, we are not told that he deliberately set out to consult with one that had a familiar spirit, but in Saul's case we know that he did. In the law of the Lord, which was familiar to Saul, we read:

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them. I am the Lord" (Lev. xix. 31).

"The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set My face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (Lev. xx. 6).

We are distinctly told that, when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord "answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (I Sam. xxviii. 6). In these circumstances it is difficult to believe

that, when Saul turned to the power of darkness, the Lord actually answered him by raising the prophet Samuel from the dead. The fact that the message given to Saul through the witch was true does not in any way prove that Samuel himself was present. The young girl who cried after the apostles in Acts.xvi. used words that were quite true, but she was nevertheless under the control of an evil spirit (Acts xvi. 16-18).

If we examine I Samuel xxviii. carefully, we shall find that Saul himself saw nothing. He asked the witch: “What form is he of?” and she replied: “An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.” We then read that “Saul perceived that it was Samuel” (xxviii. 13, 14). This might have been convincing enough to Saul in his overwrought state, but it is hardly logical to conclude that an old man wearing a mantle must necessarily have been Samuel. All that we actually know is that the witch was startled at the apparition, that she perceived that her questioner was Saul, that she described what she saw, and that Saul heard the prophecy. The prophecy was true, and in this we can see the restraining hand of the Lord, but there is no reason to believe that the Lord made any special exception in this case. Those who believe that the soul is immortal, and that the dead are not really dead but alive in another sphere, may find “proofs” for what they believe in this chapter, but we dare not run counter to the whole testimony of Scripture, Spiritism, in all its ways, is from beneath and is abhorrent to the Lord.

We must now return to David and Ziklag (I Sam. xxix. 1 - xxx. 31). David was now in a very serious predicament. The Philistines were gathering for war, and Achish had so trusted David that he believed that he had “made his people Israel utterly to abhor him” (xxvii.12). Moreover, he had made David “the keeper of his head” (xxviii. 2). Whatever David did now would be an act of treachery. If he betrayed the trust Achish had reposed in him, it would be base indeed. On the other hand, how would it be possible for him to fight with Achish against his own people and future subjects? This is surely a lesson for us all. The man who sets out to please everybody generally succeeds in pleasing no one. We well remember, when we first began our printed testimony, how many wrote to us about the “mistake” of not being sufficiently diplomatic with regard to our attitude to the Lord’s Supper. It was suggested that it would limit the sphere of our ministry, and make many turn back — and this was certainly the case. We decided, however, that the only thing was to “burn our boats” so that there should be no compromise. We have certainly “suffered” for our actions in some respects, but we have been spared the dreadful predicament in which David found himself. There are also other elements of truth about which some have compromised to their spiritual undoing. We need not mention them specifically; each one will know his own heart before the Lord.

The Lord in mercy used the natural suspicions of the Philistines themselves to extricate His servant, and he appears to have learned the lesson. Upon returning to Ziklag, however, David found to his horror that the Amalekites had taken their revenge upon him, and had sacked the town carrying away all the women as captives. So bitter was the grief of David’s men, that they even spoke of stoning him — “but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God” (xxx. 6).

He now does what he had failed to do in chapter xxvii. He enquires of the Lord through Abiathar the priest, and received the assurance of victory. The six hundred men who formed his band had already marched over rough country for three days, and by the time they reached the brook Besor two hundred were so faint that they could go no further. Much time was saved in the pursuit by the finding of an abandoned Egyptian servant belonging to the Amalekites, and there was a great slaughter — only four hundred young men escaping on camels. David recovered all that had been taken by the Amalekites, the typical teaching probably being that David had at last overcome the flesh, for which Amalek usually stands. David’s magnanimity did not meet with the approval of some of his men, who objected to the suggestion that the two hundred who had stayed behind at Besor should share the spoil. David, however, overruled their objection and “made a statute and an ordinance”, the terms of which are a comfort to many in the present day:

“As his part is that goeth down to battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike” (xxx. 24).

Aaron Pick states that *Besor* means “The bringer of good tidings”, and it is certainly true that some have to press on and preach the gospel, while others remain behind and teach, build up or supply the necessary means. All alike, however, shall receive the Lord’s approval in that day — whether they be those that sow or those that water or reap.

In verse 26, we read that David “sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying: Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord”. Thirteen places are mentioned “where David himself and his men were wont to haunt”, beginning with Bethel, “The house of God” and ending with Hebron, “Fellowship”. These were the places associated with the days of David’s rejection, corresponding to the present day when Christ is rejected. To his people, before the day of his coronation comes, he sends indications of his victory, and though the number thirteen suggests that the day of full blessing has by no means arrived, yet Bethel at one end and Hebron at the other indicate a very blessed fellowship, anticipating the greater day when David shall be acclaimed King over all Israel.

The last chapter of I Samuel records Saul’s ignominious death, a death at last by his own hand. The Philistines strip him of his armour, cut off his head, and fasten his body to the wall of Beth-shan. The last three verses, which record the considerate action of the men of Jabesh-gilead for the dead Saul, are balanced by the song of the bow, David’s lament for Saul and Jonathan (II Sam. i. 17-27).

In II Sam. i. 1-16 another Amalekite is slain, and the section ends with David’s lament, a lament in which no word is uttered concerning the cruel persecution he had suffered at the hands of Saul. His tribute to Jonathan is very moving:

“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” (II Sam. i. 26).

With the fall of Saul, the way is now clear for David to show himself to his people, and our next article will deal with his anointing as king over the house of Judah. So the purpose of the ages unrolls, foreshadowing in the history of David, in faltering type, the glories of his greater Son.

### **#31. II SAMUEL ii. 1-11. David anointed King over Judah. Ish-bosheth usurps the kingship over all Israel.**

We have now reached, in a series of articles which has extended over a period of many years, the beginning of the recorded history of the Kings of Israel and Judah. Before we proceed further with our studies, it will be advisable to consider what principle we must adopt in future in view of the almost overwhelming amount of subject-matter to be dealt with and the feebleness of the instrument that must bear the burden. We hasten to explain that we are not thinking of failing health on the part of the writer, who for these many years has been so mercifully sustained, but rather of the magazine itself. What can we hope to do with 20 pages, published monthly, in face of the sheer mass of material that awaits us in these books of the Kingdom? In the Second Book of Samuel, the two Books of Kings, and the two Books of Chronicles, we have more detail to consider, compare and unravel, than our length of days will allow. Moreover, we have other important studies in hand, the present series being only one of many. It is essential, therefore, that we should come to some understanding before we embark upon the history of the Kings of Israel, so that, while acknowledging the inspiration and profitableness of all Scripture, we may also retain our sense of proportion.

With the exception of the opening chapter, the whole of II Samuel is devoted to the life of David. After David we have Solomon; and then a succession of kings, good and bad, who reign over the

divided house of Israel and Judah, until the Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar brings the dispensation of the Kingdom of Israel to an end, and the times of the Gentiles begin.

We propose giving the Second Book of Samuel a fairly careful study so that the salient points of David's career, particularly those which contribute to the understanding of the purpose of the ages, may be seen, and then, using a key which we shall explain in due course, to go through the remaining history of the kings briefly, so that time may be allowed for the testimony of the Prophets and the Psalms to be given a hearing. We are sure that none of our readers will accuse us of negligence or lack of reverence in our attitude to the Word of God — we are but bowing to the necessities of the case, and seeking to use our stewardship to the fullest advantage.

In our last article we left David lamenting the death of Saul and Jonathan (II Samuel i.), and we now take up the theme in the second chapter, where the story of David as King properly begins. In its broadest outline the record of the Kings is as follows:

- A | II Sam. ii. 1 - iv. 12. The Kingdom. Divided.  
David, King over Judah.
- B | II Sam. v. 1 - xxiv. 25. The Kingdom. United.  
David, King over all Israel.
- B | I Kings i. 1 - xi. 43. The Kingdom. United.  
David, Solomon over all Israel.
- A | I Kings xii. 1 - II Kings xxv. 30. The Kingdom. Divided.  
Rehoboam, Jeroboam and successors over Israel and Judah.

The subject, therefore, falls into four sections, the first being II Sam. ii. 1 - iv. 2 — giving the reign of David as King over Judah, up to the time when he ascended the throne of a united people. The most important part of this first section from our present point of view is that which records the anointing of David at Hebron (II Sam. ii. 1-11). We will first look at the structure of this passage and then consider its message.

### **II Samuel ii. 1-11. The Two Kings. David and Ish-bosheth.**

- A | 1-3. DAVID goes to Hebron with his two wives.
- B | 4. Men of Judah. David anointed King.
- C | 4-10. SAUL though dead, still has influence.
  - a1 | 4-6. *Saul* dead and buried.
  - b1 | 7. David *anointed* King.
  - a2 | 8. *Saul's* captain, Abner.
  - b2 | 8, 9. Ish-bosheth *made* King.
  - a3 | 10. *Saul's* son Ish-bosheth. 40 years.
  - b3 | 10. His reign of two years.
- B | 10. House of Judah. David followed.
- A | 11. DAVID reign in Hebron 7 years and 6 months.

One of the things that strikes the reader as this structure emerges, is the fact that, though Saul is dead and buried (ii. 4, 7), his evil influence is still active; also, that Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, is "made king", but not "anointed".

David is pre-eminently a type of Christ, and his life is recorded, not so much for its own sake as for its remarkable foreshadowing of the future. For instance, we find that, before David was anointed King over all Israel, he was anointed King over his "own", the house of Judah. The instructed reader will not need any proof that in this, David was a type of Christ. The day is yet to dawn when Christ shall be

acknowledged King over all, but it is the blessed privilege of His brethren to acknowledge Him as King now.

We must now give our attention to the record of II Sam. ii. 1-11, so that we may learn its typical lesson, and our faith and hope may be strengthened. First of all, let us consider the city selected by God in answer to David's prayer.

“Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? . . . . Unto Hebron” (ii. 1).

Hebron was a city that was closely associated with Abraham, at the time of his separation from Lot.

“Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever . . . . Then Abraham removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord” (Gen. xiii. 14-18).

Hebron was also sacred to the Israelite, for there Abraham, Isaac & Jacob were buried (Gen. xxiii. 19; xxxv. 27; xlix. 30; I. 13). The burial of the patriarchs here must not be looked upon in any mournful way. They await the promise of God, and, as it were, claim the land by their presence there. Joseph's command “concerning his bones” (Gen. I. 24, 25; Heb. xi. 22) was an act of faith, for he said: “God will surely visit you”. In addition to these hallowed and encouraging associations, the meaning of the word itself is suggestive. The word “Hebron” means “a ford”, as in Gen. xxxii. 22, and so suggests those that “pass over” — in other words, the redeemed. It was here at Hebron that David was anointed by the men of Judah.

After this anointing there follows the incident of David's magnanimity to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, who had “buried Saul”. In his message to them David says: “you master Saul is dead”. Instead of this kindness to the inhabitants of Gilead moving them to loyalty towards David as king — for he had added the words: “And also the house of Judah have anointed *me* king over them” — we have an act of rebellion and attempted usurpation. Saul was dead and buried, but he had a captain Abner, who was Saul's cousin (I Chron. ix. 36), and also a son, a man who is called Ish-bosheth in II Sam. ii. 8, and Esh-baal in I Chron. viii. 33. Ish-bosheth means a “Man of Shame”, and Esh-baal a “Man of Baal”. Both are significant names for a type of Antichrist.

Ish-bosheth was brought over to Mahanaim, a place associated with Jacob's return to his home and his meeting with Esau (Gen. xxxii. 2). The word means “Two Camps”, and the place was so named because of the angels that met the returning patriarch. When Ner took Ish-bosheth to Mahanaim, however, the word took on a new significance. Israel were divided into “two camps”, one section following David (“The Beloved”), the Lord's anointed, and the other a man who was “made king”, Ish-bosheth (“The Man of Shame”). With the exception of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Ish-bosheth himself belonged, the places and tribes enumerated were all on the West side of Jordan. The reader will remember that the tribes of Reuben, and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, asked for the land of Jazer and Gilead, and so never crossed the Jordan, so far as their inheritance was concerned. These facts surely have a spiritual significance. Believers whose interests are largely “on this side of Jordan” are those who are most likely to come under the dominion of the usurper to-day. So we read that at the place called “Two Camps”, Ish-bosheth was made “King over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel” (II Sam. ii. 9). Inasmuch as David was already King of Judah, and the name “Israel” had not at that time come to indicate the ten tribes that separated from Judah after the death of Solomon, we can see that the idea of usurpation was very definite. Satan is the Prince of this world and the God of this age, and his subordinates are called the “rulers of the darkness of this world”.

The name Jezreel in II Sam. ii. 9 is associated with Jezebel and her awful end “by the wall of Jezreel” (I Kings xxi. 23). Jezreel was also the name given to the eldest son of Hosea (Hos. i. 4), and became a symbolic name for Israel (Hos. i. 11), prophesying first of all their “scattering” in judgment, and then their final “sowing”, when all “men of shame” shall be for ever put down and the true David, “the Beloved”, shall reign from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

David reigned over Judah in Hebron for seven and a half years, and in II Sam. v. 5 we read:

“In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel.”

According to Hebrew computation this makes 40 years (in I Kings ii. 11 the odd six months are ignored), and as he was 30 when he began to reign (II Sam. v. 4), we have a total of 70 years associated with this great typical king. Ish-bosheth, on the other hand, reigned only two years, and died at the hand of murderers at the age of 42 (6\*7):

“Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years” (II Sam. ii. 10).

These two years of usurpation should be viewed in the light of Hosea’s prophecy:

“After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up and we shall live in His sight” (Hos. vi. 2).

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days” (Hos. iii. 4, 5).

It is evident, we trust, that the seven years of David’s reign over Judah, before he was acclaimed King over all Israel, are prophetic of heaven’s true King. He also has been anointed and is King among His brethren, but the usurper still seeks to exercise dominion over “all Israel”, finding a place for his usurpation in the territory that lies “on this side of Jordan” — the world and its attractive snares. The end, however, is fixed, for “after two years” Israel seek the Lord and David their King, and the Millennial Reign begins.

## **#32. II SAMUEL v. - xxiv.**

### **A Sevenfold Foreshadowing of the Millennial Kingdom.**

We have so far considered the brief but richly prophetic account of David’s reign over Judah in Hebron (II Sam. ii. 1-11), and, passing by the details which occupy chapters iii. & iv., we come now to chapter v. where David is anointed King over all Israel.

The story of David’s reign occupies the remaining nineteen chapters of the Second Book of Samuel. This record contains some acts that are typical, and others that are shameful. All are necessary to make up a faithful record; and all are necessary if we are to enter into the workings of the human heart and have a complete picture of the two natures in the child of God. All these things are not, however, necessary to our understanding of the purpose of the ages, and we must therefore make some selection.

In the centre of the record we find eleven chapters, all overshadowed by David’s sin in connection with Uriah and Bathsheba, and at the close of the book we have another confession on David’s part. In the first of these sections the child that Bathsheba bears to David is stricken with sickness and dies; and in the second, the land is stricken with pestilence, which destroys seventy thousand men. The

consequences of David's sin follow him through many a weary year, as the sins of Amnon, and Sheba, and Absalom show.

The structure of the whole passage is given below, but we shall only deal with those sections in which David is in any measure a type of Christ. His sin with regard to Bathsheba, while bringing to light much truth of both doctrinal and practical importance, will not be included in our survey, except to give it its place in the structure.

## II Samuel v. 1 - xxiv. 25. The Kingdom. United.

- A | v. "All the tribes." David anointed.
- B | E | vi. The bringing of the Ark to Zion (Psalm xxiv.).
  - F | vii. The promise. "He will make thee an house."
  - G | viii. 1-14. David's victories.
    - Spoils dedicated to the Lord.
- C | H | viii. 15-18. David's Officers. Joab, Zadok, etc.
  - I | ix. 1 - x. 5. The house of Saul. "For Jonathan's sake."
  - J | x. 6 - xi. 1. Wars. "But David tarried."
- D | DAVID'S SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCE (xi. 2 - xx. 22).
  - K | xii. 10. "The sword shall never depart from thy house."
  - L | xii. 13. "I have sinned."
  - M | xiii. 1 - xx. 22. Consequences.
    - Amnon, Absalom, Sheba.
- C | H | xx. 23. David's Officers. Joab. Zadok, etc.
  - I | xx. 1-14. Saul and his bloody house. "Jonathan."
  - J | xxi. 15-22. Wars. "David waxed faint."
- B | E | xxii. Deliverance from all enemies (Psalm xviii.).
  - F | xxiii. 1-7. The Prayer. "My house." "All my desire."
  - G | xxiii. 8-39. David's mighty men.
    - Water poured out before the Lord.
- A | xxiv. 1-9. "All the tribes." Israel numbered.
  - D | DAVID'S SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCE (xxiv. 10-25).
    - L | xxiv. 10. "I have sinned."
    - K | xxiv. 11-15. Famine, enemies or pestilence.
    - M | xxiv. 16-25. The offering.
      - Consequences.

While it will not be possible for us to go through this great section step by step, we very much hope that many of our readers, with this analysis before them, will use it in their own private study, for there are valuable lessons embedded in this record of greatness and frailty, of high intent and tragic fall, that none of us can afford to miss. Meanwhile we must devote ourselves to those parts of the record that foreshadow David's greater Son.

*The anointing of David as King over all Israel (II Sam. v. 1-25).* — The Israelites were greatly troubled when they heard of the death of Abner (iv. 1), and after the treacherous murder of Ish-bosheth, all the tribes of Israel come to David and anoint him King.

They remind the King and one another of several important facts (II Sam. v. 1, 2):

- (1) "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh."
- (2) "When Saul was King, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel."
- (3) "The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be captain over Israel."

When Israel shall at length look upon Him Whom they have pierced, will they not also realize that for their sakes He had taken upon Him flesh and blood, that He had led them out and brought them in, and that He was their true Messiah appointed by God?

*The capture of the stronghold of Zion.* — The first event recorded after the anointing of David over all Israel, is the overthrowing of the Jebusites and the taking of the stronghold of Zion. The Jebusites' taunt in this passage should be understood in the sense that they considered their fortress to be so impregnable that in derision they manned the walls with the blind and the lame — "thinking, David cannot come in hither". There was, however, a secret entrance into the stronghold that somehow had come to the knowledge of Joab. This is called in the A.V. "the gutter" — "a rock-cut passage or shaft, from the upper Gihon (now the Virgin's Fount on the east of Ophel) leading up into the city, and up which the inhabitants drew their water supply" (*Companion Bible*). This conduit is shown in the Ordnance Survey maps, and *The Companion Bible* gives in Appendix 68 a cross-section showing the "gutter", from a drawing made by Sir Charles Warren.

We learn from I Chron. xi. 6 that Joab went up this "gutter" first, and so became chief. By this means the stronghold of Zion was taken, and we read in verse 7: "The same is the city of David" (II Sam. v. 7). We can see here an anticipation of the final overthrow of Babylon and Satanic opposition, which the N.T. places just before the revelation of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

*The bringing up of the Ark to Zion.* — The capture of Zion was preliminary to the bringing up of the Ark of God, "Whose name is called by the name of the Lord of Hosts, That dwelleth between the cherubims" (II Sam. vi. 2). David's intention here was right, but owing apparently to ignorance or neglect of the law, Uzzah is smitten, and the Ark left for three months at the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite. From I Chronicles we learn that David must have been exercised over the miscarriage of his plan, and must have sought the Lord and His word about it, for we read:

"Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him forever" (I Chron. xv. 2).

This time the transfer of the Ark is accomplished with safety, and David, discarding his royal apparel and girt with a linen ephod, dances before the Lord.

"So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of a trumpet" (II Sam. vi. 15).

Upon returning to bless his own household, however, David is met by his wife's sarcastic disapproval:

"How glorious was the King of Israel to-day, who disrobed himself to-day in the sight of the handmaidens of his servants, as one of the low people might disrobe himself!" (II Sam. vi. 20).

It may be of interest to the reader to know that the LXX here uses *apokalupto*, where the A.V. reads "uncovered". This word, of course, gives us the word used for the "revelation" of Jesus Christ — which emphasizes a point that has perhaps not been given its due weight, namely, that the "revelation" of Jesus Christ, even though "glorious in our eyes", is nevertheless a condescension on His part. There is a "light" in which He dwells that is unapproachable (I Tim. vi. 16), and the "glory" of His appearing must not hide from us the other equally glorious fact that all His acts on our behalf are condescensions beyond our understanding.

*The house of the Lord and the house of David (II Sam. vii. 1-29).* — With the coming of the Ark to the city of David, there comes also "rest round about from all his enemies"; and the King, contemplating the disparity between his own house of cedar, and the house of curtains that held the Ark

of God, is moved to build a house for the Lord. He reveals later to his son Solomon, however, that the Lord had forbidden his building such a house, because he had “shed blood abundantly”. The Temple must be associated with one who was in type the Prince of Peace.

In II Samuel vii., to David’s amazement, the Lord makes a promise concerning his house:

“Also the Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house” (II Sam. vii. 11).

Further on, in verse 18, we read:

“Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord and said, who am i, O Lord God? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” (II Sam. vii. 18, 19).

David was facing grace, and was learning in his measure the same lesson that we may learn to-day as we contemplate the grace of God, namely, that the grace of the “hitherto”, is to be eclipsed by the “exceeding riches of grace” which the Lord will reveal in the ages to come (Eph. ii. 7).

This indeed was not “the manner of man”. The word “manner” is the Hebrew *torah*, “law”, and “man” here is “Adam”. The passage reminds us of Psalm viii., where David asks “What is man?” and then goes on to speak of the Lord’s wonderful condescension to a position “lower than the angels”, which will ultimately associate the sons of Adam with the Son of God in His dominion over all the works of His hand. David saw by faith something of the glorious truth revealed subsequently in I. Corinthian. xv. 22-28, 45-49; and Heb. ii. 5-10.

With great reluctance we must pass over the intervening chapters that reveal such great depths, after the heights of chapter vii., and come now to the closing chapters xxii.-xxiv. Chapter xxi. significantly ends with the overthrow of several giants, one of them being another Goliath of Gath (II. Samuel. xxi. 19).

*David’s psalm of thanksgiving for his deliverance from all his enemies (II Samuel xxii.).* — We have here a prophetic foreshadowing of the day when “all enemies” shall be under the feet of Christ, and the glorious goal shall be achieved. The Psalm, which occupies the whole of II Samuel xxii., was afterwards revised and put into the Book of the Psalms as number xviii.

"In this magnificent hymn the Royal Poet sketches in a few grand outlines the tale of his life — the record of his marvelous deliverances and of the victories which Jehovah had given him — the record, too, of his own heart, the truth of its affection towards God, and the integrity of purpose by which it had ever been influenced. Throughout that singularly chequered life, hunted as he had been by Saul before he came to the throne, and harassed perpetually after he became king by rivals who disputed his authority and endeavoured to steal away the hearts of his people — compelled to fly for his life before his own son, and engaged afterwards in long and fierce wars with foreign nations — one thing had never forsaken him, the love and presence of Jehovah. By His help he had subdued every enemy, and now, in his old age, looking back with devout thankfulness on the past, he sings that great song of praise to the God of his life" (*Perowne*).

Following this great song of praise are “the last words of David” — which are in structural correspondence with the promise of chapter vii., and refer to David’s “house”.

*David’s last words. The Kingdom foreseen (II Sam. xxiii. 1-7).* — David’s “last words” must be read together with Psalm lxxii., where it is said that the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are “ended” (Psa. lxxii. 20). Both are prophetic utterances concerning the glorious reign of David’s Greater Son. In II Sam. xxiii. we read: “He that ruleth over men must be just” (II Sam. xxiii. 3), while in Psalm lxxii.

we read: “He shall judge the people with righteousness” (Psa. lxxii. 2). This righteous rule is followed by newness of life:

“As the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain” (II.Samuel.xxiii.4).

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth” (Psa. lxxii. 6).

Verse 5 of II Samuel xxiii. needs some slight revision. Rotherham’s Version perhaps expresses David’s intention more closely than any other that we have examined, as follows:

“When not so was my house with God,  
Then a covenant age-abiding He appointed me,  
Ordered in all things and guarded,  
Now that is all my salvation and all my desire  
Will He not make it shoot forth?”

The “last words” of David refer to Christ, and in the words: “Will He not make it shoot forth?” (or grow) we have in verbal form the prophetic title of Christ as “The Branch” (*Tsemach*).

“I will raise unto David a righteous branch” (Jer. xxiii. 5).

At the close of this prophetic “last word”, David looks down the centuries and sees that “the sons of Belial” shall finally be tossed away as thorns, and shall be utterly burned with fire. With this the reader should compare the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and all references to the “seed of the wicked one”, from Genesis to Revelation.

The “tares” having been destroyed, we should expect the next step to be parallel with the words:

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. xiii. 43).

The sons of Belial have dominated the earth long enough, and at their removal, II Samuel xxiii. introduces David’s mighty men.

*The names of the mighty men whom David had (II Sam. xxiii. 8-39).* — These names are linked together in groups.

THE FIRST THREE.—ADINO, ELEAZAR, and SHAMMAH (II Sam. xxiii. 8-12).

THE SECOND THREE.—ABISHAI, ENAIAH, and ASAHIEL (II Sam. xxiii. 18-23).

THE THIRTY ONE.—Then follows a list beginning with ELHANAN of Bethlehem and ending with URIAH the Hittite.

“Thirty seven in all.”

Here we have the overcomers, who are honoured when the days of persecution are over — a glorious anticipation of that day when in every sphere of blessing, there will be those who, having “endured”, shall receive “the reward” of their inheritance, “the prize” of their calling, “the crown” of life, or righteousness, and share with Christ, not only in His life, but in His glorious reign.

The A.V. and the R.V. in II Sam. xxviii. 8 read, in the margin “Josheb-bassebet the Tachmonite”, instead of “the Tachmonite that sat in the seat”. His original name meant “A man of shame”, but this was altered to Adino, meaning “Ornament”. Whether the lesson here is an encouragement for the most worthless of sinners to seek to please the One Who has become Saviour and Lord, or an encouragement to the suffering and persecuted saint, who is for the time being accounted “vile” (cf. Phil. iii. 21 “this body of humiliation”), the end is the same.

One name is notably absent from this list — the name of Joab. The note in *The Companion Bible* at verse 24 is as follows:

“24. ASAHIEL.—The third of the second three, brother of Joab, but not Joab. His *name* here but not *himself*, because when the time of the end comes with its ‘last words’, *loyalty* will be the one test. Joab remained true in Absalom’s rebellion, but fell away in Adonijah’s. Hence in I Cor. 16.22 ‘*love*’ is the test, in the light of ‘Maran-atha’, *not* the ‘strifes’ of ch.3, or the wrong judgments of chapter 4, or the uncleanness of ch.5, or going to law of ch.6; not the fornication of ch.7, not a wrong conscience of chs.9,10, not ecclesiastical disorders of ch.11, not the misuse of special gifts (chs.12, 13, 14), not orthodoxy (ch.15), but ‘love’ and loyalty to the Person of Christ, the true David, David’s son and David’s Lord.”

We cannot conclude without referring once again to Uriah the Hittite. Defrauded and basely betrayed by David the man, he is nevertheless honoured and exalted by David as the type of heaven’s King.

And so we must conclude this all too meagre survey of the reign of David over all Israel. Let us sum up the various points so that their prophetic import may be the better realized.

- (1) David is anointed King over all Israel.
- (2) The Jebusite is overthrown.
- (3) The Ark ascends to its place in the city of David.
- (4) God promises David “a house”, and David catches a glimpse of “the law of the Man” that is to come.
- (5) David at last, with all enemies subdued, sings a Psalm of Praise.
- (6) David gives his “last words” regarding the future kingdom.
- (7) The mighty men who shared with David in his distress now share with him in his triumph.

May every reader be able to enter into the realization of the prophetic import of these seven items.

### **#33. The Books of CHRONICLES. The Divine survey of the history of the kings in relation to the House of God, as indicated by an examination of the Book of Chronicles.**

If our intention were to study the record of each king of Israel and Judah in turn, our next book would be the First Book of Kings, and our theme the closing days of David and the accession of Solomon. This, however, is not our purpose. As we have already explained, what we are attempting to do is to present to the reader a sort of bird’s eye view of the whole period covered by the reign of these kings, so that the light that their history throws upon the purpose of the ages may be seen. With such a task before us, we may well ask “who is sufficient for these things?”.

Most readers are probably aware that the ground covered by Samuel and the two books of Kings, is traversed again in the two books of Chronicles. Upon examination, however, we soon perceive that this is no mere repetition. The essential fact about the books of Chronicles is that they view history *from the Divine standpoint*. To be convinced of this, one must investigate for oneself, but the earnest student will find a good deal of the spade work already done for him by Girdlestone, in his *Deuterographs*, a book still obtainable at second hand. Appendix 56 of the *The Companion Bible* also supplies the parallel references, without the actual text. As an example, let us take the record of Saul’s death as given in I.Samuel.xxxi., and compare it with I.Chronicle.x. The reader will notice minor differences in the two records, but none of these would seem to justify the time and space of re-writing. At I Chron. x. 13, 14,

however, we find a definite addition, the Divine comment upon the factual history recorded in I.Samuel.xxxi.:

“So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord, which he kept not; and also, for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire thereby, and enquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the Kingdom unto David the son of Jesse” (I.Chron.x.13,14).

The books of Samuel and I & II Kings view history from the human standpoint, whereas the same events are shown in I & II Chronicles as they appear from the Divine standpoint.

“In the former books we have three *chapters* (or 88 verses) given to the *secular* events of Hezekiah’s reign (II Kings xviii., xix., xx.), and only three *verses* (II Kings xviii. 4-6) given to his great religious reformation. In Chronicles this is exactly reversed. *Three* chapters (or 84 verse) are devoted to his reformation (II Chronicles xxix., xxx., xxxi.), while *one* chapter (or 32 verses) suffices for the secular events of his reign” (appendix 56, *Companion Bible*).

Here, then, is material to our hand. All we need is diligence, patience, the gift of some key-thought, and the record will unfold itself. For this we prayed, and waited, and at length we were led to discover that Israel’s history is to be understood dispensationally *in the light of their attitude to the house of God*. We noted down every king that had anything to do with the Temple, either for good or ill, and to our amazement the notes took shape until we were able to perceive, however dimly, the onward movement of something greater than human action or design. The record is written round the lives of sixteen kings, of which three were Gentiles: Shishak, king of Egypt; Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and Cyrus, king of Persia. This leaves the number of Israel’s kings as 13, an ominous number associate with rebellion (Gen. xiv. 4), fleshly failure (Gen. xvii. 25), self (I Kings vii. 1), and Satan (Rev. xii. 9). The thirteenth king of Judah was Ahaz, who was, as we shall see, a type of Antichrist.

Before we can go further it will be necessary for us to acquaint ourselves with the way in which Chronicles associates the history of Israel with the house of God. This can be done by each reader for himself by patiently reading through the record and noting each occurrence. The following is the structure obtained (see next page).

## The Kingdom of Priests.

### The history of Israel is the history of the House of God.

- A | I Chron. xxviii. DAVID. Command to build (10). Writing (19).  
The Lord be with thee (20).
- B | II Chron. ii.-xi. SOLOMON. Determines (ii. 1). Begins (iii. 1).  
Finishes (v. 1). Dedicates (vi.). Threat (vii. 19-22).
- C | II Chron. xii. SHISHAK. Deliverance granted (7). Treasures taken to Egypt (9).
- D | xiii. ABIJAH. Keeps to Levitical order (10, 11).
- E | xv., xvi. | a | ASA. Brought in dedicated things (*good*) (xv. 18).  
b | ASA. Brought out silver and gold (*bad*) (xvi. 2).
- F | xx. JEHOASHAPHAT. Be not afraid (15).  
Battle is not yours (15).  
Believe His prophets (20). Dead bodies (24).  
\* \* \* Types of Christ and Antichrist. \* \* \*
- G | xxii. JOASH. Hidden (12).
- H | xxiii. JOASH. King brought (20).
- I | xxiv. JOASH. Repaired (4). Levites gathered (5).
- J | xxiv. | c | JOASH. Set house in his state (13).  
d | JOASH. Vessels to minister (14).
- K | xxiv. JOASH. Burnt offerings offered (14).  
\* \* Three out of four types of Antichrist. \* \*
- L | xxv. JOASH. Take vessels (24). *Israel's King*.
- M | xxvi. UZZIAH. Sacrilege (16). 16 years (1). The leper.
- M | xxvii. JOTHAM. Entered not (2). 16 years (1).
- L | xxviii. AHAZ. Take portion (21). *Followed Israel* (2).  
\* \* \* Types of Christ and Antichrist. \* \* \*
- G | xxviii. AHAZ. Shut up (24).
- H | xxix. HEZEKIAH. Doors opened (3).
- I | xxix. HEZEKIAH. Cleansed (15). Levites gathered (12-15).
- J | xxix. | d | HEZEKIAH. Sacrifice (31).  
c | HEZEKIAH. Service of house set in order (35).
- K | xxx. HEZEKIAH. Passover kept (15).
- F | xxxii. HEZEKIAH. Be not afraid (7).  
With us . . . . . the Lord . . . . . battles (8).  
Rested on words (8). Cut off . . . . . slew (21).
- E | xxxiii. | b | MANASSEH. Build altars (*bad*) (4, 5).  
a | MANASSEH. Took away altars (*good*) (15, 16).
- D | xxxiv. JOSIAH (8). Restore to Levitical order (30, 31).
- C | xxxvi. NEBUCHADNEZZAR. No remedy (16). Vessels to Babylon (7).
- B | xxxvi. NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Burnt (19). Threat fulfilled (21).
- A | xxxvi. CYRUS. Charge to build. Writing.  
The Lord be with him (22, 23).

In I Chronicles xxviii. we find David expressing the desire of his heart to build the house of God, but, bowing to the Divine will, he urges his son Solomon to build it, saying: “Be strong and do it” (xxviii. 1-10). David does not leave the matter there, however. He provides “the pattern”, which he says that he had had “by the spirit” and by “writing by His hand upon me” (I Chron. xxviii. 11, 12, 19), and he also supplies abundant material.

“Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for the things of gold . . . . silver . . . . brass, etc. . . . in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver . . . . given . . . . Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” (I Chron. xxix. 2-5).

With such an example and such an appeal, there was a great response, and we read that “the people rejoiced and offered themselves willingly”. David, however, recognizes in prayer that

“All this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name, cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own” (I Chron. xxix. 16).

In verse 22 we read: “And they made Solomon, the son of David, king *the second time*” — a phrase that reminds us of the coming of Christ “the second time” to put forth His great power and reign.

In II Chron. ii. 1 it is recorded that Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the Lord, chapter iii. tells us when the work began, chapter v. that it was at length finished, and in chapter vi. we have its dedication. In chapter vii. 19-22 we have a warning which includes the prophetic utterance:

“And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it, so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land and unto this house?”

It will be helpful, at this point, to look at the other end of the story. In II Chronicles xxxvi. the warning is fulfilled, the house of God is burnt with fire, and the people carried away captive:

“To fulfil the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil three score and ten years” (II Chron. xxxvi. 21).

The last item in the structure, and the last word of the Book of Chronicles, is one of restoration.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying:

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah, Who is there among you of all His people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up” (II Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23).

We observe that we have here the “charge to build”, the putting of the proclamation into “writing”, and the prayer, “The Lord his God be with him”, all of which are reminiscent of the opening section in connection with David. It is good to “see the end from the beginning” and to know by the prophetic word that, after many days of apostasy and rebellion, the time of restitution will surely come.

Returning to the beginning of the record, we come next to the transgression of Rehoboam and the punishment executed upon him by Shishak king of Egypt, who carried away the treasures of the house

of the Lord. Rehoboam and his princes humbled themselves, however, and the Lord granted “some deliverance”, or “deliverance for a little while”. Rehoboam’s attitude here is in strong contrast with that described at the end of the book, where we read of the king and his associates that, instead of humbling themselves and repenting—

“They mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, TILL THERE WAS NO REMEDY” (II Chron. xxxvi. 16).

The acts of Abijah in chapter xiii., and the acts of Josiah in chapter xxxiv. have this in common, that both kings were zealous in witnessing against idolatry and in restoring the worship of God in accordance with the law. Asa and Manasseh come next in the structure and provide a picture of that mixture of good and bad that is often a link between the true and the false. Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah are the next corresponding members and form an obvious pair. In both cases we have the fear of an enemy, an exhortation not to be afraid, the thought that “the battle is not yours, but God’s”; and in both cases we have the destruction of the enemy either by “ambushments”, by angelic ministry, or by patricidal murder. All these items are indicated in the structure and should be checked.

We now come to the three central groups in the structure, that provide types of both Christ and Antichrist. Athaliah and the destruction of the seed royal are a type of Satanic opposition to the purposes of God in Christ, while the hiding of the infant king for *six* years, and his proclamation in the *seventh*, will need no explanation to those who are acquainted with prophecy. Ahaz stands in line with Athaliah as a type of Antichrist, and the “hiding” of the king’s son is echoed by the “shutting up” of the doors of the Lord’s house. Hezekiah follows in much the same steps as Joash in the cleansing of the Temple, the gathering of the Levites, and the setting in order of the Lord’s house. All these points are noted in the outline already given.

The four kings that come centrally in the structure are important because of the way in which they indicate the various phases of Antichrist’s rebellion and opposition. It should be noted that the name of the evil king of Israel here, is the same as that of the good king of Judah. This is a fruitful cause of much evil. Satan’s deception is carried out by means of travesty. Let the reader compare, for example, the names of the descendants of Cain given in Gen. iv. 16-24, with those of the descendants of Adam given in Gen. v. To make sure that there is no mistake in connection with Enoch the Scriptures refer to him as the “seventh from Adam” (Jude 14), for there was also a son of Cain who bore the same name.

Uzziah also is a type of Antichrist, for although at first all seemed well, we read later:

“He was marvelously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction; for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense’ (II Chron. xxvi. 15, 16).

Uzziah was stricken with leprosy and remained a leper to the day of his death, a dreadful picture of the Usurper and his doom.

Of Jotham it is said that he followed his father in so far as he had done right in the sight of the Lord, but he “entered not into the Temple”.

The fourth king Ahaz completes the evil triad. We read that he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made molten images to Baalim. “Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen”. In the same chapter we read that a hundred and twenty thousand men of Judah were slain in one day, “because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers” (II Chron. xxviii. 6), while Israel “carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil”.

“And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord;  
THIS IS THAT KING AHAZ” (II Chron. xxviii. 22).

Ahaz seems to be specially marked as a transgressor, as were Cain and Dathan before him. He stands out in strong contrast to Hezekiah, who is singled out for his good deeds (II Chron. xxxii. 12, 30).

It is impossible in these articles to enter into fuller detail, and we can but hope that the reader will accept the suggestion that he should take the key provided and use it in his own personal studies.

We would also remind the reader that the Lord Jesus Himself associated the failure of Israel with the Temple in Matthew xxiii.:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! BEHOLD YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. xxiii. 37-39).

### **#34. The nations of Israel never “lost”.**

**Spiritual testimony to the fact that “the Jews” are a people  
composed of the twelve tribes of Israel (Kings and Chronicles).**

In the present series we have so far gone through the history of the Kingdom of Israel in very broad outline, and have explained our reasons for adopting this method. Our next subject must be a study of the Prophets, but before we turn to this great theme, we feel that we should devote one more article to the record of the Kings, and consider briefly the claims of those who believe that the ten tribes were “lost”, and that they are now to be “found” again under another name. We are not allowing ourselves to be drawn into a controversy, and we do not intend filling our pages with criticism. It is a legitimate part of our business, however, to search the Scriptures and to register our findings, and if these findings contradict the theories held by others we have no option but to reject such theories as unscriptural.

We preface our study by asking the question, Does Scripture say that the house of Israel is “lost”? We can at once answer this question with a decided negative. The next question to be asked is, Do the Scriptures tell us where the house of Israel is to be found? — and to this the answer is that they do. In the following pages we give chapter and verse for both these answers.

The division of the nation into “Israel” and “Judah” was consequent upon the idolatrous affinities contracted by Solomon. After revealing the names, nationality and number of his wives, and the fact that Solomon “went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians”, the record continues:

“And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel . . . . wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon . . . . I will surely rend the kingdom from thee and give it to thy servant . . . . I will rend it out of the hand of thy son . . . . I will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake which I have chosen” (I Kings xi. 9-13).

The actual rending of the kingdom is related in I Kings xii. When Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, ascended the throne of all Israel, Jeroboam, who had fled to Egypt from the presence of Solomon, returned and headed a gathering to protest against the heavy yoke of taxation that had been imposed by Solomon. Instead of granting some measure of relief, Rehoboam listened to the younger men and not only refused to grant relief but threatened to intensify the burden.

“So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the people answered the King, saying, what portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents” (I Kings xii. 16).

We must next consider the testimony of Scripture with regard to the fate of this divided kingdom, and particularly what is said of the ten-tribed Kingdom of Israel. Before passing on to this, however, we would draw attention to the statement made in the next verse, namely, I Kings xii. 17:

“But as for the children of ISRAEL, which dwelt in the cities of JUDAH, Rehoboam reigned over THEM.”

It is therefore a Scriptural fact that there was a remnant of Israel associated with the House of David. With the flight of years, this remnant, left behind with Rehoboam, would multiply, and so ensure the presence of representatives of all twelve tribes, even though but “one tribe”, intact and undivided, had sided with Rehoboam.

Again, further on in the same chapter, we read:

“Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, King of Judah, and unto all the house of JUDAH and BENJAMIN, and to the REMNANT of the people” (xii. 23).

Even after this, when Jeroboam had been made King over the ten tribes, he felt uneasy about the attraction that the Temple services at Jerusalem would still exert over all the tribes of Israel.

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam King of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam King of Judah” (I Kings xii. 26, 27).

To counteract this great attraction, Jeroboam deliberately introduced idolatry into his kingdom:

“The King . . . . made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt” (I Kings xii. 28).

This sinful action stemmed the tide, and saved the kingdom as a whole from drifting back to Judah, but we must not assume that it prevented hundreds of those who were faithful to God from leaving Samaria and returning to Judah to join the little remnant of Israel that remained. The Scriptures definitely confirm that this was so.

In the First Book of Chronicles we have the genealogies of those who returned from the Babylonian captivity, and we find therein this entry:

“And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of EPHRAIM, and MANASSEH” (I Chron. ix. 3).

This passage at once raises an interesting point in connection with the so-called “lost tribes”. If there were representatives of Ephraim and Manasseh among the returning captives of Judah, these two tribes obviously could not have been lost. If only one man and his wife in each tribe had returned, they would have been sufficient to continue the line. It is most important in view of the ideas contained in the “British-Israel” theory, that we should remember that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh at least need not be looked for outside the limits of the people we now call “Jews”. These tribes were evidently never “lost”.

Moreover, we must also take into account the evidence of II Chronicles xv.:

“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the sojourners with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: *for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance*, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him” (II Chron. xv. 9).

Here we not only get four tribes mentioned by name, but we are also assured that “out of Israel” there fell to Asa men “in abundance”. Is it possible, then, that these tribes can be lost?

In the next chapter, we read that Baasah, king of Israel, came up against Judah and built Ramah, “to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa, king of Judah” (II Chron. xvi. 1). This action by the king of Israel shows how seriously he regarded the continuous loss of his people to the kingdom of Judah. We also find, in chapter xix., the king of Judah going through the people “from Beersheba to Ephraim”, and “bringing them back to the Lord God of their fathers” (II Chron. xix. 4).

Again, we read in chapter xxiii., in connection with Jehoiada, the high priest:

“And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, *and the chief of the fathers of Israel*, and they came to Jerusalem” (xxiii. 2).

And again, in Chapter xxx.:

“And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel” (II Chron. xxx. 1).

“So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout ALL ISRAEL from Beersheba even to Dan” (II Chron. xxx. 5).

“Divers of Asher and Manasseh out of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem” (II Chron. xxx. 11).

“A multitude of people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves” (II Chron. xxx. 18).

We do not suggest that this great number of the house of Israel severed all connection there and then with the ten-tribed kingdom, for we are told that these Israelites returned to their possessions and cities (II Chron. xxxi. 1). Their hearts were certainly with their inheritance and tribal obligations that needed re-adjusting before they could follow their hearts and take their place with the people of Judah.

We have now discovered that representatives of nine tribes were gathered under the aegis of the King of Judah — Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, and Levi. The more we read, the more difficult it becomes to believe that the ten tribes were ever lost.

Following the chronology given in the *Companion Bible*, we find that the ten-tribed kingdom was established under Jeroboam in B.C.800 and carried away into captivity by Shalmanezar in B.C.611. This would give a period of 269 years from its inception to its disruption. If, alternatively, we adopt Ussher’s chronology the period will be reduced to 254 years. We have already seen that, before this captivity, the tribes of Israel “in abundance” went back and joined with Judah, and it therefore follows that, when the ten-tribed kingdom was taken into captivity, representatives of all Israel must have remained in the land as part of Judah.

In the days of Josiah (B.C.531 — that is 80 years after the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians) we read:

“And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had

gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim and of ALL THE REMNANT of Israel, and all Judah and Benjamin” (II Chron. xxxiv. 9).

Here we reach absolute, positive proof, that the ten tribes were never lost. Even though those deported by the Assyrian kings never returned, this does not affect the argument, for the “remnant of Israel” was quite sufficient to perpetuate the seed, and preserve the continuity of the people. The kingdom of Judah went into captivity under Nebuchadnezzar in B.C.496, which would be 115 years after the end of “Israel” under Shalmanezar. This captivity, however, was limited to 70 years, and at the end of this period the people returned to Jerusalem and the land. Towards the close of this captivity, a recorded prayer of Daniel mentions “Judah” and “all Israel”, including those that were “near” and those “afar off”.

This captive people are called not only “Jews” but “Israel”. Ezra, in his second chapter, gives a list of those who came back to Jerusalem at the end of the seventy years’ captivity, and he heads the list with the words: “The number of the men of the people of Israel” (Ezra ii. 2). We are given the names of a few who “could not shew their father’s house, and their seed, whether they were *of Israel*” (Ezra.ii.59-63), and we therefore infer that all the others in the list were able to establish their claim to be members of one or other of the tribes of Israel. At the end of the list we read of that “all Israel” dwelt in their cities; and we read of “Israel” in Ezra vii. 10, 13; ix. 1; and x. 1, 5. The kingdom of Judah was taken captive by the same line of kings as had taken captive the ten-tribed kingdom, and any one of the ten tribes was as free to go back as were the members of the tribe of Judah. This we find they did (see Ezra vii. 7).

When the returned captives assembled before the rebuilt temple on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius, “twelve he-goats” were offered “for all Israel”, “according to the number of the tribes of Israel” (Ezra vi. 15-17). From this time onwards the title “Jew” became a generic one, and was used without discrimination of any member of the nation of Israel. It is a fallacy to imagine that it is unscriptural to use the word “Jew” of an Israelite after the return from the captivity. Paul himself says, “I am a man which am a Jew” (Acts xxii. 3), and yet he also calls himself an “Israelite” (Rom. x. 1). Peter also calls himself a “Jew” (Acts x. 28), in spite of the fact that he was a Galilean (Acts ii. 7). The “Jews” who were assembled on the day of Pentecost were addressed by Peter as “Ye men of Israel”, and “All the house of Israel” (Acts ii. 22, 36), while in Acts iv. we read that “all the people of Israel” were guilty of the death of Christ, not merely Judah (Acts iv. 10, 27). To take further examples from the Acts, can we believe that Gamaliel made a mistake in speaking to the “Jews” as “Ye men of Israel” (Acts v. 35), or that Peter was confusing things that differ when he told Cornelius that “the word” was sent “unto the children of Israel”, “in the land of the Jews” (Acts x. 36, 39)? When Paul stood up in the synagogue in Acts xiii., he spoke to the assembly as “men of Israel and ye that fear God”, while, according to the record further on in the chapter, those that heard him speak were “Jews” (Acts xiii. 16, 42). The tribes of Israel were certainly not lost when Paul stood before Agrippa and said:

“Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come”(Acts xxvi. 7).

The word “instantly” could only be used here of actual service; it could not have been used if any of the twelve tribes had been lost.

James also addresses his epistle: “To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (James i. 1). Could this letter have been so inscribed if the bulk of the ten tribes had by this time lost their identity?

The suggestion that God would preserve the ten-tribed kingdom after their captivity and bless them centuries later in the guise of Gentiles is quite unscriptural. According to Scripture, the Lord said that He would “destroy the sinful kingdom from off the face of the earth”, but would not utterly destroy the “house of Jacob”. The remaining members of the twelve tribes, that had not been deported by the

Assyrians, were to be “sifted among all nations as corn is sifted in a sieve” (Amos ix. 8, 9), until the time came for their ultimate restoration — for we read that “*all* Israel shall be saved”. The *northern kingdom*, however, was to be destroyed, and not preserved. There was a sufficient number of every tribe left in the kingdom of Judah to ensure the continuity of the whole house of Israel, and, though scattered for a time among the nations, the twelve tribes are to be preserved until the end. Such is the testimony of Scripture. We have not covered a tithe of the whole ground, but what we have seen of what has been revealed in the Word concerning the fate of the house of Israel allows no room for doubt.

Into the supposed etymological and geographical “identification” of these so-called lost tribes we do not propose to enter. The moment a person who has been falsely reported as “lost” is discovered, all “identification” at once becomes valueless. To those who believe in the inspiration of the Holy Writ, nothing more need be said. We have demonstrated by citations from the Scriptures themselves that the tribes of Israel were never “lost”, but that many of Israel returned “in abundance” to Judah after the separation.

In conclusion we should like to add one more quotation — this time from Isaiah:

“The Lord of Hosts shall be for a sanctuary; but for a *stone of stumbling* and for a *rock of offence* to *both* the houses of Israel” (Isa. viii. 13, 14).

This passage looks forward to the cross and discountenances the idea that only “the Jews” were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. In the Acts Peter speaks of the Lord as “the Stone which was set at nought of you builders” (Acts iv. 8-11), and in his epistles quotes Isa. viii. 13, 14 (I Pet. ii. 8). It is obvious from this passage that Christ became a “stone of stumbling” and a “rock of offence” to *both* houses of Israel, and not merely to the house of Judah.

We are not discussing here the various matters that arise out of this subject, as we are confining our studies to one point only. We know from Scripture that all the blessings of Israel are related to the land promises to Abraham; that Israel will be gathered from the lands into which they have been scattered; that Israel will be *Lo-ammi* for many days, but will return to the Lord and to David their King in the latter days; the Israel shall dwell alone and not be numbered among the peoples. These and many other items of revealed truth we pass over as not essential to our main quest. Having “searched the Scriptures” we intend by grace to abide by our findings. At some future time, under another heading, we hope to show that the tribe of Dan will be antichristian in the last days — a serious fact that should deter any believer from becoming associated with a movement that in any measure prepares the way for such a goal.

### **#35. ISAIAH. The Sevenfold Prophecy of Isaiah.**

So far in this series we have followed the order of books as given in the A.V. If we continue to follow this order our next study, after the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, will be the Book of Ezra, which opens with the words: “Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia”. This is evidently a continuation of the story given in II Chronicles, for it will be found that the first two verses of Ezra are a repetition of II Chronicle xxxvi. 22, 23. We must remind ourselves, however, that during the reign of some of the early kings, certain prophets were raised up, who spoke both of the immediate perils that beset the failing people, and also of their only hope of restoration and peace, centred in the long-promised Messiah. It would seem advisable, therefore, to depart from the canonical order of the A.V. and consider next the testimony of those prophets whose ministry falls within the period covered by the books of Kings and Chronicles. We shall then be better equipped for the study of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, and the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah and others that are associated with the return from captivity. We propose, therefore, to ignore the order of the books as set out in the English Bible, and adhere instead to the chronological order. No special study is needed for this, as we merely have to follow the order given in the Hebrew Bible — which is as follows:

## **The Structure of the Prophets, according to the Hebrew Canon.**

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

We can see from this arrangement of the Prophets that, with the end of the Book of Kings, Israel has reached the depths, the glory has departed, and man, even under the immediate protection of God, has proved a failure. With the prophet Isaiah we start a new movement. Uzziah the King may fail so desperately as to be smitten with incurable leprosy, but Isaiah tells us that in the very year that Uzziah died, he saw the Lord enthroned in the temple (Isaiah vi.).

The nation of Israel was called to be the Lord’s “servant-nation” (Isa. xli. 8), but it is the Messiah, Who, in the time of Israel’s failure, is spoken of in the words of Isa. xliii. 1: “Behold My Servant”. Israel is destined to be the Lord’s “witness-nation” (Isa. xliii. 10), but it is the greater than David Who is given as a witness in Isa. lv. 4. And so we have summed up Isaiah’s prophecy in the words of the central member of the structure:

### **“ISRAEL’S ONLY HOPE, FINAL BLESSING AND RESTORATION. MESSIAH’S — GOD’S KING.”**

The prophecy of Isaiah leads up to the same glorious conclusion as that of Paul’s epistle to the Colossians — “Christ is all.”

Before we can hope to appreciate the teaching of a book of this length (it has 66 chapters), it is incumbent upon us to discover its structure. This is not an easy task, and yet our experience over the last twenty-five years and more compels us to attempt it, for we have so often in the past been richly rewarded for the hours that the investigation has entailed. Some readers may perhaps be inclined to ask, “Why not accept the structure already set out in the *Companion Bible*?”. Our reply is that, valuable as these structures undoubtedly are, we are under a self-imposed obligation to live up to the title of this magazine, and “search and see” for ourselves. In the course of our studies we have obtained, over a period of years, a few helpful books on various parts of the O.T. and among them one or two commentaries on Isaiah. One of these was responsible for starting us off on the present investigation, and although the author, the Rev. T. R. Birks, does not carry his own suggestions to their conclusion, the hint that he throws out with regard to the structure of Isaiah was enough to provide the incentive and

direction. The final result we present to the reader below. A detailed analysis of the sixty-six chapters of the book would obviously not be practicable at this stage, and we must therefore ask the reader to be satisfied with the following outline, which can be filled in as the details are given in subsequent articles.

A | PRE-ASSYRIAN INVASION (i.-xxxv.).

a | i.-xii. THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN. |

- (1) i. Zion like a lodge (*Melunah*).
- (2) ii. - iv. 6. Zion's future glory.
- (3) v. Zion, the Lord's vineyard.
- (4) vi. The Tenth. It shall return.
- (5) vii. - ix. 7. Virgin's Son. Immanuel.
- (6) ix. 8 - x. 34. Remnant shall return.
- (7) xi.-xii. The root and offspring of David.

b | xiii.-xxvii. BURDENS AND BLESSINGS. |

- (1) xiii. - xiv. 23. Babylon and Jerusalem.
- (2) xiv. 24 - xviii. Philistia, Moab, Damascus.
- (3) xix., xx. Egypt.
- (4) xxi. Desert. Dumah. Arabia.
- (5) xxii. Valley of Vision.
- (6) xxiii. Tyre.
- (7) xxiv.-xxvii. The earth like a cottage (*Melunah*).

c | xxviii.-xxxv. WOES AND GLORIES. |

- (1) xxviii. Ephraim. Instruction.
- (2) xxix. Ariel. Redemption.
- (3) xxx. Egypt. Grace.
- (4) xxxi., xxxii. Apostates. Righteous King.
- (5) xxxiii. Assyria. King in His Beauty.
- (6) xxxiv. Idumea. Recompenses.
- (7) xxxv. 1-10. Wilderness. Glory and Excellency.

B | ASSYRIAN INVASION AND DELIVERANCE (xxxvi.-xxxix.).

A | POST-ASSYRIAN INVASION (xl.-lxvi.).

a | xl.-xlvi. COMFORT AND CONTROVERSY. |

- (1) xl. 1-11. Good tidings to Zion.
- (2) xl. 12 - xlii. 17. My Servant (Israel and Messiah).
- (3) xlii. 18 - xlv. 15. My Witnesses (Israel).
- (4) xlv. 16-25. God and none else.
- (5) xlvi. Israel My Glory.
- (6) xlvii. Babylon said, I am and none else.
- (7) xlvi. His servant Jacob, redeemed.

b | xlix.-lx. LIGHT AND PEACE. |

- (1) xlix. 1-12. A light to lighten the Gentiles.
- (2) xlix. 13 - lii. 12. Sold for nought. Redeemed without money.
- (3) lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.
- (4) lvi. 9 - lviii. 1. Peace. No Peace.
- (5) lviii. 2-14. Ceremonialism.
- (6) lix. Redeemer shall come to Zion.
- (7) lx. Gentiles shall come to thy light.

c | lxi.-lxvi. ACCEPTABLE YEAR AND DAY OF VENGEANCE. |

- (1) lxi. Priests of the Lord.
- (2) lxii. A city not forsaken.
- (3) lxiii. 1-6. The day of vengeance.
- (4) lxiii. 7-14. The days of old.
- (5) lxiii. 15 - lxiv. Our Father.
- (6) lxv. 1-16. Recompense.
- (7) lxv. 17 - lxvi. New heavens and new earth.

The focal point in this sevenfold analysis is the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib and the deliverance of Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah. Three great sections lead up to this point, and three follow, each section being sevenfold in composition. Each one of these 42 subsections is complete in itself, as also is the central section, Isaiah xxxvi.-xxxix.

It is obvious that we shall have to do a certain amount of selecting in dealing with these great prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but we feel sure the reader will agree that the first of these has a very strong claim for the fullest possible hearing. The task would be sufficiently difficult even if we have unlimited space and leisure, and it becomes even more so when we have to select and condense. We remember, however, the words of Isaiah xl.: “All flesh is grass . . . . but the Word of our God shall stand for ever”, and we take courage as we remember that His commands are His enablings.

**#36. The unity of ISAIAH demonstrated.**

We believe we can safely assume that none of our readers will wish for a lengthy disquisition on the so-called “assured results of the Higher Criticism”, nor will they feel that the space at our disposal has been used to profit by filling it with “arguments” for and against the modernist theory of two or more “Isaiahs”. When we can turn to no less than ten passages in the N.T. that quote Isaiah by name as the author of the so-called “former” portion (i.-xxxix.), and eleven passages in the N.T. that just as emphatically quote him by name as the author of the so-called “latter” portion (xl.-lxvi.), and when we also discover that six different speakers are responsible for these statements—namely, the Lord Himself, Matthew, Luke, John, John the Baptist, and Paul—then, for the believer, the matter is at an end. These twenty-one reference to Isaiah *by name* are not, of course, the total number of references to his *prophecy*. Isaiah is quoted 85 times in the N.T., from 61 separate passages (some are repeated by more than one writer), and there are only seven books out of the twenty-seven that form the N.T. canon that are without a reference to his prophecy. Twenty-three of these citations are from Isaiah i.-xxxix., and thirty-eight from Isaiah xl.-lxvi. The unity of authorship is further demonstrated by the occurrence of certain words in both portions, which, according to the so-called critics, are to be found in one portion only. A selection of these will be found in the *Companion Bible* (appendix 79), but a much more exhaustive list is given in the commentary, referred to in our first article, by T. R. Birks.

Turning from the question of the authorship of the prophecy to matters far more helpful, it is important at the outset that we should bear in mind the two great sections of the book — namely, Chapters i.-xxxv. and Chapters xl.-lxvi.

**The Relation of Isaiah XXXV., to the Latter Portion of the Prophecy.**

The former portion of Isaiah ends with chapter xxxv., but this closing chapter is so woven into the fabric of the latter portion that neither can be looked upon as complete without the other.

Isaiah XXXV.	Isaiah XL. - LXVI.
(1) “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God” [xxxv. 1, 2].	“The glory of Lebanon” (lx. 13). “Sharon” (lxv. 10). “They shall come and see My glory” (lxvi. 18). “He hath no form nor comeliness” — <i>hadar</i> , the same word as “excellency” (liii. 2).

Isaiah XXXV.	Isaiah XL. - LXVI.
(2) "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not" [3, 4].	<p>"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (xl. 31).</p> <p>"The young men shall utterly <i>fall</i>" (xl. 30).</p> <p>"That they should not <i>stumble</i>" (lxiii. 13) — the same word as "feeble" in xxxv. 3.</p> <p>"I will strengthen thee" (xli. 10) — the same word as "confirm" in xxxv. 3.</p>
(3) "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you" [xxxv. 4].	<p>"He put on garments of vengeance" (lix. 7).</p> <p>"The day of vengeance of our God" (lxi. 2).</p> <p>"The day of vengeance is in Mine heart" (lxiii. 4).</p> <p>"Recompense to His enemies; to the islands He will repay recompense" (lix. 18).</p> <p>"The Lord that rendereth recompense to His enemies" (lxvi. 6).</p>
(4) "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped" [xxxv. 5].	<p>"To open the blind eyes" (xlii. 7).</p> <p>"I will bring the blind by a way that they know not" (xlii. 16).</p> <p>"Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind" (xlii. 18).</p> <p>see also xliii. 8.</p>
(5) "For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" [xxxv. 6].	<p>"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water" (xli. 18).</p> <p>"I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (xliii. 20).</p> <p>see also xliv. 3-5 and xlviii. 21.</p>
(6) "And a highway shall be there, and a way; and it shall be called the way of holiness" [8].	<p>"I will bring . . . . by a way . . . . in paths" (xli. 16).</p> <p>"I will even make a way in the wilderness" (xliii. 19).</p> <p>"I will make all My mountains a way, and My highways shall be exalted" (xlix. 1).</p>
(7) "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" [xxxv. 10].	<p>"Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (li. 11).</p>

It will be seen that the climax which is reached in chapter xxxv. is expanded and amplified in the chapters of the prophecy that constitute the second part.

Let us now take another line of thought. Running through the former part of the prophecy is a sevenfold prediction concerning the “forsaking” of the land and city. In the second part we find a sevenfold reversal of these judgments.

### **The Predicted Judgment (The former half).**

- (1) “A great *forsaking* in the midst of the land” (Isa. vi. 12).
- (2) “The land *forsaken* of both her kings” (Isa. vii. 16).
- (3) “The cities of Aroer are *forsaken*” (Isa. xvii. 2).
- (4) “In that day shall his strong cities be as a *forsaken* bough . . . .” (Isa. xvii. 9).
- (5) “Which they *left* because of the children of Israel” (Isa. xvii. 9).
- (6) “The habitation forsaken and *left* like a wilderness” (Isa. xxvii. 10).
- (7) “The multitude of the city shall be *left*” (Isa. xxxii. 14).

### **The Predicted Blessing (The latter half).**

- (1) “I, the God of Israel, will not *forsake* them” (Isa. xli. 17).
- (2) “These things will I do unto them, and will not *forsake* them” (Isa. xlii. 16).
- (3) “The Lord hath called thee as a woman *forsaken*” (Isa. lix. 6).
- (4) “For a small moment have I *forsaken* thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee” (Isa. liv. 7).
- (5) “Thou hast been *forsaken* . . . . I will make thee . . . . a joy” (Isa. lx. 15).
- (6) “Thou shalt no more be termed *Forsaken*” (Isa. lxii. 4).
- (7) “Thou shalt be called, Sought out, a city not *forsaken*” (Isa. lxii. 12).

The structure, which is set out on page [above](#), shows that the former prophecy is divided into three great groups, the first group ending with x. 33 - xii., the second with xxiv. - xxvii., and the third with chapter xxxv. These three closing portions of the three groups contain a special prophetic message, which finds an echo in the latter part of the prophecy. Taking the earlier chapters first, we have the following:

- (1) “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . . the lion shall eat straw like the ox . . . . they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain” (Isa. xi. 6-9).
- (2) “The Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces” (Isa. xxv. 8).
- (3) “Everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa. xxxv. 10).

These early promises are found, inverse order, in the latter portion of the prophecy:

- (3) “Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away” (Isa. li. 11).
- (2) “The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying” (Isaiah lxv. 19).
- (1) “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord” (Isa. lxv. 25).

The forsaking of Israel was consequent upon Israel’s own forsaking of their covenant with God; their restoration will be based upon a New Covenant of grace. The word “covenant” occurs twelve times in Isaiah, and its distribution is in complete harmony with the trend of the prophecy.

The first and last occurrences are in chapter xxiv. and chapter lxi.:

- “*They have broken* the everlasting covenant” (Isa. xxiv. 5).  
 “*I will make* an everlasting covenant with them” (Isa. lxi. 8).

The full list of occurrences is as follows:

**“Covenant” in Isaiah.**

	/	A		xxiv. 5.	<b>Covenant</b> broken.
First part of	/	B		xxviii. 15.	<b>Covenant</b> made with death.
Isaiah.—Desolation	\	B		xxviii. 18.	<b>Covenant</b> with death annulled.
(i.-xxxv.).	\	A		xxxiii. 8.	<b>Covenant</b> broken.

**Historic Interlude (xxxvi.-xxxix.)**

	/	A		xliv. 6; xlix. 8.	Messiah given as a <b>covenant</b> .
	/	B		liv. 10.	<b>Covenant</b> of My peace.
Second part of	/	C		lv. 3.	I will make an everlasting <b>covenant</b> .
Isaiah.—Desolation	\	A		lvi. 4, 6.	Take hold of My <b>covenant</b> .
(xl.-lxvi.).	\	B		lix. 21.	This is My <b>covenant</b> .
	\	C		lxi. 8.	I will make an everlasting <b>covenant</b>

We have already observed that the Assyrian invasion casts its shadow over the prophecy and occupies the central historic interlude. The connection between this invasion and the covenant is made clear in II Kings xviii.:

“And the King of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria . . . . because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but *transgressed His covenant*” (II Kings xviii. 11, 12).

We have sought to demonstrate something of the oneness of this great prophecy of Isaiah, and in so doing have been led to see a little of the way in which its glorious theme is unfolded. With this one article on the subject of the unity of the book we must be satisfied. In our subsequent studies we shall be exploring the book itself, and we look forward to many hours of joy and refreshment as we consider together this evangelist among the prophets.

**#37. ISAIAH i. - v. Rebellion, ruin, and restoration.**

In order to cover the ground fairly rapidly and in such a way that the salient points may be perceived, we propose to devote three articles to the section covering Isaiah i.-xii., and to apportion the subject-matter as follows:

- (1) Isaiah i.-v. (2) Isaiah vi. (3) Isaiah vii.-xii.

We therefore turn our attention in the present article to the first five chapters of this prophecy, and endeavour to obtain a comprehensive view of its teaching. We note first, in chapter i., that, on account of her ingratitude and rebellion, Israel is described as “the daughter of Zion, left as a booth in a vineyard”. In chapter v., the “vineyard of the Lord of Hosts” is said to be Israel, and because of the utter failure of this vineyard to bring forth fruit, the Lord says, “I will lay it waste”. In chapter i. we read, “I have brought up children”; in chapter v. the Lord says: “What could have been done more to my vineyard?”. In chapter i. we read, “Who hath required this at your hand to tread (*ramas*) my courts?” and in chapter v., “It shall be trodden down (*mirmas*, the substantive form of *ramas*). Again, in chapter i. we read, “Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider”, while in chapter v. we have the parallel charge:

“They regard not . . . . neither consider . . . . My people are gone away into captivity, because they have no knowledge.”

Going on to Isaiah ii. & iv., we have a marked parallel between ii. 1-5 and iv. 2-6. The first passage speaks of “the last days” (ii. 2) and the second of “that day” (iv. 2) when Zion shall be restored and glorified, and the nations shall be taught at Jerusalem. Isaiah ii. 6-22 and iii. 16 - iv. 1 deal with the exposure of sinful pride and the fact that it will be brought low in the day of the Lord, while iii. 1-15 brings before us the ruin of Jerusalem. If we are not to load our pages unduly, we must refrain from attempting too close an analysis of these five chapters, and we therefore submit the following to the discriminating reader, believing that those who wish to go more into detail will be granted sufficient light and wisdom for the task.

### Outline Analysis of Isaiah i. - v.

- A | i. REBELLION. |
  - a | Zion left like a booth in a vineyard. Defenceless.
  - b | Israel did not know, they did not consider.
  - c | I have nourished and brought up children.
  - d | The land desolate; devoured.
  - e | Treading the courts (*ramas*).
  - f | The tow and the spark.
- B | ii. 1-5. RESTORATION. |
  - g | The last days.
  - h | The house of the Lord established.
  - i | The nations shall not learn war.
  - j | Light of the Lord.
- C | ii. 6 - iv. 1. RUIN. |
  - k | ii. 6-22. Pride brought low.  
Mean men. Great men.
  - l | iii. 1-15. Jerusalem is ruined.
  - k | iii. 16 - iv. 1. Pride brought low.  
Daughter of Zion. Seven women.
- B | iv. 2-6. RESTORATION. |
  - g | In that day.
  - h | The branch of the Lord beautiful.
  - i | “Escaped” and “left”. Glory shall be a defence.
  - j | Shadow and refuge.
- A | v. REJECTION. |
  - a | The house of Israel like a vineyard.
  - b | They regard not, neither consider.
  - c | What could I have done more?
  - d | Vineyard laid waste; eaten up.
  - e | It shall be trodden down (*ramas*).
  - f | The fire and the stubble.

The above is given as an “outline analysis” rather than as a literary structure, for one very obvious reason, namely, that a literary structure of five such chapters as these would be too vast for the limits of our pages. We need not, however, forego the value of the evident correspondence of theme simply because we cannot set out each chapter fully, and we have therefore disregarded the actual order of the passages in chapters i. and v., and have merely indicated a few of the outstanding parallels.

We see from the structure that the main theme of these five chapters may be summarized in words which might well stand as representing the burden of all prophecy — viz., Rebellion, Rejection, Ruin and ultimate Restoration. Even here, in this opening charge against the ingratitude and rebellion of

Israel, grace cannot be altogether silent, and so two very small, but very precious anticipations of future glory (ii. 1-5 and iv. 2-6) find a place.

We must now seek to understand more fully the causes of the serious condition in which Israel is found, the remedy provided, and the ultimate restoration that is in view.

### **Isaiah i. The Indictment.**

The first verse of this chapter belongs, not to the opening section, but to the whole book. We learn from this verse that Isaiah's prophecies (or "visions") concern "Judah and Jerusalem", and that they were seen in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. It is probable that this opening chapter describes the condition of the land and people at a time subsequent to the reign of Uzziah, for we know that Judah was not subjected to a foreign invasion until the days of Ahaz. The whole of the former portion of Isaiah seems to be overshadowed by the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib, and it seems likely that Isaiah has described the state of the land and people during this time, and placed it in the forefront of the whole book, because of its special significance. The invasion under Sennacherib, and the miraculous deliverance from his threatenings, are a forecast of the last great world power that shall bring about the day of Jacob's trouble, and the final overthrow of the oppressor.

When dealing with the Book of Deuteronomy, we drew attention to the way in which the Song of Jehovah's Name (Deuteronomy xxxii.) seems to be the quarry to which most subsequent prophets have gone for their material. Among the parallels noted were twelve instances from Isaiah. We will not repeat what we have already written (see volume XXIV, p.82), but it may be helpful if we mention again the four parallels with Isaiah i.:

"Hear, O heavens" (Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2).

"Nourished children" (Deut. xxxii. 6; Isa. i. 2).

"Corrupters" (Deut. xxxii. 5; Isa. i. 4).

"Sodom" (Deut. xxxii. 32; Isa. i. 10).

The Song of Deuteronomy xxxii. proceeds by a series of stages from the perfect work of the Lord, down through Israel's failure, and so on to final restoration. In the same way Isaiah traces the downward path of the chosen people, until grace eventually intervenes.

As we have five sections to review within the confines of a few pages, we must necessarily pass by much that would be profitable. We shall endeavour, however, to give prominence to those points which mark the way, so that the reader may be guided in his own private reading.

The indictment of the people is that they were ungrateful children. In other places we read of Israel breaking their covenant with the Lord, and disobeying the precepts of the law. Here, however, we read:

"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me."

We get a glimpse here of the heart of God as Father, and His feelings towards His children.

In verse 4 the people are spoken of as "corrupters"; in verse 5 their punishment is spoken of in terms of "stripes" (i. 5); and in verse 7 their land and cities are said to be "left desolate" (i. 7). At the heart of this ingratitude and rebellion lies the fact expressed in verse 3: "Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider" (i. 3). The word "consider" we shall meet again in Isa. vi. 9, 10 as "understand", and we therefore postpone comment until this chapter is reached.

We also note in this chapter that the people who are so corrupt as to be likened to Sodom and Gomorrah (i. 9, 10) are nevertheless deeply "religious". Sacrifices, oblations, incense, were all enjoined by the law, but the Lord says of them here:

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? Who hath required this at your hand, to tread (or trample) My courts?"

When religious observances have become a refuge from conscience, oblations become “vain”, incense an “abomination”, and solemn assemblies “iniquity”.

It is in this context that we find the first passage in Isaiah that is quoted in the N.T.:

“Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrha” (Isa. i. 9).

This passage forms an integral part of the dispensational argument of Romans ix., and the reader is referred to the articles on Romans in *The Berean Expositor* for fuller notes on this important passage. A remnant by grace, saved at the time of trouble, was in its turn a pledge that all Israel shall be saved in God’s day of grace.

We reach a climax in chapter i. at verse 18:

“Come now, and let us reason together.”

*The Companion Bible*, together with several other commentaries, draws attention to the fact that this passage speaks of putting an end to all reasoning rather than inviting it. The Hebrew word *yakash*, which is translated here “reason together”, means primarily “to demonstrate what is right and true”, and in some of its forms can mean “to reprove” (Isa. xi. 4). The form of the verb in Isa. i. 18 is equivalent to our passive, and suggests reproof rather than continued reasoning. The Hebrew *yakash* gives us the word for “the daysman”, whom Job so longed for (Job ix. 33), and we can certainly see thought of the Mediator behind Isa. i. 18:

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

The idea involved in the simile “as scarlet” is better seen when the Hebrew is consulted. The word *sheni*, meaning “two”, or “double”, in the course of time came to mean “double-dyed”, by virtue of the fact that it was the custom to dip a garment twice when dyeing it purple (See Horace and Pliny). The second word “crimson” refers to a colour made from the Cochineal insect, our English word being derived from the Arabic *Al-Kermes*, through the French *cramoisi*. The feminine form of the word occurs in Isa. xli. 14 where it is translated “worm”. Both the colours mentioned by the prophet are deeply bitten into the material, and yet, to pass from the figure to the actuality, such is the grace of God that these double-dyed sinners may actually become “as white as snow”.

After further reference to the nature of Israel’s sin (under such figures as those of a harlot and a murderer) we read in verses 25-27 of the purifying of the people — the words used are very reminiscent of Malachi’s figure of the purification of silver in Mal. iii. 3 — and of the glorious restoration that awaits them.

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness” (Isa. i. 26, 27).

The closing verses speak of the destruction of the “transgressor and sinner, together” and the consuming of those that forsake the Lord.

“And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them” (Isa. i. 31).

These awful words concerning the fire that is not quenched find a solemn echo in the last verse of the prophecy, where we read:

“And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me: for their worm (the same word as “crimson” in i. 18) shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched (the same word as in i. 31); and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh” (Isa. lxvi. 24).

### Isaiah ii. 2-5.

This precious glimpse of the days of restoration and blessing is fully expanded in the second part of the prophecy (xl.-lxvi.) and therefore, as our space is limited, we will be content with the following outline.

- A | 2. The true exaltation (Heb. *nasa*). “The Lord’s house.”
  - B | 3. | a | Many people.
    - b | Come ye, let us go . . . to the . . . God of Jacob.
    - c | We will walk in His paths.
  - C | 3. | d | Out of Zion.
    - e | Shall go forth the law.
    - e | And the word of the Lord.
    - d | From Jerusalem.
- A | 4. False exaltation (Heb. *nasa*). “Not lift up sword.”
  - B | 5. | a | House of Jacob.
    - b | Come ye, let us walk.
    - c | In the light of the Lord.

Here, in these few sentences, we have compressed the glorious future that awaits the nations of the earth when Israel shall at last enter into their inheritance and become a kingdom of priests. Not until the nations cease to “learn” war, will peace be more than an illusion.

Before we come to the sequel to this prophecy of restoration and peace (Isa. iv. 2-6), we must first consider the intervening passage — Isa. ii. 6 - iv. 1 — which deals with the cause of Israel’s failure to enter into their inheritance and to become a channel of blessing to the surrounding nations. The structure shows a threefold division of this passage (see page.131, [above](#)) but the theme is one — sinful pride ending in ruin. What a contrast between the Jerusalem of Isaiah’s vision (ii. 1-5), and the Jerusalem he actually knew. Instead of true worship, we see a land full of idols, and instead of the law of the Lord shining forth from Jerusalem—

“They are replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they join hands with the children of strangers” (Isa. ii. 6).

The following is the structure of **Isaiah ii. 6-22:**

- A | 6. People forsaken of the Lord.
- B | 7-9. Idols. Silver and gold. The land full. Men abased.
- C | 10. Enter into rock . . . . . Glory of His majesty.
- D | 11. Lofty humbled.
- E | 11. The Lord alone exalted.
- F | 12-16. The day of the Lord.
- D | 17. Lofty humbled.
- E | 17. The Lord alone exalted.
- C | 19. Go into rocks . . . . . Glory of His majesty.
- B | 20. Idols. Silver and gold. Cast to moles and bats.
- A | 22. Cease ye from man.

The last sentence here: “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?” is parallel with the opening section of the second part of Isaiah, where we read that “all flesh is grass”. The “Word of the Lord” is what endures, and He is able to accomplish His purposes without the aid of man. If only we could take to heart the testimony of Isa. ii. 22, we should realize the futility of all human schemes to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. The Lord has forsaken His people . . . . . “Cease ye from man”.

Chapter iii. gives another terrible picture of Jerusalem as it was, in contrast to what it will be:

“I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them” (iii. 4).

“As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (iii. 12).

The word “ruin” in verses 6 and 8 means “stumbling and falling”, and occurs also in Isa. v. 27, xxxv. 3, and xl. 30. The recurrence of the idea of “rule” here (verses 4, 6, 7, and 12), shows that we have in this second view of Israel’s failure, failure in its *political* aspect, just as in ii. 6-22, we had their failure in the matter of worship and true religion. To complete the picture of Israel’s degradation we have their *moral* failure set forth in Isa. iii. 15 - iv. 1. Here the daughters of Zion come before us with their wanton eyes and mincing steps, chains, bracelets, veils, rings, jewels and perfumes. In the case of the men, their idolatry is expressed in terms of treasures, chariots, high towers, fenced walls, and ships of Tarshish (ii. 7, 15, 16); in the case of the women, it is expressed in terms of self-adornment and its immoral accompaniments (iii. 16-23). What a relief to turn from this to Isa. iv. 2-6, where we have another view of the Jerusalem that is to be, when the Lord “shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion” and, “over all the glory shall be a marriage-canopy” (A.V. “defence”: verse 5).

Isaiah rounds off this great section of his prophecy with the parable of the vineyard, which, in spite of all the care lavished upon it, brings forth only wild grapes. Following this parable we have a sixfold denunciation (verses 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, & 22), and the chapter concludes with the threat of invasion — a threat which was fulfilled when the Assyrians entered the land.

With such an abundance of material there is always the possibility of creating confusion by elaborate explanations. On the other hand, if any thread of teaching can be discerned in a particular section of such a prophecy as this, it should certainly be seized upon with gratitude. One such thread seems to be provided by the eight references to Zion, and with these we must close.

#### **Zion in Isaiah i. - v.**

- A | i. 8. Forsaken. The Remnant (i. 9).
- B | i. 27. Redeemed with judgment.
- C | ii. 3. Law goes forth to nations.
- D | iii. 16. Haughty and vain.
- D | iii. 17. Smitten with scab.
- C | iv. 3. Holy; those that are left in Zion.
- B | iv. 4. Washed . . . . . spirit of judgment.
- A | iv. 5. Defence. The Escaped (iv. 2).

### #38. ISAIAH vi. The Prophetic Vision and Commission.

While we do not suggest that one chapter of this mighty prophecy may be of greater importance than another, because to do so would merely be comparison according to our view of what is important, we can assert that Isaiah vi. contains material demanding profound attention. The chapter marks a spiritual crisis in the prophet's own life; it throws light upon the purpose of the ages; it contains a passage that is quoted by the Lord at the time of his rejection by Israel in the Land (Matthew xiii.), and by Paul at Rome of Israel in the dispersion (Acts xxviii.). Moreover it concludes with a pledge of Israel's restoration couched in terms that demand careful analysis.

First we will examine the chapter to discover its place in the ministry of the prophet. Are we to understand that after he had uttered the prophecies of chapters i.-v., he saw the vision of Isaiah vi. and confessed his uncleanness? That is the considered opinion of some. We learn from the opening verse of chapter i. that Isaiah's prophetic ministry was exercised in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. The total period of the last of these three reigns is sixty-one years, so that it is extremely improbable that Isaiah prophesied during many years of the first of the three. There are scriptural reasons for believing that this sixth chapter of Isaiah discloses the call and commission of the prophet, and that that call was received in the last years of Uzziah's reign.

If we compare the account of this call with the features that are recorded in connection with the call and commission of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel, we shall find confirmation of the opinion that Isaiah vi. is the initiatory vision of the prophet's commission. Let us see this:

JEREMIAH'S COMMISSION. — *The touched lips.* "Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put My words in thy mouth" (Jer. i. 9).

EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION. — *The Cherubim.* "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar . . . . the likeness of four living creatures . . . . every one had . . . . four wings" (Ezek. i. 3-6).

ISAIAH'S COMMISSION. — *The touched lips and the Seraphim* (Isa. vi. 1-7).

It is probable that the vision of Isaiah vi. was not made public during the lifetime of Isaiah; it was initially for his personal satisfaction and was not made known until the whole of Isaiah's prophecies were written. In the same way we do not read in Acts ix. what the Lord said to Paul himself on that occasion, but only what the Lord said to Ananias about Paul, the actual words uttered by the Lord to Paul himself not being made known until Paul was imprisoned (Acts xxvi. 16).

Before we proceed to the examination of this most important section of Isaiah's prophecy it will be well for us to get a measure of its structure, so that we may be guided in our study in the direction of the inspired intention. No existing structure appears to give the true place to the two references to the *eretz* (earth, land), nor the threefold response of Isaiah, "Then said I". Accordingly, we approach the chapter afresh, and present to the reader what we believe comprehends the essential features in their structural relationship.

## Isaiah vi.

- A | 1. Uzziah. Type of Israel, Failure.
- B | 2, 3. The thrice Holy Lord.
- C | 3, 4. *Eretz* (earth). Fulness of it, the glory of the Lord.
  - D1 | 5-8. |
    - a | *Then said i.* CONFESSIOIN; Unclean.
    - b | *And He said.* CLEANSING; Eyes, lips, hearing.
  - D2 | 8-10. |
    - a | *Then said i.* CONSECRATION; Send me.
    - b | *And He said.* COMMISSION; Hear, eyes, heart.
  - D3 | 11. |
    - a | *Then said i.* COMMISERATION; Lord, how long?
    - b | *And He answered.* COMMINATION; Until wasted, desolate.
- C | 12. *Eretz* (land). Forsaking in midst of it.
- A | 13. Sacred Tithe. Type of Remnant. Return.
- B | 13. The holy seed.

In volume XXIX, p.208 we have given the whole history of the Kings of Israel and Judah as they are associated with the *House of God*, and it will be seen that the central member of the whole outline is occupied with the reigns of Uzziah and his son Jotham. The history of the Kingdom reaches its lowest level at the presumption and leprosy of King Uzziah who, in his presumption and in his doom himself foreshadowed the future Antichrist. This gives point to the opening words of the vision:

“In the year that King Uzziah died *i saw also* the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple” (Isa. vi. 1).

Here we have a solemn contrast drawn between Uzziah, the king, stricken with leprosy because of his own sin, and the Lord, the King, Who was treated as a leper by the very people for whom He came to die (Isa. liii. 3), and Who will accomplish all that is implied in the office of King and Priest.

John xii. leaves us in no doubt that the “King” seen by Isaiah in this vision was Christ, for after quoting Isa. vi. 9, 10, the Evangelist adds:

“These things said Esaias when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” (John xii. 41).

In Isa. vi. 2 the holy beings that stand above the throne are called Seraphim, which has led many to believe that a different order of celestial being from the Cherubim is indicated. But that this is by no means a necessary deduction, we will seek to show.

Primarily, the word *seraph* means “To burn”, and anything that burns may be a *seraph*, even if it be a city (Isa. i. 7), or an idol (Isa. xlv. 16). Consequently, if it suited the purpose of Isaiah vi. to call the Cherubim by a distinctive feature, that of itself would not prove a distinction of being. The description given in the book of Revelation of the four “*zoa*” or “living ones” (wrongly translated “beasts”), shows the Cherubim of Ezekiel to be identical with the Seraphim of Isaiah.

“And the first living one was like a lion, and the second living one like a calf, and the third living one had a face as a man, and the fourth living one was like a flying eagle. And the four living ones had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. iv. 7, 8).

This is of prime importance, for the witness of the Cherubim, which commences, so far as man is concerned, at Genesis iii. continues throughout the Scriptures until its prophetic pledge is realized in the Revelation. Man’s dominion being forfeited in Genesis iii., the Cherubim are placed at the east of

the garden as a pledge that the dominion shall be restored. The fact that the next reference to Cherubim is in connection with the Mercy Seat is an added revelation indicating the process whereby this restoration shall be accomplished, and the fact that the prayer of Hezekiah, which occurs in the very centre and climax of Isaiah, is addressed to The Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, *that dwellest between the Cherubim* (Isa. xxxvii. 16) gives point to the theme of restoration, and intensifies the interest which Isaiah, and we with him, must have in the presence of the Seraphim at the beginning of his prophetic ministry.

The Seraphim are described as having six wings, yet only two were used for flying, the remaining four being used in the recognition of the holiness of the One they served. While not introduced to teach positive doctrine concerning the Godhead, their threefold ascription of holiness, together with the change of number in the person of the pronoun in verse 8, “Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *Us*?” cannot but be observed.

Before leaving the passage dealing with the Seraphim, it may help us to observe the way in which the Hebrew word is used in Isaiah.

### Seraph in Isaiah.

- A | i. 7. Country desolate. Cities burned. Not consider (3).
- B | vi. 2, 6. Temple. Seraphim. Live coal. No understanding (9).
- C | ix. 5. War. Burning.  
Child born, Prince of Peace (6).
- C | xlv. 16, 19. Idols. Burn in fire.  
He that formed thee from the womb (24-28).
- B | xlvii. 14. Babylon. Fire shall burn them. Not lay to heart (7).
- A | lxiv. 10, 11. Jerusalem desolate. House burned. None call on Name (7).

This burning judgment, echoed in Isa. iv. 4, where the cleansing of Jerusalem is in view, gives point to Isaiah’s selection in his opening vision of the name of “Seraphim”. The very last words of his prophecy end in the same strain: “Neither shall their fire be quenched” (Isa. lvi. 24).

The cry of the Seraphim, “Holy, holy, holy”, is associated with a prophetic statement; “The whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa. vi. 6). Let us read once more the parallel passage in Revelation:

“And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come . . . . Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. iv. 8-11).

In Isaiah the Hebrew word *eretz* is translated “earth”, “land” and “country” and it is consequently necessary to examine the context before drawing conclusions. There are seven undoubted references to “the whole earth” in Isaiah which will illuminate the prophecy of the Seraphim. Let us observe both the references and their correspondence.

### **“The Whole Earth” in Isaiah.**

- A | vi. 3. The whole earth is full of His glory. A great forsaking (12).
- B | xii. 5. *Excellent* things (Heb. *Geuth*).  
Water. Salvation (3).
- C | xiv. 7. Rest (blessing). The grave for king of Babylon (9, 11)
- D | xiv. 26. The purpose upon the whole earth. Assyrian broken (24, 25).
- C | xxv. 8. Rest (judgment, 10). Death swallowed up in victory (8).
- B | xxviii. 22. Crown of *Pride* [Heb. *Geuth* (1, 3)].  
Waters (17). Consumption (22).
- A | liv. 5. Husband, Redeemer, God of the whole earth. Forsaken for a moment (7).

The purpose of the ages, set forth in prophetic type by the Cherubim, and foreshadowed by the utterance of the Seraphim, is expressed in this sevenfold reference to the whole earth. The reader is urged to examine the context of each reference and to see the way in which all opposition is broken down; death swallowed up in victory, pride overthrown, and the Lord alone exalted in that day, and how, just as the Assyrian invasion occupies the centre of the whole prophecy, so the Assyrian occupies the centre of this sevenfold reference.

We observe that the A.V. gives in the margin of Isa. vi. 3, the note: “Heb. His glory is the fulness of the whole earth”, while Rotherham translates the passage: “The fulness of the whole earth is His glory”. Isaiah observed that the train of the Lord’s garment *filled* the temple (Isa. vi. 1), and that the house was *filled* with smoke (Isa. vi. 4).

The first occurrence of this phrase in Isa. vi. 3 is found in Numbers xiv. where Israel so signally failed to follow the Lord and triumph over the Canaanites.

“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord”  
(Numb. xiv. 21).

This initial promise strikes the key note. The glory of the Lord and the fulness of the whole earth are connected with the overthrow of satanic opposition and the full faith of His people. This is seen in the seven occurrences of the expression “the whole earth” already reviewed.

At the close of that prayer which looks forward to the kingdom of Christ on earth, David said:

“Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only doeth wondrous things.  
And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with  
His glory: Amen and Amen” (Psa. lxxii. 18, 19).

Again, the triumphant twenty-fourth Psalm, which speaks of the entry of the King of glory and the lifting up of the age-abiding doors, opens with the statement: “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” (Psa. xxiv. 1).

The subject is carried to its completion in the N.T. where the fulness is seen expressed and realized in Christ. It would take us too far afield to examine these N.T. references now, but the reader is directed to the article dealing with the *Pleroma* in volume XIII, pp.165-170.

In contrast therefore with the failing King Uzziah, Isaiah sees the pledge of final fulness in the Christ of God. There is a comparison also between Isaiah himself, the nation and Uzziah, for he too confesses uncleanness.

“I SAW ALSO THE LORD.” — In the year that King Uzziah died.

“ALSO I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD.” — After Isaiah had confessed  
uncleanness.

This “seeing” & “hearing” is in direct contrast to the failure of Israel which is manifested in Isaiah.vi.10.

“Then said i, Woe is me!” (Isa. vi. 5).

The effect of the vision of the Lord upon the beholder has ever been the same. Job, the “perfect” man, said that if he could but stand before the Lord he would maintain his integrity, but when at last his wish was gratified, he said:

“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth Thee.  
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job xlii. 5, 6).

Daniel’s comeliness turned to corruption in the presence of an angel (Dan. x. 8); Peter besought the Lord to depart from him because he was a sinful man (Luke v. 8); and John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, fell at His feet as one dead, when he beheld His glory (Rev. i. 17).

This attitude and confession of Isaiah is but a blessed anticipation of the attitude and confession of Israel when at last they shall look upon Him Whom they pierced.

“We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;  
and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away”  
(Isa. lxiv. 6).

Isaiah, in the course of his commission, stood up before men and pronounced woe to them because of their sins. Twenty times does he pronounce this woe, but before he uttered one note of denunciation upon others, he bowed in the presence of the Lord and confessed:

“Woe is me! for i am undone; because i am a man of unclean lips, and i dwell  
in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the  
Lord of Hosts” (Isa. vi. 5).

Here is the true spirit of ministry. “Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. vi. 1), is a N.T. equivalent.

Moreover, Isaiah did not first speak of the unclean people among whom he dwelt; he spoke first of himself. This, too, finds parallels in such passages as Daniel ix.: “We have sinned, etc.”; and Nehemiah i.: “We have dealt very corruptly, etc.”

There are times when we must preach wrath and speak of condemnation, but in doing so let us remember that we are ourselves but brands plucked from the burning. A preacher once told a friend that he was going to preach “hell” to a certain congregation. “I hope you will preach *tenderly*” was the rejoinder. This is the attitude expressed in the reply of Isaiah after his commission of judgment, “Lord, how long?” (Isa. vi. 11). This attitude of mind and heart must have pleased the Lord that sent him.

The threefold “Then said I” of the commission of Isaiah speaks for itself. The structure shows that they include his confession and his cleansing, his consecration and his commission, as well as his commiseration with his people, and the message of commination (**threatening**) that he had to pronounce. His confession was specific, “Unclean lips”. His cleansing was equally specific, “This hath touched thy lips”, and Isaiah then heard the voice of the Lord saying:

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isa. vi. 8).

Let us pause. God had the sovereign right to command the service of any of His creatures. He could have sent an unclean or an unwilling Isaiah to do His service; He *could*, we say, if might be the only criterion. But God is holy, and He therefore uses clean vessels. He could have ordered Isaiah to take up his commission, He *could*, we say, if omnipotence were His only attribute, but He had made man after

His Own image, and therefore instead of commanding Isaiah, he says in Isaiah's hearing: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And Isaiah's service becomes willing service.

"Then said I, Here am I; send me."

Yet again, notice Isaiah's reply. He, on his side, might have said, "Here am I, I am going", but he did not. Instead, as a child of redeeming grace, he begins to reflect the image of His Lord, and says with a beautiful blend of willingness and submission, "here am i, send me."

Here we must pause. In our next article we must deal with the nature of his message, and with the pledge of verse 13.

### **#39. ISAIAH vi. The Remnant shall return.**

We take up our study of Isaiah vi. at the commission received by Isaiah, as recorded in vi. 9 & 10:

"And He said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isa. vi. 9, 10).

Here we have the intensely solemn message entrusted to the prophet. Even though we allow for the figure of speech — the expression "Make the heart of this people fat" signifying "declare that it will be so" — the prophet must still have felt the great solemnity of his charge.

This passage in Isaiah vi. is quoted in the N.T. seven times and on three different occasions:

- (1) Matt. xiii. 14; Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10. King and kingdom rejected.
- (2) John xii. 40. The King and the kingdom. Hosannah. Yet rejection.
- (3) Acts xxviii. 25-27. Israel as a nation rejected.

We read in verse 9, "Go and tell this people". No longer does the Lord say "My people", for the passage prophesies that Israel were to become "Lo-ammi" — "Not My people". In the opening chapter of Isaiah, Israel are referred to as "My people", who "do not consider", "a people laden with iniquity", and "ye people of Gomorrha" (Isa. i. 3, 4, 10). In the opening chapter of the restoration section, on the other hand (Isaiah xl.-lxvi.) the very first verse reads: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people" (Isa. xl. 1), while in the closing references to Israel as His people, the Lord says that they are a people that have sought Him, that they are a joy, that His joy is in them, and that their days shall be "as the days of a tree" (Isa. lxv. 10, 18, 19, 22).

Let us now consider a little more closely the words used in Isa. vi. 9 & 10:

"Understand not"; "perceive not"; "make the heart of this people fat";  
"make their ears heavy"; "shut their eyes"; "convert"; "be healed".

The word "understand" is the Hebrew *bin*, which is rendered "consider" in Isa. i. 3: "My people doth not *consider*". The word "perceive" is the Hebrew *yada*, which occurs in the same verse (Isa. i. 3) in the sentence: "The ox *knoweth* her owner . . . . but Israel doth not *know*". The Hebrew word translated "to make fat" is *shamon*, and is connected with the word *shemen*, "ointment" (Isa. i. 6). It occurs but five times in the O.T. and always in a bad sense — rather in the same way as we speak of the fatty degeneration of the heart. The five occurrences are as follows:

"Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God" (Deut. xxxii. 15).

"Make the heart of this people fat" (Isa. vi. 10).

“They are waxen fat . . . . they overpass the deeds of the wicked” (Jer. v. 28).

“They became fat . . . . nevertheless they were disobedient” (Neh. ix. 25, 26).

If the judicial fattening of the heart is connected with the same word that gives us “ointment”, and the anointing of the Messiah, “the making heavy” of Israel’s ears seems to be associated with their failure to recognize and further the Lord’s glory, for the word that gives us “glory” in Isa. vi. 3 (*kabod*) also gives us “heavy” (*kabed*). The underlying link between the words is the conception of “weight”. Riches were conceived of in the terms of weight as in Gen. xiii. 2, and Paul, who had been a “Hebrew of the Hebrews”, uses the same idea when he speaks of the “weight of glory”.

The expression “shut their eyes” in Isaiah vi. is rendered, in Young’s literal translation: “And its eyes declare dazzled”. In its various forms, the verb *shaa* is translated “delight” (Psa. cxix. 16, 47, 70; xciv. 19) and “cry ye out and cry” (Margin: *Take your pleasure and riot*: Isa. xxix. 9). Once again it seems that, as Israel did not “delight” or “take their pleasure” in the glorious purposes of the Lord, the very glory dazzled their eyes, just as the glory of the risen Lord resulted in the Apostle’s three days of blindness on the road to Damascus.

The word “convert” is the translation of the Hebrew *shub*, which appears again in verse 13 with special emphasis. The same word (*shub*) occurs several times in Isaiah i.:

“And I will *turn* My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross . . . .  
and I will *restore* thy judges as at the first . . . . Zion shall be redeemed with  
judgment, and her *converts* with righteousness” (Isa. i. 25, 26, 27).

The word “heal” in Isaiah vi. is the Hebrew *rapha* which occurs in Isaiah seven times, as follows:

#### **The word “heal” in Isaiah.**

- A | No hope in themselves |  
vi. 10. The judgment upon the people.
- A | The blessing of the people. Only hope in Messiah. |
  - a | xix. 22. EGYPT. Smite and heal. Intreated and heal.
  - b | xxx. 26. Heal the stroke of their wound.
  - b | liii. 5. With His stripes we are healed.
  - a | lvii. 18, 19. ISRAEL. I will heal, restore.

The reader will see from the brief notes we have given above that these verses in Isaiah vi. contain, in a condensed form, much that illustrates the progress of the Lord’s purposes in relation to Israel. Peter evidently refers to this usage of “healing” when he explains the typical character of the healing of the lame man:

“Neither is there THE HEALING (A.V. salvation) in any other” (Acts iv. 12).

We must now pass on to the prophet’s answer to this great commission.

“Then said i, Lord, how long?” (Isa. vi. 11).

The prophet does not draw back or refuse to utter the solemn words of judgment committed to him, but he manifests the true spirit of service when he asks “How long?”. It was fitting that the man who was to utter woe after woe against his own people should first of all be brought to say of himself “Woe is me”; and so here, even though he perceived the judgment to be just, the prophet must have pleased the Lord by his evident pity. The Lord’s answer is twofold — first, the desolation of judgment; and then, the pledge of restoration:

“And He answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the  
houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed

men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof” (Isa. vi. 11, 12, 13).

Here is no small disturbance among the people, but a laying waste and depopulation that was to reduce the land to “utter desolation”.

The removing “far away” of verse 12 was but the sequel to Israel’s moral and spiritual separation from the Lord:

“Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have *removed* their heart *far from Me*” (Isa. xxix. 13).

In contrast to this, when at last Israel are restored and their forsaking is for ever past (Isa. liv. 7), then we read:

“In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou *shalt be far from* oppression” (Isa. liv. 14).

The verses we are considering in Isaiah vi. foreshadow not only the Assyrian and the Babylonian captivities, but also the great dispersion that followed the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D.70, for at the end of the **book of Acts** Isa. vi. 10 is quoted for the last time.

The Lord’s words in verses 11 and 12 indicate a long and severe judgment, but the chapter ends with a note of hope. If we turn back to Isaiah i., we learn there that Israel was saved from utter destruction, “as Sodom and Gomorrha”, because of a “remnant” (Isa. i. 9). Similarly in Romans ix.-xi., we find that the Apostle uses the same argument — the remnant saved in Rom. ix. 27 were a firstfruits, pledging the salvation of all Israel in the future (Rom. xi. 16, 26). So here, it is this same idea of a firstfruits that we find in the last verse of Isaiah vi.

We must now pay careful attention to the wording of this last verse. We observe first of all that the words “their leaves” are in italics, and therefore added by the translators. The word “cast”, which precedes the italics, refers to the *felling* of a tree rather than to the *falling* of leaves. Moreover there is no “substance” in leaves that can in any sense be regarded as a pledge of restoration, especially when we learn that the Hebrew word for “substance” is usually translated “pillar”. This latter word suits the idea of the stem of a tree, and this is undoubtedly the intention of the passage.

Some translators have looked upon the words “shall return” in verse 13 as giving the idea of repetition, as though to imply the thought of repeated destruction. This, however, ignores the way in which the Hebrew word *shub* is used by the prophet. We have already seen its use in Isa. i. 27 — “her converts”, and it is also found in Isaiah vi. itself: “And return, or convert, and be healed” (Isa. vi. 10). The prophetic name given to Isaiah’s firstborn, *Shear-jashub*, or “The remnant shall return” as Isa. x. 21 renders it, also indicates that the words “shall return” must be given their primitive meaning.

If the words: “But yet in it shall be a tenth” are put into parenthesis, we can then read straight on from the end of verse 12 to the second clause of verse 13:

“And the land be utterly desolate (but yet in it shall be a tenth) And it shall return, and shall be eaten . . . .”.

Even though this returning remnant should again be “eaten”, it is likened to the teil and the oak tree, that in falling, have substance in them, so that, even though cut down to the ground, they will again send forth new shoots and in time produce a new tree. The tenth or tithe is the Lord’s portion, a beautiful title for the remnant according to the election of grace.

So ends the vision of Isaiah. It begins with utter failure, as does the prophecy itself, but, after desolation and forsaking have done their work, it at last reaches restoration and blessing. The vision that Isaiah saw in the year that King Uzziah died is, therefore, practically an epitome of his life's ministry.

#### **#40. ISAIAH vii. 1 - x. 34. Children of Sign and Wonder.**

We have now passed in review four out of the seven sections of the first great divisions of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah i.-xii.), and we must next consider the remaining sections: 5, 6, & 7 — Isaiah vii.-xii.). Just as we found the first three sections linked together as a structural whole, so we shall find the last three also closely associated by corresponding parts. For the structure of Isaiah i.-v., the reader is referred to volume XXX, p.131. Our present quest is the analysis of Isaiah vii.-xii. The subject-matter here falls into three sections:

- (1) THE VIRGIN'S SON. IMMANUEL (Isa. vii. 1 - ix. 7).
- (2) THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN (Isa. ix. 8 - x. 34).
- (3) THE ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID (Isaiah xi.-xii.).

For our present purpose, we must pass by a great deal of detail, but we believe the accompanying structures will be of service in drawing attention to the outstanding features of each section.

In the first of these sections (Isa. vii. 1 - ix. 7) we are struck by the recurrence of the children who are said to be given for "signs", and the importance of the typical meaning of their names.

SHEAR-JASHUB.—"The remnant shall return" (Isa. vii. 3).

IMMANUEL.—"God with us" (Isa. vii. 14).

MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ.—"Haste, spoil, speed, prey" (Isa. viii. 1-4).

In addition we have the words of the prophet concerning himself and his children:

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts which dwelleth in mount Zion" (viii. 18).

And then finally, in chapter ix., we have the glorious prophecy that sums up all these signs:

"For 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. ix. 6).

Intertwined with these wonderful signs, we have references to the political atmosphere of the times, driving the people through unbelief into confederacies, and so bringing upon them the invasion of the Assyrian, which forms the centre of the book (Isaiah xxxvi. - xxxix.).

## Isaiah vii. 1 - ix. 7. Immanuel.

- A1 | vii. 1-9. |
  - a | 1, 2. Confederacy. Syria with Ephraim.
  - b | 3. SHEAR-JASHUB. The sign.
  - c | 4-9. Threat of Invasion.
- A2 | vii. 10 - viii. 8. |
  - b | vii. 10. IMMANUEL. The sign.
  - c | vii. 18-25. Threat of Invasion.
  - b | viii. 1-3. MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ. The sign.
  - c | viii. 4-8. Threat of Invasion.
- A3 | viii. 9 - ix. 7. |
  - a | viii. 9-12. Confederacy. Both houses of Israel.
  - c | viii. 13-17. Sanctuary from gin and snare.
  - b | viii. 18. THE CHILDREN given for signs.
  - a | viii. 19-22. Confederacy. Wizards. Dead
  - c | ix. 1-5. Deliverance from oppressor.
  - b | ix. 6, 7. CHILD. SON. Fulfilling all signs.

Isaiah's prophetic method is to take the actual facts of current history and with these facts as a basis, to look down the centuries to the more complete fulfillment both of the woes, and of the blessings. The reference to the war against Jerusalem by the Kings of Syria and Israel with which Isaiah vii. opens, is a reference to a fact of history, recorded in II Kings xv. 37 - xvi. 5. No comment which we could make could take the place of this inspired record, and we therefore quote what is written in the Book of Kings so that the background of Isaiah vii.-xii. may be appreciated:

“In those days the Lord began to send against Judah, Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead. In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. Then Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him” (II Kings xv. 37 - xvi. 5).

The real menace of this attack is found in the words of Isa. vii. 6: “Let us ... set a king in the midst”. Immediately following this we read: “Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass” (Isa. vii. 7). “Within threescore and five years” Ephraim was to be “broken” (Isa. vii. 8).

No outside foe could hurt the house of Judah: the real enemy was in their own hearts: “If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established” (Isa. vii. 9).

*The Companion Bible* calls attention to the figure of *paronomasia* that is used here. The rhyming of the Hebrew words may perhaps be illustrated by some such translation as: “No *confiding* . . . . no *abiding*.”

It is in connection with this threat of invasion by Syria and Israel that the first of the “sign” children is introduced.

“Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-Jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field” (Isa. vii. 3).

*Shear-Jashub*, as we have seen, means “The remnant shall return” and is so translated in Isa. x. 21. The name therefore contained the assurance that, even though the people were to be reduced by siege or invasion, God would remember His covenant with the house of David.

It would appear from Isa. vii. 10 that the Lord was testing the nature and sincerity of the faith of Ahaz, when He said:

“Ask thee a *sign* of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above” (Isa. vii. 11).

Ahaz had no excuse for refusing, except that he had already made up his mind to appeal to Assyria:

“So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the King of Syria, and out of the hand of the King of Israel, which rise up against me” (II Kings xvi. 7).

The refusal of Ahaz has the appearance of humility (“Neither will I tempt the Lord”) but it was, in fact, a cloak for his apostacy.

We come now to the first great prophetic type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a *sign*; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. vii. 14).

This sign had a twofold fulfillment — the first, in the lifetime of Ahaz himself, and the second, at the birth of Christ. The word for “virgin” here needs a word of explanation. The word used by Isaiah is *ha-almah*, which means a “damsel”, but not necessarily a “virgin” in the fullest sense of the word. The word used in Matt. i. 23, on the other hand, is *parthenos*, and means a “virgin” in the strictest sense.

The political bearing of the name Immanuel (“God with us”) is found in Isa. viii. 10:

“Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought: speak the word, and it shall not stand: FOR GOD IS WITH US.”

The “sign” of Isa. vii. 14 was indeed “in the depth” and “in the height”, as verse 11 puts it, for what could be deeper than the Saviour’s condescension when He laid aside His glory to take upon Himself the form and fashion of a man, and become the virgin’s son?

The bearing of this verse upon the great subject of the deity of Christ is too vast a theme to be touched upon in a paragraph, but the reader will find the subject dealt with in our published writings, to which reference should be made for fuller exposition. The curious reference to “butter and honey” constitute part of an infant’s diet. Some translators render the connective “that” in verse 15 as “before” or “up to the time of”. It would seem, however, that the A.V. is probably correct here.

"The received version is the most simple and agrees best with the real scope ... this child, unlike other infants, from the first dawn of reason, will know to refuse evil and to choose the good. The phrase, like the fact, is unique, and never used in Scripture of any other child. Three wonders would meet in Him Whose name is “Wonderful” — a miraculous birth, a Divine nature, and sinless choice of the good alone" (*Birks Commentary on Isaiah*).

The remaining verses of Isaiah vii. 18-25 are at first sight rather difficult. They must be understood as indicating the change over a country when, owing to the depopulation consequent upon invasion, agriculture ceases, and the normal crops give place to jungle, and patches of scant pasturage. The necessity for arming with bows and arrows in a land which once produced crops and supported flocks and herds is indicative of the degeneration that had occurred. The desolation thus produced fulfilled the

prophecy of Isaiah vi. and extended to the very days of the Messiah. Before, however, we reach these times, we have a further reference to the days of Ahaz.

Isaiah is told by the Lord to take a great roll, or better, a great tablet, and write on it with the carving tool of man, “For Maher-shalal-hash-baz”. The warning indicated by the meaning this strange name is clear: “Hasting to spoil, he speeds to the prey”. This prophecy was attested by Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and within twenty-one months (i.e. nine months before his birth, and twelve months after) Damascus had fallen, in the third year of Ahaz. This period (II Kings xvi. 9) has been called “The Gordian Knot of Chronology”. We cannot, however, go into this question in the present article.

The further threat of invasion (*see* structure) is followed once more by a reference to the children who were given as signs:

“Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs”  
(Isaiah viii. 18).

A deeper and even more serious “confederacy” is now indicated. It was a sad departure for the children of Israel to seek an alliance with Syria, and for Judah to seek the help of Assyria, but the prophet now visualizes an apostasy that is in league with hell itself. The conflict of the ages is brought before us in the choice of refuge to which Israel descended in time of danger.

“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? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, there shall be no morning unto them” (Isa. viii. 19, 20).

Light, however, dawns “in Galilee of the nations”, and in Isa. ix. 2 we read, “Upon them hath the light shined” — a promise that was fulfilled in Matt. iv. 14-16.

In Isa. ix. 3, Dr. Ginsburg suggests that one of the Hebrew word has been wrongly divided, and that, instead of being *lo*, “not”, it should form part of the preceding word and read *haggilo*. The translation would then be:

“Thou hast multiplied the exultation, Thou hast increased the joy; They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, As men exult as they divide the spoil.”

Deliverance instead of invasion is now the theme. The rejoicing is associated with “spoil” and with the thought of the “harvest”, and so refers to the last days of prophetic vision.

In verse 5, Young’s literal translation reads as follows:

“For every battle of a warrior is with rushing, and raiment rolled in blood, and it hath been for burning — fuel for fire” (Isa. ix. 5).

Here we have, not only the overthrow of Sennacherib, but an anticipation of the day ushered in by the Prince of Peace, as spoken of by the Psalmist:

“Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder: *He burneth the chariot in the fire*” (Psa. xlv. 8, 9).

Then, in verses 6 and 7, comes the glorious prophecy of the true Immanuel, the One Who gathers up into Himself all the signs and prophecies that have gone before:

“For 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. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah.ix.6,7).

In Isa. x. 21 we read:

“The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the MIGHTY GOD.”

This is balanced in verse 20 by the statement:

“The remnant of Israel . . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.”

Who is this “mighty God”, the “Holy One of Israel”? He is Immanuel (“God with us”), the virgin’s Son, the Child Whose name is “wonderful”. There are those who would attempt to anatomize the glorious Person of the Son, but there is no justification in Scripture for such a course. The N.T. affirms that “Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh”. So here in Isaiah ix. How the “Child” or the “Son” can be at the same time “the mighty God” the prophet makes no attempt to explain. He does, however, preface the glorious title with the word “wonderful”, and **worship rather than analysis would seem to be our true attitude.**

We must beware of confusion when we read the title “The everlasting Father”. The word translated “everlasting” is the Hebrew *ad*, and the LXX translates the passage: *Pater tou mellontos aionios*, “Father of the age about to be”. These words describe the Lord’s office. The “age about to be”, the age that was beyond the purview of the O.T. prophet, was entirely in His care. The words of Luke i. 32, 33 are relevant here:

“And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

The next section (Isa. ix. 8 - x. 34), is devoted to the Assyrian invasion, a dark cloud lightened by the promise, “The remnant shall return”. We will leave the examination of this section to the reader, and pass on, in our next article, to chapters xi. & xii.

## **#41. ISAIAH xi. & xii. The Rest that shall be Glory.**

We now come to the closing sub-section of Isaiah’s great opening prophecy (Isaiah i.-xii) which is found in chapters xi. & xii. In the earlier section (vii. 1 - ix. 7) the theme was the Virgin’s Son, Immanuel, and the Child Whose name is Wonderful. In chapters xi. & xii. the subject is this same glorious person, with a further explanation of His government, and its association with the house of David. The section naturally falls into two parts:

- (1) ISAIAH XI. THE ASSURANCE OF DELIVERANCE.  
THE BRANCH AND ROOT OF JESSE.
- (2) ISAIAH XII. THE SONG OF SALVATION.  
THE LORD JEHOVAH.

It will be seen that the structural outline of chapter xi., which is given below, revolves around the two titles of the Deliverer — “The Branch” and “The Root”, the intervening and following verses revealing the character and extent of His dominion.

### Isaiah xi.

- A | 1. THE BRANCH OF JESSE.
- B | 2-5. | a | 2, 3. Spirit. *Ruach*.
  - b | 4. Judge the poor and meek.
    - a | 5. Breath. *Ruach*.
    - b | 5. Slay the wicked.
  - C | 6-8. | c | 6. Animal creation; loses enmity.
  - d | 6. Little child shall lead them.
    - c | 7. Animal creation; changes in constitution.
    - d | 8. Sucking child and weaned child fearless.
  - D | 9. | e | They shall not hurt nor destroy.
  - f | The Sea.
- A | 10. THE ROOT OF JESSE.
- B | 10-12. | a | 10. Ensign. *Nes*.
  - b | 11. Recover the remnant.
    - a | 12. Ensign. *Nes*.
    - b | 12. Gather the dispersed.
  - C | 13, 14. | c | 13. Enmity of Ephraim and Judah removed.
  - d | 14. Submission of former enemies.
  - D | 15, 16. | e | 15. The Lord shall utterly destroy.
  - f | 15, 16. The Sea.

The opening words of Isaiah xi. seem to be set in contrast with the closing words of chapter x., in which the Assyrian is likened to a “bough” that is “lopped with terror”, the “thickets of the forest” that are “cut down with iron”, and “Lebanon” that “shall fall by a mighty one”. The word “rod” in Isa. xi. 1 (“the rod out of the stem of Jesse”) does not seem a very suitable translation in view of the fact that the same word is used of the Assyrian in Isa. x. 5 & 15. The two Hebrew originals are entirely different. In chapter x. it is *matteh*, while in chapter xi. it is *choter*, meaning a “twig” or “shoot”. No etymologist would, of course, teach that *choter* has any real connection with *chittah*, the Hebrew word for “wheat”; nevertheless the resemblance is marked in the original and is suggestive. The word *geza*, meaning “stem” or “stock”, which is used of Jesse, the father of David (Isa. xi. 1), is an apt word, as a reference to Job xiv. will show:

“For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root (*sheresh*, the same word as in Isa. xi. 1) thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock (*geza*, the same word as ‘stem’ in Isa. xi. 1) die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant” (Job xiv. 7-9).

Coming back to Isaiah xi., we find next the enduement of the Messiah set forth, and the spirit of the Lord is said to “rest” upon Him. The word “rest” is *nuach*, while “spirit” is *ruach*. The paronomasia here is intentional. Perhaps, also, there is a reference back to Isa. vii. 2 where “is confederate” is the translation of this same word *nuach*, the people being represented as “resting” on a false hope.

This spiritual enduement of the Messiah is sevenfold:

		(2) WISDOM.
		(3) UNDERSTANDING.
(1) THE SPIRIT		(4) COUNSEL.
OF THE		(5) MIGHT.
LORD.		(6) KNOWLEDGE.
		(7) FEAR.

In verse 3 we learn that this spiritual equipment is to make the coming Ruler “of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord”. The Margin tells us that the word translated “quick understanding” is the Hebrew for “scent” or “smell”. Actually it is the verbal form of *ruach*, meaning “spirit” (Isa. xi. 2) or “breath” (Isa. xi. 4). It is translated “to smell” eight times in the A.V., together with three further occurrences in the marginal notes. “He shall be of *quick scent* in the fear of the Lord” is a vivid figure, and indicates very strikingly the acuteness of the Messiah’s recognition of the Father’s will.

As one reads of the manner in which the Messiah will “judge the poor” and “reprove with equity for the meek of the earth” one is reminded of David’s great kingdom Psalm, where over and over again he speaks of the judgment of the poor and needy. It is interesting also to note that it is in this Psalm and in no other that David speaks of himself as “the Son of Jesse” (Psa. lxxii. 20).

“And He shall *smite* the earth with the *rod* of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked” (Isa. xi. 4).

Some codices of the Hebrew Bible read here *ariz*, meaning “oppressor”, instead of *erez*, “earth”. This reading is confirmed by a parallel reference in the N.T. and by comparison with Isaiah x.:

“O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall *smite* thee with a *rod*, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt” (Isa. x. 24).

The N.T. parallel is found in II Thessalonian ii., where the antitype of the Assyrian is himself smitten in the day of the Lord’s coming:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (II.Thess.ii.8).

The references in Isa. xi. 6 to the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, look forward to this same blessed day when the enmity brought in by sin shall be removed, and the groan of creation shall be hushed. Some have raised scientific objections to the literal interpretation of the following verse (xi. 7) on the grounds that the lion is a carnivorous animal, and therefore fashioned and constituted, both in tooth and maw, so as to be able to live on flesh. We do not deny this. If it were natural for a lion to eat straw like an ox, there would be no point in the prophecy. He Who can change the hearts of men and turn them from darkness to light, can as surely change the nature of the animal world so that all types of evil shall pass away.

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. xi. 9).

These words are repeated in Isa. lxxv. 25, and the context of this second reference helps our understanding of the first. It should be observed that the promise in the first place is not universal, but is limited to “all My holy mountain”. So, in Isaiah lxxv., the new creation is limited at first to Jerusalem (Isa. lxxv. 17, 18), and the nations that go up to Jerusalem to learn of the law of the Lord (Isa. ii. 3-5) see with their own eyes what full surrender to the Lord’s will means and to what it leads.

The words: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah.xi.9) are liable to be misunderstood. “The waters” here are those living waters that shall flow out from Jerusalem, “half of them to the former or eastern sea (that is ‘the Dead Sea’), and half of them toward the hinder sea” (Zech. xiv. 8). These living waters are described at length in Ezekiel xlvii., and the reference to Engedi (Ezek. xlvii. 10) shows that the Dead Sea is intended. Wherever this water comes it brings “healing”, and so, as we look back to Isa. vi. 10, we realize that at last Israel shall perceive and understand, and be healed indeed. What a beautiful figure of blessing this verse reveals:

“The earth shall be full of life-giving knowledge of the Lord, as the living water shall flow down and completely cover the Dead Sea.”

The Branch and Root of Jesse is to be, in that day, “an ensign of the people” and “an ensign of the nations” (Isa. xi. 10, 12). Out of the twenty occurrences of *nes*, the Hebrew word translated “ensign”, ten are found in Isaiah. The first is in Isa. v. 26:

“And He will lift up an *ensign* to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them ... whose arrows are sharp” (Isa. v. 26, 28).

Here we have a “banner” or “ensign” lifted up for judgment. In Isaiah xi., on the other hand, it is lifted up for blessing. The next reference, in Isa. xiii. 2, is again a message of judgment, this time judgment upon Babylon.

Passing over several intervening references, we come to Isaiah xlix.:

“Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My *standard* to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders” (Isa. xlix. 22).

The last reference is in Isaiah lxii., where Israel’s blessed restoration is in full view:

“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones, lift up a *standard* for the people . . . . thy salvation cometh . . . . A city not forsaken” (Isa. lxii. 10-12).

The “Gentiles”, as well as “the outcasts of Israel”, are all, in that day, to be gathered to this Ensign. It is to this that the Apostle refers in Rom. xv. 12, where the hope of the church during the Acts is seen to be the realization of the prophecy of Isa. xi.

Ephraim in Isa. xi. 13 stands for the whole ten tribes of Israel, but we must not forget that Ephraim itself was also engaged in strife within the kingdom of Israel as well.

“Syria is confederate with Ephraim” (Isa. vii. 2).

“The head of Ephraim is Samaria” (Isa. vii. 9).

“The drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet” (Isa. xxviii. 3).

The reunion of the tribes is set forth in symbol in Ezekiel xxxvii., and Ephraim is there used to represent the whole ten tribes (verse 16).

The tongue of the Egyptian sea that is to be utterly destroyed (Isa. xi. 15) refers to “that arm of the gulf of Suez which was parted in the Exodus” (*Birks*). This is to disappear when the movements that are to shake the earth take place. The “river” is the river Euphrates — the word used for the Nile is *Yeor* (Isa. vii. 18); *Nahar* refers to the Euphrates (Gen. xv. 18). In that day men shall go over dryshod into the land of promise, even as Israel did “in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt” (Isa. xi. 16).

We now come to the concluding section — Isaiah xii., a chapter that might well be entitled “The Song of Salvation”. Anger is turned away and Israel is comforted. God is their salvation, and the Lord Jehovah their strength and song. The passage ends on the exultant note:

“Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isa. xii. 6),

with which we may compare the concluding words of Ezekiel:

“And the name of the city from that day shall be, The Lord is there” (Ezekiel xlviii. 35).

So concludes the first glorious section of this wonderful prophecy. We have much land to be possessed before we can call Isaiah our own, but we trust the reader’s interest has been quickened, and that his hope and faith will be encouraged as we go on to learn more of the wonderful ways of God.

## **#42. ISAIAH xiii. - xxvii. Burdens and Blessings.**

With Particular Reference to The Burden of Babylon (xiii., xiv.).

The second large section of Isaiah’s prophecy extends from chapter xiii. to xxvii. and is largely occupied with “burdens” concerning the nations that come into touch with Israel and their relation to the glorious kingdom that is to be set up at the advent of the King. The nations that are the subject of this series of prophecies are Babylon, Palestine, Moab, Damascus, the land beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, Egypt, The Desert of the Sea, Dumah, Arabia, The Valley of Vision (possibly Jerusalem) and finally Tyre.

It is not our intention to examine in detail these fifteen chapters, with their intricate references to history past and future, but to concentrate attention upon the “Burden of Babylon”, for with the fall of Babylon the conflict ceases and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

The structure of Isa. xiii. 1 - xiv. 30 is as follows:--

### **ISAIAH xiii. - xiv. 30. BABYLON AND PHILISTIA.**

- A1 | xiii. 1-5. Babylon. Destroy the whole land.
- B1 | xiii. 6-18. | a | 6. The Day of the Lord. Destruction.
  - b | 7, 8. Faint, melt, pangs, sorrows.
  - a | 9-14. The Day of the Lord. Destroy.
  - b | 15-18. Dashed, vanished, no pity, not spare.
- C1 | xiii. 19. Babylon, as Sodom and Gomorrah.
- D1 | xiii. 20-22. Owls shall be there, satyrs, dragons.
- A2 | xiv. 1-3. Israel. Set in their land.
- B2 | xiv. 4-20. | a | 4-8. The oppressor ceased.
  - b | 9-11. Pomp brought down to the grave.
  - a | 12-15. Subduer of nations cut down.
  - b | 16-20. Cast out of thy grave.
- C2 | xiv. 21, 22. Babylon, name cut off.
- D2 | xiv. 23. Possession for the bitter.
- A3 | xiv. 24, 25. Assyrian. Broken in My land.
- B3 | xiv. 25. Yoke and burden removed.
- C3 | xiv. 26, 27. The purpose.
- D3 | xiv. 28-30. Serpents, cockatrice, fiery flying serpent.

Before Immanuel, the root of Jesse, is lifted up as an ensign for the blessing of the peoples, another ensign is lifted up to bring the peoples with their armies “to destroy the whole land” (Isa. xiii. 2-5).

The “sanctified ones” of verse 3 need not refer to saints, but to any set apart for a particular work. The immediate reference may have been to the Medes and Persians that conquered Babylon, but the fact that the prophecy immediately runs on to the day of the Lord, shows that the full significance of this passage is future. “The sanctified” and the “mighty ones” may refer to the angelic powers that will be marshaled against Babylon at the time of the end.

“The Day of the Lord is at hand” (Isa. xiii. 6).

The term “The day of the Lord” occurs first of all in chapter ii. 12 when the Lord alone shall be exalted (verses 11 and 17). There are twenty such occurrences, sixteen of them simply reading **Yom Jehovah**, “Day of Jehovah”, and four **Yom I’Jehovah**, “Day for Jehovah”. In the New Testament it occurs four times, making a total of twenty-four, all divided in fours or multiples of four. At some time or another we ought to set out these references, and so we will make sure that the reader is acquainted with them and their contexts by setting them out here and now.

### “The Day of the Lord.”

#### (1) YOM JEHOVAH.—A DAY OF THE LORD.

“Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty” (Isa. xiii. 6).

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger ... stars . . . . sun . . . . moon . . . . shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove” (Isa. xiii. 9-13).

“Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord” (Ezek. xiii. 5).

“Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty it shall come” (Joel i. 15).

“For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness” (Joel ii. 1, 2). ... “For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” (Joel ii. 11).

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come” (Joel ii. 31).

“For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining . . . . heavens and the earth shall shake” (Joel iii. 14-16).

“Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion . . . . bear . . . . serpent . . . . Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light” (Amos v. 18-20).

“For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head” (Obadiah 15).

“Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, He hath bid His guests” (Zeph. i. 7).

“The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly” (Zeph. i. 14).

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. iv. 5).

(2) YOM L'JEHOVAH.—A DAY FOR, OR KNOWN TO, THE LORD.

“For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud . . . . the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (Isa. ii. 12-17).

“For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day: it shall be the time of the heathen” (Ezek. xxx. 3).

“Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee” (Zech. xiv. 1).

“It shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night” (Zech. xiv. 7).

(3) HE HEMERO KURIU.—THE DAY OF (THE) LORD.

“For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night” (I Thess. v. 2).

“That ye be not soon shaken in mind . . . . as that the day of the Lord is at hand” (II Thess. ii. 2, R.V.).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in the which the heavens shall pass away . . . .” (II Pet. iii. 10).

(4) HE KURIAKE HEMERA.—THE LORD'S DAY.

“I was in the spirit in the Lord's day” (Rev. i. 10).

To appreciate fully the meaning of that prophetic period entitled “The day of the Lord”, every one of these references must be duly considered together with their context, and when the whole is brought to bear upon the last prophecy concerning it, namely, the book of the Revelation, it will be seen that both the first occurrence (Isa. xiii. 6), and the last (Rev. i. 10), focus attention upon the character and the fall of Babylon. A very small remnant prevented the overthrow of Israel being like that of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. i. 9), but no remnant is found in Babylon.

“And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah” (Isa. xiii. 19).

The plea of Abraham, that if only ten righteous were found in Sodom, it would be spared (Gen.xviii.32) comes to mind, and also the “tenth” of Isa. vi. 13 which, as the remnant, saved Israel from utter destruction.

Before the “proverb” is taken up against the King of Babylon (Isa. xiv. 4), a small section is devoted to the restoration of Israel (Isa. xiv. 1-3). In the space of these three verses is compressed a great amount of prophetic truth.

**“The Lord will have mercy on Jacob.”** — In this simple statement we have the germ of Hosea.i.&ii., where a child is named Lo-ruhamah — “not having obtained mercy”, which sign is finally cancelled in Hosea ii. 23: “I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy”. The dispensational section of Romans, namely, chapters ix.-xi. bases its teaching, concerning the remnant and the nations, upon this theme of “mercy” (Rom. ix. 15, 16, 18; xi. 30, 31, 32).

**“And will yet choose Israel.”** — The opening chapters of the prophet Zechariah expound this promise.

“Cry, yet, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem” (Zech. i. 17).

“And the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again” (Zech. ii. 12).

“The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” (Zech. iii. 2).

So we may supplement every clause. Israel are to be set in their *own land*; this makes void all propositions to settle Israel in any land other than that given to Abraham. Strangers are to join with them in that day, yea, they shall even bring them to their place, and the house of Israel, so long the outcast among the nations, shall “possess them in the land of the Lord for servants”. Those who had been held captive by others shall in that day “rule over their oppressors”. In that day the Lord shall give Israel “rest”. The glimpse of the glorious future which Isaiah gives in these three verses, is comparable with the lifting of the veil in Isa. ii. 2-5 and iv. 2-6. It is as though the glorious purpose toward which the Lord moves cannot be entirely hidden even in a day of ruin and judgment.

From verse 4 to 23 of Isaiah xiv. we have a “proverb” or a “parable” against the King of Babylon, but we must observe that it is not Isaiah himself who “takes up this parable”, but the restored Israel of verses 1-3. This is made evident by the initial word “that” of verse 4:

“And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, *that* thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased!” (Isa. xiv. 3, 4).

This is comparable with the connection between Isaiah xi. & xii. where we have the song which Israel will sing in that day. Like the lamentation which is taken up against the king of Tyre in Ezekiel.xxviii., we shall find in this parable a double reference. There will be a reference to the fall of the actual king of Babylon, who will also be a foreshadowing of the great oppressor and usurper, Satan himself:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah xiv. 12-14).

The expression, “the sides of the north”, is not so much explanation as revelation. Satan knew where God held His court, for Job i. 6, 7 tells us of his access. The word “sides” means “recesses” or “remote regions”. Seeing that Satan had aspired to a throne above the stars of God, the remote recesses of the north must refer to that region of the sky which is associated with the Pole Star. In solemn contrast with this blasphemous thought is the doom that is expressed in the very next verse: “Yet thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the sides (remote recesses) of the pit” (Isa. xiv. 15). “How art thou fallen”, indeed, “O Lucifer, son of the morning!”. The solemn “never more” of Isa. xiv. 20 finds an echo in Ezek. xxviii. 19, “never shalt thou be any more”; also in the doom of Babylon itself, where in Rev.xviii.21-23 the words “no more at all” ring out like a knell.

Into the “burdens” of Palestine, Moab, Damascus, etc., that occupy the remainder of this section, we do not propose to enter. These scriptures are inspired and profitable, but our particular quest is to discover from all scripture the “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth”. The remaining sections of Isaiah are such abundant material, we must pass on, and in our next article examine the third great section, namely, Isaiah xxviii. - xxxv., “Woes and Glories”.

### **#43. ISAIAH xxviii. - xxxv. Woes and Glories. Ephraim (xxviii.).**

**Woe:** the crown of pride and the covenant with death.

**Glory:** the crown of glory and the sure foundation.

We have now examined, with what care our time and space have permitted, the first two sections of the prophecy of Isaiah:

- (1) THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN (i. - xii.).
- (2) BURDENS AND BLESSINGS (xiii. - xxvii.).

We now come to the third great section:

- (3) WOES AND GLORIES (xxviii. - xxxv.).

In this section Israel is prominent, and the nations are represented mainly by the great oppressor Assyria. As we read the opening chapter (xxviii.) our first impression is a somewhat confused one. We read of a crown of pride, strong drink, overflowing waters, precept upon precept, stammering lips, a covenant with death and hell, a bed too short, the ploughing of land, and the cultivation of corn. What can it all mean? What connecting thread links these dissimilar themes into coherence?

If we forget for the moment the wealth of imagery, and take once more the larger view, we are immediately reminded that the pivot of the whole prophecy of Isaiah is the Assyrian invasion, which occupies the central section (Isa. xxxvi. - xxxix.). This section opens with a plain fact of history:

“Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib, King of Assyria, came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them” (Isa. xxxvi. 1).

We also read that Rabshakeh, the Assyrian envoy, suggested that Hezekiah should “make an agreement” with the king of Assyria (Isa. xxxvi. 16). Now Isaiah’s prophecy, while it refers to the kingdom of Israel (Ephraim, Samaria, etc.) is specifically stated to be “concerning Judah and Jerusalem” (Isa. i. 1), and consequently it may very well be that the flowery language of Isaiah xxviii. may represent certain specific facts of history expressed in prophetic form.

Ephraim (Isa. xxviii. 1) refers to the kingdom which had its seat in Samaria. In II Kings xviii. we read concerning Samaria:

“In the fourth year of King Hezekiah (i.e., ten years before the invasion of Sennacherib, see above) . . . . the king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, and at the end of three years they took it” (II Kings xviii. 9, 10).

This again is a plain fact of history, the only moral being the added statement of verse 12:

“Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed His covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded, and would not hear them nor do them.”

This comment underlies the prophecy of Isaiah xxviii.:

“Yet they would not hear” (Isa. xxviii. 12).

“We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement” (Isa. xxviii. 15).

Beneath the imagery of Isa. xxviii. 1-4 we find presented the physical glory of the land of Samaria, the moral corruption of its people, and the advent of the king of Assyria.

"It would be difficult to find in all Palestine, a situation of equal strength, fertility and beauty combined" (*Dr. Robinson*).

Twice the prophet refers to the "glorious beauty" and the "fat valley" of Ephraim, but he also speaks of their crown of pride becoming a fading flower. Under the figure of the hasty or early summer fruit, he represents the taking of Samaria by the hand of the Assyrian (Isa. xxviii. 4). Drunkenness, wine, strong drink, bring their corresponding dullness, pride, recklessness and judgment. The people are said to have been "swallowed up of wine" (Isa. xxviii. 7), and in verse 4 we read that they shall be "swallowed up" (Isa. xxviii. 4 margin) by the avenging Assyrian. The reader will doubtless remember the gracious use of this strange figure in Isa. xxv. 7, 8, where "the vail" and "death" are swallowed up in victory.

The prophet uses the figure of a "crown" four times. Twice he speaks of the "crown of pride" (Isaiah.xxviii.1,3) and twice of the "crown of glory" (xxviii. 5 & lxii. 3). Reference to a "crown of glory" in a setting of judgment is characteristic of Isaiah (ii. 1-4; iv. 2-6), where we frequently have glimpses of coming glory interposed between chapters of denunciation and woe.

We must now present the structure of this chapter, a structure that has cost us much time and thought. The material is so rich and the theme so interwoven with imagery, that we must be content to give the barest outline, leaving the interested reader to fill in the detail.

### **Isaiah xxviii. Ephraim: Woes and Glories.**

- A | CROWNS (1-8). |
  - a | Crown of pride. Drunkards of Ephraim.
  - b | Overflowing flood.
  - a | Crown of pride. Drunkards of Ephraim.
  - b | Trodden under foot.
  - a1 | Crown of glory. Wine and strong drink.
- B | TEACHING (9-13). |
  - d | Whom shall He teach?
  - e | Precept upon precept.
  - f | Stammering lips in judgment.
  - d | To whom He said.
  - e | Precept upon precept.
  - f | Snared as a judgment.
- A | COVENANTS (14-19). |
  - a | Death and hell.
  - b | Overflowing, refuge of lies.
  - c | Line and plummet.
  - b | Overflowing, refuge of lies.
  - a | Death and hell.
  - b1 | Overflowing, trodden down.
- B | TEACHING (20-29). |
  - d | Parable of the short bed.
  - e | Strange work, strange act.
  - f | The Lord of Hosts.
  - d | Parable of corn cultivation.
  - f | The Lord of Hosts.
  - e | Wonderful, excellent.

Leaving for the moment the section that foretells the destruction of Samaria, let us look at the section that reveals the cause of this great judgment. We are already prepared by the comment in II.Kings.xviii.12 to find that the root cause is disobedience to the word of the Lord.

How are we to understand the references in Isa. xxviii. 9-13 to teaching? Are we to take the repeated statement “precept upon precept” as indicative of the approved method of instruction? or are these the words of “scornful men” and “mockers” (Isa. xxviii. 14, 22)? Bishop Lowth’s comment seems to supply the best interpretation that we know, and we give it in his own words:

"What, say they, doth he treat us as mere infants just weaned? Doth he teach us like little children, perpetually inculcating the same elementary lessons, the mere rudiments of knowledge; precept after precept, line after line? imitating at the same time, and ridiculing in verse 10, the concise prophetic manner. God by His prophet retorts upon them with great severity their own contemptuous mockery. Yes, saith He, it shall be, in fact, as you say: ye shall be taught by a strange tongue, and a stammering lip, in a strange country; ye shall be carried into captivity by a people whose language is unintelligible to you, and which ye shall be forced to learn like children" (*Bishop Lowth*).

"We must conceive the abrupt, intentionally short, reiterated and almost childish words of verse 10 as spoken in mimicry, with a mocking motion of the head, and in childish, stammering, taunting tone" (*Ewald*).

The Hebrew reads:

ZAV LAZAV, ZAV, LAZAV  
KAV LA KAV, KAV LA KAV  
ZE ER SHAM, ZE ER SHAM,

or, as the *Companion Bible* puts it: “Law upon law, \*Saw upon saw.”

(NOTE: \* - “Saw”, allied with “saga”, a sententious saying, “a wise saw”).

The word “stammering” here does not refer to a defect in the power of speech, as “stuttering”, but rather to the scorn with which the Jew looked upon the “jabbering” of other tongues. *Laag* is translated “scorn”, “derision”, “mock”; and the margin of Isa. xxxiii. 19 gives the rendering “ridiculous”.

It would take us too far afield to speak here of the spiritual gifts which were poured out upon the church during the Acts, but the fact that Paul cites this very passage in I Cor. xiv. 21, shows that the Gentiles received these gifts “to provoke Israel to jealousy”. This view we have always maintained in our exposition of the gifts in the church and will be found in the articles concerned. The only point we make here is that the thought of mockery and derision is incipient in the reference, and that judgment is imminent, both in Isaiah xxxiii. and in I Corinthians xii. - xiv.

Israel had refused the “rest and refreshing” which the Lord had offered:

“To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: *yet they would not hear*” (Isa. xxviii. 12).

“How often”, said the Saviour, “would I have gathered your children . . . . *and ye would not*” (Matt. xxiii. 37).

The same charge is repeated in Isaiah xxx. where, instead of the covenant with death and hell, we find the people “trusting in the shadow of Egypt”:

“That strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! . . . . For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still . . . . In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength: *and ye would not*” (Isa. xxx. 2, 7, 15).

God's people had made for themselves, "a refuge of lies" (Isa. xxviii. 15), but it would be of no avail.

In contrast with the false security that Israel had achieved by entering into an agreement with heathen nations, we read in Isa. xxviii. 16:

"Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste."

This passage is quoted by Paul in Rom. ix. 33 when dealing with the parallel failure of Israel and the advent of the Messiah.

When Cromwell was encamped at Musselburgh in 1650, he sent a letter to the opposing party, in which the following passage occurs:

"I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken . . . . There may be, as well, a carnal confidence upon misunderstood and misapplied precepts, which may be called spiritual drunkenness. There may be a *covenant*\* made with death and hell . . . . I pray you read the twenty-eighth of Isaiah from the fifth to the fifteenth verse."

(NOTE: \* - A pointed reference which the Covenanters would be quick to see.)

It is interesting to find that this chapter in Isaiah has played its part in our own national history; whether rightly or wrongly we do not here attempt to decide.

The remainder of the chapter is taken up with the parable of the bed too short for the sleeper, an allegory referring to the false security that any alliance with Sennacherib would achieve, and the parable of the husbandman, who does not plough for ever but follows the ploughing with sowing. There is a definite purpose in the process of ploughing, harrowing, threshing and grinding. Judgment with its accompanying misery is God's "strange act" (Isa. xxviii. 21), but He permits the judgment to fall, so that He may at length restore and bless.

"Is corn crushed (i.e. reduced to powder)? Nay, He will not for ever be threshing it, nor break it . . . . This also cometh from the Lord of hosts (i.e. the same may be expected of Him in His treatment of His people), Which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isa. xxviii. 28, 29).

"For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos ix. 9).

We have now considered briefly the alternation of woes and blessings so far as Samaria is concerned. In the next chapter the prophet's attention is directed to Jerusalem, and this we must consider in our next article.

#### **#44. ISAIAH xxviii. - xxxv. Woes and Glories. Jerusalem, and its trust in Egypt (xxix. - xxxi.).**

In the preceding chapter Isaiah has spoken of the sin and the punishment of Samaria. He now turns to the rulers and people of Jerusalem and Judah and denounces in them the self-same spirit that brought about the downfall of Samaria, the self-same instrument being used for their abasement, namely, the king of Assyria, though this time it was Sennacherib in the place of Shalmaneser. Chapters xxix., xxx., & xxxi are devoted to Judah's woes (because of their alliance with Egypt, and because of their blindness to the Word), and Judah's future glories, for which the Lord waits to be gracious. There are six references to Egypt in these three sections.

Because of its introductory nature, Isaiah xxix., with its twofold woe, must first of all be considered. It explains the reasons that led both to lack of trust in the Lord and putting trust in Egypt, which, however, is not named in it.

“Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto Me as Ariel” (Isa. xxix. 1, 2).

With such cryptic terms Isaiah opens his mouth against Judah. What does he mean?

The name Ariel has two distinct meanings dependent upon whether the word *ari* is taken to mean “a lion”, as it does in II Sam. xxiii. 20, or “an altar”, as it does in Ezek. xliii. 15, 16. The reader unacquainted with the Hebrew may appreciate a word of explanation concerning this ambiguity.

*Ari*, if derived from *arah*, “to pluck or to tear”, denotes a “lion”, but if *ari* be derived from *arah* (from *charah*), “to burn”, it denotes a “hearth” or “altar”. There is, however, the possibility that the word in Ezek. xliii. 15, 16 is *Har-el*, “the Mount of God”, for this is the spelling of the first occurrence of “altar” in these verses. However, the matter is too involved for more than a note here, and the array of names, including such scholars as Vittinga and Gesenius on the one hand and Grotius and Delitzsch on the other, is such that we must perforce accept the difficulty and do the best we can. As the name is repeated by Isaiah, it must be recognized that there is always the possibility that he played upon the double meaning of the word. If so, his message would read: “Woe to the lion of God, To the altar-place of God”. The words: “Add ye year to year; let them kill the sacrifices”, are spoken ironically and have the sense: “Go on, year after year, let the feasts go round”. But the Lord had already repudiated such sacrifices and feasts:

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? . . . . Bring no more vain oblations, incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with” (Isa. i. 11-13).

As faith declines, ceremonial increases: “Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have done these so many years?” asked the ritualist in the days of Zechariah. But what did it matter how, when and what they did, for, said the Lord: “When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast, unto Me, *even to Me*?” (Zech. vii. 3-5). And so, “Woe to Ariel”, the altar-hearth of God!

Isaiah xxix. 5-8 graphically portray the coming of Sennacherib, his dream of conquest and his utter defeat. The Assyrians might be likened, for their multitude, to small dust, yet they should become like chaff that passes away suddenly (Isa. xxix. 5). Those nations that fight against Zion shall be as a dream, or night vision, when “he awaketh”, a figure that very aptly describes the difference between Sennacherib’s boast and his expectation, and what he actually received at the hand of the Lord.

From verse 9 it is evident that the people did not understand Isaiah’s prophecies. They were like those who heard Ezekiel, who said:

“Ah, Lord God! they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?” (Ezek. xx. 49).

“They are drunken; but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep” (Isa. xxix. 9, 10).

Here was judicial blindness, the book had become “sealed” (verse 11), the reason and the consequences being given in verses 13, 14:

“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart from Me,

and their fear of Me is taught by the precepts of men, therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (Isa. xxix. 13, 14).

Such is the “Woe”.

The future “Glory” is found in verses 18-24. “In that day”, as in Isa. xxix. 18, “the deaf shall hear the words of the book”, “the blind shall see”, and they “that erred in spirit shall come to understanding”, and “they that murmured shall learn doctrine”.

Chapter xxx. opens with a specific charge against these “rebellious children”: “They set out to go down into Egypt; and they have not asked at My mouth” (Isa. xxx. 2). To Egypt! once “an iron furnace” to this people and now, as Rabshakeh even taunted Israel, “a broken reed” (II Kings xviii. 21). Judah thought “to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt”, but this could only end in their “shame” and “confusion” (Isa. xxx. 2, 3): “For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose, therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still” (Isa. xxx. 7).

In the mistaken idea that it is an exhortation to trust the Lord, the words, “Their strength is to sit still”, have been often misapplied. The word “strength” here is Rahab, a name given to Egypt (Psalm.lxxxvii.4). “I have named her, Rahab, sitting still”. That is poor help in time of need; “a bruised reed” indeed. In contrast with the false and fickle “stillness” is the true exhortation of Isa. xxx. 15: “In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength”. Then comes the dreadful refusal, “And ye would not”, followed by their reaping and sowing:

“But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee; and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift” (Isaiah.xxx.16).

Thus is pronounced yet another “woe” against this people. But the “Glory” follows immediately.

“And therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for Him” (Isa. xxx. 18).

“Therefore will the Lord wait . . . . blessed are all they that *wait*”. “Though it tarry, *wait*”, said the Lord to Habakkuk — and to us all. Go not down to Egypt — *wait*. Put no trust in ungodly alliances — *wait*. This is not the wisdom of the world: “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that *waiteth* for Him” (Isa. lxvi. 4).

From the context of Isa. xxx. 18, we are once more “in that day”, for verses 21-26 reveal millennial conditions, and verses 27-33, with its “Tophet” and “breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone”, pointedly refer to the events of Rev. xix. 20.

From the vision of the future, Isaiah once more returns to the unholy alliance with Egypt, saying:

“Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are strong, but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord” (Isa. xxxi. 1).

The vanity of this trust in Egypt is further enlarged upon in verse 3: “Now the Egyptians are men and not God; and their horses are flesh and not spirit.”

With this prophecy of failure, the series of woes end, and the remainder of the chapter reveals “the glories” that shall come “in that day”. First, the Lord reveals that “He will come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hills thereof” (Isa. xxxi. 4). From the figure of an undaunted lion when a crowd of shepherds come against it, the prophet turns to the figure of a bird protecting its young: “As birds flying, so will the Lord of Hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it” (Isa. xxxi. 5). The word translated “birds” (Heb. *Tsippor*) refers to birds of the smaller kind, as the translation “sparrow” indicates (Psa. cii. 7). The word “flying” is in the feminine and may indicate the “mother bird”, even as the word translated “flying” contains the thought of “hovering”. But the most interesting word here is the one which is translated “passing over”, for it is *pasach*, which is first found in Exod. xii. 13 in the words, “I will pass over you”. The fact that the word can be translated “halt” and “leap” in I Kings xviii. 21 & 26, and “lame” in II Sam. iv. 4, together with the figure, in Isa. xxxi. 5, of the outstretched, protecting, wing, shows that in the great Passover itself, the thought is that the Lord *stayed* to preserve against the destroying angel rather than that he “passed over” and left them.

The final section begins with a call to repentance, which is characteristic of all God’s dealings in grace with Israel: “Turn ye unto Him from Whom the children of Israel have so deeply revolted” (Isaiah.xxxi.6). Similarly, Moses and the Prophets emphasize the necessity for “turning”.

“If thou *turn*” (Deut. iv. 30);

“*Turn* thou unto Me” (Jer. iii. 7);

“Repent and *turn*” (Ezek. xiv. 6; xviii. 30);

“That we might *turn*” (Dan. ix. 13);

“Take with you words and *turn* to the Lord” (Hos. xiv. 2);

“*Turn* ye unto Me . . . . and I will turn unto you” (Zech. i. 3);

“Rend your heart . . . . and *turn* unto the Lord’ (Joel ii. 12);

“Repent” cried John the Baptist, followed by the Lord Himself and, later, by the apostles.

This “turning to God” will be “from idols” (I Thess. i. 9, 10), for “in that day every man shall cast away his idols” (Isa. xxxi. 7). Just as Isaiah xxx. ended with Tophet, so chapter xxx. ends with the destruction of the Assyrian and with Jerusalem described as the Lord’s “fire” and “furnace”. *Vitringa* comments on verse 9 as follows:

"The Assyrian king shall be struck with so great a panic at the slaughter of his army, that in his flight he shall pass by his strongholds on the borders of his empire, not daring to trust himself to them."

**#45. ISAIAH xxviii. - xxxv. Woes and Glories.  
Glories when the King reigns.  
Woe to the vile and the careless (xxxii.).**

Isaiah, after his alternation of “woe and glory”, pauses at chapter xxxii., while he envisages that glorious reign which, at intervals, has shed light, in prospect, upon the dark picture of his people’s sin. Twice, already, the prophet has followed the mention of the Assyrian by a glorious reference to Christ.

- A | The greaves and war cloaks of the warrior become fuel for burning.
- B | “Unto us a child is born, etc.” (Isa. ix. 5, 6).
- A | The thickets of the Assyrian forest are cut down.
- B | “There shall come forth a rod . . . . of Jesse” (Isa. x. 34 - xi. 1).

He does so again in the opening of the section now before us.

- A | The Assyrian has fled in fear.
- B | “Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness” (Isa. xxxi. 9 - xxxii. 1).

The structure of the chapter may be set out as follows:--

**Isaiah xxxii.**

- A | 1, 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS. | Hiding Place. Covert. Shadow.
- B | 3-11. CHARACTER. | Eyes, ears, heart, stammerer.  
Vile, liberal, churl.  
Careless women.
- C | 12-14. LAMENTATION. Land a desolation.
- D | 15, 16. Until . . . . Then.
- A | 17, 18. RIGHTEOUSNESS. | Peace. Quietness.  
Assurance. Peaceable habitation.  
Sure dwellings. Quiet resting places.
- C | 20. BLESSING. Land cultivated.

Years before Isaiah uttered his prophecy of the King, David had expressed his longing for such a reign of righteousness, peace and prosperity. This is recorded in Psalm lxxii., wherein “the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended”. When the great antitypical Assyrian shall be destroyed, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and the reign of righteousness and peace will begin.

We are already aware that this King is Immanuel, “God with us” (Isa. vii. 14), and that He is the Child born, the Son given, and at the same time the mighty God (Isa. ix. 6, 7), also that this mighty One is to reign upon the throne of David. We realize therefore that the prophet uses the words “A man” in chapter xxxii. with intention.

“A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa. xxxii. 2).

“*A hiding place.*” — The first occurrences of *chaba*, the verb that gives us “hiding place”, are in Gen. iii. 8 & 10, where our first parents hide themselves for shame because of their sin. This word “hiding place” indicates peculiar distinction, because it is the only occurrence of the word in the O.T. Men may make a refuge of lies, they may invent a covering for themselves, but all will be swept away and be of no avail. This King, this Man, is the one and only true Hiding Place since Adam’s futile attempt. He shall be a “covert”, Heb. *sathar*. The word includes an element of secrecy, and *sethar*, the substantive, is many times translated “secret” and “secretly”:

“In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion, in the *secret* of His tabernacle shall He hide me” (Psa. xxvii. 5).

“Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my *hiding place*; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt encompass me about with songs of deliverance” (Psa. xxxii. 6, 7).

“Thou hast been a shelter for me . . . . I will trust in the *covert* of Thy wings” (Psa. lxi. 3, 4).

Isaiah has used the word twice before in chapter xvi. 4 where he speaks of “a covert” from the face of the spoiler, and in xxviii. 17, where the “refuge of lies” is referred to and it is said that “the waters shall overflow the hiding place”.

Moreover, a two-fold provision that would be fully appreciated by those who dwelt in a thirsty land is found in this “man”.

“As rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary (or thirsty) land” (Isa. xxxii. 2).

The figure of a shadow is one that is used very freely in the Old Testament.

“Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings” (Psa. xvii. 8).

“How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings” (Psa. xxxvi. 7).

Isaiah himself contrasts the “shadow” provided by the Lord (Isa. iv. 6; xxv. 4), with the “refuge of lies” to which Israel turned when they put their trust “in the shadow of Egypt” (Isa. xxxii. 2, 3).

The “weary” land, is a land where weariness arises out of drought and thirst. In Psalm lxiii. 1 and cxliii. 6 it is translated “a thirsty land” and in Prov. xxv. 25 it is used of a “thirsty” soul.

These are lovely and blessed forecasts of the reign of Christ. In Isa. xxxii. 17 and 18, as the structure reveals, these blessings are again to the fore, and we draw attention to two important reciprocal principles underlying them.

- (1) In both Isa. xxxii. 1, 2, and in the sequel verses 17 and 18, peace is the effect and work of righteousness, and
- (2) Then the *abstract* terms “righteousness, quietness and assurance” are realized in the *concrete* enjoyment of “peaceable habitation, sure dwellings and quiet resting places”.

Quite apart from the importance of understanding the teaching of Isaiah, the true and scriptural meaning of “peace” and its essential relationship to “righteousness”, lies at the very foundation of our faith and is practically the key which unlocks the doctrine of the Epistle to the Romans.

*Shalom*, “peace”, is derived from *shallam*, which has the meaning of “completeness”. This completeness colours the varied ways in which *shallam* is used in the O.T. For example,

“The days of thy mourning shall be *ended*” (Isa. lx. 20).

“Thus all the work . . . . was *finished*” (II Chron. v. 1).

It is especially important to perceive this “completing” in such usage as,

“He shall *surely* pay ox for ox” (Exod. xxi. 36).

“He should make *full* restitution” (Exod. xxii. 3).

So also in the translations “reward”, “recompense”, “requite”, “repay”, “make amends” and “restore”; what is uppermost is the idea of making a complete return as a righteous basis of peace.

*Shalem*, the adjective, is mostly translated “perfect”, which enforces the idea resident in the root word. “Peace” therefore is not merely the cessation of hostilities, it is the result of **perfect or complete satisfaction**. It is therefore obvious that in their dealings with one another the world can never appropriately use the word “peace” in its full meaning. At the best there will be but a poor compromise. Again we say nations at war may cease fighting, but unless the root cause of the hostility has been completely and righteously dealt with, the ensuing “peace” will be but a patched-up interval of comparative calm between periods of open hostility. The Epistle to the Romans connects “peace” with “righteousness”. “Therefore being *justified* by faith, we have *peace* with God” (Rom. v. 1). And Hebrews speaks of the “*peaceable* fruit of *righteousness*” (Heb. xii. 11). So also Isaiah.

“The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever” (Isa. xxxii. 17).

The difference between “work” (*maaseh*) and “effect” (*abobah*) is the difference between a thing done, or made, and service rendered. So righteousness makes peace as an accomplished fact, for its result is tranquility.

We have been in correspondence with a believer, who, while positively expressing his belief in Christ and consciousness of the sealing of the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption, is nevertheless seeking assurance and confirmation. He has come as far as Isa. xxxii. 17, but has not stepped out into verse 18 where those who are justified and at peace “ *dwell in a peaceable habitation, sure dwellings, and quiet resting places*”. Perhaps the difference between the experiences of verses 17 and 18 is the difference between “faith” and “trust”, a difference that eludes us when we seek to be logical, but which is nevertheless obvious as we become acquainted with the vagaries of the human heart. The difference is well illustrated by a story about Blondin, the tight-rope walker. This acrobat asked a spectator of his feats whether he *believed* that he could carry him across the tight-rope on his back. The man replied in the affirmative. “Will you then let me do it?” continued Blondin. “No”, replied the man, thus evincing that while he “believed”, he did not “trust”.

Returning to the earlier verses of Isaiah xxxii., we observe that in the structure we have grouped verses 3-11 under the heading, “Character”. It had been the prophet’s grief that Israel’s “eyes”, “ears” and “heart” were blind, dull and hard, and that this had brought about their inability to understand, and consequently their failure (Isa. vi. 9, 10). Under the reign of the righteous King, eyes shall see, ears shall hearken, hearts shall understand, and instead of being addressed in judgment by men of stammering lips (Isa. xxviii. 11); those of once stammering lips shall speak plainly. Let us not miss the prophet’s intention here. Every faculty mentioned is seen to have reached perfection. Eyes “shall not be dim”, or “be dazzled”. Ears shall not only “hear” but shall “hearken”, meaning an obedient hearing in place of that “hearing” which “heard” but did not understand. Hearts, once hard and hasty, shall “understand knowledge”, and stammering lips shall speak “elegantly” (margin).

In contrast with this blessed growth under the reign of peace, is placed the character of the vile and the churl, who shall then be seen in their true colours. The words “The vile person will speak villainy” make one think of the pronouncement of Rev. xxii. 11, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still”. The solemn possibilities as to the nature of sin and the limits of repentance, that Isa. xxxii. 6 & Rev. xxii. 11 indicate, are great.

“Thorns and briers”, emblems of the primeval curse, come up upon the land where villainy and carelessness go hand in hand, and Isaiah adds that the

“palaces shall be forsaken; the multitudes of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens *for ever . . . . . until* the spirit be poured upon us from on high” (Isa. xxxii. 13-15).

*“For ever . . . . until.”* — The association of these two expressions is impossible if the orthodox interpretation of “for ever” be the truth, for every exponent of the eternity of punishment stresses its everlasting and unchanging character. *Olam*, the Hebrew word translated “ever”, is derived from *alam*, to hide or to conceal, therefore something secret (Psalm xc. 8); (II Kings iv. 27), and *olam* refers to a period of time, the beginning, end, or character of which, is “hidden” from the observer. It is used of time past (Gen. vi. 4); or time future, and in many occurrences it is evident that such future time is limited (Deut. xv. 17). The word “until” is the translation of the Hebrew *cd*, as it occurs in the phrase “for ever”; consequently we could translate the passage “The . . . . towers shall be for dens until the age . . . . until the spirit be poured”, which gives good sense and does no violence to word or grammar. If the judgment here described is to be eternal, then there can be no subsequent “until”. But there is a subsequent “until”, and we are therefore compelled to conclude, either

- (1) The orthodox translation “for ever” is an error and should be abandoned, or
- (2) Isaiah made a mistake, and there will not be, because there cannot be, any subsequent blessing, because the eternal nature of punishment precludes the idea.

Most of our friends who hold the orthodox view, are happily neither consistent nor logical. They appear to be able to believe both the eternity of punishment, and the inspiration of Isaiah. Perhaps it is a case of where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise, but such blissful ignorance is hardly the qualification that one looks for in critic or teacher.

This blessed restoration, when “the wilderness shall be a fruitful field”, is the result of Israel’s true Pentecost. To this blessed day the prophet Joel devotes practically the whole of his prophecy. Just as Isaiah speaks of the wilderness being turned into a fruitful field, when the spirit shall be poured out from on high, so Joel uses another great figure of restoration.

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

Then comes the call,

“Rend your hearts, and not your garments” (Joel ii. 13).

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm” (Joel ii. 25).

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh” (Joel ii. 28).

Isaiah, as Joel, looks to the fulfillment of Pentecost for the realization of his vision of restoration. This evidently was in the minds of the apostles when they enquired as to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts i. 6), just as it was also the basis of Peter’s call to repentance, with the assurance that if there was a true response the times of refreshing and restitution would follow (Acts iii. 19-21).

We should exceed the scope of our present studies were we here to enter into the question of the true meaning of Pentecost, but the question has been studied in the series “The Acts of the Apostles” in volume XXV.

**#46. ISAIAH xxviii. - xxxv. Woes and Glories.**  
**“Without form and void” (xxxiii., xxxiv.).**

We draw near to the closing pæan of Isaiah xxxv., but before the millennial glories of that chapter are reached, the shadow of the Assyrian invasion is once more cast across the prophecy and made to subserve the divine purpose.

In his commentary upon Isaiah the Rev. Alfred Jenour makes the useful suggestion that chapter xxxiii. is a song of triumph in which the Prophet is answered by a chorus of the people. While he does not appear to have perceived the underlying structure of the chapter, and we cannot therefore follow his suggested subdivisions, the principle seems to be true.

Woe is uttered against the Spoiler (Isa. xxxiii. 1), the chorus of praise replying,

“O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for Thee; be Thou their arm  
(one MS reads ‘our’) every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble”  
(Isaiah xxxiii. 2).

The Prophet resumes and speaks of the coming of the Assyrian under the familiar figure of a plague of caterpillars and locusts. This again is answered by the chorus of praise:

“The Lord is exalted; for He dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with  
judgment and righteousness” (Isa. xxxiii. 5).

Next is depicted the breaking of the treaty of Sennacherib and its effects upon the Land and once more there is a responsive chorus of praise:

“Now will I rise, saith the Lord . . . . as thorns cut up shall they be burned in  
the fire” (Isa. xxxiii. 10-12).

The Prophet now turns to his own people. Not only will God be a consuming fire to burn up the chaff and stubble that represented the Assyrians (Isa. xxxiii. 11, 12), but to His Own people, the “sinners of Zion”, this fact causes fear, for they cry, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” (xxxiii. 14), and the reply insists upon practical righteousness, and that such as practice it need have no fear. Of such it is said, “He shall dwell on high . . . . his waters shall be sure” (Isa. xxxiii. 16).

The Prophet lifts up his eyes, and in contrast with the stricken king of Assyrian, or even the trustful king of Judah, he speaks of “the King in His beauty” as the glorious goal of prophetic vision, “and the land of far stretching distances” in contrast with the cramping limitation of a siege.

Once more the Prophet turns back to the stricken foe:

“Thine heart shall reflect upon the terror (that threatened, and you shall ask in  
wonder) Where is he that counted? Where is the weigher of tribute? Where is he  
that counted the towers?” (Isa. xxxiii. 18).

Sennacherib and his host will have gone, and instead of looking upon a people of fierce countenance and ridiculous language, the people are exhorted to

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a  
quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes  
thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken”  
(Isa. xxxiii. 20).

This prophecy takes us beyond the type, Sennacherib, and his destruction, to the anti-type, the antichristian Beast and his overthrow at the time of the end. It looks on to the day when Israel shall say,

“The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King (Israel’s triune Lord). He will save us” (Isa. xxxiii. 22).

Two millennial blessings conclude the chapter. The inhabitants of the Land in that day shall not say, “I am sick”, and the people that dwell in the Land “shall be forgiven their iniquity”, for the New Covenant will at length be put into effect. Other nations may depend upon their galleys and their ships, but the defence of Israel, as demonstrated by the overthrow of Sennacherib, is the Lord. Isaiah xxxiv., which follows, takes us into “the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion” (Isa. xxxiv. 8). The language is apocalyptic and looks to the great and dreadful day of the Lord. While Idumea is the place named, the great Edomite at the time of the end is intended, for this judgment is world-wide. Nations are called upon to hear, the peoples of the earth and all therein, and the world and all things that come forth of it.

The special objects of the Lord’s indignation and fury are the “nations and all their armies”. This looks to the great gathering against Jerusalem,

“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh . . . . For these be the days of vengeance . . . . until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars” (Luke xxi. 20-25).

“And I saw the beast, and the Kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war” (Rev. xix. 19).

Zechariah speaks of the gathering of all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the descent of the Lord with an accompanying earthquake (Zech. xiv. 1-5). The dreadful slaughter that ensues is suggested by the words of verse 16 where it speaks of “every *one* that is left of *all* the nations that came against Jerusalem”. This is literal Armageddon (Rev. xvi. 16). The terrible conflict upon earth will be echoed by confusion in the heavens.

“And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from a vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree” (Isa. xxxiv. 4).

The unprecedented nature of such an event precludes repetition and it therefore follows that the parallel passages in Matthew xxiv., II Peter & Revelation vi. must refer to the same prophetic period.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven” (Matt. xxiv. 29, 30).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (II Peter. iii. 10).

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places . . . . for the great day of His wrath is come” (Rev. vi. 12-17).

Isaiah xxxiv. is a revelation of the day of the Lord, a day of the sword of vengeance and of indignation.

The word “vengeance” (Heb. *naqam*) occurs six times in Isaiah. The occurrences are:

- A | xxxiv. 8. Idumea and Bozrah.
- B | xxxv. 4. Millennial. Weak, feeble and fearful comforted.
- C | xlvii. 3. Vengeance upon Babylon.
- C | lix. 17. Redemption to Zion.
- B | lxi. 2. Brokenhearted, captives and mourners comforted.
- A | lxiii. 4. Edom and Bozrah.

It is evident that this “day of vengeance” in prophecy is one. We find Jeremiah using the term with much the same emphasis and precision but introducing the expression “the vengeance of His Temple”. Associated with the word “vengeance” is the word “recompense”. “The year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion” is the extension of Isa. xxxiv. 8. “Even God with a recompense” is the amplification of Isa. xxxv. 4. “The Lord God of recompense shall surely requite”, comments Jeremiah at the overthrow of Babylon (Jer. li. 56).

The whole prophecy of Isaiah could be threaded upon the name of Zion. Zion is seen in its desolation, sin and uncleanness (Isa. i. 8; iii. 16; iv. 4), but it is also seen glorified, reigned over by the Lord, and saved (Isa. iv. 5; xxiv. 23; lxii. 11). The language with which the Prophet was inspired to describe the day of judgment in Isa. xxxiv. 11 is of extreme importance because of the illumination which it throws upon other extremely important passages:

“But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness” (Isa. xxxiv. 11).

The unclean birds that possess the land of Edom are an accepted symbol of judgment and desolation and do not call for extended comment. The line and the stone refer to measurement and weight:

“I will stretch over Jerusalem the *line* of Samaria and the *plummet* of the house of Ahab” (II Kings xxi. 13).

This passage not only uses these words as symbols of judgment, as in Isa. xxxiv. 11, but, by substituting “plummet” for “stone”, enables us to decide what is intended by the stone in Isaiah xxxiv. In Zech. iv. 10 the word “plummet” is actually “a stone of tin”, as the margin shows.

As a symbol of perfectly unbiased judgment, a judgment that, by its very nature, must be free from all partiality, the plumbline is among the most suggestive.

“Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel: I will not again pass them by any more. And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste” (Amos vii. 8, 9).

In Isaiah xxviii. we have the same figure,

“Judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place” (Isa. xxviii. 17).

II Kings xxi. 13, Amos vii. & Isaiah xxviii. also use this symbol of the searching inquisition of Israel, but Isaiah xxxiv. reveals that at the time of the end the same scrutiny is to be turned upon the Edomite. The chief importance however of this passage is not in the easily recognized symbols of line and stone, but in the words translated “confusion” and “emptiness”. In the original they are *tohu* and *bohu*, and occur together on the opening page of the O.T.:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void (*tohu* and *bohu*) and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. i. 1, 2).

From these verses it is clear that the primal creation had passed under the judgment of “line and plummet” because of some failure (the pride and fall of Satan, as we believe), and had become involved in ruin. From Isaiah xlv. 18 we learn that the Lord did not create the earth *tohu*, “in vain”, and we also find that the word *tohu* is placed in contrast with the word “inhabited”. In Isa. xxxiv. 10, 12 we read “none shall pass through it”, “none shall be there”, while in Jeremiah iv., where the words “without form and void” again appear, the context speaks of earthquake, darkness, no man, and desolation. Upon re-examination of Isa. xxxiv. 11 another truth appears. We place Gen. i. 2, with its chaotic condition, at the junction between “the world that then was” and “the heavens and the earth which are now” and the later parallel, confusion and desolation, which includes the passing of the existing heavens, at the junction between the close of the present system, and the beginning of the new heavens and new earth of Rev. xxi. 1. In other words, the earth, with its firmament, which was “called heaven”, is bounded at either end by the words *tohu and bohu*. Moreover, the heaven that is to depart as a scroll, is not the heaven of heavens, the place of the throne of God, but is the limited “firmament”, “called heaven”, which was made on the second day of the reconstruction of Gen. i. 6.

It is somewhat unfortunate that we have such a word as firmament in Genesis i. It comes into our English Bible from the Latin. The Latin is an attempt to translate the *stereoma* of the LXX, which in its turn, is an attempt to translate the Hebrew *raqia*, which the margin of Gen. i. 6 gives as “expansion”. Now *raqia* by no means indicates something “firm” or “hard”, but rather something “spread out”, and while it can refer to “beaten gold” (Exod. xxxix. 3) it does not so much to the hardness of the metal as its extreme thinness. It is used of “spreading forth” the earth. Moreover, to confirm the idea that *raqia* in Gen. i. 6 means an expansion, the Hebrew word *natah*, “to stretch out” as a tent (Gen. xxxiii. 19), is used by Isaiah alone five times in connection with the heavens. The passages are as follows:

“That *stretcheth out* the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in” (Isa. xl. 22).

“He that created the heavens, and *stretched them out*” (Isa. xlii. 5).

“That *stretcheth forth* the heavens alone” (Isa. xlv. 24).

“I, even My hands, have *stretched out* the heavens” (Isa. xlv. 12).

“The Lord thy Maker, that hath *stretched forth* the heavens” (Isa. li. 3).

To these can be added Job ix. 8, Psalm civ. 2 and Zech. xii. 1.

It is this stretched out heaven, the “firmament” of Gen. i. 6, which is to be dissolved and rolled up at the time of the end. We repeat, it does not include those heavenly places “far above all heavens” where Christ sits, and where the Church of the One Body finds its sphere of blessing. Therefore while these things remain Scriptural facts, criticism of our emphasis upon the “super-heavens” must leave us unmoved.

Reference is made at the close of Isaiah xxxiv. to “the line”, this time associating it with “the lot” and so with dividing, as an inheritance. A very simple outline of Isaiah xxxiv. which takes note of this twofold use of the line is as follows:--

## Isaiah xxxiv.

- A | 1-8. VENGEANCE. |
  - a | Indignation of the Lord.
  - b | Heavens dissolved.
  - c | Idumea.
  - a | Sword of the Lord.
  - b | In heaven—sword.
  - c | Idumea.
- A | 9-17. DESOLATION. |
  - d | Cormorant, bittern, owl and raven.
  - e | Line and stone.
  - d | Dragons, wild beasts, owls and vultures.
  - e | Line and lot.

Thus, by a series of steps, some sad and some glorious, we reach the close of this section with chapter xxxv., a chapter which is in itself an epitome of the glorious restoration which is the prophetic burden of the whole of Isaiah's prophecy.

### **#47. ISAIAH xxviii. - xxxv. Woes and Glories. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return” (xxxv.).**

We now reach one of the most glorious chapters in the first part of Isaiah's prophecy, a chapter which brings the first section of the book to a glorious conclusion, and anticipates by word and phrase the restoration which is the chief theme of the remainder.

We have already indicated some of the references in Isaiah xxxv., that find their echo in xl.-lxvi. One very clear example is found in Isa. xxxv. 10, which is repeated in Isa. li. 11.

Isaiah xxxv. opens with the words: “The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them”. We have already learned from Isa. xlv. 18 that the Lord did not create the earth *tohu* (“waste”), but formed it to be inhabited. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the first passage in Isaiah in which the word “wilderness” occurs reads:

“Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness?” (Isa. xiv. 16, 17).

The Assyrian is addressed here, but as in Ezekiel xxviii., a greater foe is in view. A little earlier in Isaiah xiv. we read:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . . for thou hast said in thine heart, i will ascend into heaven, i will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . . i will be like the Most High” (Isa. xiv. 12-14).

Here we have Gen. i. 2 on a smaller scale, for in Israel has been enacted in miniature the drama of the ages.

The “solitary place” is actually a place that is “dry” and so “barren” (as in Joel ii. 20). *Tsiyyah* is translated “dry land” in Isa. xli. 18, and “dry ground” in Isa. liii. 2. This wilderness and dry place shall we read, “be glad for them”. We find it exceedingly difficult to agree with the commentaries that see in the words “for them” a reference to the noisome creatures of Isa. xxxiv. 14-16. These are to “possess it for ever” and “from generation to generation shall they dwell therein” (Isa. xxxiv. 17) — which makes it impossible for the same district to “blossom as the rose”. The land of Idumea is to be so visited that its “streams shall be turned into pitch, and the dust into brimstone . . . . it shall lie waste;

none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10) — which makes it all the more difficult to reconcile with the description of Isa. xxxv. 1, 2, 6 & 7.

The R.V. omits the words “for them” entirely, while the LXX reads: “Be glad, thou thirsty desert: let the wilderness exult, and flower as the lily”. Dr. Young’s literal version reads: “They joy from the wilderness and dry place”, while Govett renders it: “Thou thirsty wilderness rejoice! Thou desert be glad, and blossom as the lily!”

It will be obvious to the student that any attempt to read a special meaning into the language of the A.V. is uncalled for. Moreover, in addition to this negative argument, there is a positive one of much greater force. From the days of Moses, the words “to rejoice over” in connection with Israel have conveyed the hope of prophecy:

“As the Lord *rejoiced over* you to do you good” (Deut. xxviii. 63).

“The Lord will again *rejoice over* thee for good, as He *rejoiced over* thy fathers” (Deut. xxx. 9).

We also find the phrase in Isa. lxii. 5 & lxv. 19; and in Zeph. iii. 17. Isa. xxxv. 1 undoubtedly refers to the rejoicing of the land of Israel on account of the deliverance and restoration that had then come to pass.

The change from barrenness to blessing is expressed by the frequently used figure of “blossoming”. In Job xiv. 9 we read, with regard to a tree whose root had grown old: “Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant”. This passage occurs in a context of resurrection, and its application to Isaiah xxxv. is a pointed one. In chapter xxvii. 6 Isaiah had already prophesied concerning Israel: “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.”

There are so many diverse opinions as to the precise flower indicated by the “rose” that it hardly seems worth while discussing it in any detail. The lily, the meadow saffron, and the narcissus have all been suggested as possibilities. The word occurs only once elsewhere, in the Song of Solomon, where the Shulamite, comparing herself with the daughters of Sion, modestly confesses: “I am *the rose* of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys” (Song of Sol. ii. 1). To which the shepherd lover replies: “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters”. This context seems to favour the simple saffron or lily rather than the rose. In any case, we can rejoice in this wonderful blossoming even though we remain uncertain as to what flower is actually intended by the long Hebrew word *chabatstseleth*.

The allusion to Lebanon, Carmel and Sharon in verse 2 is a glance back to the terrible desolation left by the Assyrian invader:

“The earth mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down:  
Sharon is like a wilderness: and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits”  
(Isaiah.xxxiii.9).

There is a further connection between these two chapters (xxxiii. & xxxv.) in verse 8. The statement in Isa. xxxiii. 8: “The highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth”, is surely referred to in xxxv. 8, even though the words translated “wayfaring men” in the two passages are not exactly the same.

Before we go further with our examination of the chapter, let us obtain what help we can from its structure:

**Isaiah xxxv.**  
**The Glory of the Lord.**

- A1 | 1, 2. JOY AND SINGING IN THE WILDERNESS. |  
     a | Glory of Lebanon. \  
     b | Excellency of Carmel. \ Physical and  
     a | Glory of the Lord. / spiritual glory.  
     b | Excellency of our God. /
- B1 | 3, 4. BE STRONG, FEAR NOT. |  
     c | Weak hands—strengthened. \  
     d | Feeble knees—confirmed. } Moral  
     c | Fearful heart—strengthened. / restoration.  
     C1 | 4. VENGEANCE. |  
         e | Your God will come. \  
         f | With vengeance. \ Salvation.  
         f | With recompense. /  
         e | He will come. /
- B1 | 5, 6. HEALING. |  
     c | Then eyes of blind—opened. \  
     d | And ears of deaf—unstopped. \ Physical  
     c | Then lame man—leap. / restoration.  
     d | And tongues of dumb—sing. /
- A2 | 6, 7. WATER IN THE WILDERNESS. |  
     a | In wilderness—water.  
     b | In desert—streams.  
     a | Parched ground—pool.  
     b | Thirsty land—springs.  
     a1 | Habitation of dragons—reeds and rushes.
- B2 | 8. WAY. |  
     c | A highway shall be there.  
     d | A way.  
     c | The way of holiness.
- C2 | 8, 9. NO LION. |  
     e | Unclean—not pass over. \  
     f | Wayfarer—not err. \ Protection.  
     f | No lion—there. /  
     e | No ravenous beast—go up thereon. /
- B2 | 9. WALK. |  
     c | Redeemed shall walk. \ Spiritual  
     d | Songs and everlasting joy. / restoration.
- A3 | 10. SONGS AND EVERLASTING JOY. |  
     a | Come—to Zion. \  
     b | Songs and everlasting joy. \ Spiritual  
     b | Obtain joy and gladness. / deliverance.  
     a | Flee—sorrow and sighing. /

In the first two verses of the chapter we find the “glory of Lebanon” and the “excellency of Carmel” balanced by the “glory of the Lord” and the “excellency of our God”. This teaches the important lesson that, at the restoration, the glory and excellency that will be manifested and enjoyed, will be but the reflection of the glory and excellency of the Lord Who has brought His purposes to their glorious goal.

Of all the O.T. books, apart from the Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah is pre-eminently the book of “glory”. In the very day of Israel’s failure the Seraphim utter their comprehensive cry: “The fulness of all the earth is His glory” (Isa. vi. 3 lit.).

In Isaiah xi. 10, we read: “His rest shall be glorious (or glory)”, and in lx. 1: “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee”.

A reference in this sixtieth chapter to “the glory of Lebanon” (verse 13) further illuminates the character of these glories that shall be revealed: they are devoted to the beautifying of the place of the Lord’s sanctuary — or, as verse 13 puts it: “I will make the place of My feet glorious”.

This whole section of Isaiah, that begins with the “glorious beauty” that had become as “a fading flower” (Isa. xxviii. 1), closes with the fulfillment in Isaiah xxxv. of the promise of chapter xxviii.:

“In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people” (Isa. xxviii. 5).

The word translated “excellency” in Isa. xxxv. 2 is the Hebrew word *hadar*, and this word occurs seven times:

“The *glory* of His majesty” (Isa. ii. 10, 19, 21).

“Their *glory* and their multitude” (Isa. v. 14).

“The *excellency* of Carmel and Sharon” (Isa. xxxv. 2).

“The *excellency* of our God” (Isa. xxxv. 2).

“He hath no form nor *comeliness*” (Isa. liii. 2).

The first three of these occurrences refer to the day of the Lord and of judgment, while the central references deals with Israel’s loss of honour when the people went into captivity (Isa. v. 13, 14). The remaining occurrences are connected with the Lord’s glory and the day of restoration (Isaiah xxxv.), and with that wonderful self-denial that led the Lord of glory to become as a root of a “dry ground”, having no form nor “comeliness”, the same word as “excellency”.

When the day of Israel’s glory dawns, it will be true of her, as of every one of the redeemed, that her beauty will be “perfect through My comeliness (excellency, Heb. *hadar*), which I had put upon thee” (Ezek. xvi. 14).

When we bear in mind Isa. xxxv. 5 & 6, we can readily understand why miracles of healing performed upon the blind, the deaf, the dumb and the lame, are called “the powers of the age to come” (Heb. vi. 5), and how “healing” can be synonymous with “salvation”, as it is in the typical miracle of Acts iv. 12. Israel’s failure was largely associated with their eyes and their ears (Isa. vi. 10), and these at last shall be “opened” and “unstopped”.

“The parched ground” of Isa. xxxv. 7 is translated “glowing sand” by the R.V., with the word “mirage” in the margin. The cruel and delusive mirage is a fit symbol for the glory of the world that passes away, but its fatal attraction shall at length cease, and “the mirage shall become a pool”.

“The habitation of dragons” and the “court” (margin) of Isa. xxxv. 7 are obviously an allusion to the passage in Isa. xxxiv. 13 that speaks of a “habitation of dragons, and a court for owls”. The difference between the two passages is that in one case the thorns and nettles of the context speak of judgment, whereas the “reeds and rushes” of Isa. xxxv. 7 speak of luscious grass and plentiful water.

The first half of Isaiah xxxv. is dominated by the figure of the restored wilderness, the second half by the figure of a highway. In this second half we have the words a “highway”, a “way”, “the way of holiness”, “pass over”, “wayfaring man”, “walk”, “return”, and eventually the glorious conclusion, when the ransomed of the Lord shall come to Zion. The Hebrew word for “highway” is *maslul*. This masculine form of the word occurs only in Isa. xxxv. 8, every other occurrence being in the feminine

(*mesillah*). We can advance no reason for this change in gender, except that it serves to throw the highway of Isa. xxxv. 8 into prominence. The word is derived from *salal*, “to cast up”. A “highway” is a raised, cast up, way, specially built in order that the traveler can return. It is also called “a way” (*derek*), or “trodden path”, so that we may understand that this way is to be used. It is a “common” way for all the redeemed, but it must also be remembered that it is “a way of holiness”, and none but the redeemed can tread this way that leads to Zion. No unclean person or thing shall pass over it.

Apart from Isa. xxxv. 8 there is no other occurrence of the word “unclean” in the first half of Isaiah except that of Isa. vi. 5. Just as the Seraphim anticipate the glory of the Lord, so they symbolize the removal of Israel’s uncleanness; in fact the glory of Isaiah xxxv. is largely the fulfillment of the promises and the reversal of the evils found in chapter vi.

There is an element of ambiguity in the A.V. of Isa. xxxv. 8, which is intensified by the marginal alternative: “The unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those (*margin* — ‘for he shall be with them’)”. Dr. Young’s literal translation, which makes good sense, is as follows: “And He Himself is by them, Whoso is going in the way — even fools err not”. The presence of the Lord is certainly a feature of the day of glory, and Dr. Young’s rendering would seem to be preferable to those already quoted. Once the people of Israel went astray like sheep (Isa. liii. 6), but now all this has passed away in the glory of restoration, and “even fools err not”.

And so we come to the blessed conclusion of Isaiah xxxv. 9 & 10, a conclusion that anticipates Rev. xxi. 1-4, just as the New Jerusalem anticipates the New Creation (Isa. lxv. 17-20):

“The redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isa. xxxv. 9 & 10).

#### **#48. ISAIAH xxxvi. - xxxix.**

#### **The relation of History, Archæology and Prophecy**

We have now reviewed the three great sections of the opening prophecy of Isaiah:

- (1) THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN (i. - xi.).
- (2) BURDENS AND BLESSINGS (xiii. - xxvii.).
- (3) WOES AND GLORIES (xxviii. - xxxv.).

In chapters xl.-lxvi. there await us three more, and between these two great groups of prophecy is interposed a piece of history, the Assyrian invasion. At first it may seem strange that a piece of history which can be read in II Kings xviii.-xx. should apparently be recapitulated in the heart of a great Messianic prophecy, but an acquaintance with the unfolding of the purpose of the ages will correct this impression and enable us to perceive that what is past history may nevertheless have also a prophetic import. This principle we find very clearly indicated in the book of Daniel.

In volume XXXI, p.35, we have given the structure of the book of Daniel, as a whole, showing the relation of the historic section to the prophetic.

While many of the references to the Assyrian in Isaiah may refer to Sennacherib, it is evident that some, at least, look beyond this king to the world’s last Destroyer, “The Man of Sin”. We learn from Daniel that this world Destroyer shall set his tabernacle “between the seas” (i.e., between the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea), “in the glorious holy mountain”, “yet”, adds Daniel, “he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Dan. xi. 45). So, when we read in Isa. xiv. 25, “I will break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains tread him under foot”, we are reading of the prophetic future, of which the destruction of the host of Sennacherib was an historic type. Moreover,

Isa. xiv. 26 continues: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations".

From an examination of Isaiah xxxvi. we gather that Rabshakeh's weapon is his tongue. Daniel reveals that the Man of Sin will have

"A mouth speaking great things" (Dan. vii. 8).

"Because of the voice of the great words which the Horn spake, I beheld even till the Beast was slain" (Dan. vii. 11).

"And he shall speak great words against the Most High" (Dan. vii. 25).

"He shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods" (Dan. xi. 36).

John also informs us similarly:

"There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (Rev. xiii. 5).

Paul reveals that this Beast should exalt himself above all that is called God or worshipped, and Rabshakeh asks:

"Hath any of the *gods of the nations* delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria?" (Isa. xxxvi. 18).

Further, we learn that Sennacherib's projected attack upon Jerusalem was diverted by a rumour:

"He heard say concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come forth to make war with thee" (Isa. xxxvii. 9).

So also of the last Assyrian it is written:

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him, and he shall go forth in great fury to destroy" (Dan. xi. 44).

The destruction of the Assyrian host by night, by the Angel of the Lord, foreshadowed the day when the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming,

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thess. ii. 9).

The reader will see how a knowledge of the times of Sennacherib illuminates much that belongs both to past Biblical history, and to future prophecy. We therefore devote the remainder of our available space to a resumé of the testimony of antiquity to the life and times of this great type of the Man of Sin.

The archæological resurrection of Nineveh and its kings reads like a romance, but as we cannot here traverse the fascinating history, we must be content to establish the historic accuracy of the Scripture references to Sennacherib. In the mind of students the name of Layard will always be associated with the recovery of the palace and records of Sennacherib. Layard turned his attention to the mounds of Kuyunjik, which were opposite Mosul. Here were unearthed the famous winged, human-headed bulls, with which visitors to the British Museum are familiar. A palace, paneled with sculptures slabs, was also excavated. This building had evidently been destroyed by fire, but, while many of the slabs had been reduced almost to lime, a sufficient number of them were found to be in a state of preservation good enough to bring Sennacherib and his times vividly before the mind.

One bas-relief, of great importance to us at the moment, represents Sennacherib, not in Assyria, but at Lachish, where the Scripture tells us Sennacherib was at the time referred to in Isaiah xxxvii. 8 and II Kings xviii. 17. This important slab can be seen in the Assyrian Saloon of the British Museum. The

King is represented as seated on a throne, outside the city, in a setting of vines and fig trees. Officers and prisoners stand or kneel before him.

No such exact description can be penned of, say, Alfred the Great, or even of William the Conqueror, but Sennacherib is made to live before our eyes. His name, as it appears on his own monuments, agrees with the Hebrew spelling, *Sin-akhi-erib*. Sennacherib's third campaign after ascending the throne was against "the land of Hatti", which included Judaea. Sidon, Tyre, and Cyprus, "which is in the middle of the sea", are mentioned. After a lengthy enumeration of towns subdued by him, whose rulers, as Sennacherib records, "kissed his feet", we come to a mention of Zedekiah: "And Zedekiah (*Sidga*), king of the city of Askelon (*Isgalluna*), who was not submissive to my yoke . . . . I removed . . . .".

After seeing how Sennacherib then swept along the sea coast, overthrowing the strongholds of the Philistines, we come to the first reference to Hezekiah:

"The prefects, the princes, and the people of Ekron, who had thrown Padi their king, who was faithful to the agreement and oath of the land of Assur, into fetters of iron, and given him to Hezekia (*Haziqiau*) of the land of the Jews (*Yaudaa*) . . . . I caused Padi, their king, to come forth from the midst of Jerusalem (*Urusalimmu*) . . . . as for Hezekiah of the land of the Jews, who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six strong cities, fortresses and small towns which were around them, which were innumerable, with overthrowing by battering rams, and advance of towers, infantry attack, breaching, cutting and earthworks I besieged and captured . . . . as for him, like a cage-bird I shut him up within Jerusalem, the city of his dominion . . . . with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver . . . . caused to be brought after me to the midst of Nineveh . . . ." (*Dr. Pinches' translation*).

Be it noticed, Sennacherib says nothing of capturing the city, or of entering it, yet the Scriptures, silent regarding a regular siege, say that, "The king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem" (II Kings xviii. 17). Why, after receiving the tribute from Hezekiah, did Sennacherib suddenly turn on him in an endeavour to blot out the kingdom of Judah, as his father Sargon had blotted out the ten tribes? While the Scriptures do not give a formal answer to the question, their historical account of the times contain the explanation:

"Hezekiah . . . strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance" (II Chron. xxxii. 2-5).

This act of Hezekiah's looked like preparation for a fresh rebellion, and Sennacherib himself tells us that this was the cause of his assault on Jerusalem: "Siege towns I constructed, for he had given command to renew the bulwarks of the great gate of his city".

From the Assyrian inscription we learn that the amount of the tribute sent was 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, but while in the scriptural record we also read of 30 talents of gold, the amount of silver is stated to have been only 300 talents. Learned commentators have exhibited a good deal of misplaced ingenuity in their attempts to deal with this apparent discrepancy, yet it turns out that *both* records are correct. Mr. Basil T. A. Evetts, formerly of the Assyrian Department of the British Museum, says:

"The amount of the tribute in the two accounts . . . . the Palestinian talent of silver *was exactly eight-thirds of the Babylonian*: the talent of gold, on the other hand, was the same in both countries."

We learn from II Kings xviii. 17 that

"The king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem."

These titles can be identified in the inscription of the monuments, and the O.T. record is seen to be true in every minute particular. There is no difficulty in the title "Tartan", which is easily identified as

the *Turtanu* of the inscriptions, the meaning of which is “Commander-in-Chief”. The titles *Rabsaris* and *Rabshakeh*, however, have been the subject of conjecture and criticism. Jewish commentators regarded the words as being Hebrew, translating them, “Chief of the Eunuchs” and “Chief Cup-bearer”, but these speculations have been entirely discredited, for *Rab-shakeh* has now been discovered to be an old Sumerian word, found in the Assyrian inscriptions as *Rab-sa-rish*, “Chief of the Captains”. It is found in an inscription of Tiglath-pileser II, as the title of a trusted statesman whom that monarch sent to Tyre on a mission similar to that indicated in II Kings xviii.: “My officer, the *Rabsak*, I dispatched to Tyre”.

We have seen that the old Sumerian *Rab-sa-rish* appears in Assyrian as *Rabshak*, and some reader may have jumped to the conclusion that here we have also the *Rabsaris* of II Kings xviii. 17. This has not escaped the eye of the critics, but such jumping to conclusions has once again proved to be wrong; the facts showing the Scriptures to be right. Dr. Winkler and his followers were not slow in attributing to the Scriptures “a blunder”, whereas the blunder was their own, for the *Rabsaris* which they said was not on the monuments was there all the time. A brick in the British Museum gives an Aramaean translation of an Assyrian inscription, and reads: “In the eponymy of the *Rabsaris*, Nabusarusar”. As this date is the last year of Sennacherib’s reign, there is every probability that we have the name of the official who stood before the walls of Jerusalem with *Rabshakeh*. Dr. Pinches has since discovered that *Rab-sa-rasu* is “Chief of the Heads”.

#### **#49. ISAIAH xxxvi. - xxxvii. Sennacherib’s Threat and his Destruction.**

Having seen how fully the scriptural record of Sennacherib’s invasion is subserved by archaeology, we now turn to the more important side of attempting to discover the teaching that is embedded in that record. One of the first things we must do is to endeavour to get an idea of the passage as a whole. We note that the *Companion Bible* sorts the subject-matter out under the sub-heading of three “kings”,

xxxvi.1 - xxxvii. 13 . . . .	THE KING OF ASSYRIA.
xxxviii. 1 . . . . .	THE KING OF TERRORS.
xxxix. 1 . . . . .	THE KING OF BABYLON.

If “kings” are to form the nucleus of this structure, then some are omitted, for the “kings” of Judah, of Egypt, of Ethiopia, of Hamath, and of Arphad, are also named in the passage. We have therefore omissions from the structure, and also the intrusion of the name “The King of Terrors”. While it is true that Hezekiah was “sick unto death”, the title “The King of Terrors” is not found here but in Job.xviii.14, and found, too, in the argument of Bildad the Shuhite, whose reasoning concerning Job and Job’s “wickedness” was fallacious. We feel obliged to omit this title, therefore, which leaves the structure of our passage still unascertained, for we have made it a rule never to import into a passage words that belong elsewhere. In doing so we nevertheless gladly record that we have nothing but admiration for the colossal pioneer work exhibited in *The Companion Bible*. Indeed, we but follow the spirit that actuated its author. It is, however, beyond the limits of our space, the purpose of these studies, and the usefulness of these articles to the reader, to provide a structure that will account for every detail. While our aim is the truth, our ability may never permit us to display all that there is of the truth, and we are therefore limited to making selections. Here again, under God, the human element is present. Who is to select? Who will guarantee the accuracy of the selection? With great diffidence, therefore, we submit the following very simply outline, believing that upon these selected recurring words the whole story of Isaiah xxxvi.-xxxix. may be based.

We observe in the opening of the narrative that while Sennacherib is mentioned, it is *Rabshakeh* who is prominent, “The king of Assyria *sent Rabshakeh*” (Isa. xxxvi. 2). Moreover, we observe that in the sequel, where Hezekiah fails, it is connected with another embassy. “The king of Babylon *sent letters and a present*” (Isa. xxxix. 1). In these two passages the word used in the original is the same, namely *shalach*. It occurs eight times in this section and punctuates the record as follows:--

**Isaiah xxxvi. - xxxix.**  
**Shalach: Hebrew word, “To send”.**

- A | a | xxxvi. 2. Embassy from king of Assyria.  
    b | xxxvi. 17. “Until I come to take you away to a land like your own.”  
B | c | xxxvii. 2. To Isaiah from Hezekiah.  
    d | xxxvii. 4. Reproach the living God.  
    C | xxxvii. 9. Messenger sent from Sennacherib,  
        suggesting trust in God to be vain.  
    B | d | xxxvii. 17. Reproach the living God.  
        c | xxxvii. 21. To Isaiah from Hezekiah.  
A | a | xxxix. 1. Embassy from king of Babylon.  
    b | xxxix. 6, 7. “Thy sons shall they take away.”

The opening embassy, with its threats and its plausible suggestion of “an agreement by a present” (Isa. xxxvi. 16), failed. The closing embassy, with its letter and present, succeeded. The idea that Hezekiah should tamely submit to allow himself and his people to be “taken away” is treated with righteous scorn: “Answer him not” (xxxvi. 21). Yet, when the messengers come from the king of Babylon with letters and a present, and without sword or spear, Hezekiah succumbs, and the very thing unsuccessfully threatened by the Assyrian is accomplished by the Babylonian, “Thy sons . . . shall they take away” (Isa. xxxix. 6, 7).

However meager therefore this outline may appear, the great lesson is enforced; a lesson pertinent for all times and peoples. Today, we too may successfully resist spiritual *attack* only to succumb to spiritual *flattery*. We too have our spiritual adversaries, the Assyrian, Babylon and Rabshakeh, and need protection from “the wiles of the Devil”.

Let us now make ourselves acquainted with some of the material that is linked together by this outline.

**Rabshakeh’s Speech.**

First, Rabshakeh touches a weak spot in Judah’s defence: “What confidence is this wherein thou trusteth?” (Isa. xxxvi. 4). Isaiah himself had pronounced a “woe” on those that “strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and trust in the shadow of Egypt” (Isa. xxx. 2). Rabshakeh knew, of course, that the king of Judah had turned to Egypt for help, and his scoffing words must have cut deeply: “Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt” (xxxvi. 6). But he had heard also of the reform which Hezekiah had accomplished, and sought therefore to make capital of the fears of the half-hearted, saying, “But if thou say to me, We trust in the Lord our God; is it not He Whose high places and altars Hezekiah hath taken away?”

With all his worldly wisdom Rabshakeh here manifested himself to be utterly ignorant of the true situation. Hezekiah had entered into the spiritual nature of the worship of God, whereas, to Rabshakeh, the God of Hezekiah was but one of many gods, all of which had failed their respective worshippers:

“Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad?” (Isa. xxxvi. 18, 19).

To all this, the king’s instruction was “Answer him not”.

We turn from the spectacle of Rabshakeh strutting before the walls of Jerusalem, already confident that the city would fall an easy prey to Hezekiah within its walls, “shut up like a bird in a cage”, distressed by the reproach leveled at the name of the living God. Hezekiah makes much of the fact that Rabshakeh had blasphemed God, and little of his own distress and that of his people. In other words, he “sought first the kingdom of God”. The Lord sent a message through Isaiah the prophet, saying:

“Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed ME. Behold I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land” (Isa. xxxvii. 6, 7).

From this it would appear that Rabshakeh received some inkling of Isaiah’s encouraging prophecy, for the remainder of Isaiah xxxvii. is taken up with the fact that the rumour caused Sennacherib uneasiness, that he suddenly returned without delivering a blow at Jerusalem, and was ultimately put to death in his own land. Rabshakeh makes an immediate move to counteract the effect of this fulfillment of Isaiah’s words. He heard that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, threatened war, and immediately sent further messengers to Hezekiah, saying:

“Let not thy God in Whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria” (Isa. xxxvii. 10).

Once more, Hezekiah’s reply was to turn to the Lord, and in his prayer he makes it manifest, that to himself, at least, the God of Judah was no mere tribal deity.

“O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, That dwellest between the Cherubim, Thou are the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth . . . . Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou are the Lord, even Thou only” (Isa. xxxvii. 14-20).

To this noble and unselfish prayer the Lord sent the encouraging answer of xxxvii. 22-35. Addressing the Assyrian, the Lord said:--

“Because thy rage against Me, and thy tumult, is come up into Mine ears, therefore will I put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest” (Isa. xxxvii. 29).

A sign is then given to confirm the faith of the people. Invasion goes hand in hand with devastation, the ordinary procedure of agriculture being entirely upset, yet for two years there should be sufficient food provided by that which “groweth of itself” and which “springeth of the same”. In the third year sowing and reaping could once more be undertaken.

Reverting to the threatened siege of Jerusalem the prophet continues:--

“He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a back against it . . . For I will defend (Heb. shield\*) this city to save it for Mine Own sake, and for My servant David’s sake” (xxxvii. 33-35).

[NOTE: \* - See the series “*The Eternal God is thy Refuge*”.]

How “the angel of the Lord” smote the camp of the Assyrian, and what, or who, actually constituted the “messenger” thus indicated, we do not know. Some say a plague was spread among the camp by hosts of mice (deriving some support for the idea from an Egyptian inscription), but this is mere speculation. “He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire”. All things subserve His purposes. An east wind brought Israel a supply of food in the wilderness (Psa. lxxviii. 26) even as the Lord used a strong east wind to open a way for them through the Red Sea (Exod. xiv. 21). Miracles are no less miraculous because, in the execution of them, natural agents are used.

“Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses” (Isa. xxxvii. 36).

So was Hezekiah delivered, and, as history and prophecy are intimately blended together in this book, so we see here a forecast of the day when the last great Blasphemer and Oppressor shall be “broken without hand”. There can be little in common between “Byron” and “Berean”, yet few can read unmoved the poet’s description of the destruction of Sennacherib.

“The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold:  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.  
Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown,  
For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed on the face of the foe as he pass’d.

\* \* \* \* \*

And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!”  
(*Lord Byron*).

### **#50. ISAIAH xxxviii. - xxxix. Hezekiah’s testing under favour and flattery.**

Judged by their own annals and the illustrations left to us, there could be nothing much more to be dreaded than an attack by the Assyrians, yet, as chapters xxxviii. & xxxix. succeed xxxvi. & xxxvii., we become conscious that there are spiritual forces of which these earthly and visible foes are but shadows.

Hezekiah, having been delivered from the threatenings of Sennacherib, faces the threat of death by sickness, and, being spared, is laid open to the insidious approach of Babylon by flattery, only to succumb.

“In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live” (Isa. xxxviii. 1).

Some have found a difficulty in the fact that Isaiah’s prediction that Hezekiah should die was not fulfilled. But we must learn to distinguish between prophecy uttered as a prediction of future events, and prophecy uttered as a warning and addressed to an individual, or a people, on some particular occasion. Of the latter, Jonah’s utterance against Nineveh was an example: “Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown”. Yet, on repentance, Nineveh was spared.

Jeremiah makes an explicit statement regarding the principle that underlies the apparent discrepancy.

“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (Jer. xviii. 7, 8).

From this it is clear that the words of Isaiah, though apparently unconditional, were not so, and that the deciding factor would be Hezekiah’s response and attitude.

It is just here that the special purpose of the books of the Chronicles can be discerned. In both the record of Isaiah xxxviii. and the parallel passage in II Kings xix. & xx., there is no word dropped as to the state of Hezekiah's heart before the Lord. If we had only the external history we might be at a loss to explain several things. For example, we learn from II Kings xviii. 15, 16 that

“Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.”

Both the Temple and the king's treasure were therefore depleted, yet when the emissaries of the king of Babylon arrived with congratulations at Hezekiah's recovery:

“He showed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures; there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not” (Isa. xxxix. 2).

Where did this wealth come from? The answer is supplied from II Chronicles:

“Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib . . . . And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, king of Judah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from henceforth. *In those days* Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and He spake unto him, and He gave him a sign. BUT Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, FOR HIS HEART WAS LIFTED UP: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah. And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour; and he made himself treasures for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels . . . . And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. HOWBEIT in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land, GOD LEFT HIM, to try him, that He might know all that was in his heart” (II Chron. xxxii. 22-31).

Here is the Divine comment; humbling in its illumination, not only of the recesses of the heart of Hezekiah, but of our own.

Hezekiah was, at this time, without a son, so that there was no heir to the throne of David. This would intensify his grief on receiving Isaiah's communication that he should “die and not live”. It is therefore with purpose, that in the message of hope and restoration sent to the sick king, the Lord is called “The God of David thy father”. Hezekiah was granted another fifteen years of life, and as his son Manasseh was twelve years old at his father's death, he must have been born three years after the sign and promise had been given to Hezekiah. The sign was:

“Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward” (Isa. xxxviii. 8).

In the record of II Kings we find that the original sign promised by the Lord was that the shadow should move *forward*, but Hezekiah, conscious of the growing shadow over his own life, and the relentlessness of the *forward* moving shadow, cried,

“It is a light thing for the shadow to *go down* ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow *return backward* ten degrees” (II Kings xx. 10).

As is natural, various explanations of this miracle have been suggested, as that the earth may have been made to reverse its revolution; or the sun have been move in the firmament. But such solutions are contrary both to common sense and the teaching of the Scriptures. The Babylonians were noted for their astronomical observations and calculations and, had such a mighty thing happened, Babylon and the whole world would have been aware of the miracle of the ten degrees. We are distinctly told, however, that the embassy from Babylon referred to the sign of the sundial as, “The wonder that was done in the land” (II Chron. xxxii. 31). *How* the Lord made the shadow go back we do not know, but that He did so, without upsetting the solar system, we are perfectly sure.

At the conclusion of Isaiah xxxviii. we read:

“The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord” (Isa. xxxviii. 20).

More than 250 years ago Dr. John Lightfoot suggested that there might be a reference, here to those Psalms which are called “The Songs of the Degrees”, but it was left for Dr. J. W. Thirtle, in our own day, to bring this truth to light. “The Songs of Degrees” are fifteen in number, corresponding with the fifteen years of life granted to Hezekiah. They are Psalms cxx. - cxxxiv. Hezekiah’s name does not occur in them, and four are said to have been written by David and one by Solomon. From this it would appear that Hezekiah wrote some and adopted others that fitted his case, calling the whole group of fifteen “My songs”.

The Companion Bible devotes an appendix (No.67) to these Songs of the Degrees, and we here acknowledge our indebtedness to that great work. We tabulate therefrom eleven out of the fifteen items:

- (i.) RAB-SHAKEH’S BLASPHEMOUS TONGUE. — Referred to in Psa. cxx. 2, 3 and cxxiii. 3, 4.
- (ii.) SENNACHERIB’S REPROACHES. — Practically quoted Psa. cxxix. 5-7.
- (iii.) SENNACHERIB’S SHAME. — Referred to in Psa. cxxix. 4, 5.
- (iv.) HEZEKIAH’S EARNEST PRAYER. — Finds more than an echo in Psa. cxx. 1; cxxiii. 1-3 and cxxx. 1, 2.
- (v.) GOD, “THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH”. — See Psa. cxxi. 1, 2; cxxiv. 8 and cxxxiv. 3.
- (vii.) JEHOVAH’S PROMISED HELP. — Psa. cxxi. 2-8; cxxiv. 1-3, 6; cxxv. 2.
- (viii.) “FOR MY SERVANT DAVID’S SAKE.” — Psa. cxxxii. 1-10 and cxxvii. 3-5.
- (x) HEZEKIAH’S TRUST IN JEHOVAH. — Psa. cxxi. 2; cxxv. 1-3; cxxxv. 5-8.
- (xi) HEZEKIAH LIKE A BIRD IN A CAGE. — Psa. cxxiv. 7; Hezekiah re-lived David’s experience.
- (xiii) HEZEKIAH’S ZEAL FOR “THE HOUSE OF JEHOVAH”. — cf. II.Chron.xxix.3 with Psa. cxxii. 1, 9.
- (xv) THE PASSOVER FOR “ALL ISRAEL”. — Read Psalm cxxxiii. in the light of II.Chron.xxx.12.

Among the public benefactions recorded of Hezekiah must be noted that which is mentioned in II.Chron.xxxii.30:

“This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.”

A more extended reference to this act is found in II Chron. xxxii. 1-4, which associates the work with the threatened siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib.

Wellhausen, the “Father of Higher Criticism”, ridiculed the attempt to construe these notices as authentic history, but the excavator’s spade has dug the grave for his criticism. Referring to this work of Hezekiah, we have several interesting items which can best be described in the archaeologist’s own words on the work which was done on the East side of the city. W. F. Birch says:--

"Sir Charles Warren discovered one entrance to three staircases, a little north of the well, one of them leading to a semi-natural cistern in the rock, where a natural cleft was also visible . . . . at the bottom of the wall a hole or duct was left six and three-eighths by four inches, and on the northern side a stone plug to fit, and twelve inches long, was found in it. Why? Here is THE VERY PLUG Hezekiah put in when Sennacherib invaded Judah."

When the 1,800 feet long aqueduct from the cistern was brought down the Kidron, the brook was stopped and buried forty or fifty feet out of sight, beyond the hearing or discovery of the Assyrians. By a providential accident, an inscription in ancient Hebrew was found in the wall of rock about nineteen feet from the place where the subterranean conduit opens out of the Pool of Siloam. The inscription is as follows:--

*Translation of the Siloam Inscription.*

Line 1.—(Behold) the excavation. Now this is the history of the breaking through.  
While the workmen were still lifting up

Line 2.—the pickaxe, each toward his neighbour, and while three cubits still remained to  
(cut through, each heard) the voice of the other calling

Line 3.—to his neighbour, for there was an excess (or cleft) in the rock on the right . . . .  
And on the day of the

Line 4.—breaking through, the excavators struck, each to meet the other, pickaxe against  
pickaxe; and there flowed

Line 5.—the waters from the spring to the pool over (a space of) one thousand and two  
hundred cubits. And . . . .

Line 6.—of a cubit was the height of the rock above the heads of the excavators.

Such was one of Hezekiah’s works of which he might naturally have felt proud. Man is a mixture. Even the N.T. saint is the possessor of two natures, and the record of Hezekiah’s is a warning to us all. II Chronicle xxxii. 32 speaks of Hezekiah’s “goodness”, and the same chapter speaks of his pride and his ingratitude (verses 25, 26). There is no contradiction here: all who have experienced the grace of God will know how true this is to life. The redeeming feature, the synthetizing element, which brings concord and makes “pride of heart” and “goodness” possible in the same person is found in verse 26: “Notwithstanding, Hezekiah *humbled* himself for the pride of his heart”. In this he followed the footsteps of his father David, a man who sinned grievously, yet who was nevertheless “A man after God’s Own heart”.

With these notes we must bring to a close the study of this intensely interesting history, and look forward to our further studies together in the glorious prophecies which open with the words, “Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people”.

## #51. An introductory study of ISAIAH xl. - lxvi., with a note on the prophetic import of the opening message of “Comfort”.

We have now reached the great prophetic portion of Isaiah’s prophecy which speaks “to the heart” of Jerusalem and looks forward to the day when “the kingdom” shall be “restored again to Israel” (Acts.i.6). The reader may welcome a reminder of the structure of this prophecy, and accordingly once again we set out the seven great heads, omitting detail. The full structure is given on volume XXX, page.43.

- A | PRE-ASSYRIAN INVASION (i.-xxxv.).
  - a | i.-xii. THE REMNANT SHALL RETURN.
  - b | xiii.-xxvii. BURDENS AND BLESSINGS.
  - c | xxviii.-xxxv. WOES AND GLORIES.
- B | ASSYRIAN INVASION AND DELIVERANCE (xxxvi.-xxxix.).
- A | POST-ASSYRIAN INVASION (xl.-lxvi.).
  - a | xl.-xlvi. COMFORT AND CONTROVERSY.
  - b | xlix.-lx. LIGHT AND PEACE.
  - c | lxi.-lxvi. ACCEPTABLE YEAR AND DAY OF VENGEANCE.

At this point we are concerned with the last great member:--

### A | Isaiah xl. - lxvi.

It will be seen that the sub-titles are not only “Comfort”, “Light”, and “Acceptable Year”; (that would be but half the truth, and false to fact), but that “Comfort” is not divorced from “Controversy”, “Light” is associated with “Peace”, and “The Acceptable Year of the Lord” cannot be fully appreciated or understood if separated from the concomitant “Day of Vengeance of our God”. Throughout this prophecy, as throughout the Bible, or throughout any and every single one of its books, sin is in the background, and the unfolding of the Divine plan of the ages shows that plan to be occupied with the *righteous* removal of sin. This characteristic unites every book of Scripture, and every phase of the Divine purpose.

The prophet does not speak “comfortably” to Jerusalem in words of sentiment or mere pacification, but distinctly associates that part of his message with the results of redeeming love when he says, “Her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isa. xl. 2). This close association we shall discover throughout the chapters that await us, so we leave the examination of such terms until we meet them in the progress of exposition, when we can acquaint ourselves more intimately with the subject-matter as it comes before us. The section which occupies Isa. xl.-xlvi., which we have entitled “Comfort and Controversy”, is, like every other section of Isaiah, sevenfold.

### A / a | Isaiah xl. - xlvi. Comfort and Controversy.

- a | xl.-xlvi. COMFORT AND CONTROVERSY. |
  - (1) xl. 1-11. Good tidings to Zion.
  - (2) xl. 12 - xlii. 17. My Servant (Israel and Messiah).
  - (3) xlii. 18 - xlv. 15. My Witnesses (Israel).
  - (4) xlv. 16-25. God and none else.
  - (5) xlvi. Israel My Glory.
  - (6) xlvii. Babylon said, “I am and none else”.
  - (7) xlviii. His servant Jacob, redeemed.

Our subject, therefore, for the present study is Isa. xl. 1-11, “Good tidings to Zion”.

Before we can proceed to the structural analysis of these verses there is one item that must be settled. In verse 9 we read:--

“O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem *that bringest good tidings*, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (Isa. xl. 9, A.V.).

“O thou *that tellest good tidings* to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou *that tellest good tidings* to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (R.V.).

As an alternative, the A.V. places in the margin, the rendering subsequently adopted by the R.V., while contrariwise the R.V. places in the margin the translation found in the A.V. It is evident, therefore, that the passage is one of considerable ambiguity, and where so many authorities differ it would be temerity on our part to assume anything like finality in coming to a judgment.

Among those who favour the A.V. rendering are Aquila, Theodoret, Symmachus, Calvin, Vitringa, Ewald, Umbreit, Drechsler, and Stier. Among those who favour the R.V. rendering may be enumerated the LXX, Chaldean, Vulgate, Grotius, Lowth, Gesenius, Hitzig, Maurer, Knobel, Henderson and the Companion Bible. The balance, if anything, is in favour of the R.V. But the reader may find counterbalancing arguments from Young’s Literal Translation or Rotherham’s Version, and this balance and counterbalance of opinion might be pursued indefinitely, leaving us still in a state of indecision. There is, however, one appeal that we can make, and that is to an obviously parallel passage where none of the great Versions allow of the existence of ambiguity. Such a passage is Isa. lxii. 10, 11:--

“Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy Salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him” (Isa. lxii. 10, 11).

We observe the parallels:--

“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”

“Prepare ye the way of the people.”

“Make straight . . . . a highway for our God.”

“Cast up the highway.”

“The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.”

“Gather out the stones.”

“Lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up.”

“Lift up a standard for the people.”

“Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God . . . . will come.”

“Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy Salvation cometh.”

“His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”

“His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.”

In the near context of Isaiah lxii. is a parallel with Isa. xl. 2:--

“She hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isa. xl. 2).

“For your shame ye shall have double . . . . therefore in their land they shall possess the double” (Isa. lxi. 7).

There is much in these parallels to lead us to conclude that the passage we are considering, namely Isa. xl. 9, 10, is a proclamation of good tidings “to Zion”, as the R.V. indicates, rather than one made “by Zion”, as the A.V. gives it, and so far as we are concerned, this parallel passage decides the matter for us.

We now turn our attention to the structure of the passage as a whole.

### Isaiah xl. 1-11.

A | 1, 2. Message of comfort to Jerusalem. Pardon.

B | 3-5. The VOICE. The Forerunner.

“A highway for our God”.

The mouth of the Lord hath spoken.

B | 6-8. The VOICE. The Prophet.

“The Word of our God”.

The word of our God shall stand for ever.

A | 9-11. Good tidings to Zion. Protection.

*“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God” (Isa. xl. 1).*

It is with such words that the glorious prophecy of restoration opens. The first chapter saw Israel in a condition in which neither bandage nor ointment were of use. Nothing but desolation and distress awaited this disobedient and gainsaying people. When the “Voice” is first heard (Isa. vi. 8) it is to commission the prophet to utter such words of desolation that he could only wailingly cry, “Lord, how long?”. Yet, the reader will remember, that, with all its woe, the chapter does not conclude without a prophecy of “return” and “revival”. And now, with the opening of Isaiah xl., that blessed day of restoration dominates the prophetic vision. We shall at times descend into the valley of human frailty, rebellion and sin; we shall never be allowed to forget that restoration is by grace and not by law or works, but the true light has at length broken through the clouds, and nothing can dim its lustre, or, for long, keep back the prophet’s pæen of triumph.

While no better English word than “Comfort” can be found appropriately to translate the Hebrew word *nacham*, with which this prophecy opens, the word contains more than can be known by a superficial acquaintance with it. When we consider that *nacham*, here translated “comfort”, is elsewhere 41 times translated “repent”, it is evident that the original has a fuller meaning than is generally understood by the English word “comfort”.

The first occurrences of the word in Scripture are suggestive. They are found in Genesis v. & vi., in reference to the flood, and there we meet with the two conceptions “comfort” and “repent”. The parents of Noah so named their son because, said they, “This same shall *comfort* us” (Gen. v. 29). That Noah did not afford his parents individual and personal exemption “from the toil of their hands because of the ground that the Lord hath cursed” is evident, for Noah did not accomplish the purport of his name until he was 600 years old. No, the “comfort” was theirs by prophetic anticipation. In the account in Genesis vi., when the flood was about to come on the earth, the self-same word occurs, this time translated “repent”: “It repented the Lord that He had made man” (Gen. vi. 6). The word has its basis in the idea of the intaking of the breath, and is used as a symbol of grief, pity, vengeance or comfort, according to circumstances.

“I will *ease* Me of Mine adversaries” (Isa. i. 24).

“Thy brother Esau . . . doth *comfort* himself purposing to kill thee”  
(Genesis.xxvii.42).

While *nacham* occurs but three times in the first part of Isaiah, it occurs fourteen times in the second. These latter occurrences are near the very heart of this great prophecy of restoration, and we must see them together.

**The 13 occurrences of “Nacham”, (\*)  
that pertain to the restoration of Israel, in Isaiah xl. - lxvi.**

- A | xl. 1. | Comfort ye, comfort ye My people.  
*The Lord God will come.*  
 All flesh shall see salvation.  
 All flesh is as grass.
- B | xlix. 13. | Sing . . . . the Lord hath comforted His people.  
 In an acceptable time have I heard thee.  
 Say to prisoners go forth.
- C | li. 3. | The Lord shall comfort Zion.  
 Look unto Abraham.  
 He will make the wilderness like Eden.
- D | li. 11, 12. “Sing”. “Joy.”
- E | lii. 19. “By whom shall I comfort thee?”
- D | lii. 9. “Joy”. “Sing”.
- C | liv. 11. | O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted.  
 The waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth.
- B | lxi. 2. | Preach good tidings . . . . comfort all that mourn.  
 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.  
 The opening of the prison to them that are bound.
- A | lxvi. 13. | As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you,  
 and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.  
*The Lord will come with fire.*  
 All flesh. The Lord shall plead with sword.  
 All flesh shall come and worship.  
 All flesh shall abhor the transgressor.

(\*) **Corrected according to volume XXXIII, page 20.**

**Old structure based on volume XXXII, page 226.**

- C | li. 3. | The Lord shall comfort Zion.  
 Look unto Abraham.  
 He will make the wilderness like Eden.
- D | li. 19. By whom shall I comfort thee? *Question.*
- E | lii. 9. The Lord hath comforted His people.  
 How beautiful . . . . him that bringeth good tidings,  
 That saith *Thy God reigneth.*
- C | liv. 11. | O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted.  
 The waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth.
- D | lvii. 6. Should I receive comfort in these? *Question.*
- Green** (volume XXXII) has been changed to **Red** (volume XXXIII).

Even a superficial observer can hardly fail to see that these occurrences are joined together as links in a chain, and the earnest student who uses these notes in the right spirit, and is dissatisfied with a casual survey, will see the great desirability of a scrutiny of the passages and their contexts in order that the import of the opening cry of Isa. xl. 1 may be gathered up at something like its true worth.

What this “comfort” implies, how far it is possible of attainment, what place human agency has in it, and many other features, must await our next article. Meanwhile let us rejoice that there is room for

such a word in the purpose of the ages, and that even though the Church of the Body of Christ be far removed in sphere from the kingdom of Israel, yet are they all one in their need of forgiveness and in being met in wondrous grace.

The intent reader will find a field of interest in the study of the rather obscure prophecy of Nahum. As may be surmised, *Nahum* is *nacham*, “comfort”. The prophet deals with Nineveh (*see* Isa.xxxvii.37), quotes Isaiah (Nahum i. 15), asks “Whence shall I seek comforters for thee?” (Nahum iii. 7), and shows by the figure that uses “wounds” and “bruises” (Nahum iii. 19), that Assyria was like Israel (Isa. i. 6) except that God remembered His covenant and redeemed Israel, whereas no such “comfort” is ministered to Nineveh. However, the matter is somewhat obtruse, and its explication would occupy more space than is at our disposal.

## **#52. ISAIAH xl. 1-11. Comfort and Controversy. With special reference to the true interpretation of the words translated, “Her iniquity is pardoned”.**

If we enquire what is the particular “comfort” that the prophet would minister to Jerusalem, we may find help by considering his own expansion given in Isa. xl. 2.

“Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

Here, to “speak comfortably” is literally “to speak to the heart”; it is the language of love.

“And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel; and he spake *to the heart* of the damsel” (Gen. xxxiv. 3, margin).

It was the language of Joseph, the great foreshadower of Christ, the Saviour, Preserver and Restorer of His people, when he said to his brethren in Egypt,

“Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake *to their hearts*” (Gen. l. 21, margin).

It is the language of God Himself when the day of Israel’s *restoration* (Gen. l. 21) and *bethrotal* (Gen. xxxiv. 3) is in view.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her unto the wilderness, and speak *to her heart* (margin) . . . . I will betroth . . . . I will sow . . . . I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art My people, and they shall say, Thou art my God” (Hosea ii. 14-23).

The comfort of the people of Israel as intended by the prophet in Isaiah xl., touches, in the first place, two things.

- (1) The end of her warfare.
- (2) The pardon of her iniquity.

This twofold annunciation is followed by a prophecy concerning the One Who, alone, could terminate all conflict or pardon iniquity. “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Then, facing the utter inability of human nature to accomplish such an end — for all flesh is grass — the prophet is assured that this glorious consummation shall be attained, “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”. The prophetic utterance is then rounded off by a vision of the coming of the Lord, and His twofold character of Ruler and Shepherd, uniting in His Person and work of the office of Kinsman-Redeemer and the Avenger of Blood.

The first expansion given by the prophet of what is intended by the ministry of “comfort”, with which this great section opens, is found in the words, “Her warfare is accomplished”. The reader will note that for “warfare” the margin reads “appointed time”. The Hebrew word translated “warfare” is familiar to the English reader in the Divine title, “The Lord of Sabaoth” (Rom. ix. 29), which is taken from the Hebrew *Tsaba*oth, “Hosts”. *Tsaba* occurs in the O.T. 485 times, of which 394 occurrences are translated “host”, 42 translated “war” or “warfare”, 29 translated “army”, and 6 translated “battle”. The glad tidings that at length shall be proclaimed in Jerusalem is that her “warfare” is “accomplished”. This will be incomparably good news, for Israel’s history is deluged in blood and soaked in tears. War, both on the physical and spiritual plane, has been theirs, and is even threatened at the close of the Millennium (Rev. xx. 8, 9). The prophet Daniel was staggered by a vision that revealed “warfare great” (Dan. x. 1) for the word translated “appointed time” is *tsaba*. Peace however shall come; Israel’s warfare shall one day cease; it shall be “accomplished”. This word “accomplished” is a translation of *male*, “To fill”, and is of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures. Isaiah uses the word in a very forceful manner when he speaks of hands being “full of blood” (Isa. i. 15); loins “filled with pain” (xxi. 3); lips “full of indignation” (xxx. 27); but in Isa. xl. 2 he uses the word in a slightly different sense, indicating that Israel’s experience of war will at length be “filled”. It will indeed have been a full measure, for the prophet’s own comment is that Israel has received of the Lord’s hand “double” for all her sins.

The prophet Ezekiel, referring to the punishment of Israel at the hands of the King of Babylon says, “Let the sword be doubled” (Ezek. xxi. 14). The prophet Jeremiah says, “First I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double” (Jer. xvi. 18); and again, “Bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction” (Jer. xvii. 18). In all probability there is a literal fulfillment of the law in all this, for failure to keep faith was punished by restoring the amount involved “double” (Exod. xxii. 4, 7, 9). This same principle is seen at work at the judgment of Babylon:

“Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double” (Rev. xviii. 6).

This however would be no word of “comfort” to Jerusalem, but there is another side to the matter. The same Isaiah, when he looks forward to “the acceptable year of the Lord” and the day of Israel’s restoration, says:--

“For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them” (Isa. lxvi. 7).

and the prophet Zechariah says:--

“Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee” (Zech. ix. 12).

In these references we have however been dealing with two different Hebrew words and two different ideas. The word used in Isaiah xl. means “full”, “thorough”, “complete”, whereas the word used in Isa. lxi. 7 refers rather to the double portion that belongs to the firstborn (Deut. xxi. 17).

The prophet therefore comforts Israel by announcing that her warfare is accomplished, that she has received double, or full measure, for her sins, and that now she is to receive the firstborn’s portion — “possess double”, and that “everlasting joy” shall be with them.

“Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee . . . . and the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful . . . . the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land . . . .

the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other . . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!” (Deut. xxviii. 48-67).

The inquisition, the ghetto, the gabardine, the pogrom, the concentration camp — all are included in the dreadful curse that was pronounced upon disobedient and gainsaying Israel.

The reader may wonder why we have not elaborated the evangelical doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, seeing that the very words “her iniquity is pardoned” await us, and seem to be the prophet’s own added explanation. Israel are to be pardoned, yea, they are to be justified, their iniquity being laid upon Him Who bare our sins and carried our sorrows, but, wondrous as the theme of redeeming love may be, faithfulness prevents us from introducing the subject here. We are sensitive of the reader’s surprise and possible displeasure, and for the truth’s sake, not for our own, we depart from our rule, and quote an authority.

Dr. Robert Young in his literal translation, reads, “that accepted hath been her punishment”, where the A.V. reads, “her iniquity is pardoned”. This translation will be found in the margin of the R.V. and merits examination. To the evangelical mind, there is something extremely objectional in this new translation, and if intruded into the New Testament it would indeed be intolerable, but we must not forget that, however full of evangelical grace this most glorious of prophecies may be, it was originally uttered, “concerning *Judah and Jerusalem*” (Isa. i. 1), and doctrines that are foreign to the gospel of the grace of God may be in perfect harmony in the dealings of God with Israel. If Israel knew the law of Moses they also knew the conditions that were attached to its cessation and their restoration to favour. The passage that illuminates Isa. xl. 2 is found in Leviticus xxvi.

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then ACCEPT of the PUNISHMENT of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant” (Lev. xxvi. 40-42).

Here the word “accept” is the Hebrew *ratsah*, and the word “punishment” is the Hebrew *avon*, which two words appear respectively as “pardon” and “iniquity”. This same word *ratsah* supplies us with “the acceptable year of the Lord” (Isa. xl. 2), and the *acceptance* of the offerer because of the vicarious sacrifice (Lev. i. 4), which facts have their place in the final and complete acceptance, in grace, of this disobedient and gainsaying people.

We have not yet arrived at Isaiah liii., and must therefore expound Isa. xl. 2 by principles of truth, and not by feelings and wishes. If the reader will read the prayer of Nehemiah (Nehemiah i.), and of Daniel (Daniel ix.), he will perceive that these two men of God knew and understood the principles of God’s dealing with His ancient people that are implied in the translation of Isa. xl. 2 offered in this article. Moreover, the reader may be glad to see another example of the dual meaning that attaches to such words as “iniquity”, “acceptance”, “punishment” and “pardon”, by referring to Gen. iv. 3, “And Cain said unto the Lord, my punishment is greater than i can bear”, and consulting the margin, which reads: “or, mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven”. We do not propose, however, to enter into the question of Genesis iv. and its interpretation, but merely draw the reader’s attention to the fact that these dual meanings are recognized by all Hebrew scholars. We can at least learn one lesson from

this feature, namely, that, in the eyes of the Lord, “iniquity” and “punishment” are but two sides of one subject, even as are “pardon” and “acceptance”.

### **#53. ISAIAH xl. 3-5. The Forerunner. The relation of John the Baptist with Elijah considered.**

Is there any evident connection between verses 2 & 3 of Isaiah xl.? The new section (verse 3) commences with the words, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness”. Whose is this “voice”, and what connection is there between his message and that already written in verses 1 & 2? To answer the question we must look back to these verses and note their content. The passage that supplies the link is that which we found it necessary to retranslate “That accepted hath been her punishment”, and the word translated “comfort”, which we discovered was many times translated “repent”.

At first glance we may not see the principle embedded in this evangelical prophecy and consequently miss the point. God made it abundantly clear to Israel that His attitude to them would be a reflection of their attitude to Him. He is a “God of recompenses” (Jer. li. 56). “The days of recompense are come” said Hosea (ix. 7), and, reviewing the history of Israel, the apostle Paul spoke of “a stumbling block, and a recompense” (Rom. xi. 9). Under the free grace of the gospel such “recompense” would be entirely unscriptural and undispensational, but we remember that even in Matthew v.-vii. there is such a principle as “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Matt. vi. 12), and, lest we should feel inclined to tone this down, the Lord, in verses 14 and 15, makes the matter unmistakably clear, fortifying it later with the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 23-35). So we read:--

“With the merciful Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful; with an upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright; with the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward” (Psa. xviii. 25, 26).

According to verse 24, this is “recompense”. We shall find that preceding the passage in Leviticus.xxvi., where “acceptance of punishment” is found (a passage that bears intimately upon Isaiah xl. 2, as was found in our last article), there is the same principle at work:

“ . . . . . If ye walk contrary unto Me . . . . . I bring . . . . . I will send . . . . . I chastise . . . . . If they shall confess . . . . . that also they have walked contrary unto Me, and that I also have walked contrary unto them . . . . .” (Lev. xxvi. 14-46).

So, too, in Joel ii. we again have repentance of a mutual character:

“Turn ye even to Me with all your heart ... turn unto the Lord ... repenteth in Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent” (Joel ii. 12-14).

So in Isaiah xl. when the prophet passes on the Lord’s word, “Comfort ye”, he uses the Hebrew word *nacham*, which is also rendered “repent”, and John the Baptist, who partly fulfilled the prophecy of Isa. xl. 3-5, had as the key-word of his ministry to Israel, “Repent”. If therefore these things are discerned, a very palpable link between Isa. xl. 2 & 3 will be seen to exist.

When Isa. xl. 3-5 is read and associated with John the Baptist two things stand out for consideration. One is that while he did fulfil much that is written here, it could never be said that “all flesh” saw the glory of the Lord. Let us consider the way in which this passage is introduced into the Gospels.

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. iii. 1, 2).

The statement is followed by the assertion:--

“For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness” (Matt. iii. 3).

With this quotation and its application to John the Baptist, Mark opens his Gospel (Mark i. 1-3). Luke also speaks in the same strain (Luke iii. 1-6). John, in his Gospel, lays great stress upon the witness of John the Baptist but, instead of affirming, as do the other Evangelists, that John’s ministry was according to the prophecy of Isaiah, he allows the Baptist to speak for himself:--

“He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” (John i. 23).

Nevertheless, every reader of the N.T. knows that John only partly fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah. It is important that we should know not only what the Scriptures teach on any given subject, but in what part of the Scriptures the teaching is found, and this is true of the teaching concerning John the Baptist.

In Matthew iii. there is no hesitancy, no proviso: John’s ministry might easily have fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah xl., but we find that, so far from this being the case, John is thrown into prison, and himself began to hesitate at the turn of events (Matthew xi.). After the Baptist had been cast into prison, the Lord opened His public ministry, and endorsed the announcement of His forerunner:

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. iv. 17),

but following His rejection (Matthew xi.-xiii.) a dividing line is reached, and the Lord makes a new revelation:

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go into Jerusalem, and suffer . . . . be killed . . . . raised again the third day” (Matthew xvi. 21),

and the next reference to John the Baptist has a different aspect, introducing somewhat of mystery, where before all was straight-forward. The disciples asked the Lord:

“Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things” (Matthew.xvii.10,11).

The Scribes were right. Elijah indeed *cometh*, but John was already dead. Elijah indeed *cometh first, and shall restore all things*. This, John the Baptist never did. All flesh did not, then, see the glory of the Lord.

Three statements relative to John the Baptist and Elijah are given in the N.T. Taken separately they appear to contradict one another; taken together they manifest a uniting principle.

(1) John said he *was not* Elijah, but “the voice” of Isaiah xl.

“Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not” (John i. 21).

(2) The Saviour said that John *was* Elijah.

“This is Elijah, which was for to come” (Matt. xi. 14).

“Elijah is come already, and they knew him not . . . . the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist” (Matt. xvii. 12, 13).

The Lord’s statement in Matt. xi. 14 however is not so simple as our quotation makes it appear. He introduced His statement with an “If”. “If ye will receive it” (namely, John’s testimony and the presence of their King) then, most surely, Elijah had come. But Israel did not receive, and so Elijah had

not come, nevertheless John had foreshadowed and anticipated the ministry of that great prophet, which is foretold in Malachi.

(3) Just before the birth of John the Baptist, an angel spoke to Zacharias, his father, and said:

“And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in *the spirit and power* of Elijah” (Luke i. 16, 17).

It could never be said of Elijah himself, that he went before the Lord in “the spirit” and “power” of Elijah, for that would make no sense.

Taking all that is written, we understand that while John was *not* Elijah, he anticipated Elijah’s coming, much as the first advent of Christ anticipated His second coming in glory. Both John and the Lord preached repentance in view of the kingdom, but both were rejected and the promised kingdom is still future.

When we return to Isa. xl. 3-5 and ask of whom does the prophet speak, we have to reply: He speaks of John the Baptist, in an anticipatory sense, but, primarily and fully, of Elijah who shall come before the second advent of Christ, as Malachi has said:

“Behold, I will send unto you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. iv. 5).

Elijah’s ministry will be preparatory; “prepare”, “make straight”, “valley ... exalted”, “hill ... low”, “crooked ... straight”, “rough places plain”. While all the references here have to do with the actual, physical, preparation of roadways for the advent of a great personage (a preparation rendered very necessary because of the bad state of the roads, made worse by the custom of throwing out stones and rubbish on the highway), they but shadow forth a spiritual preparation. When John the Baptist went before the Lord to “prepare the way of the Lord”, he did so in fulfillment of the prophecy uttered before his birth:

“He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, *to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*” (Luke i. 17).

Again, the Lord said: “Elijah verily cometh first, and restoreth all things” (Mark ix. 12). We are not surprised therefore to find that the word translated “prepare” in Isa. xl. 3, although it occurs over 132 times in the O.T., is only so translated 6 times. Its primary meaning is “To turn the face towards anything”, *panah* “to prepare” being cognate with *panim*, “face”. In Mal. iii. 1 both words, *panah* and *panim*, are used. “He shall prepare (*panah*) the way before Me (*panim*).” The following passage, quoted from *The Land and the Book* by Dr. W. M. Thomson, will enable the reader to appreciate the symbolism of the language of Isa. xl. 3, 4.

“Isaiah says, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord: cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones’ (Isa. 62:10); and not only do modern *ways* prove the need of such preparation, but modern customs show how, when and why it is done. When Ibrahim Pasha proposed to visit certain places on Lebanon, the emeers and the sheiks sent forth a general proclamation, somewhat in the style of Isaiah’s exhortation, to all the inhabitants, to assemble along the proposed route, and prepare the way before him. The same was done in 1846, on a grand scale when the present\* sultan visited Brusa. The stones were gathered out, crooked places straightened, and rough ones made level and smooth . . . . the exhortation to gather out the stones is peculiarly appropriate. These farmers do the exact reverse — gather up the stones from their fields, and cast them into the highway: and it is this barbarous custom which in many places renders the paths so uncomfortable and even dangerous.” (\* Published in 1888.)

The two-fold use of the word “way” needs no lengthy dissertation. The “highway”, *mesillah*, is from the verb *Salal*, “To cast up”, as in Isa. lvii. 14 and lxii. 10. The “highway” is used figuratively in such passages as Psa. lxxxiv. 5 and Prov. xvi. 17. Among the prophetic preparations for Israel’s restoration is this “highway”. Isaiah says: “There shall be an highway for the remnant of His people” (Isa. xi. 16). Jeremiah says: “Set thine heart toward the highway” (Jer. xxxi. 21).

Again, the highway is to be made “straight, and the crooked made straight”, and this too has a moral significance. The Psalmist prayed: “Make Thy way *straight* before my face” (Psa. v. 8). This word, which is translated “to make straight”, *yashar*, gives us the adjectives “right”, “just”, and “upright”. When Elihu would speak of sin, he used the figure of the road, saying, “If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was *right*” (Job xxxiii. 27), where he uses the same word as is translated “crooked” in Lam. iii. 9, “He hath made my paths crooked”, and the same word as is translated “make straight” in Isaiah xl.

The reader however can sense the twofold nature of this figure: “Walk”, “way”, “path”, “crooked”, “straight”, etc., retain their twofold meaning today.

This spiritual “preparation” for the coming of the Lord, a preparation that includes “the heart” and “the people”, may be seen in Peter’s exhortation, “In holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (II Pet. iii. 12).

Let us be glad and rejoice that at last all hindrances, all obstacles, all stumbling blocks; all that prevents the coming of the King shall be removed.

“And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together”  
(Isa. xl. 5).

#### **#54. ISAIAH xl. 6-9. The Frailty of Flesh, and the Power of the Word.**

The reader may remember that the structure of Isa. xl. 1-11 is as follows:--

- A | 1, 2. Message of comfort to Jerusalem. Pardon.
- B | 3-5. The VOICE. The Forerunner.  
“The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”
- B | 6-8. The VOICE. The Prophet.  
“The word of our God shall stand for ever.”
- A | 9-11. Good tidings to Zion. Protection.

We have heard, by prophetic anticipation, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness”. Now we hear another voice, and unless we are careful we shall be somewhat confused by the inter-change of speakers. “The voice said, Cry.” The voice is the voice of the Lord, addressing the prophet and urging him to take up the glad message of Isa. xl. 1, 2: “Cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished.” But the prophet can hardly believe his ears, for the gladness and graciousness of the message. He looked at the people: a people of whom he had said, in the opening vision of his prophecy, “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity; a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters” (Isa. i. 4), and his heart failed him. Can restoration be anything more than a dream, a vision, a hope; but a hope doomed to perpetual disappointment?

“The voice said, Cry”, and Isaiah replied, “What shall I cry?” (or What is the use of crying?) for “all flesh is grass”, destined to wither away.

Back comes the word of the Lord, which, to make clear the meaning, we take the liberty of expanding a little:

Yes, Isaiah, the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but you have been looking in the wrong direction. Israel's restoration will not be accomplished by the arm of flesh, or by the wisdom of the world. No leagues or covenants or movements will ever plant Israel back into the land of promise; that is the glorious prerogative of the Lord Himself. He that scattered Israel, shall gather him; He will watch over His word to perform it. Isaiah, for the moment, you have forgotten one thing:

“The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

“The word of our God shall stand for ever.”

In this “green and pleasant land” of England there is nothing so ubiquitous and persistent as “grass”. It grows everywhere, enduring the cold of winter and the heat of summer, but, in Bible lands, grass is a fitting symbol of that which is transitory. When He would speak of something that was passing, our Saviour referred to the grass of the field “which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven” (Matthew.vi.30).

Peter quotes Isa. xl. 6 and places the symbol of frailty between references to the incorruptible seed of the Word of God and that enduring Word of the Lord, which, by the gospel, was preached by the apostles (I Pet. i. 23-25).

When he would speak of the fleeting character of riches, James also uses the same figure, saying, “So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways” (James i. 10, 11).

Allusions in the Psalms also indicate this same tendency of the grass to wither and fade; “For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb” (Psa. xxxvii. 2). Again the figure is used in that magnificent Psalm of Moses, where he calls upon men to number their days, and describes them as spending their years as a tale that is told:

“They are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth” (Psa. xc. 5, 6).

In another Psalm we are told that,

“He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass; as the flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more, BUT THE MERCY OF THE LORD IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING” (Psa. ciii. 14-17).

If, despite the frailty of the flesh emphasized in his prophecy, Isaiah had no cause to doubt but that the Lord would fulfil His promise, he is nevertheless inspired later in the same prophecy to enforce the lesson, saying, concerning the return of the redeemed to Zion:

“I, even I, am He That comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and the son of man which shall be made as grass” (Isa. li. 12).

Consequently we may learn from Isaiah xl. and Isaiah li. that the frailty of man will neither accomplish nor frustrate the purpose of God.

“The voice said, Cry”, and we now see that the basis of the blessed proclamation to be cried and the hope of its glorious fulfillment are found in the words: “The mouth of the Lord had spoken it”.

“Word of God, hath He then spoken, And shall He not make it good?

Never can His word be broken Ever faithful it has stood.”\*

(\* - From our book “Hymns of Praise”.)

Having heard the voice of the forerunner and the voice which called upon the Prophet to cry and declare the good news of Isaiah's restoration, the theme returns to those words which were spoken to Jerusalem:

“O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (Isa. xl. 9).

In volume XXXII, p.224, we have already discussed the question of the translation of this passage, and in the light of Isa. lii. 7 feel obliged to adopt the marginal alternative.

The Hebrew word which is translated “good tidings” is *basar* and the Hebrew word which is translated “flesh” is also *basar*, and, extraordinary as it may at first appear, both “good tidings” and “flesh” come from the same root. It may be useful to the student unacquainted with the language if we show how these apparently unrelated ideas can possibly grow from a common root.

*Basar*. — According to Gesenius, the primary sense is that of “beauty”, and since the face is made more beautiful by joy, so, by an easy transition, that which makes one joyful is called by the same name. The word however quite naturally took another direction. Beauty, says the proverb, is “skin deep”, and *basar* came to mean the exterior skin, then the flesh which the skin covered, and so, at length, by following two figurative pathways, the one word came to stand for “flesh”, which was likened to fading grass and “the gospel”, which endures for ever. Any student of English will be able to provide parallel examples of this diversity growing from a common stock. The LXX translated this word, “to bring”, (or to tell), “good tidings”, by the Greek *euangelizo*, which in English became “evangelize” and gives us the “evangel” or “gospel”.

What was the “gospel” that brought comfort to Zion? It was one of few words but of vast import, “Behold your God”. This is expanded in the verses that follow, but all that these verses can say, and much more, is implicit in these three words. Let us examine this all-embracing evangel.

“BEHOLD!” — This is an interjection, and such particles of language are illusive words, difficult to trace to their origin, but it appears that *hen*, “behold”, is derived from the verb *henah* “to be ready” (Deut. i. 41), which in turn means “to be present”. The particle “behold” or “lo” generally indicates the *presence* of any one or thing, and the evangel of Isaiah xl. opens with the exhortation to behold, and gives the assurance that the Lord is present.

One has only to call to mind the condition of the people that resulted in, and from, the loss of the presence of God, to become conscious that Isaiah's “Behold!” indicates the end of separation and suffering and the beginning of nearness and blessing.

“YOUR.” — While God is God, quite independent of all human or angelic recognition, Isaiah's evangel is not so much the fact that “God *is*” as that “God is *yours*”.

A part of the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham is expressed in the words, “I will be a God unto thee . . . . I will be their God” (Gen. xvii. 7, 8). The title “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”, carries with it the very essence of the covenant relationship. When the time came for Israel to be delivered from Egypt, Moses was sent to tell the people that God had remembered His covenant, and that He was about to redeem and deliver them, saying: “I will take you . . . . I will be to you a God” (Exod. vi. 7).

Coming to Isaiah's prophecy itself we have abundant testimony to the importance of this possessive pronoun:

“Should not a people seek unto *their* God” (Isa. viii. 19).

“Lo, this is *our* God; we have waited for Him” (Isa. xxv. 9).

“O Lord *our* God; (other) lords beside Thee have had dominion over us” (Isaiah xxvi. 13).

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, *your* God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you” (Isa. xxxv. 4).

We will not multiply references; the subject is one that can be explored by all.

We cannot conclude this part of our study without referring to the parallel in Isa. lii. 7:

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, *Thy God reigneth!*”

**“Behold your God!” “Thy God reigneth!”**

But there is the other side to the matter that must not be forgotten. The fact that Isaiah could say to Israel, “Behold your God” suggests what is found to be so in fact, that God can say of Israel, “*My people*”.

So, in the Exodus, God is said to see the affliction of His people, to demand of Pharaoh the release of His people, and Hosea condenses into one brief verse the great day of restoration, saying:

“I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, THOU ART MY PEOPLE; and they shall say, THOU ART MY GOD” (Hosea ii. 23).

We could, of course, have found the whole matter expressed for us in the opening words of Isaiah.xl.: “Comfort ye, comfort ye MY people, saith YOUR God”. Verses 10 & 11, with which this first section of Isaiah xl. closes, are but an expansion of this blessed evangel of restored fellowship and relationship. It is expressed there in a number of propositions, not set out formally, but nevertheless there. These may be visualized as follows:

- (1) This God who is “your God” is “The Lord God”.
- (2) This God “will come”.
- (3) This God will come with a strong hand (or against the strong).
- (4) He is accompanied by both “reward” and “work”.
- (5) He is likened to a Shepherd, feeding, gathering, carrying and gently leading.

Owing to the exigencies of space we must be content either to give scant attention to these blessed features, or to devote another article to their consideration. We trust that no reader is of two minds over this matter, and that all will gladly concur with the course taken of giving this great subject a respectful hearing. Accordingly, fuller comment is reserved until the necessary space can be devoted to these verses, which we hope will be in the next article of the series.

## #55. ISAIAH xl. 10, 11. The Second Advent. Its Rule and its Reward.

The reader will remember that we found in Isa. xl. 10 & 11, an expansion of the comfort and good tidings of verse 9 implied in the words, "Behold your God!"

The first thing we observe is that "Your God" is now expressed as "The Lord God". The Hebrew title here is *Adonai Jehovah*. *Adonai* is one of three related titles, which the Companion Bible distinguishes as follows:

*Adon* is the Lord as Overlord or *Ruler*.

*Adonim* is the Lord as *Owner*.

*Adonai* is the Lord as *Blessor*.

*Adon* is the Lord as Ruler *in* the earth.

*Adonai* is the Lord in His relation *to* the earth; and as carrying out His purposes of blessing in the earth. With this limitation it is almost equivalent to Jehovah.

Indeed, it was from an early date so used, by associating the vowel points of the word *Jehovah* with *Adon*, thus converting *Adon* into *Adonai*. (Appendix 4, viii.).

The first occurrence of *Adonai* in the Scriptures is extremely suggestive. It is found in the response of Abraham to the Lord's assurance.

"Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" (Gen. xv. 1, 2).

When therefore the Prophet expanded the title "Behold your God!" by the added words "Behold, the Lord God will come", he was but following a legitimate train of thought. "The Lord God" was indeed the God of Israel, for He was the God of Abraham, to whom promises had been made that could not be broken, and it is the glory of Isaiah's prophecy to shed a beam of heavenly light across the dark interval of man's failure, rebellion and doom.

Isaiah's vision of the coming of the Lord God is twofold. He comes to rule with strength, and He comes to lead, as a Shepherd. At His first coming John the Baptist pointed Him out as the Lamb of God, but, even then, he saw that, associated with this lamb-like character, was another characteristic, that of inflexible righteousness, for, while John records The Baptist's words, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John.i.29), Matthew records his declaration: "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. iii. 12). Peter moreover designates the Lord as a Shepherd when he speaks of His second coming, saying: "Feed the flock of God which is among you . . . . and when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory" (I Pet. v. 2-4).

The coming of Christ as the Redeemer, the mediation of Christ between His two advents, and the second coming of Christ to rule and reign, are all associated with the one title of Shepherd, and may be set out as follows:--

"THE GOOD SHEPHERD" (John x. 11).	The First Advent.	THE CROSS.
"THE GREAT SHEPHERD" (Heb. xiii. 20).	The Present Session.	THE CROOK.
"THE CHIEF SHEPHERD" (I Pet. v. 4).	The Second Advent.	THE CROWN.

In prophetic vision Jacob saw "The Shepherd" (Gen. xlix. 24); Israel's God is addressed by the title "O Shepherd of Israel" (Psalm lxxx. 1); David, the type of his Greater Son, was Israel's beloved Shepherd King, and Ezekiel prophesies of a reunited Israel by saying, "They all shall have one Shepherd" (Ezek. xxxvii. 24).

Let us consider a little more carefully the actual wording of this prophecy which sums up the "comfort" of God's people, Israel:

“Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and his work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isa. xl. 10, 11).

When we speak of the “Second Coming” we may feel obliged at one time to emphasize the teaching of the opening chapter of the Acts and say “This same Jesus”, or at another we may quote the Lord’s own words and say, “The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father” (Matt. xvi. 27), but we must never, never, forget that “This same Jesus”, this “Son of man”, is “Lord”, yea, Israel’s “God” (Isa. xl. 10), and that “the blessed hope” of the church of the mystery looks for the glory of “Our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus ii. 11-13). He comes with strength, He comes to rule, He comes to reward.

The metaphors of strength are varied; the one that supplies us with the “strong hand” of Isaiah xl. is derived from the figure of “binding”, and so by an easy transition to that of the exercise of strength which “repairs” and “recovers” (Psa. cxlvii. 13; Ezra i. 6; Judges ix. 24; Isa. xxxv. 3). The word *chazaq* is used more than thirty times in Nehemiah iii. to describe the “repairing” of the wall of Jerusalem. In the Prophet’s mind this “strong hand”, with which the Lord will come, is primarily associated with the “restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets”, and guarantees the glorious oneness of this true and blessed unity among the peoples of the earth.

He Whose strength repairs, recovers and unites, is also the great Ruler, “His arm shall rule for Him”. The “arm” of the Lord is an ever-recurring figure in the O.T.

The Hebrew word *zeroa* is derived from the verb *zarah*, “to scatter”, and is associated, by sound, with *zara*, “to sow”, as may be seen in the play on the word “Jezreel” in Hosea, where first it means “to scatter” (Hosea i. 4) and secondly “to sow” (Hosea ii. 23), fulfilling the twofold prophecy, “He that scattered Israel will gather him . . . . I will sow . . . .” (Jer. xxxi. 10 & 27). Moreover, He that gathers “scattered” Israel, gathers and keeps “as a Shepherd doth His flock” (Jer. xxxi. 10). No Hebrew could see the word “Arm” and forget its association with “scattering” in judgment and “sowing” in blessing and restitution.

Israel’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage is particularly connected with the “stretched out arm of the Lord” (Exod. vi. 6; Deut. iv. 34; v. 15). To this the Psalmist returns again and again.

“Thou hast with Thine arm redeemed Thy people” (Psa. lxxvii. 15).

“O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory” (Psa. xcvi. 1).

“He brought out Israel from among them . . . . with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm” (Psa. cxxxvi. 11, 12).

Coming to Isaiah’s prophecy itself, we find several important references. Looking back to the overthrow of Egypt, Isaiah cries:

“Awake, awake, put on Thy strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days . . . . therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return . . . . I, even I, am He that *comforteth* you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid . . . . of the son of man which shall be made as *grass*” (Isa. li. 9-12).

The reader will need no elaboration of this prophecy in order to perceive its connection with Isaiah. xl. When Israel shall be in their extremity and “no man” appears as their saviour, then, says the prophet:

“Therefore His arm brought salvation” (Isa. lix. 16; lxiii. 5).

“The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. lii. 10).

This, however, is in designed contrast with Isaiah liii. which, referring to the Lord’s first advent, asks: “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” (Isa. liii. 1).

The prophet’s words bring vividly to light the blessed fact that “The Arm of the Lord” is a title of Christ. He is both the Wisdom of God and the Power of God, a twofold pledge indeed that the purpose of the ages shall reach its goal.

When, in the passage which we are studying, the prophet speaks of the Arm of the Lord he does not refer to “salvation” but “rule”. This word “rule” is the translation of the Hebrew *mashal*, “to make like”, and gives us the word “similitude” and “proverb”. Gesenius says:

"Learned men have made many attempts to reconcile the significations of *making like* and *ruling* . . . . however, I have no doubt, but that from the signification *making like*, is derived that of *judging, forming an opinion*, to think, to suppose, to think fit."

In the O.T. the symbol of righteousness is the plummet and the balance, and *mashal*, with its root idea of equality, is a splendid conception out of which grew the flower and fruit of righteous rule and equity. “In righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth” (Isa. xi. 4). But at the coming of the Lord there is not only “rule”, there is “recompense”: “Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him” (Isa. xl. 10).

The opinion of commentators as to the “reward” here is divided, some maintaining that it is Christ’s own recompense, and others that it relates to His recognition of the acceptable service of His children. Possibly there is no need to attempt a decision, for “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied”. He endured for “the joy that was set before Him”. His glorious exaltation in that day is in direct sequence to His humiliation and death and, inasmuch as the redeemed of all ranks and callings are to share His glory, so the faithful servants of all ranks and callings may “enter into the joy of their Lord” and, in *His* crowning day also find their own. “*With Me in My throne*”, “*Reign with Him*” are words that do not permit of a separation between the triumph of the Leader and the awards of His followers. This passage, Isa. xl. 10, was very evidently in the mind of the Apostle when he wrote, “Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to every one as His work shall be” (Rev. xxii. 12). By a recognized figure of speech the word translated “work” in Isa. xl. 10 is often rendered “reward” (Psalm cix. 20; Isa. xlix. 4, margin); “recompense” (Isaiah xl. 10, lxii. 11, margin); and “hire” (Ezekiel xxix. 20, margin).

As we have already seen, the section ends on a tender note. The Lord God is the Lord of Hosts, His arm is an arm of shattering might and, in the opening of the next section, the mind is staggered at the description of His omnipotence. “The hollow of His hand” measures the waters, His “span” metes out the heavens. Yet this selfsame, mighty, arm “gathers the lambs” that He might carry them in His bosom. Israel have wandered alone and in misery for centuries, they knew not their Shepherd’s voice. One day, and that soon, they shall acknowledge Him, and, with that acknowledgment, their sorrows shall be turned into joy, the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and peace shall flow like a river.

“*Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God*” (Isa. xl. 1).

## #56. ISAIAH xl. 12 - xlii. 17.

### The Structure of the section and introductory notes.

The reader may remember that the three great divisions of Isaiah xl.-lxvi. are:

*a* | xl.-xlviii. COMFORT AND CONTROVERSY.

*b* | xlix.-lx. LIGHT AND PEACE.

*c* | lxi.-lxvi. THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR.

We have seen that Israel's comfort is intimately associated with the "Good tidings" that were preached to Zion. These good tidings are in view throughout this second great portion of Isaiah, whose prophecy is occupied with the *provision* made in Christ, the *promise* that restoration shall come to pass, and the ultimate *performance* of the word of the Lord. Further, inasmuch as this blessed restoration deals, not simply with the land and its desolation, but with the people and their sin, we must not expect the unfolding of the purpose to go forward with the directness that characterizes the response of the mechanical universe (*See also* volume XXX, p.138).

It is not without interest that we discover that the word *basar*, "To bring good tidings", occurs seven times in Isaiah, all in the second half of the prophecy. The passages are, Isa. xl. 9; xli. 27; lii. 7 and lxi. 1, where the A.V. translates "to bring" or "to preach good tidings", and Isa. lx. 6, where the response to this blessed message is found in the words, "They *shall show forth* the praises of the Lord", an aspect of "preaching" that is often forgotten.

In the attempt to comprehend its significance as expressed in its structure, the section before us, like most of the passages already examined, taxes the powers of the mind to the utmost. We can however perceive that the challenging reference to the utter failure of the flesh, under the figure of "grass that withers", so prominent in Isa. xl. 1-11, meets us afresh in this second section, where the challenge is addressed by the Creator to the dumb idols and graven images in which Israel had so often put their trust.

Intermingled with this theme is that of service; "Israel, thou art My servant", "Behold My Servant". This relationship, coupled with the fact that "No man can serve two masters", is, in itself, a protest and a provision against the folly of idolatry, for "bowing down" to graven images is associated with "serving them" (Exod. xx. 5). Contrast with this the glory of such blessed service as is seen in the opening of Isaiah xlii., where the Messiah Himself is spoken of as "My Servant".

Before we can deal with the teaching of this section, either as a whole or in its parts, it will be necessary to discover the underlying structure, so that we may concentrate our attention upon those features which carry forward the burden of the prophecy. By the very nature of the subject, the following structure is presented in its barest outlines; to follow out the subdivisions in one presentation would, because of their complexity, defeat our object. With this necessary reservation in mind, we believe that the outline will not only be of interest, but of service, as we endeavour to follow the mind of the Lord in the outworking of His gracious purposes.

### Isaiah xl. 12 - xlii. 17.

A | xl. 2 - xli. 7. The incomparable nature of the Creator,  
and the consequent folly of idolatry.

A | xli. 8 - xlii. 17. The two "Servants", Israel and Messiah,  
and the consequent folly of idolatry.

This folly of idolatry is demonstrated, first by the utter inability of molten images either to act or foretell, and secondly in the contemplation of the true nature of service.

The two parts of Isa. xl. 2 - xli. 7 can now be considered separately, and the structure of the first part is as follows:

**Isaiah xl. 2 - xli. 7.**

**The Incomparable nature of the Creator,**

- A | xl. 12-14. "WHO?" The Creator's might and wisdom. |  
THINGS VISIBLE: Measured, meted, comprehended, weighed.  
THINGS INVISIBLE: Directed, counseled, taught, shewed.
- B | xl. 15-17. "THE ISLES". The comparative insignificance of the world. |  
The nations—a drop in a bucket and less than nothing.
- C | xl. 18 - xli. 1. The utter folly of idolatry,  
and the incomparable nature of God. |
  - a | To whom will ye liken God?
  - b | The graven image.
  - c | Have ye not known . . . . heard?
  - d | Inhabitants as grasshoppers.
  - a | To whom will ye liken Me?
  - b | Creation.
  - c | Hast thou not known . . . . heard?
  - d | Power to the faint.
- A | xli. 2-4. "WHO?" Jehovah's might and wisdom. |  
THINGS VISIBLE: Raised, called, ruled.  
THINGS INVISIBLE: "I am He": "First and Last".
- B | xli. 5. "THE ISLES". |  
Fear and false trust.
- C | xli. 6, 7. The utter folly of idolatry. |  
The carpenter and goldsmith.  
Ready for soldiering.  
Fastened with nails.

In this article we do not purpose giving the structure of the second part of this section, namely, Isaiah xli.8 - xlii. 17. To do so would defeat our object, which is to provide helps to the understanding of the Word. The reader should go over the outline, point by point, in order that he may make it his own.

In our next article we hope to consider some of the outstanding lines of teaching found in this passage and gather up their comfort and inspiration. Meanwhile there is no need for any of us to wait before entering into the truth of the blessed message of the closing verses of Isaiah xl., for at the present time we all stand much in need of the promise, "*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength*".

## #57. ISAIAH xl. 12 - xlii. 17. The Folly and Tragedy of Idolatry.

Unless the reader's memory is above the average, we suggest that it would be a help to keep by him for reference the structure of the passage before us, which will be found in volume XXX, page 43.

A feature that calls for attention and which most strikes the mind when this chapter of Isaiah is read, is the apparently abrupt transition from the tender Shepherd of verse 11 to the omnipotent Creator of verse 12. But such a transition is by no means unique, as Isaiah i. shows:

"I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering. The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned . . . . I gave My back to the smiters" (Isa. i. 3-6).

We have but to call to mind the testimony of John's Gospel to perceive that there is a doctrinal basis for this apparent meeting of extremes. In the chapter which tells us that Christ is "The Lamb of God" we read, "All things were made by Him", or, if we turn to the tenth chapter, where Christ is revealed as "The good Shepherd", we shall also find the claim, "I and My Father as One".

If the hand of the gentle Shepherd that guides His sheep and carries His lambs is the hand in whose hollow the waters of the deep can be contained, then, even though all flesh is but grass, the purpose of God in Israel's restoration must be attained. Further, the restoration of Israel is spoken of in terms of a "new creation" (Isa. lxi. 17, 18). He Whose power and wisdom called the visible creation into being in the past is fully able to bring about a new creation in the future.

The utter distrust of "all flesh" that is uppermost in the mind of the Prophet in the opening section is again brought forward in this new section, as an argument against Israel's great failure to trust God alone. From the days when the Lord said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me", Israel showed a terrible tendency to idolatry, or its equivalent, a trust in Egypt, or a trust in something visible and tangible.

Isaiah does not refer to the attributes of the Creator in the form of a statement, but in the guise of a question; "Who . . . . who . . . . with whom?" and then leads on to the great challenge "To whom, then, will ye liken God?"

Before we consider these references to idolatry, let us observe the way in which the subject-matter is distributed. Isaiah divides his references to the greatness of God into three.

(1) POWER.—"Who hath measured . . . meted . . . comprehended . . . weighed?"

(2) WISDOM.—"Who hath directed . . . taught . . . counseled . . . shewed?"

(3) COMPARISON.—The Nations. |

A drop in a bucket.

The small dust of the balance.

Nothing; less than nothing; a vanity.

The Earth. |

The isles taken up as a very little thing.

Lebanon not sufficient to burn.

The beasts not sufficient for an offering.

We have already seen that in the mind of Isaiah the "Shepherd" and the "Creator" were one.

With this section of Isaiah, we may profitably couple the words of Agur, the son of Jakeh:

"Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and WHAT HIS SON'S NAME, if thou canst tell?" (Prov. xxx. 4).

This passage speaks of Christ, and John's Gospel and Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians provide the answer to the question raised:

"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13).

"Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 9, 10).

When Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, He saw the glory of the Lord Jesus (Isaiah vi.; John.xii.41). When Isaiah set forth the Shepherd-Creator, He also spoke of the incomparable power of the self-same Saviour. From incomparable power, he passes to equally incomparable wisdom, and again speaks of Christ:

"For whom hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. ii. 16).

"Christ is the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God" (I Cor. i. 24). These are two essentials to success: wisdom to know how to do a thing, and power to carry it out. That the purpose of the ages is assured is clear, for with such power and with such wisdom as is set forth in Isaiah xl. failure is impossible.

Twice the prophet sounds out the challenging question, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare with Him?". He challenges man, who alone of all creatures was made "in the likeness of God" (Gen. v. 1), as though He would say that in resorting to image worship, man not only degraded the name of God, but himself.

In this matter God has revealed Himself as being exceedingly jealous. Five times over do the Scriptures declare that the Lord our God is "a jealous God" (Exodus xx. 5; xxxiv. 14; Deut. iv. 24; v. 9; vi. 15). In every case the context deals with the worship of graven images or the making of the likeness of anything in heaven or earth, that could take the place of God Himself in the heart.

When Israel dethroned the Lord, they dethroned themselves.

"They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut. xxxii. 21).

Image worship not only degrades the name of God and the name of Israel, but aims a direct blow at the unique position of man in the purpose of creation, and what is of still greater moment, thrusts at the prerogative of Christ Himself "Who is the IMAGE of the invisible God".

It will be a help if we can visualize the argument of the passage in Isaiah xl. which deals with this question of the likeness of God:

A | 18. FIRST QUESTION. "To whom will ye liken God?"

B | 19, 20. FIRST ANSWER (Negative). The utter futility of idolatry.

C | 21. SECOND QUESTION.

"Have ye not known? Have ye not heard?"

D | 22-24. SECOND ANSWER. The majesty of the Creator.

A | 25. FIRST QUESTION REPEATED. "To whom will ye liken God?"

B | 26, 27. FIRST ANSWER (Positive). Omnipotence of the Creator.

C | 28. SECOND QUESTION REPEATED.

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard?"

D | 28-31. SECOND ANSWER. The gracious power of the Creator.

There is something of an anti-climax in the sudden insertion of B (Isa. xl. 19, 20), the First Answer. We have heard of Him in the hollow of Whose hand the waters may be measured, and Whose span meted out the heavens. Before this mighty One the nations, for all their number and prowess in arms or civilization, are as a drop of a bucket. Lebanon itself with its great cedars would not suffice to burn, nor the beasts thereof suffice for a burnt offering. Into this ascending scale, which carries the mind on and up until the contemplation of “the greatness of His might” causes the understanding to reel; into this panegyric of Deity, the prophet, without preparation, suddenly inserts the bald statement concerning the fashioning of a graven image.

“The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.”

In like manner this rhetorical figure of “Anti-climax” is found in the chapter that follows.

“And every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering: and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved” (Isa. xli. 6, 7).

Surrounded with so many evidences of the Creator’s power and wisdom, it seems almost impossible to believe that the human mind should descend so low. It seems almost equally impossible that man, made in the image of God, should even think of so debasing himself as to fabricate a graven image to serve as the object of his worship. Listen to the pitiful irony of the prophet:

“Silver chains . . . . that shall not be moved!”

“Fastened with nails, that it should not be moved!”

“It is ready for the soldering!”

But idolatry is something more than the foolish worship of images held together with “solder” and fastened with “nails” and “chains”. Its root lies deeper, for at bottom it is a false faith. This is seen in Isa. xli. 6, 7: “... *be of good courage*. So the carpenter *encouraged* ... he *fastened* it with nails”.

Used in a context like this the words “Be of good courage” indicate the root cause of idolatry. They are words used by God Himself, and which demand implicit trust in Himself.

“For I the Lord thy God *will hold* thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee” (Isa. xli. 13).

Here the words “will hold” are a translation of the same Hebrew verb that is translated “Be of good courage”, “encouraged” and “fastened”, in Isa. xli. 6, 7. It is the word used in the great epitome of prophetic truth, Isaiah xxxv., where the Lord says:

“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, *Be strong*, fear not: behold, your God will come . . . .” (Isa. xxxv. 4).

In the passage we are considering (Isa. xl. 12 - xlii. 17) the vanity of image worship is not merely contrasted with the power and might of the Creator as seen in His works, but also with the help that He alone can give to His believing people. It is tragic to read, “*So the carpenter encouraged*”, only a few verses after those magnificent lines:

“Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that

have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isa. xl. 28-31).

“To whom then will ye liken God?”

### **#58. ISAIAH xl. 12 - xlii. 17.** **The theme of the two “Servants” introduced.**

The reader will have observed that Isaiah introduces, in direct contrast with idolatry, the subject of “service”.

“But thou, Israel, art My servant” (Isa. xli. 8).

“Behold My Servant” (Isa. xlii. 1).

The etymology of the Greek word idolatry (*eidololatrea*) is suggestive of its essential meaning. It is compounded of *eidolon*, “an image”, from *eidos*, “a form” (which in its turn is from *eido* “to see”), and *latreia*, “service”, from *latreio*, “to serve”. Idolatry is “the service of that which is seen”. Hence in the N.T. “covetousness” is called idolatry (Eph. v. 5) — a connection which, although not expressly stated in the O.T., is implied in the Law:

First commandment.—“Thou shalt have no other gods.”

Tenth commandment.—“Thou shalt not covet.”

The reader will doubtless call to mind many passages where idolatry and the worship of graven images is spoken of as “service”:

“Thou shalt not *bow down* . . . . nor *serve* them” (Exod. xx. 5).

“Driven to *worship* them, and *serve* them” (Deut. iv. 19).

“*Walk after* other gods, and *serve* them” (Deut. viii. 19).

“*Following* other gods to *serve* them” (Judges ii. 19).

“Whom they have *loved*, and whom they have *served*” (Jer. viii. 2).

Such acts of veneration and esteem as “bowing down”, “worshipping”, “walking after”, “following”, and “loving”, find their complement here in “serving”. It is not therefore strange — it is indeed of the very essence of the subject — that the section before us places “Image worship” over against true “Service”.

The first of the two servants referred to is named:

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art My servant: I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away” (Isa. xli. 8, 9).

The second is unnamed, but His character and mission are defined:

“Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” (Isa. xlii. 1).

We must now acquaint ourselves with the teaching that underlies these references to the Lord’s “Servant”. We must first, however, have the structure of the section as a whole before us, so that, even

though we do not attempt a detailed exposition of every section, the relation of each part to the whole may be observed, and the light thus received illuminate the passages chosen for expansion.

### Isaiah xli. 8 - xlii. 17.

#### The Two Servants, Israel and the Messiah.

- A | xli. 8, 9. ISRAEL MY SERVANT. |  
     a1 | Thou Israel, My Servant.  
         b1 | Chosen.  
             c1 | My friend.  
     a1 | Thou art My Servant.  
         b1 | Chosen.  
             c1 | Not cast away.
- B | xli. 10-20. I UPHOLD. |  
     d1 | I am . . . . . I am.  
         e1 | I will . . . . . will . . . . . will.  
             f1 | They shall . . . . . shall.  
                 g1 | I will . . . . . will . . . . . will . . . . . will.  
             f1 | They shalt . . . . . shalt . . . . . shalt.  
         e1 | I will . . . . . will . . . . . will . . . . . will . . . . . will.  
     d1 | The Lord . . . . . the Holy One.
- C | xli. 21-29. YE ARE GODS. |  
     h1 | Show what shall happen.  
         i1 | Ye are gods.  
             j1 | Ye are nothing . . . . . nought.  
     h1 | Declare from beginning.  
         i1 | He is righteous.  
             j1 | Wind, Confusion.
- A | xlii. 1. BEHOLD MY SERVANT. |   Messiah. Israel a type.
- B | xlii. 1-7. I UPHOLD. |  
     d2 | Judgment to Gentiles.  
         e2 | He shall not cry, bruise, quench.  
     d2 | Judgment unto Truth.  
         e2 | He shall not fail, be discouraged.  
             f2 | Called, hold, keep, give.  
                 g2 | Covenant. Light.  
             f2 | Open eyes. Release prisoners.
- C | xlii. 8-17. YE ARE OUR GODS. |  
     h2 | Graven images. No praise.  
         i2 | Former things. New things.  
             j2 | Call to sing.  
             j2 | Purpose to destroy.  
         i2 | Darkness—light. Crooked—straight.  
     h2 | Graven images—shame.

*“Israel, My servant”* (Isa. xli. 8, 9).—Three names occur in this section, which must be considered together: “Israel”, “Jacob”, and “Abraham”. Israel is the “servant”; Jacob was “chosen”; but both names would have remained empty titles, did they not belong to “seed of Abraham”, the friend of God. “Covenant” relationship is implied in Isa. xli. 8; and expressed in Isa. xlii. 6.

In the section that follows (Isa. xli. 10-20), Jacob is referred to as “a worm”, Israel as “man” and the Lord as their “Redeemer”.

In Isa. xlv. 1 we find once again the double title: “Jacob My servant, and Israel, whom I have chosen”, which is modified in verse 2 to read: “Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and Jesurun, whom I have chosen.” In verse 21 of the same chapter both titles are used together: “Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art My servant”, a proof, if it were needed, that both titles refer to the one chosen people.

“Jacob, the servant”, and “Israel, the chosen” figure once more in Isa. xlv. 4, while in the last reference to “Israel” as the “servant”, the title is assumed by Messiah in His work of restoring and preserving (Isa. xlix. 3). These different passages will come before us in their turn; we have merely mentioned the references here in passing.

God’s purpose in the earth, so clearly indicated at the call of Abraham (Genesis xii.), is the reason for the “service” of Israel and the “choice” of Jacob. Its unconditional character is made evident by the references to Abraham, and the assurances that the Lord would not “cast away” nor “forsake” His people (Isa. xli. 9, 17). This purpose receives further confirmation in the promise that “they that strive against thee shall perish” (Isa. xli. 11, 12), and the positive declaration that Israel shall be a sharp threshing-instrument and a fan in the hand of the Lord.

Israel, however, cannot stand alone. As we have already seen from the last reference to Israel as the servant (Isa. xlix. 3), all finally depends upon Israel’s Messiah. We pass, therefore, from chapter xli., with its references to Israel, the servant, to chapter xlii. with its glorious prophecy of Israel’s Messiah, Redeemer and King.

The main purpose of this article has been “to prepare the way of the Lord”. This we have done chiefly by placing before the reader the structure of the section as a whole, with some insistence on the corresponding passages that speak of the Lord’s “Servant”. In our next article we hope to take up the blessed prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that occupies the first eight verses of chapter xlii. Meanwhile, even though we to-day are neither Israel nor the seed of Abraham, we may nevertheless lay hold upon and rejoice in the precious promise of Isa. xli. 10 as being true for us also in Christ:

“Fear thou not, *for I am with thee*; be not dismayed; *for I am thy God*; I will *strengthen* thee; yea, I will *help* thee; yea, I will *uphold* thee with the right hand of My righteousness” (Isa. xli. 10).

## **#59. ISAIAH xl. 12 - xlii. 17.**

### **“Judgment unto TRUTH”; “Judgment unto VICTORY” (xlii. 1-4).**

Without risk of contradiction, it may be said that whatever office Israel are destined to fulfil, they will enter it only through the mediation of Christ, and that most, if not all, of the responsibilities attached to their calling have been, or will be, fulfilled by Christ.

As an instance of the first proposition, we cite the office that is peculiar to Israel, “A kingdom of priests”. We meet with this description of the nation in Exodus xix. where the foot of Mount Sinai is reached and the First Covenant instituted. Israel utterly failed to observe the condition of this covenant, and will become a “kingdom of priests” only by virtue of the blood of the New Covenant; in other words, through the mediation of Christ (Rev. i. 6).

As an instance of the second proposition we may cite Isa. xlii. 10, “Ye are My witnesses”, which refers to Israel, and Rev. i. 5 which speaks of Christ as “The faithful Witness”. So it is with the subject immediately before us. We have seen that the section divides into two, the first part falling under “*Israel, the Servant*”, and the second under “*Messiah, the Servant*”.

If the reader will consult the structure on page 10 ([see above](#)), he will observe that Isa. xlii. 1-17, is divided into three parts.

- (1) BEHOLD MY SERVANT. (Isa. xlii. 1-.).
- (2) WHOM I UPHOLD. (Isa. xlii. -1-8-.).
- (3) THE CONTRAST—IDOLS—“Ye are gods” (Isa. xlii. -8-17).

Our immediate concern is with the first two parts, and we will consider the briefer part 1 before going on to the expansion in part 2, which is very full.

“BEHOLD MY SERVANT” (Isa. xlii. 1).

In the opening words of “comfort”, with which chapter xl. opens, the prophets had said: “Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!” (Isa. xl. 9). Here, in Isa. xlii. 1, he writes, “Behold My Servant”. Both passages refer to the same blessed Person, none other than:

“Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God . . . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant” (Phil. ii. 5-7).

Of this One, Isaiah had already spoken:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us) . . . . a Child is born . . . . His name shall be . . . . the Mighty God . . . .” (Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6).

The word translated “servant” is the Hebrew *ebed*, and although it may not be capable of proof, the idea is at least suggestive that the Latin *obedio* and the English *obedience* are derived from the same root. *Abad*, the verb, means “to labour”, and, in certain forms, “to till” (Gen. ii. 5); “to dress” (ii. 15). To be destined to become “A servant of servants” was to be placed under a curse (Gen. ix. 25).

Of this “Servant” the Lord said: “Whom I uphold; Mine elect, in Whom My soul delighteth: I have put My spirit upon Him” (Isa. xlii. 1). A reference to Matt. xii. 18-21 shows beyond a shadow of doubt that the “Servant” of Isaiah xlii. is the Lord Jesus Christ, but upon reading Matthew’s quotation of Isaiah xlii. 1-4, certain changes are observable which demand attention before we can proceed.

To economize space we will not print the passage in full as it occurs in the A.V. of Isaiah, the Greek of the Septuagint and of Matthew, but bring out the divergences by the following analysis:

Isaiah xlii. 1-4. (Hebrew).	Isaiah xlii. 1-4. (Greek).	Matthew xii. 18-21. (Greek).
“Behold My servant, Whom I uphold; mine elect in Whom my soul delighteth.”	“Jacob is My servant, I will help him; Israel is mine elect, my soul has accepted him.”	“Behold My servant; Whom I have chosen; My beloved, in Whom my soul is well pleased.”
“Smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”	“Smoking flax shall He not quench; but He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”	“Smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory.”
“The isles shall wait for His law.”	“And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.”	“And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.”

The careful reader will discover a number of other, minor, differences in these three presentations, but in the present study those cited are all that need be considered.

Seeing that both names have already occurred in connection with the title “servant” in the preceding chapter, the introduction of the names “Jacob” and “Israel” into the Septuagint version of Isa. xlii. 1 was perhaps natural, but the testimony of Matthew and the general trend of the prophecy of Isaiah leave no room for doubt but that the Messiah alone is intended in the passage before us.

The second passage cited is of a different nature and not so easily disposed of. Isaiah says “He shall bring forth judgment unto TRUTH”, a translation followed by the Septuagint. Matthew however departs from this and uses the word “victory” instead of “truth”.

Jenour has a note saying, “All translators, misled by the Septuagint, render the passage something in the same manner as in our English Bibles”, and he would render the disputed words as “to the people”. After careful examination we find no grounds for the amended translation, and only mention it for the benefit of any reader who may think it has not been seen and weighed. *Emeth* is “truth” and *am* “people”, but there the likeness ceases. Matthew is evidently inspired to give the word used by Isaiah its full meaning, and guided by the underlying principles that are observable in all the ways of God, we ultimately arrive at the same conclusion.

The Devil’s doctrine is that “MIGHT is RIGHT”.

The doctrine of the Lord is that “RIGHT ALONE IS MIGHT”.

By the very nature of the case, however, this involves the possibility that “right” will suffer before the ultimate victory, whereas brute force can crash its way to immediate triumph. So it is that the gentleness of the mighty Victor is intimately associated with His triumph.

In all the annals of the nations is there on record one who attained victory by manifesting such consideration for weakness and lowliness as is indicated by the words: “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench”?

The structure of the passage (Isa. xlii. 1-4) reveals that the subject is twofold:

- (1) The work which Messiah came to accomplish, “JUDGMENT”.
- (2) The character of the Messiah in its accomplishment, “GENTLENESS”.

This has been set out in the complete structure (page 10), but it will not be out of place to reproduce it here.

#### **Isaiah xlii. 1-4.**

<i>B</i>		<i>d2</i>		<i>Judgment</i> to the Gentiles.
		<i>e2</i>		He shall not cry, bruise, quench.
		<i>d2</i>		<i>Judgment</i> unto Truth.
		<i>e2</i>		He shall not fail, nor be discouraged.
		<i>d3</i>		<i>Judgment</i> in the earth.

The theme here is “Judgment”, and it is subdivided into three aspects. This “Judgment” is *to* the Gentiles, it is *unto* truth, it is *in* the earth.

It is imperative that we should not misunderstand the meaning of the word “Judgment”. Most certainly it does not mean “condemnation” here. That is but one of its meanings and only so when put into exercise in the face of evil. Judgment may be a great blessing, a coveted boon. The Hebrew word *mishpat* is from *shaphat*, “To judge”. This is the word used for those who “judged” Israel (Judg.iii.10; I.Sam.vii.6). This is the word so frequently used in the prophecies and prayers of the oppressed, who looked for deliverance.

“To *judge* the fatherless” (Psa. x. 18).

“*Judge* me, O Lord” (Psa. xxvi. 1).

“*Judge* me, O God, and plead my cause” (Psa. xliii. 1).

David’s prayer reached its consummation in Psalm lxxii. in which he says of his greater Son, “He shall judge the poor of the people” (Psa. lxxii. 4).

While Isaiah sometimes uses the word *mishpat* in its condemnatory meaning, the bulk of the occurrences are in line with the usage already indicated.

“Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Isa. i. 17).

Here it is evident that reference to the exhortation to seek judgment involves “relieving the oppressed” and “pleading for the widow”.

“How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers” (Isa. i. 21).

One has but to read on in verses 22 and 23, to see, by contrast, what is implied by “full of judgment”.

The manner of the restoration of Israel when that day comes is thus described:

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, The faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment” (Isa. i. 26-27).

The opening chapter of Isaiah speaks primarily of Israel, but in the closing section the “Gentiles” are given a place.

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

But judgment is not only “to the Gentiles”; it is also “unto Truth”. An investigation of the meaning of *emeth*, the Hebrew word translated “Truth”, and which gives us our word “Amen”, cannot be undertaken now, but it is not without interest to discover that the word is used by ISAIAH exactly twelve times, six occurrences coming in i.-xxxix. and six in xl.-lxvi.

Victory by aggression may be swift, but it is short-lived. Truth will and must prevail, but it is slower in achievement, even as the characteristics of *the* Conqueror are essentially different from those of brute aggression.

“The smoking flax shall He not quench; He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”

Finally, this judgment shall be set “in the earth”. We remember the prophetic cry of the Seraphim: “The fulness of the whole earth is His glory” (Isa. vi. 3, Margin), and the assurance of the millennial hope: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. xi. 9).

The references to the “earth” in Isaiah are far too many to consider here, even as a list, and the study of its meaning and prophetic import must be reserved for a future article. In the passage before us the reference to “judgment in the earth” is balanced by the words, “and the isles shall wait for His law” (Isaiah xlii. 4).

The Hebrew “isle” is not necessarily “a piece of land entirely surrounded by water”. Jeremiah speaks of “The isles which are beyond the sea”, which the margin renders “region by the sea side”. The word “isles” indicates the lands inhabited by the Gentiles, without limiting those lands to the physical character of an “island”.

Here, with the promise that judgment in the earth shall at last be established, we must close our present study, reserving for our next article the second part of this prophecy which comes under the heading, “WHOM I UPHOLD”.

**#60. ISAIAH xl. 12 - xlii. 17.**  
**The Covenant for Israel. The Light for the Gentiles.**

The section of Isaiah xlii. which is embraced by the words “I uphold”, falls into two parts:

- (1) I UPHOLD. RESULT. JUDGMENT (Isa. xlii. 1-4).
- (2) I UPHOLD. RESULT. COVENANT (Isa. xlii. 5-8).

We have considered some of the teaching of the first part; let us now give attention to the second.

In an earlier study we have set out the distribution of the word “Covenant” in Isaiah, and have observed that in the former part, chapters i.-xxxix., the breaking of the covenant is prominent, while in the latter part, chapters xl.-lxvi., the making and keeping of the covenant is prominent.

The first occurrence reads: “They have . . . . broken the everlasting covenant” (Isa. xxiv. 5) and the consequent misery is described:

“The curse devoured the earth.”  
“They that dwell therein are desolate.”  
“The inhabitants of the earth are burned.”  
“Few men are left” (Isa. xxiv. 6).

The last occurrence reverses all this: “I will make an everlasting covenant with them” (Isa. lxi. 8), and the consequences are expressed in such terms as:

“Beauty for ashes.”  
“Oil of joy for mourning.”  
“A garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”  
“Former desolation raised up.”  
“Everlasting joy shall be upon them” (Isa. lxi. 3-8).

Between these two references we find the utter failure of Israel and the glorious triumph of Christ, and it is the first of these Messianic references to the covenant that must now occupy our attention.

The passage, Isa. xlii. 5-8, falls into two parts. The first part announces the glorious power of the One Who has appointed this covenant, “He that created the heavens” (Isa. xlii. 5). He it is Who upholds His Servant, giving Him for “a covenant of the people” and for “a light of the Gentiles” (xlii. 6). The second part describes the blessedness of this Servant’s work: “To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (xlii. 7).

The first and last references to the “covenant” in Isaiah i.-xxxix. speak of it as having been broken:

“They have . . . . broken the everlasting covenant” (Isa. xxiv. 5).  
“He hath broken the covenant” (Isa. xxxiii. 8).

The first and last references to the “covenant” in Isaiah xl.-lxvi., speak of its establishment:

“I the Lord . . . . will give Thee for a covenant of the people” (Isa. xlii. 6).  
“I will make an everlasting covenant with them” (Isa. lxi. 8).

Moreover, we discover that there is an intended correspondence between Isaiah xlii. and lxi. Let us read again xlii. 7, quoted above, and then read Isa. lxi. 1.

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

If Matthew, by his quotation in the twelfth chapter, establishes beyond dispute that Isa. xlii. 1-4 is fulfilled in the Person and work of Christ, Luke, in his fourth chapter, also establishes the same of lxi. 1.

Behind the Gospel is the Law, and behind the Law is the sovereign Creator of heaven and earth, Who not only “spread forth the earth” but “that which cometh out of it”. Not only does this almighty Creator supply all things necessary for the sustenance of His creatures, but He is the source of life itself, “He giveth *breath* unto the people upon it, and *spirit* to them that walk therein” (Isa. xlii. 5). It is this One, Whose might and Whose right are beyond question, Who called the Messiah and gave Him to the world in His twofold capacity as: “A covenant of the people” and “A light of the Gentiles”.

The word translated “covenant” is the Hebrew *berith*. The origin of this word is obscure, although there are many (as Gesenius) who teach that it is derived from an obsolete root, meaning “to cut”, since, in making solemn covenants, it was the custom to pass between the divided parts of the victim (*see* Gen.xv.10,17). Gesenius however contains the following note, in the edition edited by Tregelles:

"But the idea suggested by Lee deserves attention, viz., that *berith* is strictly nothing more than *eating together*, from *barah* No.2, since among orientals, *to eat together* is almost the same as to make a covenant of friendship . . . . in this way we obtain an explanation of the covenant (*or eating?*) of salt."

As a matter of dispensational truth, observe the distinction between the relationship of Messiah with Israel and with the Gentiles:

“A *covenant* of the people,  
A *light* of the Gentiles” (Isa. xlii. 6).

Since the call of Abraham, there is no record in Scripture of any covenant ever being made by God with a Gentile nation, company or individual. Even the admission of the Gentile to New Covenant blessings during the early ministry of Paul, which at first may appear to be the very essence of the gospel to-day, is, upon examination, found to be hedged about with limitations. It was not so much because the time for Gentile blessing had fully come, but in order, if possible, “to provoke to jealousy” the failing people of Israel, to “provoke to emulation” the true beneficiaries of the New Covenant. Old Testament prophecy and promise never visualize the Gentile coming into full blessing independently of a restored Israel. Consequently, while in the dispensation of the mystery the most glorious figure of the Body, with its equality of members, is used to set forth the relationship of believing Jew and Gentile to one another and to the Lord, the Head, during the period covered by the Acts, the union of Jewish and Gentile believer is likened to the ingrafting of a wild olive into a true olive tree, with admonitions concerning possible consequential Gentile “conceit”, and admonitory foreshadowings of the ultimate restoration of the “natural branches” to their place in their own olive tree.

Here, in Isaiah xlii., it will be observed that God’s intentional order is maintained:

*First*, Christ is given for a covenant of the *People*.  
*Secondly*, Christ is given for a light of the *Gentiles*.

But by the time chapter xlix. is reached a change has come over the face of things. Soon will come that great prophetic utterance which declares that “He is despised and rejected of men” (Isa. liii. 3), and the rejection of the Messiah by Israel brought the Gentile into favour before their, originally, allotted time. This can be seen in Isaiah xlix.:

“And now, saith the Lord that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength: And He said, It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to

restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa. xlix. 5, 6).

We may learn a very profitable lesson in “Dispensational Truth” and the value of “Right Division” if we will observe how three writers of the New Testament handle the passages referred to in Isaiah.xlii.&xlix.

(1) *The quotation of Matthew xii.* — Matthew xii. approaches the first great crisis of the N.T., the rejection by Israel of their Messiah and King. In the immediately following chapter “mystery” occurs for the first time in the phrase, “The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”, where parable is employed to hide rather than reveal truth (Matt. xiii. 10-12), and where Israel’s rejection, as foretold in Isa. vi. 9, 10, now begins to take place. *It is in such a context* that Matthew introduces the blessing of the Gentile into his gospel.

According to Matthew’s account the Saviour was named “Jesus, for He shall save HIS PEOPLE from their sins” (Matt. i. 21). He was born, to “rule MY PEOPLE Israel” (Matt. ii. 6). It was eventually “This PEOPLE’s heart” that waxed gross (Matt. xiii. 15). The Gentiles are not introduced by Matthew in a favourable sense until the citation from Isaiah xlii. in Matt. xii. 18, 21. “Not in a favourable sense” is in fact understating the truth, for in Matthew x. there is a definite exclusion of the Gentile: “Go not into the way of the Gentiles” (Matt. x. 5). With Matthew’s testimony before us we can therefore safely say that, not until the rejection of Christ by Israel became quite evident, did the Gentile have any part or lot assigned to him in the scheme of salvation.

(2) *The quotation of Luke ii.* — The designed intentions of two writers is nowhere more clearly evident to the enquirer than in the case of Matthew and Luke. Where Matthew says “kingdom” Luke says “forgiveness of sins” (Matt. iii. 2; Luke iii. 3); where Matthew says “King” Luke says “Saviour” (Matt. ii. 2; Luke ii. 11). Matthew makes no reference to the prophetic utterance of old Simeon. To do so would not further his intention of presenting Christ as “King of the Jews”. But Luke inserts it because it does most definitely further his intention to present Christ as Saviour, not only of the people of Israel, but of the Gentiles.

“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke ii. 32).

Here, it will be observed, Simeon, who was waiting for the consolation of *Israel* (Luke ii. 25), is inspired to place the Gentile before Israel. This would have outraged the feelings of the Jewish reader, as may be seen by consulting the effect of “this word”, “Gentiles”, in Acts xxii. 22; yet in the Gospel of Luke, the companion of Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, this order of blessing is in harmony with its message.

(3) *The quotation of Acts xiii.* — The two halves of the Acts of the Apostles, Acts i.-xii., Peter’s ministry, and Acts xiii.-xxviii., Paul’s twofold ministry, may be compared with the two presentations of truth by Matthew and Luke just noted.

Acts xiii. corresponds somewhat with Matthew xii., xiii., for there the Apostle says:

“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, *lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (xiii. 46, 47).

The reader will need no more persuasive argument than that already provided by these three passages, to lead him to see that “dispensational” truth, that “rightly divided” truth, is really the only presentation of truth that is whole, complete, and that does not mislead by misapplication.

Returning to Isaiah xlii., we observe that this “covenant” for the people, this “light” for the Gentiles, is expanded in the verse that follows:--

“To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isa. xlii. 7).

This twofold figure of “the blind” and “the prisoner” is found in other parts of Isaiah, but for the time, its study must be postponed.

There awaits us one section which is indicated in the structure, C | xlii. 8-17. *Ye are gods*, which is an exposition of the words that link the two parts of the structure together, namely, those contained in verse 8:

“I am the Lord: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images” (Isa. xlii. 8).

The prophet repeats and amplifies what he has already said concerning the futility of image worship, once more concluding on a note of wondrous grace:

“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them” (xlii. 16).

We are now approaching the further unfolding of the Divine purpose contained in the chapters that still await us, and to the blessed task of studying and understanding this we must devote ourselves in the subsequent articles of this series.

### **#61. ISAIAH xlii. 18 - xlv. 15.**

#### **Restoration Promised, Conditioned, Foreshadowed.**

#### **Restoration Promised (xlii. 18 - xliii. 9).**

The preceding section of Isaiah, which we have just completed, dealt particularly with Israel and the Messiah under the common appellation of “My Servant”. The section now before us considers Israel and their Messiah under the title of “My Witnesses”. We found, as a severe and awful contrast, that the worship of graven images was placed over against true service, and, once again, we shall find that idolatry is the black background against which true witness is depicted. Moreover, in connection both with Witness and Idolatry, Isaiah reiterates the glorious fact that God is One, and that there is none else. This constitutes the positive witness of Israel, which is definitely assailed by the introduction of false gods.

If we left the matter there, however, it would both misrepresent Isaiah’s prophecy and manifest an ignorance of his great purpose. While positive witness to the fact that there is one God is of itself an essential element in all worship and service, we are nevertheless reminded by James that demons believe the fact yet tremble (James ii. 19). In Isaiah’s prophecy Israel’s witness and the doctrine of the unique supremacy of the Deity, are a means to an end. The end before Isaiah and before the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the end to which Israel themselves are witnesses, is “Restoration”, the key-note of which has already been sounded in our meditation upon the opening words of Isaiah xl., and we shall find a three-fold recurrence of it in the section now before us, viz., Isa. xlii. 18 - xlv. 15, each division of which is introduced by the subject of Restoration.

First we have a lament, that although Israel have been robbed and spoiled, “none saith, Restore” but, where man fails, God, in His mercy, triumphs, as is shown by the immediately following sweeping promise of Isa. xliii. 5, 6. But whether He deals with Man (Adam), Men (the individual), Nations (generally spoken of as Gentiles) or the Nation, Israel, God deals with them as with responsible, moral

agents. Israel are not to be taken by sheer force; dragged unwillingly from the East, the West, the North and the South, and dumped into the land of Palestine regardless of their sins or of their desires. They are called upon to “Return”, and Israel have been “Redeemed”, and it is upon the basis that Restoration proceeds (Isa. xliii. 9 - xliv. 27). The third section of the prophecy differs from the bulk of the book, and introduces an historic character, Cyrus, the king of Persia. He takes his place in the foreshadowing of Israel’s final restoration under their true King and Shepherd, as Sennacherib’s fate foreshadowed the ultimate overthrow of the last world conqueror, the Beast of the Apocalypse.

**Isaiah xlii. 18 - xlv. 15.**

### **RESTORATION: Promised, Conditioned and Foreshadowed.**

- A1 | xlii. 18 - xliii. 9. RESTORATION Promised. |  
 “This is a people robbed and spoiled . . . and none saith, Restore” (xlii. 22).  
 “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth” (xliii. 5, 6).
- A2 | xliii. 9 - xlv. 27. RESTORATION Conditioned. |  
 “Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee” (xlv. 22).  
 “That saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof” (xlv. 26).
- A3 | xlv. 28 - xlv. 15. RESTORATION Foreshadowed. |  
 “That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid” (xlv. 28).  
 “He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives” (xlv. 13).

We must devote the remainder of our limited space to the consideration of the first of these three sections, namely “Restoration promised”, and it will be well if the structure of this section is before us from the start.

**Isaiah xlii. 18 - xliii. 9.**

## RESTORATION Promised.

- |   |  |              |  |   |  |                                       |
|---|--|--------------|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| A |  | xlii. 18-20. |  | a |  | Call to deaf and blind.               |
|   |  |              |  | b |  | Perfect.                              |
| B |  | xlii. 21-25. |  | c |  | A people robbed and spoiled.          |
|   |  |              |  | d |  | The law magnified and disobeyed.      |
|   |  |              |  | e |  | Set on fire . . . burned.             |
| B |  | xliii. 1-7.  |  | c |  | Israel, created for His glory.        |
|   |  |              |  | d |  | Redeemed.                             |
|   |  |              |  | e |  | Not be burned . . . flame not kindle. |
| A |  | xliii. 8, 9. |  | a |  | Call to deaf and blind.               |
|   |  |              |  | b |  | Justified.                            |

The chief interest is found in the central members, where Israel under law is contrasted with Israel under grace. But before we reach this portion the peculiar difficulty of verses 18-20 must be faced. Who are the “deaf and the blind” in these verses? Do they refer alone to Israel, as some teach? Do they refer alone to the Messiah, as other teach? or do they refer to both Israel and their Messiah, as yet others teach? Upon first reading, it is perhaps excusable to think of Israel’s Messiah, rather than of Israel the nation, as being implied in the words, “Who is blind as he that is perfect?” (Isa. xlii. 19). Yet, if *Meshullam* (Perfect) must of necessity refer only to the Messiah and not to Israel, the same argument would apply in the case of the title *Jeshuran* (the Darling Upright One) of Isa. xliv. 2. Nevertheless we have the warrant of the law of Moses that Jeshuran was a title of Israel, and that even Jeshuran “waxed

fat and kicked”. If the “Darling Upright One” of the Lord could thus respond there is no insuperable obstacle to believing that the same people under the title of *Meshullam* (Perfect) should fail to see or hear. The title “Perfect” is given to Israel much in the same way that it has been adopted by the follower of Mahomet, who is called a “Musselman” or “Moslem”, that is, one who is “complete”. It was Israel’s boast that they were *Meshullam*, but it was Paul’s accusation that, while he conceded the claim to superior understanding, it revealed the utter darkness of their hearts.

Here Paul recognizes the right that Israel has to the title “*Meshullam*” but he continues:--

It is evident that though Israel is *Meshullam*, or Perfect, yet in deed and in attitude they were the very reverse, thus the paradox of Isa. xlii. 18-20 finds its solution in them. Israel dishonoured their God by their disobedience to the law,

What Israel failed to accomplish, Christ has done. The blindness and deafness which is here charged against Israel is a frequently recurring indictment. As a result of their blindness and deafness Israel had become the prey and spoil of other nations, yet they do not seem to have “considered” this matter (Isaiah.i.3).

So blind were they that “none saith, Restore” (Isa. xlii. 22). Consequently upon this people came the fury and anger of the Lord, manifested in “the strength of battle”, but though the nation was “set on fire round about, yet he knew it not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart” (Isa. xlii. 25). Under the law, Israel failed, and failed utterly. Restoration was impossible. Blind, deaf, blunted, hardened, they laid not these things to heart. The structure of this dark section is as follows. Its central note is, “No restoration”, which indeed is the doleful prospect of all under law.

- B | xlii. 21-25. | a | The Lord is well pleased.  
                   b | The law, magnified.  
                   c | A people robbed and spoiled.  
                   d | None saith RESTORE.  
                   c | Jacob a spoil. Israel robbed.  
                   b | The law, not obeyed.  
                   a | The fury of His anger.

specific purpose, and if law-keeping and the flesh failed, God, out of the treasures of His grace, would provide redemption.

“I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name, thou art Mine.”

The structure places the obdurate insensibility to “fire” and “burning” in Isa. xlii. 25, in correspondence with the blessed immunity to such devouring agencies under grace. The punishment permitted against Israel in the ordinary course of events, would have ended in the utter extinction of them as a people. But there were other factors at work. Side by side with retributive justice went restoring and redeeming love, and it is the triumph of redeeming love that Isaiah celebrates in his glorious prophecy. So it is that, to the same people that are addressed in Isa. xlii. 18-25, come the promises of Isa. xliii. 1-7. To save space we omit the structure of Isa. xliii. 1-7 here, but it will be found in “The Companion Bible”. When we read the blessed words:--

“Fear not for I have redeemed thee” (Isa. xliii. 1), or “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour” (Isa. xliii. 3);

it is very natural for us, in the light of the New Testament, to invest the words “redeemed” and “Saviour” with their full evangelical meaning. While, at that time, this could only be in purpose we have but to read on to the end of the third verse, to find the precious word “ransom” (Heb. *kopher*, “atonement”) used in connection with Israel’s deliverance from the Persian captivity.

“I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee” (Isa. xliii. 3).

We have already learned, that in the eyes of the Lord

“The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance” (Isa. xl. 15).

Egypt, Ethiopia and Seba were not too big a ransom to compensate for the deliverance of Israel, “since”, as the Lord said to them,

“Thou was precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life” (Isa. xliii. 4).

Though Israel are at present blind, they “have eyes”. Though this favoured people are at present deaf, they “have ears”, and they shall yet, by redeeming love, see and hear and fulfil their appointed role as the Lord’s witness (Isa. xliii. 9, 10). We must conclude our present study at this point and look forward to pursuing the theme of Israel’s restoration when we come to deal with Isa. xliii. 9 - xliv. 27.

## **#62. ISAIAH lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.**

### **The Material sorted and the Structure of Isa. lii. 13 - liii. 12 discovered.**

Isaiah xl. opens with the words “Comfort ye” and the section before us provides the only solid basis for true comfort. To Israel, and indeed to us all, are addressed the words

“O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted . . . .” (Isa. liv. 11);

and where shall the “afflicted” look for comfort, but away to Him Who was “afflicted” as their substitute? (Isa. liii. 7). This portion of Scripture includes Isaiah liii., the “holy of holies” of all the prophets. Whenever we open the sacred page we are on holy ground; whenever we read the Law and the Prophets we read the scriptures that speak of Christ, but there are some passages that stand out prominently in this blessed particular, and the chapter before us was written in the foreknowledge of Calvary, of its suffering and of its triumph.

The section we are to study is lii. 13 - lvi. 8 and it divides into four parts.

- A | lii. 13 - liii. 12. He bare the sin of many. His soul an offering.
- B | liv. Restoration. Seed inherit Gentiles. No weapon shall prosper.
- A | lv. 1-7. He will abundantly pardon. Your soul—fatness.
- B | lv. 8 - lvi. 8. Gathering “others” “all people”. Word shall prosper.

The subject is so vast and our means so small that we will concentrate all our attention for the time being on the first section lii. 13 - liii. 12, leaving the remainder to be considered in due course.

Before studying any passage in detail we seek the literary structure, for by so doing we discover the scope and the argument of the passage, and without either structure, scope or argument, our comments must degenerate to a mere list of unconnected notes on individual words. The *desire* to present to the reader the structure of this great passage, and our ability to satisfy that desire are, however, two widely differing propositions. We do not propose asking the reader to share with us in this arduous task, neither can we expect any who have not pursued this path, to be able to enter into the joy of its discovery. We give a few indications as to how the structure grew, and leave it with the earnest reader to test, to use and to enjoy as grace may be given. In the first place, we noted the passage opens with the words, “Behold My Servant” (Isa. lii. 13) and we remembered that after the record is given of His substitutionary sufferings, this blessed Servant is again brought before us.

“By His knowledge shall *My righteous Servant* justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. liii. 11).

A moment’s meditation brought another feature to light. The Hebrew word translated “To bear” is *Nasa* and means primarily “To lift up”. The word “extolled” is also a translation of *Nasa*. Concerning these and other Hebrew words we do not offer any explanation, we are but noting the beginnings of the structural arrangement of material, and record our first note.

“My Servant.” “Extolled.” *Nasa*.

“My Righteous Servant.” “Bear.” *Nasa*.

We now observe that nations and kings are referred to in lii. 15, and we read of them being astonished at something totally unexpected. We find something equally unexpected after the sorrow, the humiliation and the meekness in Isaiah liii. 4-10 Division of the Spoil with the Great and the Strong, Isa. liii. 12. These features however we kept in reserve, while examining the remaining verses. We knew that the words “The Lord *hath laid on* Him the iniquity of us all” (liii. 6), and “He *made intercession* for the transgressors” (Isa. liii. 12) employed the same Hebrew word *paga*, and this is noted in the first volume of the *Berean Expositor* in an article entitled “Wondrous meeting places”, where these passages are retranslated:

“The Lord *hath made to meet* on Him the iniquity of us all” and

“He bare the sin of many, and *made a meeting place* for transgressors.”

We have now two focal pairs of correspondences.

- A    Servant—extolled *Nasa*.
- B    Meeting place—*Paga*.
- A    Servant—bear *Nasa*.
- B    Meeting place—*Paga*.

We observed that both the sinner and the Saviour are likened to “sheep” which, together with the most evident emphasis upon His sufferings for the people, filled the remainder of the space with the wonder of His “Substitutionary sufferings”. Returning to lii. 14, 15 and liii. 1-3 we discovered that the word “Visage” and the word “Beauty” were translations of the same Hebrew word, as also are the two words “Heard” (lii. 15) and “Report” (liii. 1). We therefore set before the reader and commend to his prayerful study and service the following structure of this glorious passage.

**Isaiah lii. 13 - liii. 12.**

- A | lii. 13 - liii. 11-. MY SERVANT. EXTOLLED (*Nasa*).  
MANY STARTLED. |
- B | lii. 14 - liii. 3. NATIONS AND KINGS. |  
c | Visage (*Mareh*).  
d | Form (*Toar*).  
e | Heard (*Shamea*).  
e | Report (*Shamuah*).  
d | Form (*Toar*).  
c | Beauty (*Mareh*).
- C | liii. 4-11-. SUBSTITUTIONARY SUFFERINGS. |  
f | Grief (*Choli*, noun).  
g | Stricken (*Naga*, verb).  
h | Bruised (*Daka*).  
i | Like Sheep \ The  
j | Astray / Sinner.  
k | Made to meet (*paga*).  
l | Iniquity.  
i | As Sheep \ The  
j | Dumb / Saviour.  
g | Stricken (*Naga*, noun).  
h | Bruised (*Daka*).  
f | Grief (*Chalah*, verb).
- A | liii. 11, 12. MY SERVANT. HE BARE (*Nasa*).  
MANY JUSTIFIED. |
- B | liii. 12. GREAT AND STRONG. |  
c | Divide portion.  
d | With the great.  
c | Divide spoil.  
d | With the strong.
- C | liii. 12. SUBSTITUTIONARY SUFFERINGS. |  
f | He poured out His soul.  
g | Unto death.  
f | He was numbered.  
g | With transgressors.  
k | He made to meeting place (*paga*).  
l | Transgressors.

As may have been expected, a number of quotations are made in the N.T. from Isaiah lii. & liii., and we will conclude this opening survey of the material before us by indicating the passages quoted.

Isaiah lii. 15, "For that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

This verse is quoted in Rom. xv. 21, in connection with the desire of the apostle to "preach the gospel, not where Christ was named lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (Rom. xv. 20).

Isaiah liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

This passage is quoted by John, in his Gospel, xii. 38; and the first sentence is quoted by Paul in Rom. x. 16. John xii. is the chapter which closes the witness of Christ in the world as man, and reveals His rejection.

Isaiah liii. 4, “Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.”

This passage is quoted in Matt. viii. 17 where it reads: “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses”.

Isaiah liii. 5, “And with His stripes we are healed?”

This is quoted in I Pet. ii. 24 “By Whose stripes ye were healed”. It is useful to note that Peter, by reason of the fact that he was writing an epistle changes the “we” of Isaiah liii. to “ye” in order to apply the passage to his immediate hearers.

Isaiah liii. 7, 8.

This rather lengthy passage is quoted in Acts viii. 32, 33. A number of most important questions are raised upon comparing the Old Testament original with the N.T. quotations, which will be considered in their place. The one and most important contribution which we would emphasize here is in the sequel, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and PREACHED UNTO HIM JESUS” (Acts viii. 35).

Isaiah liii. 9, “Because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.”

The Hebrew word translated “violence” is translated *hamartian* by the LXX, and this is adopted by Peter. He also adds the verb “was found” which makes no material difference.

Isaiah liii. 12, “And He was numbered with the transgressors.”

This is quoted in Mark xv. 28 and Luke xxii. 37. These seven passages are quoted by different writers of the N.T. and reveal the importance that this chapter holds in their estimate, for although at first sight seven quotations do not seem many — yet no other chapter in Isaiah nor in the Old Testament is quoted so many times.

We are now ready to give this majestic chapter something of the attention that is its due. May we never forget that its greatest glory is to lead our hearts upward from the contemplation of the letter, to Him “The Word made flesh”, “The Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

### **#63. ISAIAH lii. 13. “Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him”.**

“Behold My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.”

With these words, the great sacrificial chapter of Isaiah opens. Not with sorrow or grief, not with humiliation, not with references to death and the grave, but with exaltation, with being extolled, and with being very high. In earlier chapters we have read of this Servant of the Lord (Isaiah xlii. 1, 19; xlix. 3, 6), and the prophecies have gathered strength and clarity as this climax drew near. Our attention is drawn first to what this Servant of the Lord does, “He shall deal prudently”, and then what shall be done to Him “He shall be exalted”. The word translated “deal prudently” is given in the A.V. margin an alternative meaning “prosper”. This, however, must not be understood in the same sense as the word “prosper” in Isa. liii. 10 where a different Hebrew word is employed. *Sakal*, is rendered in most of its occurrences by the words “wise” or “understanding” but in the *Hiphel* or causative, it is translated eight times “prosper”. Jeremiah uses this word in a prophetic utterance that looks to the same glorious day of the Messiah as does Isa. lii. 13.

“Behold the days come saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called ‘THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS’.” (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6).

It is moreover written of both Joshua and Hoshea (names that foreshadowed the “Saviour” “Jesus”) that they “prospered” (Josh. i. 7; II Kings xviii. 7). He Who is the Wisdom of God is also the Power of God (I Cor. i. 24), His Wisdom is dynamic, it “prosper” and prevails.

So Isa. lii. 13 opens “My Servant shall prosper”, and the seal was set upon His glorious “success” (as this word is translated in Josh. i. 8) by His resurrection and ascension.

“He shall be exalted, and extolled and be very high.”

The Prophet has no intention here of making three different phases in this exaltation, it is the overflowing joy of the prophetic vision, using a well known figure of speech *Anabasis* or “gradual ascent” whereby an increase of emphasis is made by a rising series of successive words, phrases and sentences. We must nevertheless acquaint ourselves with all three words, in order that the Divine intention in their use may be perceived.

“Exalted”, Hebrew *Rum*. It will be remembered that Abraham before his name was changed (Gen.xvii.5), was Abram made up of *Ab* “Father” and *Rum* or *Ram* “High” and “Exalted”. So also the place names, *Ramah* and *Ramoth* “A lofty place” (I Sam. xix. 18; Deut. iv. 43). Some of its usages in Isaiah alone will indicate sufficiently its distinctive meaning. Exalted as a “highway” (Isa. xlix. 11); as one of the cedars of Lebanon (ii. 13); as the Lord sitting upon a throne “high” and lifted up (vi. 1), or as “The High” and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity (Isa. lvii. 15). Something of what is involved in the exaltation of the term in the blasphemous words of Lucifer, Son of the Morning.

“I will ascend into heaven, i will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . . i will ascend above the heights of the clouds: i will be like the Most High” (Isaiah.xiv.12-14).

The LXX translates this by the Greek verb *Hupsoo* which is fourteen times rendered “exalted” and six times “lift up” in the N.T.

“Being by the right hand of God exalted” (Acts ii. 33).

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts v. 30-31).

“Extolled”, Hebrew *Nasa*. This is a most extensive root, signifying “To bear, take or lift up”. It is found in Isaiah in combination with the previous word *Rum*, several times.

Cedars of Lebanon “High and lifted up” *Rum* and *Nasa* (Isa. ii. 13).

I saw also the Lord “High” and “lifted up” (Isa. vi. 1).

Thus saith the “High” and “lofty One” (Isa. lvii. 15).

Another suggestive passage in Isaiah is “every valley shall be exalted”. These are passages in which the verb *Nasa* is used in its reflexive form. In the simple active form, this word is used in Isa. liii. 4, 12 “He hath *borne* our griefs”, “He *bare* the sin of many”, where instead of Himself being lifted up or “extolled” He is seen “lifting up” the burden of our sins. The LXX here uses the word *doxazo* “to glorify”. Those readers who are acquainted with the Gospel of John, and especially John xiii.-xvii. will realize how fully the Saviour entered into these prophetic utterances concerning Himself.

“Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him” (John xiii. 31).

“Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee” (John xvii. 1).

It will be seen how fully also Peter entered into these prophetic words. In Acts ii. 33 and v. 31, he used, as we have seen the word “exalted”, but in Acts iii. 13 in a similar context he uses this word “glorify”:

“The God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, Whom ye delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.”

“And be very high.” Here the words used in the original are the verb *Gabah* and the adverb *Meod*. Just as we found Lucifer using the word “exalted” so we find written of the Prince of Tyre, “Thine hearts is lifted up ... thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God” (Ezek. xxviii. 5, 6), and further to reveal the parallel intended between the Usurper and the Rightful Lord, we find the word “astoried” or “astoried” used of each (Isa. lii. 14; Ezek. xxviii. 19). *Gabah* is used of the “heart” (II. Chron. xxvi. 16); “the heavens” (Isa. lv. 9); “the Lord of hosts” (Isa. v. 16), and of Saul who was higher than any of the people (I Sam. x. 23).

“Behold”, said the Lord, “Behold My Servant, He shall be exalted, and extolled and be very high.”

The LXX recognizes that these are not to be considered as three separate statements, positions or degrees, but an intensive way of speaking of His exceeding exaltation, it reads “He shall be exalted and glorified exceedingly”.

We must not look upon the exaltation of the Servant of the Lord here, as though it were the effect of the prospering of the first part of the verse. Rather is the second clause to be read as an expansion, a parallel, with the first. In this verse the suffering and humiliation are passed, the glory fills the vision. Here, in Isa. lii. 13 - liii. 12 we have Exaltation, followed by a review of past humiliation, succeeded once again by exaltation, this time manifested by dividing the spoil.

We turn to the N.T. and discover another passage which sets before us the blessed sequel to His condescension. It will enable us to appreciate the antichristian blasphemy of Lucifer or the Cherub that fell; it will enable us to understand that the words “*The high and lofty One*” Who inhabiteth Eternity, were perfectly fitting to Him Who was on earth known as the Man of Sorrows, for He was more than mere man, He was the God-Man. “Behold My Servant” said the Lord, not only in Isaiah lii., but in Philippians ii.

“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, But made Himself of no reputation . . . . the form of a servant . . . . He humbled Himself (see Isa. liii. 8 LXX, ‘In His humiliation His judgment was taken away’) ... unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him (*huperupsoo*) and given Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow” (Phil. ii. 6-10).

Stress is laid in the N.T on the exceedingly exalted position now occupied by the Ascended Lord.

“He ascended up far above all heavens” (Eph. iv. 10) so far above that He might “fill all things”. He has “passed through” (*dierchomai*) the heavens (Heb. iv. 14); He is “made higher than the heavens” *hupsiloteros* “more exalted” (Heb. vii. 26).

Thus does prophet and apostle delight to honour Him, Who for our sakes stooped so low. It is good that at the opening of this chapter of unprecedented suffering we should be taken as it were with Peter, James & John to the Mount of Transfiguration, and there with Moses & Elijah become “eye-witnesses” of His majesty, before we descend with Him into the vale of tears that led to Calvary’s Cross.

**#64. ISAIAH lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.  
The astonishment and blindness of Israel (Isa. lii. 14, 15).**

In order that we may clearly perceive the argument of Isa. lii. 14, 15 we must recognize in the “As” . . . . . “so” of these two verses the figure of speech called the Simile, and not allow the intervening sentences to prevent the mind from grasping its import.

“AS many were astonished at Thee;  
(His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men);  
SO shall He startle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him;  
(For that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard  
shall they consider).”

The alteration of the word “sprinkle” to “startle” will be found in the marginal reading of the R.V. Consideration of this revision will not only enable us to understand the teaching of Isaiah lii., but also illustrate the danger that besets anyone who attempts to translate the original Scriptures, depending only or mainly on the evidence of the Concordance. We must never forget that the Concordance, if it gives the English rendering, is merely recording a fact, but whether that fact be at the same time a true translation, the Concordance cannot say. If the reader is in the habit of using a Hebrew English Lexicon Concordance, he will find that the word translated “sprinkle” is used twenty-four times in the O.T. and is translated in every case “sprinkle”; there is no other passage where such a rendering as “startle” is possible, for in every case, except that of Isa. lii. 15, it is either blood, oil or water that is sprinkled. In that very exception however lies the answer to the difficulty. Supposing we said that blood, oil, water or nations are sprinkled, we should at once realize that the blood, oil or water are said to be sprinkled on person or things, and that something not stated is said to be sprinkled on the nations.

The Hebrew word *Nazah* means primarily “to leap” and is allied with the similar Arabic word which is employed in such proverbs as “a greater leaper than the locust”, or “more springy than the springbok”. When a fluid is in mind, then “sprinkle” or “spurt” is appropriate.

"The fluid spurted is put in the accusative, and it is spurted *upon* the person. In the present passage, the persons ‘many nations’, is in the *accusative*, and it is simply treason against the Hebrew language to render ‘sprinkle’. The interpreter who will so translate will ‘do anything’.”  
(A. B. Davidson).

Moreover the LXX translates this passage, “Thus shall many nations wonder at Him”, clearly showing that they understood the word as the R.V. gives it. This translation is endorsed by The Companion Bible.

We can now see more clearly the teaching of Isa. lii. 14, 15 which we will set out, using the added knowledge we have gained.

AS. The many “astonished”.  
Reason. The marred visage.  
SO. Many nations “caused to wonder”.  
Reason. Unheard of things.

Having corrected our translation and assembled our passage under its respective headings we can now proceed.

“Astonished”, Hebrew *Shamen*. This word is translated “astonish” when applied to the mind, or “desolate” when applied to land or city, and then, by a figure quite common among us, the word “desolate” is applied to the state of mind also. We have an example of this double use in Leviticus:

“And I will bring the land into *desolation*, and your enemies which dwell therein shall be *astonished*” (Lev. xxvi. 32).

The reader will keep in mind the parallel word “startle” or “wonder” of verse 15. The book of Job confirms this:

“Mark me, and *be astonished*, and lay your hand upon your mouth” (Job xxi. 5).

So Isa. lii. 15 may read “wonder” and the sequel, “Kings shall shut their mouths at Him” continue the thought.

Three passages in Ezekiel will increase our understanding of the nature and character of the “astonishment” of Isa. lii. 14. Two of these passages relate to the fall of Tyre, and the third to the mystical king of Tyre, probably Satan himself.

“Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling: they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and *be astonished* at thee” (Ezek. xxvi. 16).

Here is a picture of desolation of mind. Thrones vacated, royal insignia laid aside; trembling at every moment: this is “astonishment” in the Biblical sense. Ezekiel xxvii. 35 & xxviii. 19 should be read in conjunction with the above verse. The degree of desolation intended can be gathered from the fact that this same word is used to describe “the abomination that maketh *desolate*” (Daniel ix. 26, 27; xi. 31; xii. 11), and the effect upon Daniel, “I was astonished at the vision” (Dan. viii. 27). When therefore we read, “As many were astonished at thee” let us not pass by the word, as of little importance. In Isa. lii. 14 and in one or two other places the A.V. uses the older spelling of the word, “astonied” which is derived from the old French word *estoner*, and allied with the word “stun”, and sometimes derived from *stony* and used as *petrify*. For our present purpose the modern spelling is preferable. The astonishment here referred to, in Isa. lii. 14, was produced by the humiliation and suffering to which this august Servant of Jehovah stooped.

“His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.”

The structure has already informed us that in the original “visage” and “beauty” are the same word.

We have already referred to Dan. viii. 27 in connection with the word “astonish”: we now refer to it again, as it uses the Hebrew *Mareh*, “visage” or “beauty”. “I was astonished at the *vision*” (viii. 27). *Roah*, “to see”, from which this word is derived, is found in Isa. lii. 15:

“That which had not been told them shall they see.”

What Israel failed to see, Isaiah himself saw,

“Mine eyes have seen the king” (Isa. vi. 5),

and we are assured by John that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, and spoke of Him (John xii. 41), and it is in this very connection that Isa. vi. 10 is quoted:

“He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted and I should heal them” (John xii. 40).

This “visage” which Israel failed “to see” was “more marred than any man”. In the opening chapter Israel were charged by Isaiah with being “corrupters” (Isa. i. 4) and the context makes one almost suspect the condition known as leprosy. This word, translated “corrupt”, is the word that gives us

“marred” in Isa. lii. 14. Leprosy most certainly is in view in Isaiah vi. There we find King Uzziah who had been stricken with leprosy and Isaiah confessing that he dwelt among a people of *unclean* lips. Among other practices that made Israel resemble their idolatrous neighbours, rendering them unfit for the service of the Lord, is the prohibition, in Lev. xix. 27, “neither shalt thou *mar* the corners of the beard”; for of all the heathen at that time it could be written “their corruption (same word as ‘marred’) is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you” (Lev. xxii. 25). The reader will observe that the context deals with the need for a spotless offering in the sacrifices of Israel. Here, in Isaiah liii., is “the Lamb of God”, Who had laid aside His glory, and was made a sin-offering on our behalf, stooping down to this likeness of “corruption” and being charged with the very thing He had come to remove. Israel were “astonished” at the depths to which He descended, but they did not know it was for their sakes. In Isaiah liii. that light breaks in — but we have not reached that section yet. They treated Him as a moral leper, “we hid as it were our faces from Him”; they could not “see” anything in Him to desire Him. Again Ezekiel xxviii. must be quoted. The Saviour’s visage was “marred”, not through pride, but in love that passeth knowledge; but of the fallen cherub it is written, “Thine heart was lifted up (*Gabah*, “high”, Isa. lii. 13) because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted (same word as ‘marred’) thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness” (Ezek. xxviii. 17).

“Form”, Hebrew *toar*, is once translated “visage” (Lam. iv. 8), and is used, in the way common to Hebrew poetry, as a repetition for emphasis. Perhaps there is a glance at the description given of David:

“Behold I have seen the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a *comely* person” (I Sam. xvi. 18).

It will be remembered that David was described as being “ruddy, and of a fair *countenance*” (where the word “countenance” is *mareh*, “visage”, of Isa. lii. 14), although Samuel was warned about looking on the “countenance” of Saul, for that was to judge merely by outward appearance and not by the heart (I Sam. xvi. 7). The word translated “visage” occurs in but one other place in Isaiah and that is in chapter xi. 3, “He shall not judge after *the sight* of His eyes”. Applying, then, all that we have seen, both of the structure of these verses and the meaning and usage of the words which they contain, we believe we can perceive that the astonishment and wonder of these many people and kings at the depth of the Saviour’s humiliation, arises out of the following facts:

- I. They who judged after the sight of their own eyes saw nothing but the outward appearance, and, just as Israel were unanimous in the choice of Saul as their king, by reason of his “countenance”, even though they were self-deceived, so they were unanimous in their rejection of their true King because of this selfsame superficial judgment.
- II. The reason why Israel made so tragic a mistake was because of their moral condition. They themselves, as Isaiah i. & vi. indicate, were moral lepers, and when they looked upon the Lord, they saw but their own reflection, the sin and stripe that He bore, but they saw not the patient, lowly sin-bearer Himself.
- III. The many references that we have made to antichristian persons, (the king of Babylon, the king of Tyre, and Lucifer, son of the morning), place the Christ of God, in direct contrast with the false christ, the man of sin, the fallen cherub and the whole satanic travesty of truth. These exalt themselves; these corrupt themselves. He, though originally in the “form” of God, took upon Him the “form” of a servant, and in that form, which had no comeliness, He was despised and rejected, yet “this same Jesus” shall be “admired” (*thaumazo*, “be wondered at”, the LXX equivalent of “startle” in Isa. lii. 15) in that day.

**#65. ISAIAH lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.  
“Who hath believed our report?” (Isa. liii. 1).**

We now approach the opening verses of Isaiah liii. itself, but the structure of the passage as a whole has shown us that these are so interwoven with the closing words of the previous chapter that they cannot be considered separately. We must therefore carry forward with us all that we have learned concerning the “astonishment” of those who failed to see beyond the marred visage of the suffering Saviour, and realize that our present study is a continuance of the same theme.

To refresh our memory, the following outlines are repeated from previous articles:--

**Isaiah lii. 14, 15 - liii. 3.**

B | lii. 14 - liii. 3. NATIONS AND KINGS. |  
c | Visage (*Mareh*).  
d | Form (*Toar*).  
e | Heard (*Shamea*).  
e | Report (*Shamuah*).  
d | Form (*Toar*).  
c | Beauty (*Mareh*).

**Isaiah lii. 14, 15.**

AS many were astonished at Thee;  
(His visage so marred more than any man);  
SO shall He startle many nations;  
(That which not told them shall they see.)  
“Who hath believed our report?” (Isa. liii. 1).

Who is the speaker of these words? Jenour in his analysis places first verse under the heading of the “Watchmen”, by which he intends “the apostles and first preachers of the gospel”.

The Companion Bible says: “The questions are asked by the prophet.” George Adam Smith translates Isa. liii. 1, “Who gave believing to that which we heard?” and gives the note:--

"And not *our report*, or *something we caused to be heard*, as in the English Version. *Shemuah* is the passive participle of *Shema*, to hear, and not *Hashemia*, to cause to hear. The speakers are now the penitent people of God who had been preached to, and not the prophets who had preached."

In Isaiah liii. we have a foreshadowing of Israel's repentance and grief when they look upon Him Whom they had pierced and, at last, recognize that “He was wounded for *their* transgressions”.

The A.V. margin shows that the translators were not quite satisfied with the words “our report”, and reads “or *doctrine?*” *Heb.* “*hearing?*”. This word translated “doctrine” is in the text itself of Isa.xxviii.9, and once again occurs as an alternative in the margin (Isa. xxviii. 19).

“Who hath believed.” As cited above, George Adam Smith gives the strange rendering, “Who gave believing”, but there is a reason behind it. In his Literal Version Robert Young reads: — “Who hath given credence to that which we heard?”. The reason for this circumlocution is that the translators knew that the Hebrew word for “believe” is the origin of our word “amen”, as though faith says “Amen” to all that God reveals. This word *Aman* is of great importance, not only by reason of its use here in Isaiah.liii., but because of its influence on our approach to the question “What is faith, or believing?”

Primarily, *Aman* means “To prop, to stay, to sustain, to support”; intransitively the word means “To be stayed up”, hence “To be firm, unshaken; such as one may safely lean on”, and, then, metaphorically, “To be faithful” (see Gesenius).

“Who accepted the words that we heard as being the truth, upon the veracity of which we could lean in utter confidence, sure of the faithfulness of Him Who uttered them?”

While this is impossible as a translation, it may awaken in the English mind that which would have been quickly conveyed to the mind of the Hebrew. The appropriateness of the title “Amen” as given to Christ in Rev. iii. 14, and the N.T. expansion of the title that follows, “*the faithful and true Witness*” may now be better appreciated, as also the introduction of the “Yea” and “Amen” in II Cor. i. 20, in regard to all the promises of God.

What Israel heard of their Messiah was simply incredible, because tradition, blindness, ignorance and sin had robbed them of their right to have simple confidence in the faithfulness of God Who spoke to them. Instead of believing what they were told, they brought the doctrine to the bar of their own reasoning, and, judging by the sight of their own eyes, the Lord and His Word were despised and rejected. But what they once heard not, they are yet to “consider”. Of this people Isaiah had said, “My people doth not consider” (Isa. i. 3), or, as the word is translated in Isa. vi. 10, they did not “understand with their heart” and so were not healed.

Not only did Israel not believe that which they heard, but the prophecy continues:--

“And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

Evidently the message which these people had heard, and which they did not believe, was concerning “the arm of the Lord”. No Israelite could forget the words of Exod. vi. 6, “I will redeem you with a stretched out arm”, nor would the hearers of this prophecy forget that in the tenth verse of Isaiah lii., the prophet had said:--

“The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. lii. 10).

Yet “the nations had been startled” when, at long last, they had realized the import of the words.

The word “revealed” is usually associated with a doctrine or a truth, and not so frequently with a person. Of course, “to reveal” the “arm” of the Lord, might mean to reveal the truth, the promise or the deliverance accomplished by “the arm of the Lord”, but as the word translated “reveal” primarily means “to be naked” and “to make naked”, the meaning of the phrase “The arm of the Lord revealed” may mean “The arm of the Lord *uncovered*”, as the word is translated in Isa. xlvii. 2, 3. This would bring the passage into line with the one already quoted, which speaks of “making bare” the arm, and so ready for battle, service or redemption. The fact that the Greek translators use the verb *apokalupto* might lead one who was acquainted with the N.T. only, to reject this suggestion, but the very first occurrence of *apokalupto* in the LXX is in Gen. viii. 13, where it would be impossible to translate “And Noah *revealed* the covering of the Ark”, the obvious meaning being that Noah “removed the covering” or “uncovered” the ark. So is it with the second reference, Exod. xx. 26, but perhaps the most decisive passage of all is Isa. lii. 10 where it is used to translate the words “The Lord *hath made bare* His holy arm”.

The meaning of Isa. liii. 1 therefore, is:--

“Who hath credited the words we heard as truth? and to which of the nations, before whose eyes the Lord had made bare His holy arm, has that arm really been uncovered?”

In other words, when the Saviour entered into His great ministry, how many recognized that in Him the word of the Lord was being fulfilled, or that the great work of redemption was being accomplished?

“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.”

We shall preserve the unity of the prophecy if we follow the R.V. and use the past tense from verse 2 to verse 10, where the change is made to the future, when it says, “He shall see His seed”, etc. “The tender plant” means a “suckling” and the word is used of infants in Psalm viii. 2 and in Isa. xi. 8, “The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp”, even as the verb means to suckle a babe. There is something very tender and appealing in the thought of a suckling, and this is how the Saviour “grew up before the face” of the Father, for the words “before Him” are literally “before His face”. The Father knew those early years at Nazareth, and all the sinless purity of that obscure life, so that heaven itself opened at His baptism and the good pleasure which the Father had in Him was made known — but in the eyes of others, instead of “a tender plant”, He was but “a root out of a dry ground”.

To be set in a dry land, and slain with thirst, is to suffer judgment (Hos. ii. 3), but to be visited with dew from heaven is to be restored and to have beauty as the olive tree (Hos. xiv. 5, 6). When the Psalmist was cut off from the worship of God he said that he longed for God “as the hart panteth after the water brooks” (Psa. xlii. 1), and that he thirsted for God “in a dry and thirsty land where no water is” (Psa. lxiii. 1).

For a nation to be compared to “a wilderness”, “a dry land”, and “a desert” (Jer. l. 12) was to declare that nation cast off from God and devoted to judgment. For the people of Israel to have compared the Servant of Jehovah to a “root out of a dry ground” reveals the extent of their blindness and the completeness of their rejection of Him.

“He hath no form nor comeliness.” “Form” has already appeared in Isa. lii. 14; there it was “more marred” than the sons of men, here it is described as being devoid of “comeliness”. This is too homely a translation; “excellency” (Isa. xxxv. 2), “majesty” (Psa. xlv. 3), “honour” (cxlv. 5), “glory” (Isa. ii. 10), or “beauty” (Psa. cx. 3) would be a more fitting translation. At His second coming the verb is used of His appearance,

“Who is this that *is glorious* in His apparel” (Isa. lxiii. 1),  
yet, at His first advent, His people saw neither honour, glory, majesty, nor beauty.

“No beauty that we should desire Him.” We have already considered under “visage” (Isa. lii. 14), the meaning and usage of the word here translated “beauty”.

The Messiah is given the title “The desire of all nations” (Hag. ii. 7), but this again is at His second coming (see context).

Contrariwise, upon Saul — the people’s choice, the persecutor of David and the rejected of the Lord — this title was laid, “On whom is all the desire of Israel” (I Sam. ix. 20).

“He was despised (see also Psa. xxii. 6) and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted (the ‘knowledge’ of Isa. liii. 11) with grief: ‘and we hid as it were our faces from Him’ (A.V.). ‘He hid as it were His face from us’ (A.V. and R.V. margins). ‘As an hiding of faces from Him’ or ‘from us’ (A.V. margin). ‘As one from whom men hide their face’ (R.V.).”

It will be seen that owing to the ambiguity of the sentence the translators have experienced some difficulty in interpreting this last clause. G. A. Smith gives:--

"And as one we do cover the face from",  
while the LXX reads, “For His face is turned from us”.

The reader will remember the allusions to leprosy in earlier comments. We believe that the same dread thing is in view here. The Saviour was regarded as “unclean”. He Who was the brightness of the Father’s glory, so identified Himself with His people’s sin and shame, that there was “an hiding of faces”, and He Who ever was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners” was separated by them from their company and treated as a leper.

Since writing these notes, we are glad to be able to give the following confirmation of this interpretation from a note taken from the Talmud where it asks, “What is the name of the Messiah?” One answer is that “Some say *Hatsara*, ‘The Leprous’, according as it is written, ‘Surely He hath born our sicknesses’,”

We are now ready for the great confession, the examination of which must be the theme of future studies.

**#66. ISAIAH lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.  
“Christ . . . suffered . . . the Just for the unjust” (Isa. liii. 6-9).**

We now approach the revealed results of this tremendous burden of suffering and transgressions, and read,

“The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. liii. 5).

First let us consider the teaching contained in the words: “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him”. This cannot mean that “our peace” was “chastised”, but that the chastisement was “upon Him”. The reader is doubtless aware that the word “of”, which is the sign of the genitive case, is not necessarily limited to the “possessive”, although this is the first and most frequent meaning. The phrase “smitten of God” can mean nothing else than “smitten by God”, which is an example of the genitive of efficient cause. So also is the phrase “chastisement of our peace”, which means not only the chastisement that procures our peace, but, as the context reveals, a chastisement endured by the Lord on behalf of His people.

So in the passages before us we observe two parallel lines of suffering:

Acquainted with and bearing grief.		Wounded for transgressions.
Carrying sorrows.		Bruised for iniquities.
Chastisement to procure peace.		Stripes to procure healing.

There is a difference between being “acquainted with” grief, and being “wounded for” transgressions, even as there is a difference between being burdened *with* our sorrows, and being bruised *for* our iniquities. This is brought out by the presence or absence of the word “for”, which is employed in the phrases “wounded for” or “bruised for”, but not in those passages which speak of being acquainted with or carrying grief or sorrow. The *chastisement* of our peace belongs to that class of sufferings that stress the mental aspect; the *stripes* that procure healing belong to the bodily sufferings the same Saviour endured “for” His people.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Isaiah liii. is the great confession of repentant Israel, and so at last, they acknowledge their transgressions, saying:--

“All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way,  
and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. liii. 6).

## A TWOFOLD MEETING PLACE.

A | Suffering Servant. He shall be extolled, Heb. *Nasa*, "To be lifted up".

B | A meeting place for sins. Heb. *Paga*.

A | Triumphant Servant. He shall bear, Heb. *Nasa*, "To lift up".

B | A meeting place for sinners. Heb. *Paga*.

In both passages *paga* is causative, "He caused to meet". In the one case it was the meeting, in wrath, of borne sin; in the other the meeting, in grace, of ransomed sinners.

How different is Isaiah's usage of the word in chapter forty-seven, where God visits the iniquity of Babylon on the great city and system.

"Come down, and sit in the dust . . . . thy shame shall be seen, I will take vengeance, *and I will not meet thee as a man*" (Isa. xlvii. 3).

The translation hardly expresses the true intention of the prophet here. He does not so much say that God will not meet guilty Babylon as a man, for, then, Babylon might hope for some excusing of its evil. Rotherham renders the passage:

"An avenging I will take, and will accept no son of earth".

George Adam Smith renders the passage:

"Vengeance I take, and strike treaty with none."

The R.V. reads, "I will accept no one."

Truly, terrible indeed would be the lot of all men if God dealt with them according to their deserts. Merciful intercession *for us*, meant the bearing of sin *by Him*.

"He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation?"

*The Companion Bible* says: "As to the men of his age (i.e., His contemporaries), who ponders, or considers as to this seed, seeing He is to be cut off?"

Lightfoot refers to the rule of the Sanhedrin which says:--

"In judgments about the life of any man, they begin first to transact about acquitting the party who is tried: and they begin not with those things which makes for his condemnation" (Sanhedr. cap. 4).

It is evident from the record of the trial of Christ, that this merciful rule was abandoned. There was some pretence of calling forward any who would "testify on His behalf: but, with the disciples fled, and the ban of excommunication awaiting any Israelite who confessed Him, none were forthcoming. From all considerations we are inclined more to the rendering propounded by Jenour than by others, which is as follows:--

"From help and from justice He was taken away."

The LXX is quoted in Acts viii. 33 where it reads, "In His humiliation was His judgment taken away". He was denied a regular trial, and those helps which were normally granted to accused persons were withheld.

"Who testifieth to His way of life?" The Mishna (a collection of Rabbinical traditions) states that before anyone was punished for a capital crime, proclamation before the prisoner was made in these words: "Whoever knows anything concerning his innocence, let him come and declare it". When our Saviour requested that His disciples should be asked to bear witness as to His doctrine, the only answer was a blow from one of the officers which stood by (John xviii. 21).

"And He made His grave with the wicked and with the rich in His death."

Calvin understand the word “rich” to be a synonym for “wicked”. Govet, following Dr. Kenincott’s translation, reads:

“He was taken up with wicked *men* in His death and with the rich *man* was His sepulcher”,

which seems to be a prophetic anticipation of the “thieves” (plural) and of Joseph of Arimathæa, the rich man (singular). “The Companion Bible” supplies a comment on the word translated “made” in Isa. liii. 9 showing that it could mean “appointed”, but *nathan*, the Hebrew word in question, is found in the record of Absalom’s death, where we read “*he was taken up* between the heaven and the earth” (II.Sam.xvii.9), and, for the Hebrew student, we note that De Rossi found the word in one of his Spanish MSS pointed to read passively. On more than one occasion the Saviour spoke of the manner of His death as that of being “lifted up” (John iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32, 34). It is therefore in full harmony with the truth thus to understand Isa. liii. 9.

The word “wicked” is plural, (there were two thieves crucified with Christ), but the word “rich” is singular. The N.T. particularly records the fact that Joseph of Arimathæa, who begged of Pilate the body of Jesus, was a “rich man”. Thus the unjust character of His trial, and the character and circumstances of those intimately associated with His death are clearly foretold in this wondrous prophecy.

The first word in the clause “because He had done no violence” (Isaiah liii. 9) has been rendered by some translators “although”, making the sense “*although* He had done no violence *yet* it pleased the Lord to bruise Him”, which does most certainly accord with the doctrine of the atonement. *The Companion Bible* however makes no comment, and the absence of comment here is eloquent for Dr. Bullinger was a Hebrew scholar and keen enough to have seen the value of such a translation. The comment of Birks seems the soundest: he says that these words “are neither the cause nor the impediment ‘though’ or ‘because’”. They seem to note simply the fact of the strange contrast between His spotless innocence, and His dishonourable death”, consequently he translates the passage,

“When He had done no violence” ...

As we read this foreshadowing of the great Sacrifice for sin, may we ever remind ourselves that *He* was wounded for *our* transgressions, and so echo the grateful words of the apostle, “The Son of God Who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*”.

### **#67. ISAIAH lii. 13 - lvi. 8. The Lamb of God.**

**“The Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand” (Isa. liii. 10-12).**

We now draw to the conclusion of this mighty chapter of redeeming love. The great solitary Figure, so clearly seen centuries before his advent, is given one title, “My Servant” (Isa. lii. 13), “My righteous Servant” (Isa. liii. 11). His humiliation and His exaltation are the two subjects that divide this prophetic passage between them. His humiliation has now been surveyed. We have seen Him “a root out of a dry ground”, treated by Israel as a leper, yet bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows; wounded for our transgressions and bringing healing by His very stripes.

We now approach the glorious conclusion. While the actual word “resurrection” is not employed by the prophet here, the fact of resurrection is most surely to be found in Isaiah liii. The Servant of the Lord is not only bruised and wounded, He is actually “cut off out of the land of the living” (Isa. liii. 8), and finds His grave with the wicked (Isa. liii. 9). He is seen as both dead and buried. Yet verse 10 says, “when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, *He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,* and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand”. Here then is abundant life from the dead, resurrection life and glory.

Just as Isaiah liii. prophetically depicts the suffering, death and burial of the Saviour, following that burial with words that can mean nothing else than newness of life, so another prophetic fore-view of the cross (Psalm xxii.), does not end before introducing the word of life, saying of Him Who for our sakes had been “forsaken” (Psa. xxii. 1):

“A seed shall serve Him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation”  
(Psa. xxii. 30).

This passage would be better rendered, with Perowne:

“A seed shall serve Him; it shall be told to the generation (to come) concerning the Lord”, and should be read as being similar in thought to Psalm lxxi. 18: “Forsake me not, until I have shown Thy strength unto this generation”.

Not only shall the Messiah have a seed but He, Himself, shall prolong His days. Under the law, the prolonging of one’s days was a special promise to those who kept the commandment of the Lord, as the apostle Paul notes where he alludes to it as the “first commandment with promise” (Ephesians vi. 2; Exod. xx. 12). According to Deut. iv. 26, the alternative to the prolongation of one’s days is “to utterly perish”, “to be utterly destroyed”. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy the association of prolonged days with obedience is maintained (there are nine separate references). One passage particularly noteworthy, is xxv. 15, where the keeping of a perfect and just weight and measure is connected with this promise of life. We have learned, however, both by bitter experience and by the teaching of the Scriptures, that “if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21). But the law was rendered “weak through the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3) and so Isaiah liii. was the blessed answer of grace. The fact should not be lost sight of, that by choosing the expression, “He shall prolong His days”, Isaiah intentionally introduces the thought that here, at last, is the righteous Servant of the Lord; One Who has magnified the law; One in Whose heart and life that law was honoured and obeyed, even though the Righteousness provided by the Gospel be infinitely beyond anything that “the law” could attain.

“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him”, yet He was the righteous One, an enigma solved only by the teaching of the N.T. concerning Him Who, though He knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Not only shall He see His seed, not only shall He prolong His days, but something even more wonderful than length of life is His for “the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand”. Let us allow no tampering with the word “pleasure”. There are other Hebrew words that are rightly rendered “will”, “purpose” and “counsel”, but the prophet has been inspired to use a word that in the A.V. of Isaiah alone is nine times rendered “delight”, four times “please”, and seven times “pleasure”. At the opening of the second part of Isaiah, Cyrus foreshadows the coming of Christ:

“That saith unto Cyrus, He is My Shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure.”

The restoration of Israel, includes the New Jerusalem, whose “gates” shall be of carbuncles, and whose “borders” “pleasant stones”, and in Isa. lxii. 4 the word attains its highest fulfillment in this prophecy when the marriage of the redeemed people is celebrated under the name Hephzi-bah, “My delight is in her”, for this word *chephets*, is the very word “pleasure” we are considering. This “pleasure”, eventuating in blessing such as the world has not yet experienced, is the direct outcome of the Saviour’s sufferings. These blessings flow from the grace of atonement, for it is the selfsame “pleasure” of the Lord that will fall in judgment upon Babylon, and would, and must, fall upon all whose sins are unremoved.

Consequently we are prepared for the lesson of Isaiah liii., and observe that this same word, “pleasure”, of verse 10, has previously been used of the Saviour’s sufferings in the same verse, where we read:

“Yet it *pleased the Lord* to bruise Him . . . . the *pleasure* of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”

It shall *prosper*. Gesenius gives as the primary meaning of the word translated “to prosper”, “to go over, or through (as of a river)”, and so we find the word used in a literal sense in such a passage as II.Sam.xix.17, “they went over Jordan”, and in Josh. i. 8, we read, “Thou shalt make thy way prosperous”. The conquering King of Psalm xlv. “rides prosperously”. When Nehemiah contemplated the restoration of Jerusalem he prayed, “prosper Thy servant” (Neh. i. 11), and when opposition reared its head he responded by saying, “The God of heaven, He will prosper us” (Neh. ii. 20). The word “prosper” is found in association with the word “please” already considered in Isa. lv. 11, where, speaking of His word, the Lord declares, “It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” — words that have a specific bearing upon the restoration of the people of Israel. This prophecy will not be fulfilled until Israel shall say:

“Save now (Hosannah) I beseech Thee, O Lord . . . . send now *prosperity*.  
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psa. cxviii. 25, 26).

With all this positive witness concerning the prosperity of Israel, when once they look upon Him they have pierced, comes the negative assurance,

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper” (Isa. liv. 17).

Not only shall the crucified and bruised Christ have risen to die no more; not only shall the purposes of the Lord’s grace be performed, but —

“He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.”

The word here translated “travail” means, “labour with toil and weariness”. It is found more frequently in Ecclesiastes than in any other O.T. book, where the labour that is undertaken by man under the sun appeared to Solomon to end in “vanity and vexation of spirit”. Here is the blessed contrast: He shall see the glorious fruits of *His* weary labour and toil, “and *shall* be satisfied”. Here again our thoughts are turned to Ecclesiastes, where we learn,

“The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing” (i. 8).

“Neither is his eye satisfied with riches” (iv. 8).

It is the Psalmist who sees that true satisfaction awaits the day of resurrection, when he cries,

“I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness” (xvii. 15).

Here, moreover, we find that most precious word — so intimately bound up with the ministry of Paul as to be for ever associated with his gospel to the Romans and Galatians — the word “justify” and, in perfect accord with the doctrine of those mighty epistles, this justification is based upon atonement:

“By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa. liii. 11).

“By His knowledge.” Birks comments on this phrase: “ ‘His knowledge’ is commonly taken in a passive sense, for knowledge of which He is the object . . . . a pronoun with ‘knowledge’ always denotes the subject, not the object, of the knowledge”. There is considerable disagreement among expositors as to whether “by His knowledge” means (1) the believer’s knowledge of Him or (2) His own knowledge. And where it is understood as His own knowledge opinions are divided as to (a) whether it is His knowledge of the Father’s will, or of grief (Isa. liii. 3), or (b) whether the words should not read with the preceding sentence, thus, “and by His knowledge be satisfied”. In his commentary George Adam Smith says that he had not found in this reading in any other writing until he found it in Professor Brigg’s translation. The reader of *The Companion Bible* will see that it has been adopted in the notes on

this chapter. There is much to be said for the reading, more particularly because as George A. Smith points out, “it is supported by the frequent parallel in which we find *seeing* and *knowing* in Hebrew”. Let it be observed that God’s righteous Servant does not justify the many simply because *He Himself was righteous*. He justifies the many because He Himself “bear their iniquities”, or, as Paul puts it, “justifies by His blood” (Rom. v. 9); “Who was delivered *because* of our offences, and raised again *because* of our justification” (iv. 25).

Now comes the triumph; the crown following the cross; the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. Those whom He justifies He will also glorify.

“Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great; and He shall divide the spoil with the strong” (Isa. liii. 12).

In the original of Isa. liii. 12 there is no word for “portion”, but some such word must be supplied. Two very distinct lines of teaching arise from the two dividings of this verse.

(1) “I WILL DIVIDE Him a portion with the great”; that is the inheritance apportioned to Him shall be commensurate with the victory He has achieved, and,

(2) “HE SHALL DIVIDE the spoil with the strong”; that is, some of the redeemed will not only be saved, not only receive pardon and life, but will attain to a crown and a prize, as a reward. In earlier volumes of *The Berean Expositor* we have discussed the great difference that must be observed between “the hope” and “the prize”: between “the inheritance” of Col. i. 12, which is all of grace, and the “reward” of the inheritance of Col. iii. 24; between the “presentation” of Col. i. 22, which stands only and entirely upon the virtue of His atonement, and the “presenting perfect” of Col. i. 28, which is associated with the apostle’s “warning”.

We cannot go over the ground again here, but it is saddening, beyond measure, to see men of God, men who hold the truth of the mystery, men who are teaching others, failing, in this vital matter, “rightly to divide the Word of Truth”. As workmen, such will be “ashamed” in that day, and through failure to “divide” the truth, will fail to “divide” the spoil, for that honour is reserved for those who resemble David’s first three mighty men or his first thirty. This does not indicate unfair discrimination — this reward is not merely for the obvious overcomer; David’s law will obtain at the end:

“As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff, they shall part (divide) alike” (I Sam. xxx. 24).

In whatever rank the believer may find himself in that day, whether “saved so as by fire” or obtaining salvation “with age-abiding glory”, all will share the triumph of the Saviour’s cross; all can say from a full heart “Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ”.

## **#68. TRANSITION.**

The series of studies that bear this title were commenced in January, 1916, and have continued without break up to the present time. After a few introductory studies dealing with “Right Division”, “Purpose”, “Ages”, and “Dispensation”, we commenced the exposition of Genesis in November, 1916, and from that date analytical studies of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, and the books of Samuel have been given, the historic portion of the O.T. study being concluded with “The divine survey of history of the Kings in relation to the House of God” (I & II Chronicles), at the close of the year 1939.

After writing a transitional article entitled “The nation of Israel never lost” we explained to the reader the reason for departing from the canonical order of the O.T. Scriptures and that instead of taking up Ezra and Nehemiah which dealt with the return of Israel from captivity, we intended considering the

prophet that wrote during the reign of several kings of Judah, namely the prophet Isaiah. This mighty study was commenced early in 1940 with the naive remark:

"We shall then be better equipped for the study of the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, and the prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and others that are associated with the return from captivity."

The spirit indeed, was willing, but since writing the above words, more years have passed, burdened with war and its distresses, and "The Chapel of the Opened Book" has come into being, with its present service and future prospects of concentrated study, teaching and witness. Beyond the O.T. books enumerated, there stretch the vast fields of research in the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and many hours of study in the Psalms, the Proverbs, Esther and the Song of Solomon, and so, even though we were given the wisdom of Solomon combined with the patience of Job, we are conscious that the span allotted to men is not sufficient to embrace so great an undertaking. In accord with this conclusion, a number of articles on Isaiah were withdrawn, leaving Isaiah liii., to crown the O.T. series.

Acknowledging as we do with bowed head and much humility, that *The Berean Expositor* is not lightly read and then disposed of, but studied and treasured for future reference, and realizing with something akin to awe, that all unknowingly we have these many years been providing a book of reference for the students who may come under our care or the care of our successor as the work at the London centre grows, we feel that it is incumbent upon us to use all the strength and time permitted to us in perfecting this particular part of our work, and that we shall best attain our goal by transferring these studies under the heading "Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth" from O.T. books to those of the N.T. None of our readers need feel that they have been cheated, in view of all the circumstances, and if we are granted grace to complete this survey of the books of the N.T. we shall at least have dealt with "fulfillment" as well as "preparation" in the matter of the purpose of the ages and it will still be open to us, independently and as opportunity presents itself, to consider one or another of the O.T. books that still await our attention\* (\* - This has, in part, already been done in the case of Nehemiah and Job). The new series therefore will commence (D.V.) with a survey of the N.T. and subsequent studies will examine, analyze and comment upon the dispensational characteristics of the several books that go to make up the N.T. We shall step from the age of promise, to the age of fulfillment, from groping among shadows to the full glory of revelation, from the precursor of the Messiah, to the Presence of Christ Himself, or in the language of John and Paul we shall go from "grace to grace" and from "glory to glory" from type and symbol to blessed reality where "Christ is all and in all".

If we follow the canonical order of the Epistles of Paul, we shall begin with Romans and pass via Ephesians to I & II Thessalonians, this, dispensationally would give us (1) Foundation doctrine, (2) The Mystery, (3) Subsequent reversal and revival of an earlier dispensation and hope ending with the Day of the Lord and the Man of Sin. We are however concerned very much that the peculiar character of the present dispensation of the Mystery shall be clearly seen, and therefore a study of the epistles of Paul in their dispensational grouping seems called for. We may not be able to decide beyond dispute the exact order in which these epistles were written, but we can place them in two groups, those written during the Acts while Paul was free, and those written after the dismissal of Israel in Acts xxviii., when Paul became "The Prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles". It will be in this dispensational order that the epistles will be surveyed.

Some of these N.T. books have received individual study in these pages. The exposition of Romans\* (\* - The labours of fourteen years, on this epistle is now in book form entitled "JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER"), Hebrews, Ephesians, Colossians, Acts and Revelation between them occupying a period of over 30 years. Where such studies have been published the ground will not be retraversed, but a brief analysis will be given.

The number of books which make up the N.T. is twenty-seven, and they are distributed thus:

Gospels	4	Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
Acts	1	
Early Epistles of Paul	7	Gal., Heb., Rom., I & II Thess., I & II Cor.
Later Epistles of Paul	7	Eph., Phil., Col., Philemon, I Tim., Titus, II Tim.
Epistles of Circumcision	7	James, Jude, I & II Peter, I, II & III John.
Revelation	1	
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27		
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These books fall into three groups:

- (1) Historic. Gospels and Acts.
- (2) Doctrinal. Epistles.
- (3) Prophetic. Revelations.

The historical books must be subdivided into two groups: (1) The Gospels which give the earthly life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord; (2) The Acts of the Apostles, which gives the subsequent work of the Holy Spirit based upon that historic death, resurrection and ascension, and mainly the labours of Peter, Acts i.-xii. and of Paul, Acts xiii.-xxviii.

With this initial and introductory study, the way is clear for a consideration of the four gospels. This we look forward to in the next article of this series.

## **#69. The Four Gospels.**

Owing to the fact that Matthew, Mark and Luke confine themselves to the Galilean ministry of our Lord, and do not speak a word of any visit to Jerusalem until His last solemn journey, there to die, these three Gospels have been called "The Synoptic Gospels", i.e. Gospels having a common point of view, and differing very materially from John's Gospel which gives detailed accounts of our Lord's several visits to Jerusalem and His ministry there. While this subdivision therefore sets forth a truth, it is not the whole truth, for upon examination Matthew manifests a different approach to his theme than either that of Mark or Luke, even as these two differ materially from each other. Even more striking and important than the geographical setting of these Gospels, is the character of their writing. Matthew, Mark and Luke give little comment, adding nothing by way of personal observation or doctrinal inference from their record of parable, miracle, discourse, death and resurrection. John however not only provides a prologue (John i. 1-18) and a stated purpose (xx. 30, 31), but "delivers his historical testimony as from the chair of an apostle" (Alford). Again, neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke claim in so many words, to have been eye-witnesses of the facts they record, although the record of Matthew's calling, necessitates this feature in his case. John however insists in a number of places that he wrote as an eye-witness.

We shall therefore be wise to recognize that God has given us four inspired accounts of the earthly life and ministry of Christ and that each writer was guided in the selection of his material so that in each case one special aspect of that wondrous life should be thrown into prominence.

We are indebted to men of God from earliest times for the construction of a "Harmony of the four Gospels", but any reader who has either diligently studied these attempts or, better still, has endeavoured to construct a harmony from his own findings, will have discovered that such "harmony" is often spoilt either by the author doing violence to the arrangement found in the Gospels, or by arbitrarily adopting one aspect or order to the exclusion or distortion of the rest. **The truth is, that there is so much material omitted that it is beyond the ingenuity of man to supply the missing link and, moreover, it is evident that had God wished the church to have one harmonious record, He and He alone could have supplied it. We**

must therefore not only thankfully accept the four gospels as they stand, but recognize that four facets or aspects of truth are intended, and instead of wasting precious time in attempting the impossible, spend our time and strength in discovering “the things that differ”, so learning the Divinely intended lesson.

Before we study each Gospel in turn, let us enquire into the question of authorship, for we speak of the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

**Matthew.** From the earliest days, the authorship of the first of the four Gospels has been ascribed to Matthew the son of Alphaeus and called by Mark and Luke by the name of Levi (Mark.ii.14, Luke.iii.24). The name “Matthew” and not Levi is used when speaking of him as one of the apostles (Mark iii. 18, Luke vi. 15). There are, as we well know, other examples of a change of name; Simon was called Peter, Saul was named Paul, and just as we do not read of “Levi” as one of the apostles, but “Matthew”, so we never read of the “apostle Simon” or the “apostle Saul”. These names “Levi” and “Matthew” need cause no trouble to us, they were evidently accepted without comment at the beginning. The testimony of antiquity moreover is unanimous in placing Matthew’s gospel first among the evangelists. The actual date has been put at “eight years after the ascension” (*Theophyl*), “fifteen years after the ascension” (Niceph. Hist.) and “at the stoning of Stephen” (Cosmos Indic:). 38A.D. is the date adopted by Webster and Wilkinson.

**Mark.** The writer of the second Gospel has been universally believed to be *Marcus*, the same person who is called “John Mark” in Acts xii. 12, and Mark in Col. iv. 10 and II Tim. iv. 11. We learn from Acts xii. 12 that his mother’s name was Mary, and that she was a sister of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10). We gather that Mark owed his conversion to Peter (I Pet. v. 13); that he joined in the first missionary journey undertaken by his uncle Barnabas and Paul (Acts xii. 25), and owing to this blood relationship partly caused the disruption recorded in Acts xv. 37-40. Later, any reflection on his character is effectively removed by the gracious words of Paul (Col. iv. 10, II Tim. iv. 11). It is the unanimous tradition of antiquity that Mark was the ‘*interpretes*’, the amanuensis, of Peter.

While it is evident that Matthew had Hebrew readers in mind we can deduce from the writing of Mark that Gentile readers were before him. This would account partly for the omission of our Lord’s genealogy, the general omission of O.T. citations, except, of course, where the Lord Himself is reported as quoting from the Scriptures, and the interpretations offered of Hebrew and Aramaic expressions and the explanation of Hebrew customs.

**Luke.** While the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts does not give his actual name, there can be no doubt that Luke, the one spoken of in Col. iv. 14, is the writer. We find the writer of the Acts personally associated with Paul in Acts xvi. 10, and at intervals afterwards, his personal presence being indicated by the appearance of the pronoun “We”. Unlike the gospels of Matthew and Mark, Luke’s gospel was primarily written for the benefit of one named Theophilus, but even if Luke had no other intention than that of helping this enquirer, God intended that it should provide a companion to the Epistles of Paul, and when we exhibit the peculiar features of Luke’s gospel this will be made abundantly clear and we shall see that of the four, Luke’s gospel should be the one most studied by the Church of the One Body.

If the “Acts” is the second treatise written by Luke, and was published soon after the events recorded in Acts xxviii., it is evident that the gospel called “the former treatise” must have been published some time earlier, and Alford by a series of arguments indicates 50-58A.D. as the probable limits within which this gospel was published.

**John.** John is named the son of Zebedee, and was the brother of James. His family seem to have belonged to the middle class, as they had hired servants (Mark i. 20), and his mother was one of the women who ministered to the Lord of their substance (Luke viii. 3 & Mark xvi. 1). He seems to have been known personally to the high Priest (John xviii. 15) and possibly had some place of residence in

Jerusalem (John xix. 27). He is identified as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” and an eye-witness of the things recorded in his gospel.

Tradition places his closing years at Ephesus, where having outlived all the other apostles he died and was buried at about the age of 94. By the many explanations that John offers of matters which would be common knowledge among the Jews, together with the definite statements made in the gospel itself as to its scope, it is evident that this message is addressed to “the world”, its avowed object is to establish the truth that “Jesus is the Christ the Son of God”, so that “life” should be received “through His name” (John xx. 31). The revelation of the Person of Christ, “The Word, Who was with God and was God — Who became flesh and dwelt among us” is the distinctive feature of this gospel, and where Matthew stresses “fulfillment” of the words of the Prophets, John emphasizes personal testimony — “one thing I know”. There seems to be some reason, however, unstated but generally known, that called forth the gospel so long after the synoptics had been written, and Irenaeus, Tertullian, Epiphanius and Jerome taught that John wrote to controvert the teaching of Cerinthus and the speculations of the Gnostics.

It has been put forward by one authority that there were three classes of writing that arose in the apostolic age (1) the simple narrative, such as Matthew and Mark; (2) the compilation which attempted a more complete account, set out “in order” — such as Luke; (3) the third class, which would arise out of growth in the faith, that would not only desire *historic fact*, but would enquire into *doctrinal meaning*, and to this class John’s Gospel belongs (*see* Lucke, quoted by Alford).

Some features that are peculiar to John may well have become subjects of discussion among believers. For example, the rejection of the Lord by the Jews and the need to establish the perfect sinlessness of the One thus rejected. John stresses the fact that the Saviour “laid down His life of Himself”, no man taking it from Him. Signs are discovered in Paul’s writings that believers were not above questioning the authority of the apostles and John devotes several chapters in which the equipment by the “Spirit of Truth” was assured to the Twelve. These items lie upon the surface, a deeper and more intimate acquaintance with this gospel reveals richer and fuller grace than could have been called forth by mere controversy. To the “faith” engendered by the synoptic gospels, we may add “knowledge” as we read John.

In the A.V. and R.V. these four gospels are denominated “the Gospel according to Matthew (Mark, Luke or John), *Euaggelion kata Matthaion, Markon, Loukan or Ioannen*. *Euaggleion* is Anglicized as the Evangel, and means “good news”. *Kata* “according” denotes, not that the gospel was in any sense Matthew’s nor does it mean that the present gospel was compiled from material gathered from Matthew’s teaching, it signifies simply that Matthew was the author of the narrative so named.

It lies beyond our immediate purpose to discuss in fuller detail the testimony of antiquity, the canonicity of each book, and the many literary and historical side issues that naturally arise. Our chief aim is indicated by our heading “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth”. The four gospels yield their richest treasures to those who put into operation the principle of “Right Division”, and in the studies that follow these introductory notes the dispensational aspect will be kept steadily in view.

## #70. An approach to the Four Gospels.

Four inspired accounts of the earthly ministry of the Son of God have been given to the people of God and it is the Divine intention that these four accounts should be understood as providing four distinct aspects of the truth represented by the earthly life and ministry of Christ. Four texts of O.T. Scripture can be used to set out these four distinctive aspects of truth, namely:

MATTHEW	“Behold thy KING”	(Zech. ix. 9).
MARK	“Behold My SERVANT”	(Isa. xlii. 1).
LUKE	“Behold the MAN”	(Zech. vi. 12).
JOHN	“Behold your GOD”	(Isa. xl. 9).

These four references can be supplemented by observing the use in the O.T. of one peculiar title of the Messiah, namely “The Branch”. The figurative use of a great tree to set forth in symbol a great man, leads to the use of a “branch” to indicate some notable offspring or descendant both in the Hebrew of the O.T. and in modern usage.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him” (Isa. xi. 1, 2).

Here we have the figurative use of rod and stem; branch and root, disposed in alternating pairs. This title is endorsed and expanded in Rev. xxii. 16:

“I am the root and offspring of David.”

In the prophet Jeremiah we have the promise:

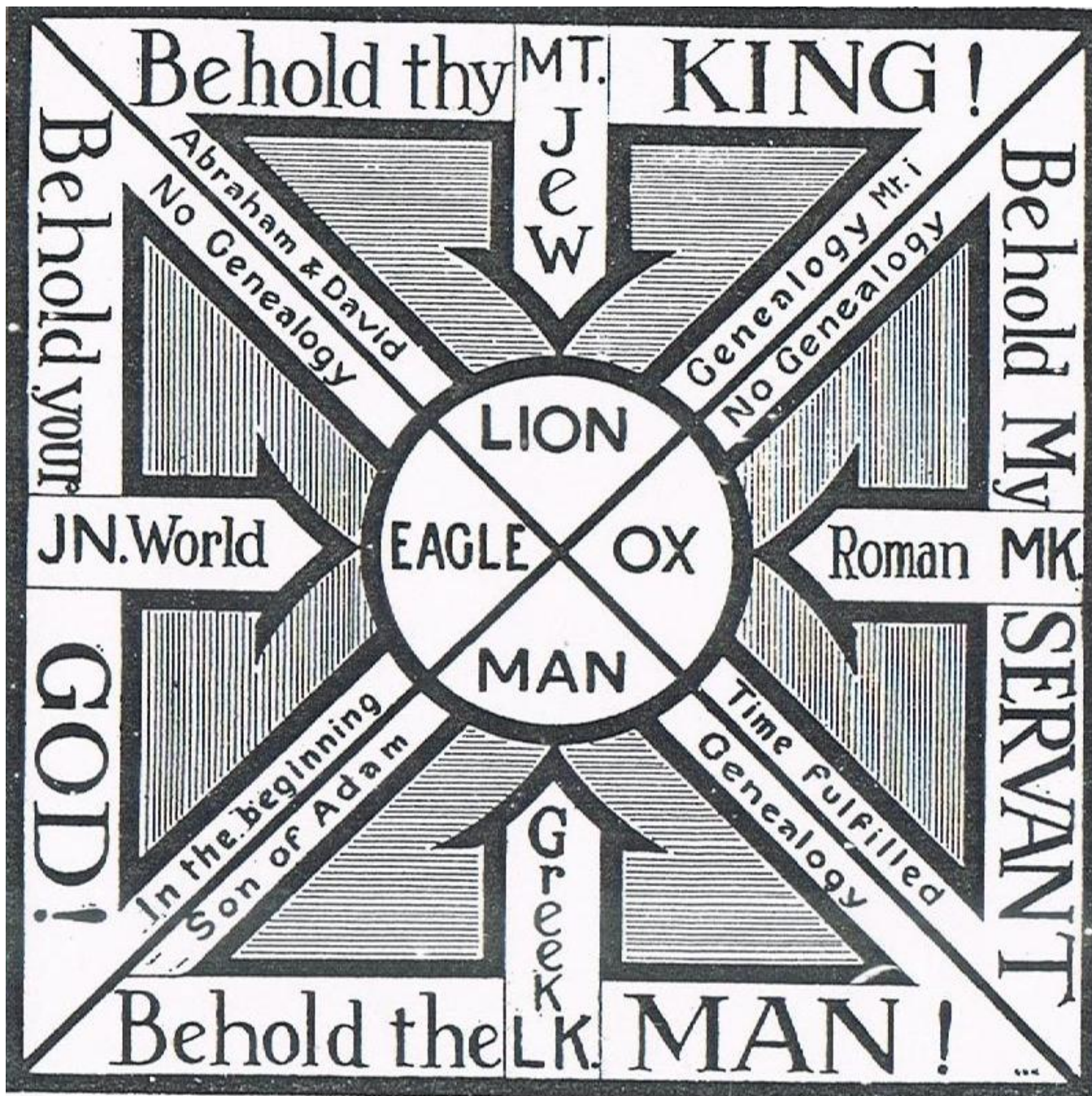
“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a KING shall reign and prosper” (Jer. xxiii. 5).

The gospel according to Matthew sets forth the Lord as KING, and traces His genealogy back through David.

The prophet Zechariah addresses Joshua the high priest saying:

“Behold, I will bring forth My Servant, the Branch” (Zech. iii. 8).

It is in this capacity and office of a SERVANT, that Mark presents the Saviour; hence there is no genealogy in the opening chapter, but immediate service, and this feature persists even unto the resurrection, the Gospel closing with the words “The Lord *working* with them, and confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark xvi. 20). Luke sets forth the Lord as the MAN and traces His genealogy back to Adam, it is of Him Zechariah speaks when he says “Behold, the MAN Whose name is the Branch” (Zech. vi. 12). Some two centuries earlier Isaiah, looking forward to the day of restoration, says, “In that day shall the Branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious” (Isa. iv. 2), and so provides the text which is appropriate to the Gospel according to John.



The four gospels point to the Lord Jesus Christ as the One in Whom all these promises were or shall be fulfilled. These four phases of prophecy however are all closely connected with Israel; there is another fourfold promise that goes back to the days of Adam that must also be fulfilled in Christ as set forth in the four gospels. From the earliest times, the Cherubim have been associated with the four gospels and it will be remembered that these living ones are described as having four faces:

“The face of a *man*, and the face of a *lion*, on the right side . . . . the face of an *ox* on the left side . . . . also the face of an *eagle*” (Ezek. i. 10).

That these cherubim are not of passing interest, but seem to be woven as it were into the very text of Scripture, a moment's consideration will prove. There are six different periods marked out in the Scriptures, where the cherub or cherubim (*im* Heb. plural) accompany the unfolding of the Divine purpose:

- Ezekiel xxviii. A supernatural being, who held the title “the anointed cherub that covereth”. He was cast out as profane. The word “anointed” is used of “The Messiah” or “The Christ” when applied to the Lord Jesus.
- Genesis iii. At the fall of Adam and at the expulsion from Eden, the cherubim are seen associated with the flaming sword that kept the way of the tree of life. “Paradise lost.”
- Exodus xxv. The cherubim now appear in the holiest of all and form a part of the mercy seat at the meeting place of the priest and God. They are intimately connected with the plan and purpose of redeeming love as set forth in the typical teaching of the tabernacle.
- I Kings vi. The cherubim are a feature in the temple built and dedicated by Solomon, whose reign of peace and abundant prosperity sets forth in type the glory that is yet to be.
- Ezekiel. In the opening and closing sections of Ezekiel we see the glory of the Lord leaving and returning to Israel accompanied by the cherubim.
- Revelation iv. Under the term “the four beasts” (lit. “living creatures” as in Ezekiel i.), the cherubim are associated with the great prophecy of restoration that leads up to “Paradise restored” in the last chapter.

If we attempt to set out these references to the cherubim in structure form, we become conscious of a gap, or something missing, but if we include the four gospels as indicating that the cherubim find their fulfillment in Christ, Who is set over against the fall and failure of the anointed cherub of Ezekiel.xxviii., the pattern is complete.

- A | Ezekiel xxviii. The anointed, his pride and fall.  
 B | Genesis iii. Paradise lost. Pledge of restoration.  
 C | Exodus xxv. Tabernacle and Wilderness.  
     I Kings vi. Temple and Land.  
     Ezekiel. Glory and Temple.  
 A | **Four Gospels.** The Anointed. His humility and triumph.  
 B | Revelation iv. Paradise restored.

We therefore believe that it was a sound sense of fitness that led the early Christians to identify the four gospels with the cherubim.

Matthew	The LION	The King.
Mark	The OX	The Servant.
Luke	The MAN	Back to Adam.
John	The EAGLE	My Lord and my God.

Christ is set forth in Matthew in the highest earthly position, that of King, and in Mark as the lowest, that of a Servant. Luke presents Him as the second Man the last Adam, and John as “The Word made flesh”, “The Son of God”.

It has been said concerning the fact that we have four gospels “The marvel is that we have not had more”. Luke tells us that many had “taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of things which are most surely believed among us” (Luke i. 1). Some find difficulty in believing the doctrine of Inspiration when faced with these four separate accounts. Yet a consideration of the duplication of another important event might enable the reader to see that purpose, influencing choice of material under Divine superintendence, may fully answer the case.

Paul's conversion is recorded in Acts ix., again in Acts xxii. & yet again in Acts xxvi. To which must be added his own references in the epistles. The first record made by Luke places the conversion and commission of Paul in its historic setting, the accounts given by Paul himself follow this primary record, but with that freedom which must ever mark the retailing of first hand knowledge. Moreover, there is one item of information which neither Acts ix. nor Acts xxii. record, namely, the words actually *spoken from heaven to Paul himself*. These are found for the first time in Acts xxvi. 16-18 and their absence from the earlier accounts can be satisfactorily explained for dispensational reasons. In like manner we shall discover that there is a definite and sufficient reason for the fourfold presentation of the Gospels — each has a purpose to fulfil and each has been written with a specific object. The critics' view is that because there are similar passages in each of the four gospels, that there must, therefore, have been an earlier common original which is now, apparently, "lost". The critics however cannot agree among themselves as to which Gospel denotes this supposed original. Urquhart has given a table showing six different theories, in which Matthew, Mark and Luke have respectively been "proved" to be the original, and he comments:

"In other words, criticism tells us (1) that each of the three was the original Gospel; (2) that each of the three was derived from another; and (3) that each of the three was derived from the two others!"

There has probably occurred to the reader, as it has to the writer, that a trite comment of Euclid namely, "which is absurd", could be quoted very fittingly here.

Dr. E. A. Abbott wrote:

"It is well known that in many parts of the four gospels the same words and phrases are curiously interlaced, in such a way as to suggest that the writers have borrowed either from each other or from some common source."

This conclusion has stultified research and led its followers into the blind alley of self contradiction.

John Urquhart replies:

"But why? Is the explanation not at least equally good that they have come from ONE MIND, by which the similarity was preserved when no variation was called for?"

This is illuminating, it involves us in no contradictions, it accepts both the differences and the agreements as coming from ONE AUTHOR, God the Holy Spirit, Who caused the four-fold Gospel to be written in harmony with that Divine purpose which it was the blessed object of the Son of His love to bring to glorious fruition.

The accompanying diagram may help the reader to visualize this fourfold gospel.

### **#71. The Structural outline of Matthew, exhibiting key words and correspondences.**

Having seen that the four Gospels form a unity, though each of them has its own individuality and its subject matter so chosen that it will develop and illustrate the peculiar purpose set before the writer of each; we shall now endeavour to set out some of the essential differences and so arrive at a just appreciation of the individual purpose of each.

First of all we must seek the underlying structure, then the disposition of its subject matter, and learn by the inclusion or exclusion of certain facts and features what the distinctive message of each record may be. Here however the reader is caused to halt by reason of the many outlines and structures that men of God have offered. Bengel in his *Gnomon of the New Testament* published in 1742A.D. has set the course for one type of analysis which has influenced many subsequent writers. It occupies six pages of print, and cannot be reproduced here. Its main divisions are:

- (1) The nativity, and the matters immediately following (Matt. i. 1 - ii. 23).
- (2) Our Lord's entrance on His ministry (iii. 1 - iv. 11).
- (3) The deeds and words by which Jesus proved Himself to be Christ (iv. 12 - xvi. 12).
- (4) Our Lord's prediction of His passion and resurrection (xvi. 13 - xx. 28).
- (5) The events at Jerusalem immediately before the passion (xxi. 1 - xxv. 46).
- (6) The passion and resurrection (xxvi. 1 - xxviii. 20).

In recent times, the outlines prepared by Dr. Campbell Morgan are suggestive, and even if the reader is conscious that the alliteration may sometimes have run away with the theme, these outlines are nevertheless worthy of attention and respect. Dr. Campbell Morgan's outline of Matthew is in the main threefold, with many subdivisions which we cannot here reproduce.

Matthew i. - iv. 16. The Person.

- (1) Relation to earth i. - iii. 12.
- (2) Relation to heaven iii. 13-17.
- (3) Relation to hell iv. 1-11.

Matthew iv. 17 - xvi. 20. Propaganda.

- (1) Enunciation of law iv. 17 - vii.
- (2) Exhibition of benefits viii. - ix. 34.
- (3) Enforcements of claims ix. 35 - xvi. 20.

Matthew xvi. 21 - xxviii. The Passion.

- (1) His Cross and His subjects xvi. 21 - xx.
- (2) Rejection of Hebrew nation xxi. - xxiii.
- (3) Prediction xxiv., xxv.
- (4) Passion xxvi. - xxviii.

The "Companion Bible" gives the structure in the form of an alternation, and as most of our readers have access to (if not possession of) this valuable work we will not occupy space by reprinting it here.

While recognizing all the labour that has been expended by other believers in the past, let us once more turn to the gospel of Matthew itself and see what fresh light the Lord may be pleased to give. We observe in the opening verse that Jesus Christ is set before us as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham, and that the genealogy itself is artificially subdivided as follows:

"So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations" (Matt. i. 17).

Here we have two patriarchs with whom covenants were made and promises given that find their fulfillment only in Christ. The failure of Israel led to their rejection and to the rise of Nebuchadnezzar, with whom commenced the "Times of the Gentiles", and it is suggestive that we meet the word *musterion* "mystery" for the first time in the book of Daniel.

This great prophetic event throws light upon the turn taken in the Gospel at chapter xiii., where we meet, for the first time, the expression "The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven". We cannot *prove* from Matt. i. 1, but we receive a suggestion from that verse, that Matthew *may* have subdivided his theme so that his gospel shall set before us first, Christ as Son of David, and secondly, Christ as the Son of Abraham, the former title stressing kingship, the second title referring to the antitypical death and resurrection of the true "Isaac" offered on one of the mountains of Moriah at a place called Calvary. We discover by reading through\* the gospel, that there are two great time periods which cannot be ignored, and these therefore we present as our first pair of items in the discovery of the structure of Matthew.

[NOTE: \* - The reader must remember that there are no short cuts to truth. What occupies a few inches of space, and takes a minute or two to read, may have cost many hours of patient research and prayerful acknowledgment of human inability.]

“*From that time* Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. iv. 17).

“*From that time* forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matt. xvi. 21).

Here most evidently we have two distinct departures, two ministries, two themes. The first stresses the kingdom, the second the cross. The former ranges under the name “David” the second under the name “Abraham”. One finds its type in Solomon the Son of David, the other in Isaac the son of Abraham.

The next repeated feature which our reading brings to light, is found in the records of the baptism at Jordan and the transfiguration on the Mount.

“And lo a voice from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased’.” (Matt. iii. 17).

“And behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him’.” (Matt. xvii. 5).

We now have two pairs of corresponding terms,

- A | The Voice from heaven.
- B | From that time . . . . began.
- B | From that time . . . . began.
- A | The Voice from heaven.

We observe moreover that in chapter sixteen, just before the new revelation is made concerning the Lord’s sufferings, that Peter makes his great confession.

“He saith unto them, But Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God” (Matt. xvi. 15, 16).

With this we must place the confession made by Christ Himself when adjured by the High Priest:

“I adjure Thee by *the living God*, that Thou tell us whether Thou be *the Christ, the Son of God*. Jesus saith unto him, thou hast said” (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64).

The words “Thou hast said” are in the original *su eipas* and in the early Greek manuscripts (where there were many contractions employed to economize space and where no space was allowed between one word and another) we find that where, in Matt. xvi. 18 we now read *su ei Petros* “thou art Peter”, the earlier contraction was *sueips*, which would naturally be expanded to *su eipas* “thou hast said”, had Peter not been in the immediate context. This matter needs much more examination and proof than these few notes can supply, but we are convinced that in both cases the words stand for one and the same thing — an emphatic affirmation, and that Peter’s name does not come into Matt. xvi. 18 at all. We now have sufficient data to build the complete structure of the Gospel according to Matthew, not by alliteration however useful such a method may be, but by recording the actual facts as found in the scriptures.

## Matthew.

- A | i. 1-iii. 16. From Birth to Baptism.  
The ministry of John the Baptist.  
“Born King of the Jews.”
- B | iii. 17 - xvi. 18. SON of DAVID the King.
  - a | iii. 17. The Voice from Heaven.
  - b | iv. 1-16. The Threefold temptation of the King.
  - c | iv. 17. Time. “From that time . . . began.”
  - d | xvi. 16-18. Confession “The Christ” *su eipas* “Thou hast said”.

In this section comes the Sermon on the Mount, giving rules for guidance during the rejection of the King. In this section also come the Parables of Matthew xiii. showing the character of the kingdom, its mystery phase, during rejection.

- B | xvi. 21 - xxvi. 64. SON of ABRAHAM the Priest.
  - c | xvi. 21. Time. “From that time . . . began.”
  - a | xvii. 5. The Voice from heaven.
  - b | xxvi. 36-44. The Threefold agony of the King-Priest.
  - d | xxvi. 63, 64. Confession “The Christ” *su eipas* “Thou hast said”.

In this section the parables are largely connected with service during the absence of the Lord. The Sermon on the Mount changes to Prophecy on the Mount and speaks of the end of the “mystery” phase of the kingdom, by which personal presence of the King in glory.

- A | xxvii., xxviii. From Baptism of suffering to birth in Resurrection.  
Ministry of those who are to baptize all nations.  
“This is Jesus the King of the Jews.”

This structural outline put forward, not as in any sense exhaustive, but suggestive. To produce a complete structural outline of a book containing twenty-eight closely packed chapters as those of the Gospel according to Matthew, is beyond our range in these articles. Such however could be built up by the student working methodically within the bounds now presented.

The two time periods, chapters iv. 17 and xvi. 21, are decisive factors in the division of the Gospel. The two “voices” and “confessions” supplement, and the threefold temptation of chapter four finds its complement in the threefold agony of chapter twenty-six, and in both the tempted Saviour emerges triumphant. When we come to compare the Gospels, we shall then be able to throw into relief those distinctive teachings that will demonstrate without peradventure the key note of each Gospel, although as the reader will remember we have tentatively put forward the well-known headings — Matthew, the King; Mark, the Servant; Luke, the Man; John, God.

## #72. The distinctive character of both “Mark” and “Luke”.

After detailing a series of differences observable between the Gospel of Mark with that of Matthew and Luke, A. W. F. Blunt, B.D., in the “Clarendon Bible”, says of Mark’s gospel:

"Thus the Marcan Jesus is neither, as in Matthew, the giver of a new law, nor as in Luke, the preacher of a catholic paternity . . . . His portrait is drawn with the utmost economy of line and colour. Practically all is subordinated to the emphasizing of His Messianic intention. First He announces the Messianic kingdom, then He admits His Messianic position, then He publicly assesses the Messianic role, goes up to Jerusalem to die, and dies for His Messianic claim."

We appreciate the note in the “Companion Bible”, p.1381, which reads:

"The Four Gospels are treated in the ‘Companion Bible’ not as four culprits brought up on a charge of fraud, but as four witnesses whose testimony is to be believed."

The difference between these four witnesses however must wait until, as in the foregoing articles on Matthew, we have attained some idea of the structural outline of the gospel itself. Blackwall in his *Sacred Classics* wrote of Mark's Gospel:

"Simplicity and conciseness are its characteristics; for the majesty of the subject, the variety of the actions recorded, and the surprising circumstances attending them together with the important doctrines and precepts laid down, this is the shortest, the clearest, the most marvelous, and at the same time the most satisfactory history in the world."

Written across the Gospel according to Mark are the words recorded in x. 45, thus:

"The Son of Man came (i. 1-13)  
To minister (i. 14 - viii. 30),  
And to give His life a ransom for many (viii. 31 - xvi.)",

which three sub-divisions are summed up by Campbell Morgan as:

Sanctification, . . . . . Service, . . . . . Sacrifice.

Like Matthew, who was also called Levi, Mark is referred to as "John whose surname is Mark" (Acts xii. 12, 25), and the Latin surname suggests some association with a Roman family. Mark has a fair sprinkling of Latin words; he translates the meaning of the Aramaic expressions introduced and explains Jewish customs. The fact that Mark wrote for the Romans would explain the omission of the genealogy and the general absence of quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures. The passage quoted at the beginning of the Gospel is the only exception, for the quotation given in Mark xv. 28 is omitted in the Revised Version (R.V.). Writing for Romans — who were men of action and whose ideals differed materially from both those of the Greeks and the Hebrews — Mark emphasizes the acts rather than the discourses of the Saviour, a feature which his frequent use of the words "immediately" and "straightway", intensifies. Mark differs from Matthew not only in the omission of the genealogy and quotations from the Old Testament, but in his treatment of a common theme and his selection of material. For example, where Matthew records fourteen parables Mark records but four; where Matthew occupies a whole chapter of forty-two verses (x.) to record the call and commission of the twelve apostles, Mark compresses this subject into seven verses (vi. 7-13); where Matthew's purpose demanded thirty-nine verses (xxiii.) in setting forth the denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, Mark's purpose is served by the use of but three (xii. 38-40); where Matthew's records in detail the temptation in the wilderness, Mark simply records the fact that the Lord was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of the devil. Perhaps, with his Roman readers in mind Mark makes one addition to the record, namely, that the Lord was "with the wild beasts" (i. 12, 13). Mark does not *record* the "Lord's Prayer", a strong *echo* in chapter xi. 24-26 satisfying the requirements of his gospel. In the face of the second coming found in Mark xiii., shows the extreme importance that must be attached to this epoch-making event for Israel and the nations of the earth.

While these articles were in preparation, a very precious letter was received from a valued fellow-worker, which so beautifully brings to light what we were feeling after, that we can do no more than quote it here, trusting that the reader will be as helped by its reprint as we were at its first reading.

"I think there are four portions of Scripture which refer to the Lord as 'Servant', namely Isaiah, Zechariah, Mark and Philippians, with perhaps the addition of such passages as Luke.xxii.27 and John xiii. 16.

It is correct to say that in His 'servantship' lies the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (the stripping of Himself John xiii, Philippians ii.) the Servant being the sufferer, and is the servantship a priestly one? If it is, a completed work, as in Hebrews, seems indicated in Mark.xvi.19, 'Sat down at the right hand of God'. This seems to have been the line taken by

Campbell Morgan, but he links Mark with the Pentateuch — ‘the answer to the unfulfilled aspiration and sigh of humanity for a priest.\*

[\* - This aspiration is fulfilled for Gentile believers, by Christ as the one Mediator and Head, Paul never refers to Christ as a Priest outside of the epistle to the Hebrews.]

Amongst the omissions (no miraculous birth; no reference to childhood at Nazareth; no claim to authority, e.g., in the parable of the tares where the command to the reapers is omitted; no woes upon the Pharisees; no reference in Gethsemane, to the legions of angels; no statements as to His having all power in heaven and in earth) — amongst such is the omission of *nomos* ‘law’ which occurs in Matthew eight times, in Luke nine times, in John fifteen times. Service SUCH AS HIS was the free offering of His heart of love and knew no urge save that of His own nature or that He came to do the will of His Father.

There is something that is very comforting in the thought that of all of whom God might have used to write along the lines of this gospel for our learning, it is the *failing servant*, who draws back from the path of service he had entered, but who later, through grace, was made ‘serviceable’ to whom it is given to set before us, so graphically and so entrancingly, the *unfailing*, the perfect Servant, Christ Jesus our Lord.

The narrative in Mark seems to have behind it the training of the twelve; in the book from which the prophecy of Mark is quoted, namely Isaiah, the disciples would have read of a ministry to be exercised by the Servant of God — now they SEE IT LIVED OUT under their very eyes; *there* they would have read the passages containing, I suppose, the fullest setting forth of Messiah in the Old Testament, now they are in daily contact with One Whose very living amongst them draws from them (one being spokesman for the rest) ‘THOU art the Messiah’ and immediately (viii. 29, 31) He began to teach them concerning His suffering, as if He would lead them on from Isaiah xl.-xlii. to lii. 13 - liii. 12 (compare Isa. liii. 1 and Mark viii. 27), while the whole gospel ends with His quietly dismissing them FOR SERVICE, but going forth ‘working with (them)’.

“That they should be WITH Him and that He might send them forth to preach” (*meta* Mark iii. 14).

“They went forth and preached . . . . the Lord working WITH (them)” (*sun* Mark xvi. 20).

How dependent we are on Him both for equipment and then for performance. There seem to be two avenues to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus — through the Book and by companionship with Him. It is possible to know more of the Book than of Him — oh for commensurate knowledge — ‘That I may know HIM’. Living, walking, with Him, they learnt Him to be what the Book says He is and was. Blessed fruitful knowledge. May it be ours."

A word must be given on the last twelve verses of Mark xvi. The R.V. margin reads “The two oldest Greek manuscripts and some other authorities omit from verse nine to the end”.

Scrivener, one of the foremost authorities in textual criticism wrote:

"The twelve concluding verses of his gospel are still found in every Greek Manuscript except the two oldest. Cod.B however, betrays consciousness on the scribe's part that something is left out, inasmuch as after *ephobounto gar* v. 8, a whole column is left perfectly blank (*the only blank one in the whole volume*), as well as the rest of the column containing verse 8, which is usual at the end of every book of Scripture."

In the “Companion Bible” Appendix 168, the reader will find a summary of the controversy, and will observe that Dean Burgon’s work is indicated as the basis of the argument presented.

It lies quite outside the scope of our pages to attempt textual criticism, for if it is not dealt with exhaustively it is valueless. Those of our readers who are interested can find all the material necessary for arriving at a sound judgment in the various volumes written on the question of Textual Criticism, and of Mark xvi., in particular those of Scrivener, Dean Burgon, Hammond and Gaussen may be cited as authors to be consulted early in the enquiry. For our own part we are satisfied with the evidence at hand

(whether these last twelve verses be the work of Mark himself, or added by another) that they form a part of those canonical Scriptures given by inspiration of God which we ignore at our peril.

### **LUKE'S GOSPEL SETS FORTH CHRIST AS "THE MAN".**

According to Eusebius and Jerome, Luke was born at Antioch, in Syria. He is reckoned among the uncircumcision by Paul (Colossians iv.), and was by profession a "physician" (Col. iv. 14). Tradition also has it that Luke was a painter of no mean skill. A fellow-labourer of Paul, he joined the apostle at Troas and accompanied him to Macedonia as far as Philippi, where he apparently left him for a time. Van Doren says of Luke's gospel "we are plainly not listening to the Galilean fishermen, but to the educated citizen of Antioch, well versed in the literary language of empire".

"Origen, Eusebius and Jerome understand the expression 'my gospel' is used in Rom. ii. 16 of the Gospel of Luke. But the language of Luke's preface forbids the notion of any exclusive influence of Paul" (Van Doren).

The truth concerning this expression lies midway, though Paul did not come into contact with Christ during His earthly ministry, the peculiar Gentile trend of Luke's Gospel would provide a complete background for the gospel preached by the apostle of the Gentiles.

The outline suggested by Dr. Campbell Morgan for Luke's Gospel is an adaption of the words found in Luke xiii. 32. Omitting lesser subdivisions, here it is in substance.

#### **Luke's Gospel. The Man.**

- |   |                |            |   |
|---|----------------|------------|---|
| A | i. - iii.      | PERFECT    | i.1-4. Prologue.<br>(1) i. 5 - ii. 39. Being and Birth.<br>(2) ii. 40-52. Childhood and Confirmation.<br>(3) iii. Development and Anointing.                          |
| B | iv. - ix.36.   | PERFECTED  | (1) iv. 1-14. Temptation.<br>(2) iv. 15 - ix. 27. Teaching.<br>(3) ix. 28-36. Transfiguration.  |
| C | ix. 37 - xxiv. | PERFECTING | ix. 37-50. Prelude.<br>(1) ix. 51 - xviii. 30. Purpose and Preparation.<br>(2) xviii. 31 - xxiv. 12. Approach and Accomplishment.<br>(3) xxiv. 13-53. Administration. |

Of the four Gospels Luke's is the one that is associated with the gospel as preached by Paul, not merely because Luke was a fellow-worker with the apostle, but because he so evidently wrote with the Gentile convert in mind.

[Sadler](#) has devoted a considerable portion of his introduction to Luke's Gospel to the links that are observable between the Epistles of Paul and the Gospel of Luke. For the benefit of the reader, we will epitomize these observations, but their full force can only be felt when the parallel passages are actually read together, unfortunately limitations of space make it impossible to set out these parallels here.

Paul's Gospel had an historic basis (I Cor. xv. 1-10). It had moreover a definite doctrine of the Person of Christ (Rom. i. 1-4), the birth, death and resurrection of the Son of God being basic.

In I Corinthians xv. Paul says of the risen Christ "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve". Luke alone mentions the appearance of Cephas (Luke xxiv. 34).

Luke lays great stress upon the fact that the ceremonial law was observed at the birth of Christ (Luke ii. 21), which provides a background to the words of Gal. iv. 4 and Col. ii. 11.

Paul's description of a "widow indeed" (I Tim. v. 5) is foreshadowed by Anna (Luke ii. 37).

The acceptable year of the Lord (Luke iv. 19; II Cor. vi. 2); the title “steward” (Luke xii. 42; I Cor. iv. 1); the condition of alienation as one of death (Luke xv. 24, 32; Eph. iv. 18); the use of the word “revealed” in connection with the second coming (Luke xvii. 30 and I Cor. i. 7); the comment “for all live unto Him” (Luke xx. 38 with Rom. xiv. 7; II Cor. v. 14); the reference to the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke xxi. 24 with Rom. xi. 25) and the close association of the ascension with the resurrection observable in the gospel and the epistles.

Luke’s record of the institution of the Lord’s supper (Luke xxii. 19, 20) is followed very closely by the record of I Cor. xi. 23-26, and it must be remembered that in both this institution, and the summary of the gospel given in I Corinthians xv., Paul declares “I have received of the Lord” and “that which I also received”.

Verbal coincidences as the use of *katecheo* “catechize” (Luke i. 4; Gal. vi. 6); “children of light” (Luke xvi. 8; I Thess. v. 4); the possible reference in I Tim. ii. 15 “the childbearing” to the account given of the birth of the Saviour in Luke’s Gospel and the use of the word *ophthe* in Luke xxii. 43 and I Tim. iii. 16 “seen of angels”.

If the exhortation “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. iii. 16) refers to a scriptural record, a record moreover that contains the only Christian hymns recorded in the N.T. then Luke’s gospel may be intended by the apostle under the heading “the Word of Christ”. Again when the apostle beseeches the Corinthian Christians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (II Cor. x. 1) some such record as that of Luke seems intended.

Other links with Paul’s Gospel will be brought to light when we institute a comparison between the Gospel of Matthew and that of Luke.

### **#73. The Distinctive Purposes of the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke demonstrated.**

The words used by Luke and Paul have been tabulated, and it has been found that “every second word in the Gospel of Luke is also used by Paul” and so close is the language of the Acts of the apostles to the diction of Paul’s epistles, that there is actually a volume of considerable interest published, entitled “Paul, the author of the Acts” (H. Heber Evans). Moreover, among those who deny that Paul was or could be the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, are those who maintain that its author was Luke. This we do not believe, and have every confidence that Hebrews is one of Paul’s fourteen epistles — yet the closeness of language between Paul and Luke is emphasized by this suggestion.

The message which was given to the apostle Paul for the Gentiles, and the ministry of the reconciliation committed to him, arose out of the failure of Israel (speaking after the manner of men) to repent and believe the good news of the kingdom. The great teaching of the apostle, which included the Gentile within the sphere of the promise of Abraham (Romans and Galatians), is scarcely suggested by Matthew’s Gospel. We have already seen that Matthew’s Gospel is divided into two parts, each part is connected with the relationship and covenants indicated in Matthew i. 1. The first part, covering Matthew iv. 17 - xvi. 20, is associated with the kingly title “Son of David”; the second portion, commencing with the announcement of suffering, death and resurrection (xvi. 21), is the fulfilling of the title “Son of Abraham”. The second phase of the Lord’s ministry could not be made a matter of public proclamation until the great transaction of Calvary had removed the curse, and made it possible for the blessing of Abraham to flow out to the Gentiles (Gal. iii. 13, 14). The Acts opens with a renewed witness concerning the kingdom of Israel and David’s throne, but also links with it the wider covenant made with Abraham. Luke, who wrote the “Acts”, had already written a “former treatise of all that Jesus began to do and teach” and in that treatise he laid a foundation for Paul’s Gospel of the reconciliation. He does not stay at Abraham when he gives the genealogy of the Lord, but goes back to Adam.

The unfolding of the divine purpose is closely connected with the revelation of Christ Himself. It will be found that the circle of truth widens and deepens as the time arrives for some richer title of Christ to come forth. The inner circle, latest in time of revelation, and first to be fulfilled and exhausted is associated with *David*. To this the first portion of Matthew is devoted (i.-xvi.). The next circle, which goes *back* in history, and looks *forward* beyond the confines of the rule of David, is connected with *Abraham*. The second portion of Matthew (xvii.-xxviii.) and the Acts belong to this section of the purpose. Luke's gospel goes back beyond *both* Abraham and David, and traces the genealogy of the Saviour back to *Adam*. This forms the basis for Paul's message to the Gentiles; and indeed it is Paul alone of all the New Testament writers who makes known the wondrous and far-reaching connection that is established in the purpose of God between Adam, mankind (including Jew and Gentile) and Christ.

Let us now examine one or two passages that are found in both Matthew and Luke, and see what divergence there is, if any, and what significance may be attached thereto.

(1) THE FORERUNNER.

(a) *The Time and Period.*

Matt. iii. 1, "In those days".

Luke iii. 1, 2, "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests".

Matthew, the Hebrew writer for the Hebrews, is unconcerned about the bearing of Gentile rulers upon the date of John's commission, whereas Luke, the writer for the Gentiles, gives the utmost attention to the Gentile powers that be.

(b) *The Preaching of John.*

Matt. iii. 1, 2, "Came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

Luke ii. 3, "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness, and he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins".

Here once more the divergence is according to plan. Matthew, the writer of the gospel of the King, for the Hebrew christian, stresses "repentance in view of the kingdom of heaven"; Luke, companion of Paul, and writing for the Gentile convert stresses "the remission of sins".

(c) *The Quotation from Isaiah.*

Matt. iii. 3, "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight".

Luke iii. 4-6, "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God".

It will be seen at once, that Luke could not be satisfied with the brief quotation made by Matthew. He must go on until "the salvation of God" seen by "all flesh" is reached, for such a theme coincides with the purpose of his gospel.

## (2) THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

### (a) *The Time and Period.*

Matt. ii. 1, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king".

Luke ii. 1, 2, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria)".

Matthew's circumference is "Judæa" and its centre Herod; Luke's circumference is "all the world" and its centre Cæsar Augustus.

### (b) *The Worshippers.*

Matt. ii. 1, "There came wise men from the east to Jerusalem".

Luke ii. 8, 15, "There were in the same country shepherds . . . . Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us".

Matthew makes no reference to the shepherds; Luke makes no reference to the wise men. Each is divinely guided in his selection as the sequel will show.

### (c) *The Purpose of the Nativity.*

Matt. ii. 2, 5, 6, "Where is He that is born king of the Jews . . . . they said . . . . In Bethlehem of Judæa".

Luke ii. 11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord".

Here the contrast is most marked — Matthew says in Bethlehem is born the *King*; Luke says in Bethlehem is born a *Saviour*, each evangelist keeping strictly to his aim and purpose.

Luke supplements his account of the shepherds' and of the Angels' testimony by the added doxology "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward *men*", whereas Matthew quotes the prophet Micah saying "that shall rule My people *Israel*". In addition, old Simeon is brought before us, an Israelite looking for the consolation of Israel, but when he saw the infant Christ, and took Him in his arms, Israel is not mentioned first, but strange as it may seem, he said, "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke ii. 32).

## (3) THE LORD'S OPENING MINISTRY.

### (a) *The Context.*

Matt. iv. 1, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil".

Luke iv. 1, "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness".

No comment is here necessary, the only reason these passages are quoted is to show that the next statements are rightly compared together.

### (b) *The Subject of the Ministry.*

Matt. iv. 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

Luke iv. 18, 19, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to

preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”.

Here once again each evangelist is true to the purpose of his gospel, Matthew consistently speaks of the Kingdom, Luke of the Gospel. The Lord continued His discourse and drew attention to the fact that in the days of Elias (i.e. O.T. Isaiah) there were many widows in Israel during the great famine, but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. Just as with the supplement in the second chapter, so here, the Gentile, not the Jew, is pre-eminent — both the widow of Sarepta and Naaman being Gentiles. One further illustration will suffice.

#### (4) THE SECOND COMING.

##### (a) *The Context.*

Matt. xxiv. 19, “And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that gave suck in those days!”

Luke xxi. 23, “But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days”.

As above, these two passages are quoted to establish the fact that both passages record the same prophecy.

##### (b) *The Prophecy.*

Matt. xxiv. 21, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”.

Luke xxi. 23, 24, “For there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”.

Here therefore is a demonstration of the distinctive point of view of each gospel. Matthew traces the Saviour’s descent back through David and Abraham and stays there, Luke however pursues it back to Adam. Matthew speaks of the quest of the wise men, and their question concerning the King of the Jews, Luke tells of the angels and the shepherds, and that child born in the city of David is a Saviour. Old Simeon supplements by putting the Gentile first. The opening ministry of Christ as recorded by Matthew speaks of the kingdom as does that of John the Baptist, whereas in Luke the opening ministry of our Lord stresses the gospel of mercy and deliverance, while instead of announcing the kingdom John preaches remission of sins.

We all know what a prominent position is given by Matthew to the parables of the mysteries of the kingdom, in no lesser prominence the distinctive parables of Luke set forth his peculiar teaching. Who but Luke could record the parable of the Good Samaritan? How fitting is the parable of the Prodigal Son! The parable of the Unjust Steward with its use of *oikonomia* illustrates Paul’s usage of the word when translated “dispensation”. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is the doctrine of Romans in picture form, and contains the only evangelical use of “justification” found in the four gospels. The parable of the “ten pounds” is similar, but not the same as the parable of the “ten talents” recorded by Matthew. The special point of Luke’s parable is the statement that it was uttered to correct the impression “that the kingdom of God should immediately appear”. Consequently this nobleman “went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return”.

The reader will find upon careful comparison, that in the smallest details, Matthew and Luke can be discovered consistently heading for their distinctive goals, and while such an examination cannot be

conducted in these pages, the reader who has never attempted it, has a joy awaiting him that no second hand acquaintance with Holy Writ can provide.

## **#74. The Dispensational Place of John's Gospel.**

For the full exposition of the Gospel of John the reader will be able to consult our new book *Life Through His Name*, to be published shortly, but in order to make this series as complete as possible yet without undue repetition, we will discuss the dispensational place which this Gospel occupies.

In the first place let us get well into mind the fact that the primitive church had *three* gospels, and three only. So far as we have any knowledge neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, Peter nor Paul saw or knew of the Gospel according to John. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, at the end of the second century, and Irenaeus, the scholar of Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of John, record the fact that John remained in Ephesus till the times of the Emperor Trajan, and that he died there in extreme old age, as is testified by Eusebius also. The mistake concerning John that is exposed in John xxi. 23, may have obtained some credit by the fact that John outlived all the other apostles. It is evident that the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke contained all the teaching that was essential during the period governed by *the Hope of Israel* and that the statements concerning the "world", "whosoever" and the "other sheep" found in John's Gospel would have been premature or "undispensational" at the time. The relative place of the different sections of the New Testament, with particular reference to John's Gospel might be set out thus:

- (1) Gospels. — New Covenant in operation.  
Matthew, Mark, Luke.  
King and Kingdom rejected.
- (2) Acts. — New Covenant in operation.  
King and Kingdom re-offered.  
Israel rejected. Hope suspended.
- (3) The Mystery. — New Covenant NOT in operation.  
Paul's prison Epistles.
- (4) John's Gospel. — New Covenant NOT in operation.  
The world. The other sheep.  
The gospel of eternal life.
- (5) The Revelation. — Resumption of the New Covenant.  
The Day of the Lord.

In Matthew's gospel is recorded the parable of the marriage of the King's Son, which is divided into three distinct phases, corresponding with the periods covered by the three Gospels, the Acts and the gospel according to John.

First Invitation (Matt. xxii. 3), "They would not come", the three gospels.

Second Invitation (Matt. xxii. 4, 5), "They made light of it", the Acts period; the servants were entreated spitefully and slain by the remnant, who in turn were destroyed and their city burned by the King in his wrath.

Third Invitation (Matt. xxii. 9, 10), "Gathered all . . . both bad and good", John's gospels.

The punishment of those who did not accept the second invitation took place between Acts xxviii. and 70A.D. during which period the dispensation of the mystery was revealed, believed and then largely forsaken. After Paul's death John wrote his gospel, giving a message and a calling to the "world" and revealing that the Lord had "other sheep" who were not of Israel's fold, which must be gathered, so that at last there may be "one flock and one shepherd".

At the present time there is an inner circle, embracing that small company of believers that are members of the Body of Christ and blessed under the terms of the Mystery, with Paul the prisoner as the appointed channel of teaching and truth, and a large outer circle embracing a vast number of believers, who while they have life, have no clear idea as to what is the hope of their calling. These find their gospel, comfort and teaching in John's Gospel.

Let us consider the character of the times in which John's Gospel operates, as compared with the character of the times covered by the three synoptic Gospels and the Acts. During the earthly ministry of Christ, He pointedly limited His ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and forbade His disciples to go into the way of the Gentiles. This limitation is most definitely set aside by John's Gospel. There, the most prominent word indicative of sphere and scope is "the world", where it occurs about seventy-nine times, as against fifteen occurrences in the three synoptics. The bulk of the scriptures, whether Old or New Testaments, was written for Israel, about Israel, or written for the guidance of believing Gentiles who were "blessed with faithful Abraham". To-day Israel has long been in the condition known as *Lo-ammi* "not My People" (Hosea i. 9), and if the Gospel of John belongs to the period when Israel is not a living active factor, then, it should contain evidence that it was written for non-Jewish readers. We turn to the Gospel, and are not only struck with the title *Logos* "the Word", which is more intimately associated with Greek Philosophy than it is with the Law and the Prophets, but we discover that John goes out of his way to interpret terms which every Jew would know from childhood. Consider the following passages in the light of the argument that John wrote for non-Jewish readers, as over against the idea that John, like the writers of the three gospels, addresses the same people on the same theme.

"They said unto Him, Rabbi (which is to say being interpreted, Master) where dwellest Thou?" (John i. 38).

"We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (i. 41).

"And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews" (ii. 6).

"The Jews' Passover was at hand"; "The Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh"; "The Jews' Passover was nigh at hand" (ii. 13, vi. 4, xi. 55).

"The Jews' feast of Tabernacles" (vii. 2).

"It was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication and it was winter" (x. 22).

"The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (iv. 9).

"Go wash in the pool Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent" (ix. 7).

"Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone" (i. 42).

It is evident that no Jew needed to be told the meaning of *Rabbi*, *Messiah*, or *Cephas*, neither did he need to be instructed that the Passover or Tabernacles were feasts of the Jews. Let us take the reference in x. 22 as a proof text. Some time ago a book came into our hands, and as we read we were at first somewhat mystified. Birds were described as flying North, *in order to get to a warmer clime!* Christmas Day was described in terms of the warmest summer, and where one would naturally look for typical Christmas fare and indoor conditions, *picnics* and open air enjoyment of the summer were its accompaniments. It began to dawn upon us that this book belonged to another part of the earth than England, and the mystery was solved by turning to the title page, where we discovered that it had been written and published in New Zealand. A book originating in London and addressed to European readers, would never use such an expression as "it was Christmas Day, and *it was winter*", or "it was August Bank holiday, and *it was summer*", and the fact that John felt called upon to add the words "and it was winter" to his reference to the feast of dedication is a proof that non-Jewish readers were in mind. Upon opening either of the three synoptic Gospels, we discover Christ presented to the people as the

long promised King and Saviour, not until we are some distance through the narrative does it appear that Israel will reject their king. With John's Gospel, rejection is imprinted on the opening chapter.

“He came unto His own and His own received Him not” (John i. 11).

Here the rejection of Matthew xii. & xiii. and Acts xxviii. is assumed as it also is in the words of John ix. 39 “for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind”, where an allusion to Isa. vi. 10 (quoted in both Matthew xiii. and Acts xxviii.) is apparent. The synoptic Gospels operate under the terms of the New Covenant and consequently the New Covenant memorial feast, known also as the Lord's Supper, is given a prominent place in them all. It is somewhat surprising, if one does not possess the dispensational key, to discover that *John makes no mention* of the institution of the Lord's supper in his gospel! If, however, the point of view advocated here be correct, then, seeing that before John's Gospel was written the people of the New Covenant had passed off the scene, it is but right and proper that John should leave the New Covenant feast unrecorded.

The revelation of the Mystery through the prison epistles of Paul had been made known some years before John's Gospel saw the light of day, consequently although John did not *teach* the truth of the Mystery, he need not have been ignorant of it, and a comparison with the doctrine of Christ, as made by John with the earlier revelation found in Colossians will show how this twofold ministry could run together, John ministering to the world, Paul ministering, through his prison epistles, mainly to the Gentiles believer.

<i>John i.</i>	<i>Colossians i.</i>
The Word (No man hath seen God).	The Image of the Invisible God.
The Only Begotten.	The Firstborn.
All things made by Him.	All things created.
His fulness.	All fulness.
The Word made flesh.	The body of His flesh.
Preferred before me.	He is before all things.
He was before me	He has pre-eminence.

In the record of our Saviour's conversation with the woman of Samaria, John slips in a note of time in order to indicate that what the Saviour had *then* said to the woman, had at the time of writing been fulfilled. At the time that Christ spoke to this woman it was still true that salvation was of the Jews and that Jerusalem was the place divinely appointed for worship. He, however, revealed to this woman that a day was coming when this would be changed, saying:

“Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father”.

“The hour cometh (and now is, *adds John*), when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (iv. 21, 23).

John's gospel covers the period indicated by the words “and now is”, a phrase repeated in v. 25-28 and referring to the gift of life which is the central message of his gospel.

The complete structure of John's gospel, both as a whole and in its separate parts will be found in our new book which is now well in hand. It is hoped that this book entitled “Life Through His Name”, being an exposition of John's Gospel in its entirety, will be ready and on sale by the end of this year. The present article is but an attempt to indicate this teaching and dispensational place, in order that the series now in hand should be in some measure complete.

## #75. The Acts of the Apostles.

When it is the glad acknowledgment that the Scriptures are “true from the beginning” and that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and profitable”, it is impossible to pit one section against another and say “this” is more important than “that”. Yet the reader who most cordially endorses the doctrine of the inspiration of all Scripture would not hesitate to choose, say, between the prophet Jeremiah and the epistle to the Ephesians, and if we seek the reason why such a choice is inevitable the answer surely is that each dispensation has its own peculiar Scriptures, and whereas the believing Israelite would choose Jeremiah, because it so accurately suited his case and need as an Israelite who realized his need of a “New Covenant”, the Gentile believer to-day who has realized his need of a calling that fits the period when Israel are reckoned “lo-ammi” and the New Covenant suspended, would find his case more than met by the glorious revelation of the epistle to the Ephesians. In this light we can therefore say, that no book of the New Testament is so important from a *dispensational standpoint*, as the Acts of the Apostles. If the believer entertains false views of the day of Pentecost he will find such views will tinge the whole of his outlook. If he entertains clear and scriptural views both of Pentecost and the crisis of Acts xxviii., it then becomes difficult *not* to see with clearness the dispensational place of both sets of Paul’s epistles, and the relationship existing between them.

An exposition of the Acts of the Apostles was commenced in *The Berean Expositor* for 1934, and at the time of writing (1944) that study draws to a conclusion. It is now being prepared in book form and will D.V. be published later. To attempt a summary of this ten years’ study in a few pages would not be profitable, we can only trust that the earnest student will readily avail himself of the existing volumes and be possessed of all the structures and explanations that have been offered.

In the series we draw attention to key passages and points of dispensational interest, so that we may be free to pass on to those remaining books of the New Testament whose exposition is needed to make this series “Fundamentals of Dispensational Truth” complete. In the first place, the reader should observe the overlap that is evident in Acts i. 1-14. Luke refers to “the former treatise” and Acts i. 1-14 is largely a resumé of Luke xxiv. The “Acts” proper begins with Acts i. 15.

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

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

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

All that Jesus *continued* to do and teach,  
through the ministries of Peter and Paul.

Apart from minor references to other servants, the Acts of the Apostles is the record of the Acts of **the apostles** Peter and Paul, Peter’s ministry commencing with Pentecost and ending with his imprisonment (i. 15 - xii. 23); Paul’s ministry commencing with the Spirit’s call at Antioch (Acts xiii.) and ending with the imprisonment of Acts xxviii. The Acts of the Apostles opens and closes on a similar note.

“Wilt thou at this time restore again the *kingdom to Israel*?” (i. 6).

“For the *hope of Israel* I am bound with this chain” (xxviii. 20).

Whereas, however, in the former passage the Lord does not state explicitly that Israel’s restoration will be deferred, simply saying “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power” (i. 7), Paul is inspired to declare in Acts xxviii., that blindness has descended upon Israel, and that the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles (xxviii. 28). Should the reader wish for a fuller exposition of the question raised in the sixth verse of the first chapter, he is referred to the volume “The Apostle of the Reconciliation” (pp. 33-48), where the subject is considered at some length under the following subdivisions:

The Lord's own teaching concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.  
The Old Testament teaching concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.  
The meaning and dispensational place of Pentecost.

It will be patent to the intelligent reader that if the hope of Israel runs throughout the activities covered by the Acts, it necessarily follows that the epistles of Paul, addressed to the churches founded by the ministry recorded in the Acts, will find their hope vitally associated with the current hope of Israel. The geographical movement of the Acts, the people who are particularly addressed and the key words that indicate the dispensational teaching of the period, move together, and are as follows:

<b>GEOGRAPHICAL MOVEMENT.</b>		
<b>PEOPLE ADDRESSED:</b>		
<b><i>Jerusalem.</i></b>	<b><i>Antioch.</i></b>	<b><i>Rome.</i></b>
"Israel" (i. 6). "Jews only" (xi. 19). "A man that is a Jew" (x. 28). "Unto you first ... God sent" (iii. 26).	"Children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, TO YOU is the word of this salvation sent . . . the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached unto them". "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken unto you . . . lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (xiii. 26-46)	"The Chief of the Jews ... they departed ... Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent UNTO THE GENTILES, and that they will hear it" (xxviii. 28).
<b>KEY WORDS.</b>		
<b><i>Restoration.</i></b>	<b><i>Reconciliation.</i></b>	<b><i>Rejection.</i></b>
Restore (i. 6). Refreshing (iii. 19). Restitution (iii. 21). "This is that" (Joel).	The ministry of Paul (Rom. xi. 15; II Cor. v. 17-21; Acts xiii.-xix.). "A light of the Gentiles" (Isa. xlix. 6).	Acts xxviii. 17-27. "Go and tell this people" (Isa. vi. 9, 10).

Two miracles, having dispensational teaching, are found in the Acts; one, the *healing* of the lame man by Peter (Acts iii. & iv.), the other the *blinding* of a Jew followed by the conversion of a Gentile (Acts xiii.). Peter follows the miracle of healing with two prophetic applications, one in iii. 17-24, the other in iii. 25 - iv. 12. In the third chapter, the times of refreshing and the times of restitution are named, while in the fourth chapter, the healing of the lame man is further expanded in the words "neither is there salvation (literally 'the healing') in any other" (iv. 12). This miracle sets forth in symbol the intent and purpose of Peter's ministry.

In Acts xiii. Paul also performs a miracle, but this is one of judgment and foreshadows his ministry. A Jew, who withstood the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, is smitten with blindness, while a Gentile bearing the same name as "Paul" is saved, a typical foreshadowing of what actually took place as recorded in Acts xxviii. 17-31. In Acts xiii. 38 Paul warns the Jew of the danger that threatened, introducing the warning with the words "Be it known unto you therefore", he uses the same words in Acts xxviii. 28, when that judgment had fallen, "be it known unto you therefore". Turning to the ministry of Paul himself which occupies chapters xiii.-xxviii., we discover that it falls into two parts. At Acts xx., in Paul's speech to the elders of Ephesus (verses 20-21, 25-27) we are conscious that a change is coming, and in verses 22-24, Paul makes it clear that a new sphere of ministry, associated with bonds and afflictions is awaiting him. As we read on, we discover in the next chapter, that owing to a riot in Jerusalem, Paul is taken into custody by the Roman soldiers, and in Acts xxiii. 11, in the

night following his trial before the council, Paul is encouraged by a vision in which he is assured he must testify of the Lord in Rome.

In Acts xxvi. 16 Paul makes it clear that he had received of the Lord a twofold ministry.

This is indicated by the word “both”.

This is indicated by the subdivision of his ministry into “those things which thou *hast seen*” and “those things in which I *will appear* unto thee”.

The transition is further indicated by the words “unto whom NOW I send thee”, and it is to this point of time that the apostle refers when he uses the past tense of the verb in Acts xviii. 28 “was sent”.

After the dismissal of Israel in the last chapter (xxviii.) and the suspension of their hope, we find the apostle occupying two whole years in his own hired house at Rome, and there, as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles” (Eph. iii. 1), he declares he received the “dispensation of the mystery” which forms the basic theme of the epistles written by Paul the prisoner, namely Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and II Timothy.

This outline of the book of Acts would be totally inadequate did it stand alone, but as a full exposition of the book has been given in these pages over the last ten years, and as both space and time are too precious to spend in unnecessary repetition, we submit this summary trusting that where it should be necessary to supplement the hints given here, the reader will find a satisfactory explanation in the series referred to. Our way is now clear to approach the epistles of Paul, and this we hope to do in our next article.

## **#76. Evidences for the Pauline authorship of Hebrews.**

Having considered the historic portions of the New Testament, namely the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, the next subject, if we continue in the canonical order of the books is the epistle to the Romans. This epistle, as our readers know, is a mighty system of theology in itself, but, even so, it belongs to a distinct group of writings and can only be fully appreciated after its relation to the whole has been perceived. That whole is the fourteen epistles written by Paul.

Eusebius, an ecclesiastical historian born 270A.D., confirms this for he wrote “fourteen epistles are clearly and certainly Paul’s”. The one epistle concerning which there has been difficulty in accepting Paul as the author is the epistle to the Hebrews. For purposes that will be evident when the epistle is studied, neither the name of Paul nor his apostolic office is mentioned, and this has opened the door for doubts and speculations. Origen, born 185A.D., is often quoted as saying of the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews “what is the very truth of the matter, God only knows”, but a fuller quotation shows that he was not referring to authorship or substance:

“If I were to give my opinion, I should say, the phraseology and the texture belong to some one relating the apostle’s sentiments, and, as it were commenting on the words of his master. If any church therefore hold this to be an epistle of Paul, let it receive commendation on account of this; for it is not without reason that the ancients have handed it down as being of Paul. Who wrote the epistle (*graphes*, penned it, or committed it to writing) God (only) knows with certainty; but the report which has reached us is, that some affirm it to be written by Clement, bishop of Rome; and some, by Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.”

Other writings of Origen can be quoted to show that he was not in a doubtful state of mind regarding this epistle, he says, quoting Heb. v. 12 “according to this, the apostle says”, and again “in the epistle to the Hebrews, the same Paul says”, and in a homily preserved in a Latin translation, he says “Paul himself, the greatest of the apostles, writing to the Hebrews, says” and then quotes Heb. xii. 18, 23. Origen refers to the opinion held “in ancient times”. Who can these of “ancient time” be? He himself

being born in 185A.D. was only a little over a hundred years removed from apostolic times, consequently as Hallet remarks:

"It is very certain, then, that the churches and writers who were ancient with respect to Origen, had one common tradition, that St. Paul was the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. And their testimony to this matter of fact cannot but be of great weight, since those Christians who were ancients with respect to Origen, must have conversed with the apostles, and at least with their immediate successors."

Turning from external evidence, let us examine the epistle itself and see what light and information it gives of its author. From Heb. xiii. 18, 19, 23, 24 and x. 34, we gather that the author was well known to these Hebrews, and he calls Timothy "our brother" even as he does in Col. i. 1, I Thess. iii. 2 and Philemon 1. The word translated "set at liberty" *apoluo* means "released, dismissed or sent away on some special mission". The request "pray for us" and the suggestion that he may be restored to the Hebrews is characteristic of Paul, as may be seen by comparing Hebrews xiii. 18, 19 with Phil. i. 25, ii. 24, & Philemon 22 and Heb. xiii. 23 with Phil. ii. 23. Hebrews x. 34 cannot be pressed, as the critical Greek text reads "prisoners" instead of "my bonds". "They of Italy salute you" (Heb. xiii. 24) must mean that the apostle was writing from Italy if not from Rome, the Greek *hoi apo tes Italias* cannot mean "natives of Italy now resident elsewhere", this is against the *usus loquendi*\* of the Greek language. A similar use of *apo* is found in Acts xvii. 13. A writer is known, not so much by outstanding features, but in small unobtrusive, least suspected items. In Heb. x. 30 for instance, the author quotes Deuteronomy xxxii. 35, but upon examination it is found that this differs both from the Hebrews and the Septuagint. Paul quotes Deut. xxxii. 35 in Rom. xii. 19, and the words used are *identical* with those used in Hebrews x. Does not this clearly indicate common authorship? Small particles and connections are employed by Paul in such a manner as to demand that he is the author of Hebrews. Not only do the following particles occur ONLY in Paul's epistles and in Hebrews, but they occur NOWHERE else in the whole range of Scripture.

[\* - "Usage in speaking". The student would be well advised to compile his own dictionary of terms, so that the fullest value may be obtained from the books he consults.]

"Even as", "as well as" *kathaper* (Heb. iv. 2, v. 4; Rom. iv. 6).

"Not yet", "never" *medepote, medepo, mepo* (Heb. xi. 7; II Tim. iii. 7; Heb. ix. 8 and Rom. ix. 11).

"Therefore", "wherefore" *toligaroun* (Heb. xii. 1; I Thess. iv. 8).

"Far above", "over" *huperano* (Heb. ix. 5; Eph. i. 21, iv. 10).

Again one set of ideas that would come naturally to one writer, would be foreign to the upbringing or thought processes of another. Paul, brought up in Tarsus, would not have the antipathy to Greek sports that would be felt by a Palestinian Jew, and his peculiar use of terms borrowed from Greek games is a most decisive indication of his authorship of Hebrews. The word *agon* is found neither in the Septuagint nor in any other part of the New Testament, than in Paul's epistles and Hebrews. It is translated "conflict", "contention", "fight" and "race", and occurs in Phil. i. 30, Col. ii. 1, I Thess. ii. 2, I Tim. vi. 12, II Tim. iv. 7 and Heb. xii. 1. This however is not all, there are scores of connections discoverable between Paul's epistles and Hebrews by observing the context of the several occurrences of *agon*. We give the following:

*Echontes* "having" (Heb. xii. 1 and Phil. i. 30).

*Tes pisteos* "of faith" (Heb. xii. 1, 2 and I Tim. vi. 12).

*Perikeimenon* "compassed about" and *apokeitai* "laid up" (Heb. xii. 1; II Tim. iv. 8).

*Stauron* "cross" (Heb. xii. 2 and Phil. ii. 8).

*Teleioten* "finisher" (Heb. xii. 2) and *teteleka* "I have finished" (II Tim. iv. 7).

*Athlesis* “fight” (Heb. x. 32) and *athleo* “strive” (II Tim. ii. 5) are ample illustrations of the underlying links that bind Hebrews into the same bundle with the undisputed epistles of Paul. *Apekdechomai* “waiting with expectancy”, *douleia* “bondage”, *endunamoo* “to be strengthened”, *entungchano* “to make *intercession*”, *euairestos* “acceptable”, these are but a few specimens of the peculiar use of words that characterize Paul’s epistles and the epistles to the Hebrews. The reader will see that the words chosen are in alphabetical order, and will find many others by patient search.

To this testimony of the exclusive use of certain words, must be added the personal way in which certain words are used by Paul. This can be well illustrated by the word *katargeo* which occurs in Paul’s epistles and Hebrews twenty-six times. The word is found but four times in the Septuagint, namely in Ezra iv. 21, 23; v. 5; and vi. 8, where the word is used with its primitive significance of “stopping work”. Paul however uses the word *katargeo* in a sense peculiar to himself, “to make without effect” as of faith, “to make void” as of law, “to destroy” as of the body of sin &c., &c. On two occasions Paul uses *katargeo* in connection with death.

“The last enemy that *shall be destroyed* is death” (I Cor. xv. 26).

“Who *hath abolished* death” (II Tim. i. 10).

This last usage is found in Heb. ii. 14:

“That through death he *might destroy* him that had the power of death, that is the devil”.

While the presence of *katargeo* in such a context as the above is a testimony by itself, a comparison of the context of I Cor. xv. 26 is overwhelming.

<b>I Corinthians xv. 26-28.</b>	<b>Hebrews ii. 5, 8, 14.</b>
“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all”.	For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak . . . 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 . . . that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil”.

Not only is there the special use of “destroy” as applied to death, there is in both “the world to come”, the specially peculiar argument derived from the passage “Thou didst put all things under His feet” and the reference to Adam, (1) by name in I Corinthian xv. and (2) by implication in Heb. ii. 6. The fact that angels mediated at the giving of the law at Sinai is stated in Gal. iii. 19 and implied in Heb. ii. 2. The apostolic confirmation by “signs and wonders and diverse miracles” are brought forward in II Cor. xii. 12 and Rom. xv. 19, and they are alluded to in Heb. ii. 4. Sinai and Sion are used allegorically of the two covenants in Galatian iv., and the two mountains are placed in similar juxtaposition in Hebrews xii. While Hebrews ii. is before us, we observe in verse 4 the reference to the confirming “of them that heard Him” and find parallels in II Cor. xii. 12 and Rom. xv. 19 as though the writer of Hebrews was making a covert allusion to the “signs and wonders, and diverse miracles” which were “the signs of an apostle”. The hand and mind of Paul are not only revealed in all these and many other close parallels, but in such features as a tendency to use *paronomasia* or a “play on

words” and not only so, but to use the same play on words in Hebrews as is found in his other epistles. For example in Rom. i. 20 he speaks of the “invisible” things of God being clearly “seen” and uses *aoratos*, a rare word for “invisible”. The same peculiar figure being found again “as seeing Him Who is invisible” (Heb. xi. 27). Here once more *aoratos* is employed, and is found nowhere else in the New Testament outside Paul’s epistles.

Again, to give another illustration, from Philippians and Hebrews there is a *paronomasia* on the word *meno* “to abide”.

“I know that I shall abide (*meno*), and continue (*suparameno*), with you all” (Phil. i. 25).

“Not suffered to continue (*paramenein*) by reason of death, but this man because He continueth (*menein*)” (Heb. vii. 23, 24).

“The same play, on the same words, is to be found in no third instance throughout the Bible” (Forster).

We cannot multiply evidences further. For those who desire an exhaustive treatment of the subject, we recommend a reading of the argument in the Commentary on Hebrews by the Rev. Moses Stuart, M.A., and the exhaustive treatise by the Rev. Charles Forster, B.D. We must conclude our examination of the evidences for the Pauline authorship of Hebrews, by referring to one that Paul himself assures us will *always* be found. If we can show this, then the matter can be considered settled.

Early in Paul’s ministry he was compelled to protect the churches against fraud. Writing to the Thessalonians he bids them not to be shaken in mind as though they had received a letter from himself (II Thess. ii. 1, 2), for there had been reserved for his own peculiar use one expression, which he would always write with “his own hand” and which would be “the token in every epistle”. That “token” was the use of the words “grace be with you” (II Thess. iii. 17, 18). This benediction in one form or another is found at the close of every one of Paul’s epistles, *including Hebrews*, but is absent from the epistles of Peter, James, John and Jude. Here then is “proof”, proof made doubly sure by the comparisons suggested already in this article. We therefore conclude that Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, and shall deal with it as such in all our studies without further question or remark.

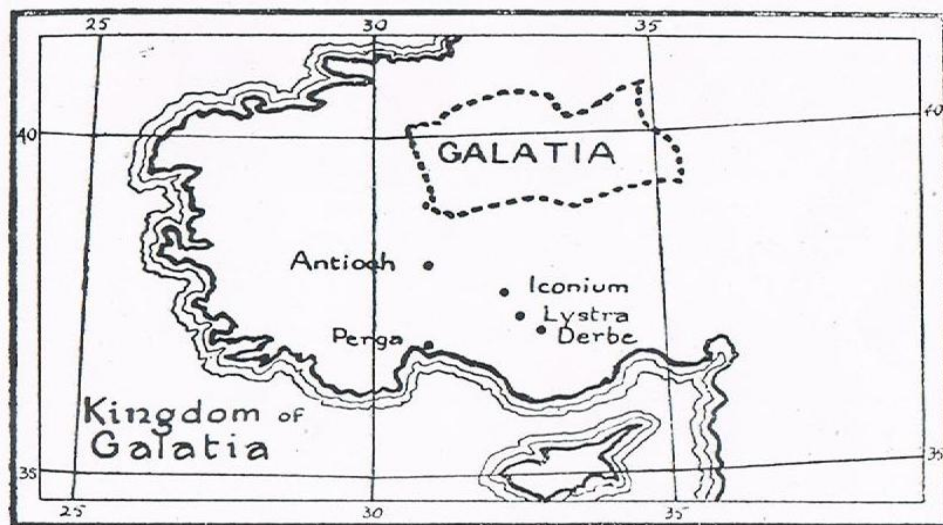
## **#77. The Place of Galatians in the early group of Paul’s Epistles.**

In our last article we were occupied with the proofs that may be brought forward for the Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews. We are satisfied that there is abundant proof and that Paul is the author of fourteen epistles in the New Testament. We have, in other epistles of other series, as in the article in the series dealing with the Acts of the Apostles, made it clear that Paul exercised a twofold ministry, and that his epistles keep pace with either the itinerant preaching of Acts xiii.-xix., or with the prison testimony indicated in the closing verses of Acts xxviii. The epistles therefore divide into two groups: those which were written while Paul was free to travel are Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, I & II Thessalonians, Hebrews, and those written after the setting aside of Israel, and either during or after the imprisonment therein recorded. For the moment we are concentrating our attention on the earlier ministry and the seven epistles of that period. It is evident that the pairs of epistles — I.&II. Corinthians, and I.&II. Thessalonians must be kept together for the purposes of study, whether one of the other epistles were written between the writing of the first and second epistles or not. We could also consider the three single epistles in their canonical order, namely Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, but wherever we may feel Galatians fits in the chronological order, we know that Romans was the last of the series.

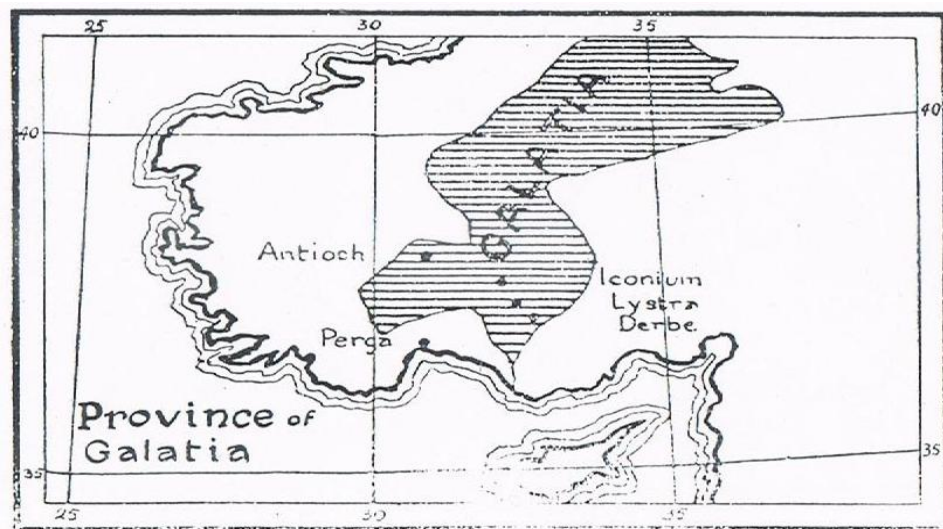
As we found it necessary, and we trust profitable to discern the authorship of Hebrews, we shall find it equally important and helpful to have some certain convictions regarding the geographical and chronological place of Galatians. The following note from Lewin's "Life and Epistles of Paul" bears witness:

"It is a great disappointment that neither in the Acts nor even in the Epistles can we trace any details of Paul's ministry in Galatia, and we must therefore content ourselves with reasonable probabilities."

We are now in the happy position of reading in the Acts itself the fullest account of this Galatian visit, and are free from the necessity of "reasonable probabilities" of any kind. Let us examine the problem.



First, if Galatia be conceived of as the kingdom of that name which occupied the Northern part of Asia Minor, it is obvious that the epistle could not have been written until after Acts xviii. 23, for Galatian iv. 13 indicated a second visit. The reader may wonder how it is possible to use such an argument as "if Galatia be conceived" for a country either is or is not a definite geographical site and beyond argument. That of course would be conclusive if man did not alter frontiers by conquest or agreement, and if the ancient boundaries of any particular country were always identical with modern geography. The map above illustrates the position of Galatia as a kingdom, and the extent of geographical and historical information possessed by Bible Students up to the days of Dr. Kitto's Cyclopaedia 1847, or T. R. Birks, editor of Paley, 1849.



By the year 1875 knowledge had so far increased that Lewin could publish in his “Life and Epistles of Paul” two maps, one showing the *national* boundaries of Galatia, the other the *political* boundaries, and it will be observed, that while the *national* boundaries coincide with Kitto’s map, the *political* map reveals many changes. We find that a part of Phrygia had been incorporated in the enlarged Province of Galatia. The second map is based upon the discoveries of Sir William Ramsay, and reveals that the Roman Province extended so far south as to include as Galatian cities, Antioch, Lystra, Derbe and Iconium. By the time we come to the New Edition of “Youngs Analytical Concordance” only one map of Galatia is provided and that the largest Province including Antioch and the other cities enumerated above.

Now Paul was a Roman citizen and knew the high value placed by all in the Empire on that status, whatever their nationality might be. He could not, without offence, have addressed one of the Churches of Galatia as “Phrygians”, and it is practically impossible that he would ever have thought of so doing. To him, Antioch, and the cities visited in Acts xiii. & xiv. were in Galatia.

Now it is remarkable that recent archaeological discoveries in Asia Minor have confirmed this point so that it has ceased to be a conjecture.

- (1) In 401A.D., Asterius, Bishop of Amaseia lived in Pontus, consequently he knew at first hand the geography of his neighbourhood. Now by 401A.D. there had taken place many changes, and Lycaonia did not at that date belong to Galatia. The Bishop and all his readers knew this, yet in dealing with Acts xviii. 23, in direct contradiction to the facts of his own day, he included Lycaonia in Galatia.

“No conceivable interpretation could get Lycaonia out of *Galatiken Choran* except deliberate adhesion to the South Galatian view”.

- (2) Ptolemy wrote concerning this part of the Roman world and arranged his chapters according to the Roman Pro-consular divisions: The Pontus and Bithynian Thesis, The Asian Thesis, The Lykian Thesis, The Galatian Thesis.

We learn from Ptolemy that Galatia is bounded on the South by Pamphylia, and on the North by the Euxine Sea. The Southern portion included Pisidia. Further he actually enumerates Antioch, Iconium and Lystra as cities of Galatia.

- (3) Hadrian conferred the rank of Colonia upon the city of Iconium and in Paul’s day Iconian citizens called their country *Galatike eparcheia* “Province of Galatia”.
- (4) In a Greek dedicatory inscription of the year 56A.D. (and so of the very period under discussion) the writer describes his *patris*, Apollonia, as being *the land of the Galatians*. A glance at a map will show Apollonia to be over 40 miles west of Antioch and Pisidia.

When therefore Paul addressed converts at Iconium as *Galatae*, he gave them their due as Roman citizens. Had he called them by their *national* and not by the *political* name, that is Lycaonians, he would have insulted them, giving them the name reserved only for slaves. To be a “Phrygian” was to be rude, ignorant, slavish. To be addressed as “Men of the Province of Galatia” was honourable. Paul could no more have hoped to gain a hearing in Antioch by persisting in the use of “Phrygians” than a candidate for Parliament could hope to secure the votes of a constituency in Scotland by persistently using the name “English” instead of “British”.

If therefore the cities evangelized in Acts xiii. & xiv. were cities of Galatia the argument for a later place in chronology that is based upon Galatian iv. 13, ceases to be sound. The fact that the Galatians knew Barnabas (Galatian ii.) is another strong proof that the epistle was written early. Paul had to explain who Titus was, but Barnabas needed no introduction. Now Barnabas played an important part in Acts xiii. & xiv., but he served his association with Paul at the end of Acts xv. and there is no record

that he ever again visited these Galatians cities. If we adhere to the North Galatian view, then Paul did not visit Galatia until *after* Barnabas had left him.

We can now consider the chronological place of the epistle. In the fight for the truth seen in the epistle to the Galatians, no mention is made of “the decrees” of Acts xv., and Peter’s defection of Galatians ii. is much more difficult to understand if it be held that it took place after Acts xv. We believe that the private conference of Galatians ii. took place upon the second visit of the apostle to Jerusalem (Acts.xi.30), and the reference to the “poor” coincides with the errand of mercy there indicated in that same verse. While Paul abode at Antioch for “a long time” the emissaries from Jerusalem went to Galatia and troubled the church (Galatian i. 6). The apostle’s immediate reaction was the writing of the epistle to the Galatians. The self same contention that necessitated the conference of Acts xv. necessitated the epistle. If Paul had already received the decrees formulated by the Council at Jerusalem, he would have been in duty bound to have said so in his epistles, and moreover they would have provided him with his strongest weapon with which to overthrow the Judaisers who were spoiling his great work, yet he never refers to these decrees when writing to the Galatians.

Summarizing we put the position as follows:

- (1) By this view no visit of Paul to Jerusalem is suppressed.
- (2) The most forceful arguments that could be used at the time are used.
- (3) No inconsistency is intruded into the Acts.
- (4) Every phrase which bears upon the date is simply and naturally explained.
- (5) The authority of the Council at Jerusalem and the decree made, remain unimpaired.
- (6) The epistle was written from Antioch in Syria, or the neighbourhood.
- (7) The Churches of Galatia were those of Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.
- (8) The epistle to the Galatians is probably the earliest book in the New Testament.

The seven epistles of the early ministry therefore appear to be arranged as follows:

Galatians.  
I and II Thessalonians.  
Hebrews.  
I and II Corinthians.  
Romans.

Our next study must seek to discover the key doctrines that bind this series of epistles together as one whole, but nothing further can be added at the moment, without encroaching too far into our limited space.

## **#78. The seven early epistles as a whole.**

Two rather controversial subjects have occupied our attention in the last two articles, namely the *authorship* of the epistle to the Hebrews, and the *identification* of the Galatian churches, together with the probable chronological position of the epistle addressed to them.

We must now submit these seven epistles to an examination in order that the distinctive teaching that they give may be made evident; but before we endeavour to open up the epistle to the Galatians itself we must see the seven epistles as one whole, and the relationship of each epistle to that whole. In order to do this some acquaintance with the teaching of each of these epistles is necessary.

We therefore approach the epistle to the Galatians with the object of discovering some basic theme which will relate its content with the rest of the group. The moment we commence to read this epistle we are conscious of conflict, something vital is at stake, something that must be met, single-handed if need be, something that may necessitate withstanding Peter to the face and yielding “not for an hour” to

those who “seemed to be pillars” at Jerusalem. The “truth of the gospel” was in jeopardy (Gal. ii. 14), the liberty of the believer was in danger (Galatian iv.) and the labours of the apostle rendered valueless. We remember that in the thirteenth of Acts there has been recorded an outline of the address that Paul gave at Antioch, and how that Gospel was summed up in the wondrous words:

“Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts xiii. 38, 39)

The heart and soul of Paul’s Gospel is here revealed, it is the blessed and liberating doctrine of “Justification by Faith”. The moment we reach this truth, we are conscious that we have reached the basic doctrine of the epistle to the Galatians, and turn to the third chapter to find its key text:

“The just shall live by faith” (Gal. iii. 11).

When we turn to the epistle to the Romans, the atmosphere of conflict, of eager zealous championship gives place to one of quieter and calmer reasoning and demonstration, yet we have but to read the first half of the first chapter to realize that “the gospel” is once more the theme (Rom. i. 1, 9, 16) and that the heart of this gospel is still found in the words quoted once more in Rom. i. 17, “The just shall live by faith”. Justification underlies the whole doctrinal fabric of Romans, *dikaio* “just”, occurs seven times; *dikaio*sune “righteousness”, 36 times; *dikaioo* “justify”, 15 times and *dikaio*ma “righteousness”, 5 times, or 63 occurrences in the one epistle of these various aspects of righteousness.

Already while we have been recording these facts, the epistle to the Hebrews have been passing before the mind. This epistle is so different from either Galatians or Romans, that at first sight it does not seem very likely that any real connection will be discovered, until we remember that in Hebrews x. we meet for the third and last time the text “The just shall live by faith” (verse 38).

This quotation from the prophet Habakkuk is found nowhere else in the New Testament and therefore its presence in these three great epistles cannot be lightly set aside. Having seen that these three epistles are therefore linked together by this common text we must endeavour to discover how it is that three epistles with so much individual and distinctive teaching come to have this common basis.

We return to the chapter in Galatians where the text is found, and learn from its context that the apostle used the text from Habakkuk to insist upon “faith” as distinct from “works of law”.

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them” (iii. 11, 12).

“The hearing of faith” over against the “works of the law” (iii. 2, 5), Abraham’s “belief” and “faith” being the characteristics of his children (iii. 6, 7, 9) and the justification of the heathen by faith (iii. 8), have led up to the introduction of this key text. We can write Paul’s text as found in Galatians thus:

“The just shall live by FAITH”.

The moment we do this, our thoughts go back to Romans with its insistence upon “Righteousness”. While it is still as true as when the apostle penned Galatians, that “faith” not “works of the law” constitutes the gospel plan for justification, there is, in Romans, a strong emphasis upon the word “just”. Paul explains that the secret of the power resident in the gospel is because:

“Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. i. 17).

Here, it is “the righteousness of God” that drew out the text from Habakkuk, and we may write Paul’s text as found in Romans thus:

“The JUST shall live by faith”.

Returning now to Hebrews, we are already aware that the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith is not the uppermost theme of that epistle. These Hebrews are rather exhorted to leave the types and shadows of their faith and to “go on unto perfection” (Heb. vi. 1). If it was blessedly possible for them to “go on”, it was sadly possible for them to fail so to do, and consequently we find in structural correspondence the two passages thus:

“Let us *go on* unto PERFECTION” (vi. 1).

“We are not of them who *draw back* unto PERDITION” (x. 39).

Now it is just here, at this second alternative that the apostle brings forward the text from Habakkuk.

“For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb. x. 37, 38).

It is evident that the apostle is now speaking of practical faith, a faith that “endures” (x. 32), a faith that holds in it great recompence of reward (x. 35). He exhorts his readers to exercise patience during the waiting period, and enforces it by the quotation, “Now the just shall live by faith”. It is evident that he is not speaking of the plan of gospel salvation, he is rather dealing with the life of faith that should accompany salvation, consequently we can once more set out the apostle’s text as follows:

“The just SHALL LIVE by faith”.

Having seen the connecting link between the three single epistles of this series we turn our attention to the two pairs of epistles, those to the Thessalonians, and those to the Corinthians.

Again we are conscious of a very different atmosphere in the Thessalonian epistles from those to the Corinthians, yet as we ponder their message there emerges from the first epistle to the Thessalonians the trinity of graces, “faith, hope and love”.

“Remembering without ceasing your work of *faith*, and labour of *love*, and patience of *hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. i. 3).

After some very pointed personal statements in chapter two, the apostle reverts to “these three” and in the third chapter deals first of all with “faith”. Timothy is sent to comfort them concerning their “faith” lest they should have been tempted and when Timothy brought good tidings of that faith and charity the apostle was comforted, and expressed the most ardent desire to see them once more that he might “perfect that which is lacking” in their faith (I Thess. iii. 2, 5, 6, 7, 10).

From faith, the apostle passes to “love” (iii. 12; iv. 9), and from love to “hope” (iv. 13-18). In the last chapter of the epistle, the apostle not only repeats “faith, love and hope”, but also repeats “labour”, “work” and “patience” (v. 8, 12, 13, 14), consequently it is clear that we can write as the key words of this epistle “faith, love and hope”. Having seen this, our task in I Corinthians is simplified. We know that after all the correction had been given and the instruction which the apostle deemed necessary, he concludes with that wonderful summary:

“And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (I Cor. xiii. 13).

We have therefore key passages for five out of seven epistles. There remains to be adjusted the second epistle to the Thessalonians and the second epistle to the Corinthians. One feature that is true of both these epistles lies on the surface, they were both written to correct erroneous conclusions that had been drawn from the first epistles. Another and deeper parallel is that in both of these epistles there is a strong warning concerning the devices of the evil one:

“Let no man deceive you by any means . . . . whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” (II Thess. ii. 3-11).

“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ . . . For satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness” (II Cor. xi. 3, 14, 15).

With the data now collected we are able to present these seven epistles as a whole, revealing their concern for doctrine, practice and dispensational truth.

*Galatians.* The just shall live by FAITH.  
*I Thessalonians.* Faith, love, hope.  
*II Thessalonians.* Satanic deception.  
*Hebrews.* The just shall LIVE by faith.  
*I Corinthians.* Faith, hope, love.  
*II Corinthians.* Satanic deception.  
*Romans.* The JUST shall live by faith.

We now ready to give the epistle to the Galatians the attention it demands. This we will do in future articles.

## **#79. GALATIANS. The Scope and Structure of the Epistle.**

For the prime purpose of these studies, it does not really matter very much what particular tribe of human race were the ancestors of those known as the Galatians, for all nations of the earth are of one blood, all have sinned, and all alike need salvation, and that by grace; but the British reader may be interested in the conclusion found in Lightfoot's discursus on the subject:

"There is every reason then for believing that the Galatian settlers were genuine Celts, and of the two main subdivisions into which philologists have divided the Celtic race, they seem rather to have belonged to the Cymric, of which the Welsh are the living representatives. Thus in the age when St. Paul preached, a native of Galatia spoke a language essentially the same with that which was current in the southern part of Britain."

For those who desire fuller information, dealing with notes on language, historical references and other arguments, Lightfoot, Alford and particularly Ramsay should be consulted.

Whether the Galatians were Celts or not does not matter so much to us at the distance, what is more important is that they being sinners saved by grace were evidently influenced by Judaistic teachers and were in danger of bartering their liberty for a dismal bondage, and to save them from this living death, and to ensure that "the truth of the gospel" should "continue right through" (*diameno*, Gal. ii. 5), this epistle to the Galatians was written.

In the Volume "The Apostle of the Reconciliation" (p.111), a tentative structure was offered, showing the main divisions. For the purpose of that volume this structure was sufficient. We are now about to make a more thorough examination of the epistle and a structure that conforms more fully with the correspondences of the theme is demanded. We set out such a structure below, but it must be remembered that no attempt has been made in this initial presentation to show in strictly-structural form

the sub-divisions of A or B sections. These will be exhibited later, as the subject matter under consideration may then demand.

## GALATIANS.

A1 | i. 1 - ii. 14. The Apostle's authority. "Though an angel from heaven."

FAITH v. WORKS. |

a | Jerusalem. Bondage.

b | Circumcision not compelled.

c | Persecution for gospel.

B1 | ii. 15 - iv. 12. CROSS v. LAW. |

d | I am crucified with Christ.

e | Not I but Christ.

f | Redeemed from curse.

g | Covenant and adoption.

A2 | iv. 13 - vi. 10. The Apostle's infirmity. "As an angel of God."

SPIRIT v. FLESH. |

a | Jerusalem. Free.

b | Circumcision availeth nothing.

c | Persecution for the cross.

B2 | vi. 11 - vi. 16. CROSS v. WORLD. |

d | I am crucified to the world.

e | Not circumcision but new creature.

f | Peace.

g | Israel of God.

A3 | vi. 17, 18. The Apostle's marks in his body.

GRACE and SPIRIT. Bondage and signature (see II Thess. iii. 17).

Before commencing the exposition of the epistle let us acquaint ourselves with the lines of teaching summarized under the captions printed in capitals here given. We do not set out every reference, but give a fair sample of the way these subjects are treated.

FAITH v. WORKS. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (ii. 16).

"This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (iii. 2).

"He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (iii. 5).

SPIRIT v. FLESH. "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (iii. 3).

"He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit" (iv. 29).

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (v. 16).

"The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (v. 17).

CROSS v. LAW AND WORLD. "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ" (ii. 19, 20).

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (vi. 14).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (iii. 13).

When we compare the epistle to the Galatians with the second epistle to the Corinthians, we discover that much of the conflict that had been fought in Galatia was repeated in slightly modified form in Corinth. For example, the strange reference to the apostles at Jerusalem “these who seemed to be somewhat” of Gal. ii. 6, finds an echo in the reference to “the extra-super apostles” of II Cor. xi. 5. The preaching of “another gospel” in Galatia (Gal. i. 6-9); has its counterpart in the preaching of “another Jesus”, “another spirit” and “another gospel” of II Cor. xi. 4. In both epistles reference is made to “false brethren” (Gal. ii. 4 and II Cor. xi. 26); and the comparison of Gal. ii. 8, “He Who wrought effectually in Peter ... the same was mighty in me”, is repeated in another form in the words of II Cor. xi. 5, “for I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chieftest apostles”. If to the Galatians Paul spoke of “the marks of the Lord Jesus” which he bore in his body (Gal. vi. 17), to the Corinthians these “marks” are given in fuller detail. Five times was he given the “forty stripes save one” of the synagogue scourging, thrice was he “beaten with rods”, once he was “stoned”, thrice “shipwrecked” (II Cor. xi. 24, 25). He repeats the figure of “devouring” one another (Gal. v. 15; II Cor. xi. 20), as also the argument of Gal. iii. 3 “having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh”, “That as He had begun, so He would also perfect in you the same grace” (II Cor. viii. 6) and finally, in both epistles there is the triumphant reference to the “new creature” (Gal. vi. 15; II Cor. v. 17). Parallels can be found between other of the early epistles and that of the Galatians, but these will fall into their place better when those other epistles are before us.

When we read in the Acts of Peter’s hesitancy to go to the Gentile Cornelius, and of the opposition manifested by the church when they heard that “the Gentiles had also received the word of God”, and when we read that the circumcision party did not hesitate to contend with Peter saying “Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them” (Acts xi. 3) then we are somewhat prepared for the challenge that Paul’s apostleship and gospel received, and for the elements of strife that permeate these early epistles. Jealousy for the law of Moses, for the rite and privileges of circumcision, marched side by side with a belief in the gospel, but in many cases, alas, the pure grace of the gospel was so adulterated with legal and ceremonial additions, that the apostle had to speak of it as “another gospel” or the preaching as the preaching of “another Jesus”.

The presence of these features makes the epistle to the Galatians of great importance to all who love the truth and who would be made both wise as to the nature of the opposition and equipped to meet it adequately and spiritually. Here in this epistle we have laid bare the devices of the opposition and the example of this foremost champion of the faith in meeting them. The foe is still the same, the truth is still the same, the call is still the same. May these and future studies be used by the God of all grace to enlighten the eyes and equip the minds of all who in this our day and generation have been chosen to be “good soldiers of Jesus Christ”.

## **#80. The threefold argument of GALATIANS i. 1 - 24 with a special examination of the term “apostle”.**

We have considered the epistles of Paul as a whole, and have seen that there are fourteen epistles that are from this apostle’s pen. We have seen that they form two groups of seven epistles each, ranged on either side of Acts xxviii. 28. We have examined the evidences for the Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, and found it to be abundant and satisfying. We have considered the latest archaeological findings and their bearing upon the date of the epistle to the Galatians and have found that there is now no valid reason for refusing this epistle prior place in the chronological order of the epistles of Paul, and we now address ourselves to the happy though arduous task of following the mind of the Spirit, through the words of Paul as they were written in his burning zeal to preserve “the truth of the gospel” for all time, and save those whose steadfastness in the faith was his own joy and crown.

The challenge therefore having sounded, the apostle as the chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, takes up the gage, and enters the arena. His opening words are a threefold response to this challenge of his enemies, and all his blessed teaching stands for naught if this threefold response cannot be maintained and justified. What are his three points therefore?

- We must now turn to the first chapter of this epistle to see whether these things are so, and discover how the apostle introduces this threefold theme and with what language and argument he enforces his conclusions.

(Key-words “Not”; “Neither”; “But”).

**B1** | 6-10. No change in gospel—"Ye received".

B2 | 13, 14. His past attitude—"Ye heard".

B3 | 18-24. His present attitude—"They had heard".

"It was the fashion of the false teachers in the Galatian church ... with a view to undermine his authority, and to disparage the doctrine which he taught, to originate reports prejudicial to the character of St. Paul. He had never seen the Lord Jesus Christ; had not received his commissions as the rest of the apostles did, at His hands; if he had any position in the church, it was delegated to him from others; whatever knowledge of the gospel he possessed had been derived from the instruction of men, and consequently his testimony, should any difference of opinion arise, should be accounted of no value, if found in opposition to them. To meet this and every kindred species of defamation, the apostle felt called upon *in limine* to establish the divine origin of his mission, which he does, negatively and affirmatively, in the passage before us" (Gwynne).

The title “apostle” is familiar to all Christians and its general import is understood. It plays such an important part however in the argument of this epistle, and its meaning is so intimately attached to the whole range of ministry fulfilled by Paul, that we will not consider the time ill spent that makes the meaning and bearing of this title known, before we proceed with the teaching of the epistle.

*Apostolos* occurs 81 times in the New Testament and is translated 78 times “apostle”, once “he that is sent”, and twice “messenger”. The word is distributed as follows, nine occurrences in the four gospels, of which Luke contains six, and the other three references are found in Matt. x. 2; Mark vi. 30 and in John xiii. 16. This last reference however should be kept apart, as it does not speak of “the apostles” but can be applied to all believers, “neither is *he that is sent* greater than He that sent him”. The Acts of the Apostles itself contain 30 references, the Epistles of Paul use the word 35 times, of which two are translated “messenger”, the remaining six references are found in the epistles of Peter, Jude and the Book of the Revelation.

McLean in His “Apostolic Commission” has given a very clear delineation of the Apostolic Office, which we summarize here:

- (1) (a) They must have been eye and ear witnesses (John xv. 27).  
(b) This is laid down as essential in the case of the successor of Judas (Acts i. 21, 22).  
(c) Paul is no exception (I Cor. xv. 8; ix. 1; Acts xxii. 14, 15).
- (2) (a) They must have been immediately called and chosen by Christ Himself.  
(b) This was true of the twelve (Luke vi. 13; Gal. i. 1), Matthias himself not excepted.
- (3) (a) Infallible inspiration was essential to the office (John xvi. 13; I Cor. ii. 10; Gal. i. 11, 12).
- (4) (a) The power to work miracles was associated with the apostolic commission (Acts.ii.43; I.Cor.xii.8-11). “Truly”, says Paul, “the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds” (II Cor. xii. 12). “God bare them witness” (Heb. ii. 4).
- (5) (a) Their commission was not local, it was not confined to any particular visible church, like that of ordinary pastors, but like Paul himself “they had the care of all the churches”.  
(b) They had power to settle the faith and order of the church, to determine all controversies (Acts xvi. 4), and to exercise the rod of discipline upon all offenders, whether pastors or flock (I Cor. v. 3-6; II Cor. x. 8; xiii. 10).

To such high office the apostle Paul lays claim in the opening words of the Galatian epistle, and his added statement “not of men, neither by man” seems to refer to the fact that among the Jews it was a custom “to call those who carry circular letters from their rulers by the name apostles” (Cecumenius).

Paul asserts that his apostleship was unlike that which was known among the Jews, who derived their authority from the Chief Priests and from the Sanhedrin. Who, Paul seems to ask, can give to me “letters of commendation”? (II Cor. iii. 1), the only “letters of commendation” possible in his case were those who believed, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men” (II Cor. iii. 2).

In this opening chapter of Galatians the apostle refers to his previous zeal as a persecutor of the faith, and it is not improbable that when he said “Paul an apostle, not of men, neither of man” he not only repudiated all human mediation in connection with his great office in the church, but he may also have glanced back to that other apostleship (using the word as the Jews employed it) indicated in the Acts.

“(Saul) desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem” (Acts ix. 2).

What the apostle thought about the office can be gathered from his epistles. He styles himself “a called apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” (Rom. i. 1), and his apostleship was to “obedience to the faith among all nations” (Rom. i. 5). While he was called and commissioned during the period when the Jew was still “first” he realized his apostleship was distinctly toward the Gentile (Rom. xi. 13) and on two occasions he makes a very solemn declaration concerning this apostleship.

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

“Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles” (II Tim. i. 11).

In the estimate of Paul, the office of an apostle took first rank.

“First apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers” (I Cor. xii. 28),

and in connection with his own commission, as distinct from the call of the “twelve” his apostleship was directly given by the “Ascended” Christ (Eph. iv. 8-11). Such was the man, and such his office, and such “his gage of battle to the incompetence of traditional authority — his trumpet note of defiance to all Pharisees of Christianity” (Farrar).

We must return to the opening sentence of this epistle in our next article, but we can now do so with at least a more accurate conception of what the claim to be an apostle, embraced.

## #81. GALATIANS.

### “The Lord’s Messenger” and “The Lord’s Message” (Hag. i. 13).

Having seen the scope of chapter one, and the meaning and importance of the word “apostle”, we can now turn our attention to the way in which the apostle opens his epistle.

Sir William Ramsay in his “Historical Commentary of the Epistle to the Galatians” says:

"In any judicious system of interpretation, great stress must be laid on the introductory address of this epistle. It should be compared with the address prefixed to the Epistle to the Romans, a letter which presents marked analogies in sentiment and topics. In each case Paul puts in his introduction the marrow of the whole letter. He says at first in a few words what he is going to say at length in the body of the letter, to repeat over and over, to emphasize from various points of view, and to drive home into the minds of his correspondents."

Lightfoot commences his commentary with the words:

"1-5. The two threads which run through this epistle — the defence of the apostle’s own authority, and the maintenance of the doctrine of grace — are knotted together in the opening salutation. By expanding his official title into a statement of his direct commission from God (verse 1), St. Paul meets the *personal* attack of his opponents; by dwelling on the work of redemption in connexion with the name of Christ (verse 4), he protests against their *doctrinal* errors."

We have seen that the key words of the structure are the threefold repetition of the expressions “not, neither, but” as applied to the three great aspects of Paul’s commission, and his independence in each department. (1) Independent Apostleship; (2) Independent Revelation of the Gospel; (3) Independence of all human authority. “Not of men, neither by man” *ouk ap’ anthropon oude di’ anthropon*.

"There are indeed few points more characteristic of the apostle’s style than his varied but accurate use of prepositions, especially of two or more in the same or in immediately contiguous clauses (e.g. *eis . . . . epi*, Rom. iii. 22; *ex . . . . dia . . . . eis*, xi. 36) for the purpose of more precise definition or limitation" (Ellicott).

No two prepositions are synonymous, although at times the difference intended by their use may be difficult to express. Perhaps an illustration of the apostle’s usage will be the best means of showing the shade of meaning attaching to interchanged prepositions. “God is one Who will justify the circumcision BY faith, and the uncircumcision BY MEANS OF (the same) faith” (Rom. iii. 30). Here *ek* is used in the first reference to faith, and *dia* in the second. The former indicates the source of justification and the

latter its means. So in Gal. i. 1 Paul was neither originally commissioned *apo* from men, nor was he commissioned *dia* through the intervention of any man. In the first clause Paul distinguishes his calling from that of “false apostles” who certainly did not receive their commission from God the fountain head; in the second he shows that his apostleship is on a level with the twelve.

Not only does the apostle vary the prepositions, *apo* . . . . *dia*, he speaks of “men” and “man”, he maintained that his apostleship was not a commission from “man in the concrete” nor from “man in the abstract” i.e. flesh and blood including a self appointment arising from his inclinations. Later in this chapter he uses “flesh and blood” and those which were “apostles” before him in much the same alternative senses, as “men” and “man” here. Truth however cannot rest upon negatives. It may be necessary for us to know that Paul’s apostleship did not arise out of any commission given him by the Sanhedrin, or that it did not originate in his own heart and upbringing, but we must pass to the positive and discover from what source this great commission sprang. This is what the apostle does:

“Paul an apostle NOT from men, NEITHER BY (the instrumentality of) man,  
BUT BY Jesus Christ, and God our Father, Who raised Him from the dead.”

It will be observed that whereas we have “men” and “man” put as alternatives, with their respective prepositions “of” and “by”, no such discrimination is made between “Jesus Christ and God the Father” which are both governed by the one preposition *dia*. Whether it be the doctrine which He taught, the miracles which He wrought or the appointments which He made, whatever the Lord Jesus Christ taught or did was regarded not as the expression or doing of His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. If Paul was appointed an apostle of Jesus Christ, then he must also be one by the appointment of the Father, beyond which there can be no other or higher authority.

This appointment took place on the road to Damascus (Acts ix. 3) and the personal appearing of the Saviour to him enabled Paul to claim fullest apostolic recognition, saying “Have not I seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (I Cor. ix. 1).

Nor is this all, he must convince the Galatians beyond the possibility of doubt, that he was not one whit behind the chiefest of the apostles, and so he not only refers his apostleship to “**Jesus Christ and God the Father**”, but adds “Who raised Him from the dead”. This added clause, largely explains the omission of the preposition before “God the Father”, as Gwynne remarks, this is “no ordinary adjunct, nor casually introduced, but a participial clause artistically arranged, to reflect light upon the antecedent context”, namely the joint names of Jesus Christ and God the Father, the introduction of the resurrection “being virtually the investiture of Him with supreme dignity and unlimited authority”.

Thus it was that Paul entered the arena, and took up the challenge. His primary object was to save the church from the Judaisers, and to do this he had to make very clear the radical difference between an attempt to justify self by the works of the law, and the justification which was by grace through faith; but this gospel was so closely related to Paul’s commission, that it became incumbent upon him to vindicate his apostleship to the utmost, setting aside the twelve, setting aside his own selfish desires, setting aside all association with men and man, and linking his calling and commission not only by the Lord Jesus, as the Twelve *could*, but to the Risen Christ, as the twelve *could not* [for the twelve were appointed during the earthly life of Christ (see Matthew x.)], but Paul was the first of the apostles to be appointed by the Ascended Christ (see Ephesians iv.).

One of the characteristics of Paul’s writing is the backward and forward sway of thought and feeling. Zealous, keen beyond the average, he makes a bold unmitigated claim — then conscious that a misinterpretation may wound a believer, he swings back and humbles himself to the dust.

Does he tell the Philippians how glad he is that their care of him has flourished again after a break, he immediately adds “but ye lacked opportunity”. Fearing lest his reference to their former fellowship should lend itself to misconstruction he adds “Not that I speak in respect of want” and asserts the most

uncompromising independence. This however might appear ungrateful, and lest he should appear to undervalue the Philippian fellowship, he swings back again with the words “Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction” (Phil. iv. 10-14).

So here in Galatians. Nothing could be more uncompromising, more independent, more entirely severed from human intervention or approbation than the opening challenge of the first verse of Galatians and nothing could be so characteristically Pauline than the swing back to human co-operation with which he opens verse two.

“And all the brethren which are with me.”

Just as he brings forward “five hundred brethren” as additional witnesses to the Resurrection of the Lord in I Cor. xv. 6, so these brethren are associated with him in this great stand for the truth, and the vindication of his claims.

Macknight brings this passage forward as one of the evidences that Paul wrote the epistle from Antioch.

"From as the only view with which any of the brethren could join the apostle in writing to the Galatians, was to attest the facts which he advanced in the first and second chapters for proving his apostleship, the brethren who joined him in writing it must have been such as knew the truth of these facts."

Brethren of Corinth, or Ephesus, or Rome would only be able to attest what the apostle himself had told them, but the brethren at Antioch would have had opportunity of obtaining first hand evidence of these things. In chapter two Paul refers to an incident which took place at Antioch, an incident that put Peter in a very bad light, and it was necessary that some such confirmation should have accompanied this stirring letter, lest the edge be taken off the arguments by doubts as to their truth and reality.

If Paul's word is to be accredited at all, and if the confirmation of “all the brethren” that associated themselves with his attitude and witness, is not to be set aside, then in the clearest possible light we must set the apostle of the Gentiles, accepting his unique and distinctive office as a gift of the ascended Christ, and realizing as we do so, that an apostle implies a message, and an apostle so represents the Lord Who sent him, that the words reveal how exceedingly serious the attitude of those must be who look upon the glorious revelation of Divine Truth found in Paul's epistles, as but Paul's “opinion”.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send (*exapostello*) receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent (*exapostello*) Me” (John xiii. 20).

## **#82. GALATIANS.**

### **With a special note on the testimony of the papyri.**

This epistle is address “unto the churches of Galatia” (Gal. i. 2) and its study will throw light upon the constitution and calling of the church, and indicate the essential difference that exists between the church as it existed before Acts xxviii., and the church as it came into being after that dispensational boundary is crossed.

Not only is it not the observed custom of the apostle thus to address an epistle, the omission of any commendation is most marked. This however cannot be felt unless the introductions to the epistles are actually before us. It would occupy much precious space to quote each introduction in full, we must content ourselves with the barest summary.

“Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ ... we give thanks ... for you all” (I.Thess.i.1,2; II.Thess.i.1-3).

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours . . . I thank my God always on your behalf” (I Cor. i. 1-4).

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia . . . . blessed be God . . . . Who comforteth us” (II Cor. i. 1-4).

“To all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints . . . first, i thank my God . . . that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom. i. 7, 8).

“To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians.i.1).

“To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. i. 1).

“To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus which are at Colosse . . . . we give thanks” (Col. i. 2, 3).

It will be observed that there is a transition from “churches” in a locality to “the church of God”, from “the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father”, to “all at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”. The epistle of the Mystery do not use the word “church” in the opening address, reserving that word for higher meaning that it assumes in the present dispensation. For this transition no individual believer or separate *ekklesia* could be held responsible, it but marked the onward movement of the Truth, but the most marked omission in Galatians of any word of commendation or thanks on their behalf calls for explanation, and that explanation must be either that Paul failed in his customary courtesy, or that the Galatian church was in such grave doctrinal and practical danger, that no such commendation could be given, but instead the most drastic measures must be taken, involving rigorous action, respecting no man’s person, whether that of the pillars at Jerusalem or the false teachers in Galatia. A burning zeal sweeps aside all convention, and the churches of Galatia were given a most salutary shock as the apostle plunged unceremoniously into his fight of faith.

While the apostle found no grounds for thanksgiving as he view the wrecking of his labour and the assault upon the truth of the gospel that brought forth this epistle, he did not, and could not, withhold the most earnest desires for their well being, consequently, whereas the customary commendation is absent, the benediction is present in all its fulness, unreserved and free as the gospel he preached, and for which he suffered.

“Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal. i. 3).

It is the habit of many commentators to go into the meaning and doctrinal significance of the words “grace” and “peace” used in the salutation, but while we are sure that these words are never used by the apostle lightly or without intention, they constitute not so much a piece of doctrine to be studied, as an heartfelt wish to be immediately appropriated. They give atmosphere to the remainder of the epistle, and to loiter on the threshold of the epistle itself, to examine this introductory blessing word for word is to misunderstand its place and intention. Therefore, instead of dealing with the wording of this salutation, let us use it as an introduction to the larger question that has received so much light in modern times from the papyri discovered in the sands of Egypt. In view of the discovery of this papyrus, Lightfoot’s words have become classical, he wrote:

"If we could only recover letters that ordinary people wrote to each other without any thought of being literary, we should have the greatest possible help for the understanding of the language of the N.T. generally."

That help we now possess, as Professor Milligan has said:

"An Egyptian papyrus letter and a N.T. epistle may be widely separated alike by nationality and habitat of their writers and by their own inherent characteristics and aims, but both are written in substantially the same Greek."

To this may be added that the form in which the epistles are written, their opening salutation, their thanksgiving and commendation, their conclusion and benediction, are seen to be in accordance with the accepted model of the times. Individual expressions moreover, found in Paul's epistles, find their echo in the papyrus letters. For example:

"Comfort, therefore one another" (2nd cent.).

"Henceforth" used as an introduction to concluding injunctions (2nd cent.).

"Serapion, with all at his house, salutes you" (1st cent.).

"Parousia" for personal presence (Phil. 2:12 & 3rd cent.).

"To be refreshed" as in II Tim. 1:16 (3rd cent.).

"A casual review of the private correspondence in the papyri reveals the fact that the letters of the period followed a regular and established order and were shaped in a well-defined way . . . . as a rule, the customary epistolary formulae turn on the following: (a) thanksgiving for good news and expressions of good wishes; (b) prayers for welfare of body and soul and also for worldly prosperity."

"The generous proportion of personal greetings in a private letter is quite in keeping with its essential character as a fresh and intimate communication between absent friends."

"A list of personal greetings closing the communication is a markedly common feature in papyri private correspondence" (Meecham, "Light from Ancient Letters").

The postscript is by no means a modern invention, and examples are found in the papyri of a postscript added by another hand after the signature has been appended. The brief note by Tertius in Rom. xvi. 22 and the postscript coming after the signature in I Cor. xvi. 21 and Col. iv. 18 are good examples.

It may come as a surprise to some readers to learn that it was a common practice in the days of Paul, for writers to dictate their letters and literary efforts to amanuenses who would take it down in shorthand. Here are the terms of apprenticeship dated 155A.D.

"Panechotes . . . . to Apollonius, writer of shorthand, greeting. I have placed with you my slave Chærammon to be taught the signs which your son Dionysius knows, for a period of two years . . . . at the salary agreed upon between us, 120 silver drachmæ . . . . of which sum you have received the first installment amounting to forty drachmæ, and you will receive the second installment when the boy has learned the whole system, and the third you will receive at the end of the period when the boy writes fluently in every respect and reads faultlessly."

Many of our readers who have experience of shorthand writers will appreciate the last phrase "and reads faultlessly".

There is every reason to believe that Tertius wrote the epistle to the Romans in shorthand at the dictation of Paul.

The epistle to the Galatians provides an example of where the author, to impress one special point upon his readers, takes the pen out of the hand of the trained scribe, and with more cumbrous letters writes the final sentence (Gal. vi. 11-18).

One of the most pathetic of these ancient papyrus letters is the following:

"Irene to Tacunophria and Philo, good cheer! I was much grieved and wept over the beloved one, as I wept for Didymus, and everything that was fitting I did, and all who were with me. But truly there is nothing any one can do in the face of such things. Do you therefore comfort one another. Good-bye."

Poor Irene. She grieved and wept. She did what was fitting — but what a blank she faces! “But truly there is nothing any one can do.” How different is the language of Paul in I Thess. iv. 14-18, he could write “Wherefore, comfort one another *with these words*”, for he spoke of the Risen Saviour.

The epistles of Paul are neither valued by us because of the form in which they are cast, nor for any novelty of style or approach. They are of perennial blessedness because of their Divine authority, and by reason of the sacred character of their subject matter.

It is a salutary lesson for all, that these holy letters were written with the same instruments and in the same way as were those that were secular and transient, and we are sure that had Paul lived in our time, he would have used to the full the advantages that accrue from the modern printing press and postal service. Let us not close without a moment’s grateful remembrances of those faithful helpers, like Tertius whose names though unknown to us to-day are in the book of life and known to the Lord we both serve.

### **#83. GALATIANS.**

#### **The unique character of the introduction to this epistle.**

The salutation of verse three, leads on to the augmenting reference to the sacrifice of Christ, with which the introduction to the epistle closes:

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Gal. i. 4, 5).

If the salutation, wishing “grace” and “peace” be something which the other epistles of Paul would lead us to expect in this place, the words that follow, and which are quoted above, are so unusual that their addition must have some most intimate bearing upon the purpose of the epistle. If the reader will consult the opening words of the epistles of Paul, it will be discovered that the salutation concludes with the wish for “grace” and “peace” and that epistle proper immediately follows. We are therefore obliged to ask why the apostle adopted such a different approach here? The answer that satisfies the question as to the strangeness of the challenging word of the first verse satisfies this question also. The Galatians were being carried away from the basic facts of salvation by grace to a system of legal works and ceremonial religion. This is diametrically opposed to the great central fact of the Gospel that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures”. To this sacrificial death the apostle returns again and again in the course of his argument. See how it forms the climax to his personal testimony of the second chapter, “I am crucified with Christ” (ii. 20) shatters the whole fabric of legalism that the Judaistic party had been erecting. “O foolish Galatians” the apostle cries — Why? because “placarded” before their eyes (as the word “evidently” literally means) “Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified” among them (iii. 1). How then could they think of being made perfect by the flesh?

Do they lean toward the possibility of accomplishing a righteousness in their own works of the law, it is met, exposed and rendered impossible by the fact that “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” by hanging on a tree (iii. 13). So on to the personal appeal with which the epistle ends, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus” (vi. 14). The same impassioned love for truth which made Paul use such language of the apostles as is recorded in Gal. ii. 6, which made it necessary to speak of Peter’s defection and Barnabas’ fall; which justified the use of the epithet “foolish” and the charge of being “bewitched” (iii. 1); which classed the withdrawal from free grace to legal observances as all one and the same with Paganism (iv. 8-11); and that could contemplate anathematizing an angel (i. 8), or “the cutting off” of those that trouble the church (v. 12); and which moved him to make the lengthy and personal appeal with his “own hand” at the close of the epistle, this same impassioned love for the truth would not hesitate to sweep aside convention and to introduce in the

very salutation of the epistle a reference to that Sacrifice for sin, which was being emptied of meaning by the false teaching combated by this epistle.

The apostle stresses the fact that the Saviour “gave” Himself *tou dontos heauton*, and this participial clause “serves at the very outset to specify the active principle of the error of the Galatians” (Ellicott). This use of *didomi* places in strong contrast the negative of iii. 21, “If there had been *a law given* which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”, and the intense personal note of ii. 20, 21 is incipient in these words of i. 4:

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me . . . . If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (ii. 20, 21).

Christ gave Himself “for our sins”. The Received Text reads *huper*, but the balance of authority is in favour of *peri* as the true reading here. While it cannot be said that *huper* and *peri* are never interchangeable by the writers of the New Testament generally speaking, *peri* will be found used with “things”, as for instance sins, while *huper* will be used of persons. The two prepositions are found in I.Pet.iii.18 Christ suffered “for sins” *peri* the Just “for the unjust” *huper*, and illustrate this distinction. *Peri* means “around” and so “concerning”. It encircles the object in view.

The dignity of the Person and the unique character of His work forbid the idea that Christ could die for our sins, and yet, weak and beggarly elements, rites and observances, all of them the works of the flesh, could have part or lot in this gracious work of redemption. The apostle had made it very clear when he opened his ministry in Galatia that “Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts xiii. 38, 39).

The apostle however, does not stay at the statement that Christ “gave Himself for our sins” he proceeds to show its application in a special particular:

“That He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal. i. 4).

Just as we discover that there is an intimate connexion between the reference to the Sacrifice for sins in this salutation and the purpose of the epistle, so most surely must there be an adequate reason for this extension. No difficulty exists in the insistence on “deliverance” for emancipation is the key thought of the epistle’s doctrine, but the question persists, “Why go on to speak about this present evil age? How does *that* bear upon the theme and motive of Galatians?” Ordinarily “the present evil age” would mean much the same as “this present world”, literally “the age of this world” (Eph. ii. 2) and simply “this world” (Rom. xii. 2), and placed in opposition to “that world” (Luke xx. 35) and “the world to come” (Heb. vi. 5). But there is no evident or sufficient justification for obtruding this teaching in the salutation of an epistle; there must be something in the words used that would strike with intended force, those who were in the position that these Galatian Christians found themselves. In his commentary upon this passage Locke says:

“Christ’s taking them out of the present world may, without any violence to the words, be understood to signify his setting them free from the Mosaical constitution.”

*Poneros* “evil” sometimes means defective or imperfect as for example “If thine eye be evil” (Matthew vi. 23). So the law was described as “weak through the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3), as making nothing “perfect” (Heb. vii. 19) and as a system that could be “blamed” (viii. 7). In the epistle to the Galatians itself it is likened to weak and beggarly elements (Gal. iv. 9), and was “added because of transgressions till the Seed should come” (Gal. iii. 19). In this light we must read the strange words of Ezek. xx. 25 “I gave them statutes which were not good”. To the Jewish believer in Galatia the

apostle's words would be vivid and incontrovertible. There is the fact to be faced that this epistle is addressed not to converted Jews only, but to converted Gentiles, and however much it may be conceded, that the Jew reading these words, would have sensed their application and import, it still remains to be shown how a Gentile could thus be conceived of understanding them. When, however, we realize that Paul has not hesitated to bracket together as it were legalism and ceremonial rites whether Mosaic or Pagan in origin, when they stand opposed to the free grace of the Gospel the difficulty is partly removed.

Later in his argument the apostle refers to the condition under which his hearers had lived "in bondage under the elements of the world" (Gal. iv. 3), and in his concluding testimony he does not speak so much as dying to the law or to sin, but being "crucified unto the world" (vi. 14). It will be seen by comparing ii. 19, 20 with vi. 14, that in the one place Paul claims to have been "crucified with Christ" and so become "dead to the law" and in the other place, to have been crucified with Christ and so become crucified to the world. In both instances there is a new life as a sequel "the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" and "for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature".

Lightfoot says "*Aion* 'age' in the Scripture, very ordinarily is 'the Jewish age'. In which sense, circumcision, the Passover, and other Mosaic rites are said to be *eis aiona* 'for an age'."

We may sum up this argument concerning the present evil age with a quotation from Sadler's commentary:

"The evil world of St. Paul is twofold. It was the Jewish evil world, with its self-righteousness, its legalism, its utterly Godless and immoral traditions, forming a character of intense worldliness and deep seated alienation from God, and the Gentile evil world with its lasciviousness, lusts, and abominable idolatries."

Christ has come to deliver from both systems, and for a Gentile who had professed to believe in Christ, to come out of the evil world of Gentile Paganism and to turn to the equally evil world of Judaistic formalism was such a lapse that the apostle could only say of such "ye are fallen from grace", "Christ is become of no effect".

The apostle, after this most unique addition to the salutation of an epistle, declares this deliverance to be "according to the will of God and our Father, to Whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen". There is, in these concluding words, yet one more item that is unique. The "will of God" is mentioned many times as the originating cause of mercy and grace but this is the only occasion when the words "and our Father" are added. Does not the apostle intentionally stress the Fatherhood of God because of the emphasis he is to place upon "the time appointed by the Father" "the adoption of sons" and the right to say "Abba, Father" in Galatian iv.?

If the exordium of this epistle contain such evidence of intense feeling and concern, we shall not be surprised to discover that the epistle itself is full of this burning zeal and evangelical fervour, and it should be our prayer, that not only may we hold fast to the Gospel therein displayed, and to the freedom therein so bravely championed, but that we too may catch something of the spirit of this man of God, and in our day and generation be prepared not only to "stand" but to "withstand" so that the "truth of the gospel may continue right through (*diameno*)".

## #84. No “Other” Gospel (GALATIANS i. 6 - 10).

The introduction of this epistle, with its strange challenge, is followed immediately and abruptly with the equally strange and challenging words “I marvel”. No intervening words of praise or commendation soften the plunge, the apostle by his very manner revealing the intensity of his feelings in this great matter. The truth of the Gospel was at stake (Gal. ii. 5, 14), and the whole of chapter one pivots on the gospel and its preaching. In the short section before us (Gal. i. 6-10) the word translated “gospel” and its derivatives, occur six times: “another gospel” *euangelion* (6); “the gospel of Christ” *euangelion* (7); “preach any other gospel” *euangelizo* (8 twice and 9); and “an angel from heaven” *angelos* (8).

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (6).

We may marvel when we see some exhibition of great faith, as did the Saviour (Matt. viii. 10), or as did the disciples when they saw the Lord’s command of the elements (27). The word is used to express wonder and astonishment at anything extraordinary, whether at a miracle (Matt. ix. 8, 33), a profound speech (xxii. 22) or at an unprecedented occurrence (Mark v. 20).

This act of marveling may be the accompaniment or outcome of unbelief (Mark vi. 6); fear (Luke.viii.25); or joy (Luke xxiv. 41). Paul was not, evidently, given to “marveling”, for out of forty-six occurrences of the word in the New Testament, Paul is responsible for three only, and of these three, once only is the word used of Paul himself, and that in the passage before us.

At Antioch in Galatia he had used the word of the unbelieving Jews — “Behold ye despisers, and *wonder*, and perish” (Acts xiii. 41), and now, to his astonishment he sees the believing company at the same place, following rapidly the same disastrous course.

The apostle’s astonishment was not only that the Galatians had been “removed”, but that the removal had been so rapid. The translation of *tacheos* by “so soon” or “quickly” seems to demand some datum line from which to reckon it. Some commentators say “so soon after conversion”, others “so soon after the apostle’s visit”, yet others, “so soon after the advent of the false teachers”. Bloomfield’s translation is probably nearer to the apostle’s intention, for he, together with a few ancient and modern commentators, understand the word to mean “hastily”, “precipitately”, “inconsiderately”, and Paul is seen marveling, as it were, at a spiritual landslide.

The main structure of this section is simple:

- A | 6. The defection “moved away” (*metatithemi*).
- B | 6. The grace of Christ.
- C | 6, 7. The “other” gospel (*heteros*).
- A | 7. The perversion “turned away” (*metastrepho*).
- B | 7. The gospel of Christ.
- C | 8-10. The “different” gospel (*par ho*).

The members C and C allow of an expansion, thus:

The members C and C allow of an expansion, thus:

- C | 6, 7. The “other” gospel (*heteros*).
  - a | Not another (*allos*).
  - b | Some that trouble you.
- \* \* \* \* \*
- C | 8-10. The “different” gospel (*par ho*).
  - a | We, or an angel.
  - b | Preached (*past*).
  - c | We preached (*we*).
  - d | Let him be *anathema*.
- a | If anyone.
  - b | Preaches (*present*).
  - c | Ye received (*Ye*).
  - d | Let him be *anathema*.
- a | Do I *obey* God?
  - b | Do I seek to *please* men?
  - b | If I yet *pleased* men.
- a | I should not be *servant* of Christ.

The word translated “removed” in verse 6, is *metatithemi*. It has the force of “transference”, “translation”, or “to carry over” (Acts vii. 16; Heb. xi. 5). It was this sudden transfer of allegiance, without defence, without an appeal to the apostle for help; this sudden capitulation that caused the apostle’s astonishment, and called forth this burning epistle.

The words “Him that called you” are almost universally ascribed to God the Father, but there are indications in this epistle that in this case the apostle refers to himself as the minister by whom they had believed. He charges them with “changing over from him that called them”, not so much with apostasy from God Himself, but from the pure gospel as preached by himself, to the garbled mixture as preached by the Judaizers. He speaks of such as “troublers”, refers plainly to them in Galatian iv. 12-17 and in Gal. v. 8, and the fact that he devotes practically two whole chapters to defend his apostleship and ministry lends weight to the suggestion.

Whether Jerome’s thought that in *metatithemi* “removed” there is a mental pun on *Galatae*, the Hebrew *galal* meaning “to roll” or “be removed”, is perhaps beyond our present knowledge to judge.

The seriousness of this “removal” or transfer, was not merely that it was a piece of personal disloyalty, it was the removal from the true gospel to that which was a gospel but in name.

“Unto another gospel which is not another” (Gal. i. 6, 7).

This phrase calls for examination, and we might as well couple with it the words “any other gospel” of verses 8 & 9, words which we have rendered in the structure by the phrase “different gospel”.

In verses 6 & 7 two different words are rendered “another”; *heteros*, “another of another sort or kind”, and *allos*, “another of the same or similar kind”.

This passage has given considerable trouble to commentators, and the reader may profit by considering some of the most noteworthy suggestions that have been put forward.

Alford adopts the note of Meyer:

"The preaching *eis heteron euangelion* was paradoxical expression, there being in reality, *but one gospel*. Paul appeared by it to admit the existence of *many gospels*, and he therefore now explains himself more accurately, how he wishes to be understood."

Lightfoot comments:

"Only in this sense is it another gospel, in that it is an attempt to pervert the one true gospel."

Ellicott sees the connexion with "troublers", saying,

"which is not another (a second) gospel, except (only in this sense, that) there are some that trouble you, *i.e.* the Judaists bring you another gospel, but it is really no GOSPEL at all."

Wordsworth uses this connexion too and would have it read:

"Which is not a second Gospel, unless, forsooth, those persons who are troubling you, and 'whose will it is to prevent the Gospel of Christ are somebody', a thought brought over from Galatians 2 where the apostle speaks of those who seem 'to be somewhat' (Gal. 2:6)."

Conybeare and Howson approach nearer to the intention of the apostle (as we understand him), "for a new glad tidings which is nothing else but the device of certain men who are troubling you".

If we take as the antecedent of the pronoun "which" the whole of verse 6, we may render the passage as follows,

"which thing (*viz.* that ye are so quickly changing from him that called you, &c., &c.) is nothing else, save that there are some who trouble you."

This gives the words *ei me* their proper signification, and throws the blame not so much on those who had been duped, as upon those who had duped them (see Gal. iii. 1; v. 8-10, 12; vi. 12, 13).

The fact that Paul calls these false preachers "troublers" is an interesting link with Acts xv., even as we found the word "marvel" a definite link with Acts xiii.

"Forasmuch as *we* have heard, that certain which went out from us *have troubled* you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment" (Acts xv. 24).

Just as the Council at Jerusalem said these "troublers" *subverted* the souls of the believers, so Paul said that these "troublers" *perverted* the gospel.

*Metastropho* primarily means to "turn", "alter", "change", and the perversion of the gospel arises out of the awful nature of its contents. It is so unique, so divine, that to tamper with it must be fatal. In order to compel the Galatians to perceive the serious nature of this preaching of a "different" gospel Paul uses a figure of speech known as *hyperbolical hypothesis*, a figure whose name implies both exaggeration and moral impossibility and only permissible when an extreme example is called for.

Here the "different" gospel is expressed by the words *par ho* "beside which". The gospel of God can brook neither rival or equal.

To Gentiles brought up as we have been with no spiritual history, the pronouncing of a possible *anathema* upon an angel from heaven may sound surprising but not blasphemous, but for one who was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and who had been an exceeding zealot for Israelite tradition, the veneration of angels would be deeply ingrained thereby making this extreme case the more incisive. Nothing could be more certain than Paul's clear conception of the Gospel he preached, and nothing could move him to abate one iota of its blessed provision. The apostle's adversaries had not hesitated to dub him both a time server and a man pleaser (I Cor. ix. 10-23; x. 24); he had proscribed circumcision, yet had practiced it (Acts xvi. 3).

"Now then", the apostle seems to say, "does this language startle you? Is this the language of a *time server*? Will you persist in defaming me by saying I simply seek to conciliate men? If that had been my desire I should not be suffering for faithful adherence to the gospel of Christ".

The word “yet” *eti* verse 10 should be read in the light of Gal. vi. 17, where Paul closes his epistle on the same note with which he began. “Henceforth let no man question my authority.” “Persuade” *peitho* usually suggests subordination, and is sometimes translated “obey”. In chapter two we see the apostle yielding subjection “not for an hour”. He disposes of the idea that he sought to please men.

Having triumphantly disposed of the first charge, that he most certainly was not attempting to ingratiate himself with men who were his superiors in the apostolic office, or to please those who were his hearers, he turns to the next great subject of dispute, namely, the Gospel itself which he preached, and the authority he had received. These two related subjects follow in due order, and must occupy our attention in succeeding articles. Let us not lightly put aside this record of a valiant single-handed fight in which immortal odds were at stake, and the whole subject of salvation by grace through faith in the very melting pot, without putting up a twofold prayer, first a word of thanksgiving for the man of God who “fought a good fight and kept the faith” and, secondly, a prayer for ourselves that we too in our day and generation may quit ourselves like men and be strong in the faith.

## #85. The Gospel received (GALATIANS i. 11 - 14).

Having taken up the challenge regarding his apostleship, it of necessity involved the gospel he preached, for an apostle without a message would remain a mere cypher and would not be worthy of debate. Again, he uses the negations “not . . . neither . . . but” declaring that the gospel which he preached was not “according to man” *kata anthropon* (see Gal. iii. 15), neither was it received from man, nor taught by man, but received by revelation of Jesus Christ. The apostle having made this new and sweeping claim to independence, proceeded at once to justify it. But here he was met with a difficulty. How can anyone prove to anyone else that which is exclusively personal? Paul might claim with all the earnestness and solemnity of his being that the gospel he preached, was revealed to him by Christ, but it must for ever remain a purely personal, unsupported assertion. The only thing he can do is to appeal to circumstances that are knowable, show the moral impossibility of things being otherwise, and demonstrate that the whole manner of his life and upbringing was completely opposed to the thought that he, Saul the Pharisee, should have evolved from his own heart and mind the gospel of free grace to the Gentiles.

The structure of this short passage is as follows:

- |   |  |     |  |   |  |                                   |
|---|--|-----|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| A |  | 13. |  | a |  | My conversation,                  |
|   |  |     |  | b |  | In time past,                     |
|   |  |     |  | c |  | <i>The Jews' religion.</i>        |
| B |  | 13. |  | d |  | <i>Beyond measure.</i>            |
|   |  |     |  | e |  | Persecution of Church of God.     |
| A |  | 14. |  | c |  | <i>The Jews' religion.</i>        |
|   |  |     |  | a |  | My equals,                        |
|   |  |     |  | b |  | In my nation.                     |
| B |  | 14. |  | d |  | <i>More exceedingly.</i>          |
|   |  |     |  | e |  | Zealot for traditions of fathers. |

Two items are thrown into relief by this correspondence. “The Jews’ religion” and the excessiveness of Paul’s zeal expressed negatively in persecuting the church and positively in maintaining the traditions of his fathers. Let us consider the bearing of this argument upon the question of Paul’s independence of human intervention in respect to the gospel which he preached.

“Conversation.” The Latin origin of this word means “to live with” or “keep company with” others, and only in a secondary sense did it bear the meaning of “talking together”. The Greek word is a compound of *strephe* “to turn”, which has already met us in Gal. i. 7 in the word *metastrepho* “to

pervert". *Diastrepho* is translated "perverse" and "pervert", and the English reader will not fail to perceive in each rendering of these words the stem *ver* is retained in English. So in the word *anastrophe* the translation retains the same stem "conVERsation" a "turn". *Anastrepho*, the verb, is translated literally "overthrow" as in John ii. 15 or "return" as in Acts v. 22; and also in its secondary sense "to abide", "to behave", "to live" and to "have one's conversation" (Matthew xvii. 22; I Tim. iii. 15; Hebrews xiii. 18 & Eph. ii. 3). When therefore Paul spoke of his "conversation in time past in the Jew's religion" he meant his whole course and manner of life, and he was but adopting a form of argument which is repeated several times in the New Testament record. Let us acquaint ourselves with this mode of reasoning so characteristic of the apostle.

(1) *In his defence before the multitude.*

"I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders" (Acts xxii. 3-7).

(2) *In his defence before Agrippa.*

"My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee . . . . I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which thing I also did in Jerusalem . . . . I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities" (Acts xxvi. 4-11).

(3) *In his confession when writing to Timothy.*

"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful putting me into the Ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (I Tim. i. 12).

Is this the sort of man that one would expect to evolve from his own heart and mind a gospel of grace to the Gentile sinner? A man who was a Pharisee, a Jew, a Zealot, a traditionalist, a blasphemer, and a persecutor? If so, then all argument is at an end. There is no room for cause and effect in the estimate of human action, all psychology is emptied of meaning, all the influence of environment and birth set at nought. One has only to become acquainted with Judaistic teaching and upbringing to know that nothing short of a miracle can account for the conversion of this Pharisaic persecutor into the lowly apostle of abounding grace, and nothing short of a miracle is recorded in Acts nine.

One especially Pauline characteristic finds its place in this passage of first Galatians, the twofold superlative "beyond measure", "more exceedingly". It will be observed in the "most straitest sect" of Act xxvi. 5 and in the "less than the least" of Eph. iii. 8. Among other consequences of his superlative zeal, Paul says that he "persecuted the Church of God and wasted it" (Gal. i. 13). There can be no two thoughts about the meaning of the added words "and wasted it". *Portheo* occurs three times in the N.T. and in each case refers to the action of Paul.

"Is not this he that *destroyed* them which called on this name in Jerusalem?" (Acts ix. 21).

"I persecuted the church of God, and *wasted* it" (Gal. i. 13).

“They had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he *destroyed*” (Gal. i. 23).

The reason we have examined this word first, and not the word persecute will become evident as we proceed.

The word translated “persecute” is *dioko*, a word in common use both in the apostle’s day and at the time of the translation of the Greek O.T. Like all words that are in constant use, it takes upon itself secondary meanings, but a consultation of the LXX of the Pentateuch leaves us in no doubt as to its primary significance.

“He pursued after him seven days” (Gen. xxxi. 23).

“The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake” (Exod. xv. 9).

“Ye shall chase your enemies . . . . chase an hundred . . . . put ten thousand to flight” (Lev. xxvi. 7, 8).

“Ye shall flee when none pursueth you” (Lev. xxvi. 17).

“The sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them . . . . they shall fall when none pursueth” (Lev. xxvi. 36).

“That which is altogether just shalt thou follow” (Deut. xvi. 20).

“Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer” (Deut. xix. 6).

“Them that hate thee, which persecuted thee” (Deut. xxx. 7).

“How should one chase a thousand” (Deut. xxxii. 30).

The only occurrence in the Pentateuch of the use of this word in a secondary sense is that of Deut.xvi.20, but this cannot be pressed as the Alexandrian version reads *phulasso* “to keep”. There can be no doubt that the mistaken idea of “pursuing” as one would “a calling” or with good intention is foreign to the usage of the word. The meaning read into the words of Judges viii. 4 “faint yet pursuing”, and kept alive by a popular hymn is altogether false.

Coming to the New Testament the six occurrences of *dioko* in Matthew are all translated “persecute” and *can mean* nothing else. Of the two references in Luke, one, Luke xvii. 23 is employed in a secondary sense. In John, the three references are translated “persecute” and can mean nothing else. Nine times does the word *dioko* occur in the Acts, and in each case the only translation is “persecute”. In the Epistles, the word is more often used in its secondary sense as in Romans, where it is translated three times “follow”, once “given to” and once “persecute”. In I Corinthians it is twice rendered “persecute” and once “follow after”. In II Corinthians it occurs but once, and in this reference it is translated “persecute”. In the epistle to the Galatians there are five occurrences of *dioko* all of which are translated “persecute”. In Philippians it occurs three times, once translated “persecute”, once “followed after” and once “press toward”. In I Thess. v. 15; I Timothy vi. 11; II Tim. ii. 22; Hebrews xii. 14; and I Pet. iii. 11 it is used in the secondary sense, and in II Tim. iii. 12 & Rev. xii. 13 it is again “persecute”. There are therefore thirty-one passages where the word is translated either “persecute” or “suffer persecution”, and thirteen where the translation is “follow” or a similar word.

The reference to Paul’s persecution of the church are as follows:

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts ix. 4; xxii. 7; xxvi. 14).

“I am Jesus, Whom thou persecutest” (Acts ix. 5; xxii. 8; xxvi. 15).

“I persecuted this way unto the death” (Acts xxii. 4).

“I persecuted them even unto strange cities” (Acts xxvi. 11).

“I persecuted the church of God” (I Cor. xv. 9).

“Beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it” (Gal. i. 13).

“Concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Phil. iii. 6).

Here is a consistent use of this word, and unless one had some private reasons, it would never occur to the mind that in Phil. iii. 6 the apostle, without warning, without conforming to the obligation laid upon all writers to notify his reader should he suddenly depart from accepted usage, that Paul here intends us to understand that he was “following after” the church, with the intention if possible to being accepted as a member! We almost feel obliged to apologize to our readers for what must appear slight recognition of their intelligence, but as this interpretation has been put upon the passage, and has been circulated among those who love and honour the Scriptures, we have felt it incumbent upon us to call attention to it. There would be just as much truth in a contention that as the word “conversation” can sometimes mean nothing more than “speech with another” that all Paul meant in Gal. i. 13 was his manner of “speech” — a proposition that could not be maintained in the light of the passages cited from Acts xxii. & xxvi.

In Philippians the apostle prefaced the persecution of the church with a list of his *Judaistic credentials*, even as he does in Gal. i. 11-14, and apparently for the same reason. He says in the one passage “concerning zeal, persecuting the church”. If we ask “concerning zeal for what?”, we are not left without guidance. The answer is “zeal for the traditions of the fathers”, and such a zeal though it may and has led to persecution, could never lead to an ardent following of a position entirely opposed to these traditions and with a view to acceptance. The whole of the passage quoted in Phil. iii. 4-6 is descriptive of Saul of Tarsus, *before his conversion* on the road to Damascus. It was “touching the law” that he was a Pharisee. It was “touching the righteousness which is in the law”, that he was blameless, a statement diametrically opposed to his apostolic doctrine, and belonging only to his unconverted Pharisaic condition.

The word *diogmos* is translated in each of its ten occurrences by the one word “persecution” and *dioktes* is the word Paul uses of himself when he styled himself “a blasphemer, and a *persecutor*, and injurious” (I Tim. i. 13).

In the two passages in Galatians i. where the Authorized Version reads “the Jews’ religion” the word is *Ioudaismos* “Judaism”, and includes the whole Jewish manner of life. “I forged ahead” he says (*prokopto* “profit”) above many mine equals. To be entrusted, though a young man, by the Sanhedrin as he had been, was a signal honour, and the more these things are appreciated, the more abundantly it becomes manifest that the gospel which Paul preached was not after man, it was not received from man, it was not taught him by man, but it was given to him by revelation.

We shall have opportunity to consider this claim to revelation when dealing with Gal. i. 16. Meanwhile let us rejoice that we are counted worthy to inherit so glorious a message, and pray that we may be in our small degree as faithful to the trust as was Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ.

## **#86. Paul’s Independent Authority (GALATIANS i. 15 - 24).**

Paul has now asserted in unmistakable terms his independent Apostleship and Gospel, and his assertions have been supported by very strong proof derived from the manner of his upbringing and the moral impossibility that from such soil there should grow, without Divine intervention, such a plant as the Gospel of the Grace of God proved to be. The apostle might have left the matter there, and proceeded forthwith to the great theme of his epistle, but he knew the kind of antagonists these Judaizing preachers were, and how any unexplained association that he may have had with the apostles at Jerusalem could easily be distorted into a tacit acknowledgment of his indebtedness to that body. He therefore uses the words “not . . . neither . . . but” once more, and shows his complete independence of all human authority especially the authority vested in the apostles at Jerusalem.

We shall find him therefore meticulously going over the ground he traversed after his conversion on the road to Damascus, how he resolved “immediately” that this was a case for a clean cut with “flesh

and blood”, how he avoided both “Jerusalem” and those who were “apostles” before him, but that on the contrary he went away from all human contacts into “Arabia”, and returned to Damascus.

Three years elapsed before he paid a friendly visit to Jerusalem “to see Peter”, but even on that occasion he declared on oath that he saw no other apostle save James the Lord’s brother. After that visit he traversed the regions of Syria and Cilicia, but was personally unknown to the churches of Judæa. All they knew of him and his activities were to the effect that the Persecutor had now turned Preacher, and they had glorified God in Him and on this account.

### Galatians i. 15 - 24.

- A | a | 15, 16. “In me.” His Son revealed. *En emoi.*
- b | 16. “Preach Him.” *Euangelizomai.*
- c | 16. “I conferred not with flesh and blood.”
- B | d | 17. “Neither went . . . but I went” *apelthon.*
- e | 17. “Returned again unto Damascus.”
- d | 18-20. “I went up . . . I lie not” *anelthon.*
- e | 21. “Afterwards I came into . . . Syria, Cilicia.”
- A | c | 22. “Unknown by face.”
- b | 23. “Preacheth the faith . . . he destroyed.” *Euangelizetai.*
- a | 24. “In me.” God glorified. *En emoi.*

The structure of the section is simple, and throws into correspondence these items, approaching the central theme by three steps, and completing the argument by another three steps, leaving the “neither . . . but” and the geographical items to form the centre of the argument.

“But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me.”

The simple sentence deals with the good pleasure of the Lord to reveal his Son in Paul, but so overwhelming was the consciousness of the Divine hand in all his affairs, even when he knew not the Lord, that the apostle has to put in a parenthetical note. Let us look at the parenthesis first.

“Separated.” Apart from three references in the Gospels, the use of *aphorizo* “to separate” is confined to the Acts or Epistles of Paul. This word is composed of *apo* “away from” and *horizo* “to define or set bounds”. The English reader will recognize the origin of the word “horizon”. We cannot here go into the many subdivisions of this word, sufficient for the moment is it to say that another word of great moment in Paul’s ministry is closely related to *aphorizo*, and that is the word translated “predestinate” *proorizo* “to mark off beforehand”. Just as in Romans, the term “calling” follows “predestination”, so here “calling” to service, follows “separation”. **God may not have been known to us during the early years of our unregenerate days. We may have done many things the very reverse of His will and contrary to His Word, yet who among us but cannot look back to those early days and be conscious that there was a hedging, a guiding, a leading which we unconsciously obeyed or which we followed sometimes against our own inclinations.** In spite of prevalent evil and in full recognition of human free choice, God has not and never will abdicate His throne.

As a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” Paul would have imbibed from infancy the doctrine of separation as it pertained to Israel and the Priesthood, for no Israelite could forget the peculiar calling of the nation to which he belonged. He would moreover, as a Preacher, remember — even when overwhelmed with his own unworthiness — the language of Jer. i. 5-10 and its close parallel with his own calling as an apostle to the nations, and still further, as a “Pharisee of the Pharisees”, he could not miss the *paronomasia*\* of the words *aphorizo* and *Pharisee*, for both words have the common meaning “separated” though derived from entirely different roots.

[\* - A figure of speech where words of similar sound are brought together, a figure found several times in Paul’s epistles.]

This national separation, this separation in pride and contempt, however, was included in those things which Paul had counted as dung, as he now rejoices in a higher and holier separation.

- (1) He had been “separated” by the Will of God before time began “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world . . . . predestinated” *proorizo*.
- (2) He had been “separated” from his birth by God Who knows the end from the beginning, and had decided both his parentage and birthplace which included not only the privileges of the Hebrew race, but that of the city of Tarsus and of Roman citizenship.
- (3) He had been “separated” on the road to Damascus, when the Lord revealed to Ananias that Paul was a “chosen vessel”.
- (4) He was “separated” unto the Gospel of God, as he declared in Rom. i. 1.
- (5) He had been “separated” by the Holy Ghost as recorded in Acts xiii.

When these facts are superadded to the items already brought forward, the apostle’s claim to entire independence of man or men is distinctly furthered, and amounts to a moral necessity.

Paul not only draws attention to his “separation”, he follows it immediately with the assertion, that the gospel which he preached was his “by revelation”, “to reveal His Son in me” (Gal. i. 16). He has already put this “revelation” over against all possible modes of instruction, declaring that he had received the gospel “by revelation” (Gal. i. 12). There it was “the revelation of Jesus Christ”, which by the antithesis of the former clause, means “a revelation from Jesus Christ” as the One Who occupied the place of a teacher. In this second reference, the Revealer is God, and the subject matter is “His Son”. To Paul the gospel of God unto which he had been separated, was “concerning His Son” (Rom. i. 1-4). When Paul preached the Gospel he preached Christ. In Romans the gospel is referred to as “The Gospel of God” because God is its author (i. 1). It is the Gospel of His Son (i. 9), because, as the Son of God, Christ was declared to be such with power (i. 4), and it is called the Gospel of Christ, because it is the power of God unto salvation (i. 16). This gospel revealed in such a manner and entrusted with such grace, the apostle claimed as his own, calling it “my gospel” (xvi. 25).

One of the reasons that helped Paul to the decision that he would not confer with the apostles at Jerusalem, seems to be found in the words of Gal. i. 16: “That I might preach Him among the heathen, or Gentiles”. The peculiar nature of this ministry was so new and unprecedented that Peter even, was called upon to give an account of himself after preaching *once* to the Gentiles (Acts xi. 1-4), making it clear to Paul that he could expect little or no help from Jerusalem and the twelve. The other reason was that he had come through a crisis, lifelong convictions had been shattered, pride had been humbled.

"He was a stricken deer, and was impelled as by a strong instinct to leave the herd. In solitude a man may trace to their hidden source the fatal errors of the past; he may pray for light from heaven — he may want the healing of his deep wounds by the same tender hand that in mercy had inflicted them" (Farrar, “Life and Work of St. Paul”).

Like Moses, and even like the Lord Himself, retirement into the wilderness was a necessity.

Lightfoot says: “A veil of thick darkness hangs over St. Paul’s visit to Arabia . . . . It is a mysterious pause, a moment of suspense in the apostle’s history, a breathless calm which ushers in the tumultuous storm of his active missionary life”.

Justin Martyr, argues, “that Damascus belongs and did belong to Arabia, though now it has been assigned to Syrophoenicia”, and so it is just possible that Paul retired to some spot in the immediate neighbourhood of Damascus. Yet, seeing that “Arabia” is mentioned in the allegory of Galatian iv.:

“For this Agar is Mount Sinai in *Arabia*, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children” (Gal. iv. 25),

it seems almost a necessity that the Arabia to which Paul withdrew should be the Arabia of Sinai and bondage too.

Elijah, as Paul would well know, had been forced to withdraw into the region of Horeb the Mount of God, there to learn a needful lesson, and when the lesson was learned, to receive the command:

“Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus” (I Kings xix. 15),

even as of Paul it is written “I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus” (Gal. i. 17).

There at the seat of the old covenant which gendered to bondage, Paul learned the wonder of the gospel of liberty which had been entrusted to him, and like Elijah, he listened to the “still small voice” and returned equipped for the fight of faith which occupied the remainder of his pilgrim days. Three years were allowed to elapse between this experience in Arabia, and his acquaintance with Peter.

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days” (Gal. i. 18).

*Historeo* means “to see or visit a person in order to make his acquaintance” (*Critical Lexicon*, Dr. E. W. Bullinger). From this Greek word our own word “history” is derived. While Paul owed his Gospel and Commission to no man, it was the most natural thing in the world that he should desire to make the acquaintance of one who not only was a prominent fellow apostle, but one whose rich experiences and personal associations with the Lord would make such an acquaintance valuable beyond estimation. We are sure that Paul would follow with a full heart, the earthly footsteps of the Son of God as conducted over the ground by such a fellow disciple as Peter. Yet this could not and did not add one iota either to his gospel or his authority.

So near to the heart of things was this independence of the apostle that more than once we find him approaching the solemnity of an oath as he asserts it:

“Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not” (Galatians i. 20).

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

The persecutor had become the preacher, but no human instrumentality had been permitted, lest the opposition to such a ministry as had been entrusted to him should have found a handle wherewith to rob him of his commission and us of the gospel of free grace, and so the chapter ends with the simple yet full words:

“And they glorified God in me.”

## **#87. “Not for an hour”. Paul in the Arena (GALATIANS ii. 1 - 14).**

After the very thorough defence which the apostle has put up in the first chapter, one might have reasonably expected that he would have proceeded forthwith to the exposition of the great doctrine which was at stake, namely “Justification by Faith”. This, however, does not come into prominence until we reach Gal. ii. 15, and a further series of historic happenings that have the independence of Paul and his gospel as their central theme are brought before us. From other epistles we know how foreign it was to Paul’s spiritual nature to appear to boast, and how reluctant he was to say anything derogatory to the character of another servant of the Lord. Yet in the section now before us, he shows quite plainly that the church to-day owes, humanly speaking, the full gospel of grace to his lone stand against the prevailing views of many in authority, and not only so, but he shows as in marked contrast with his own loyal stand, the defection of Peter and Barnabas and a company of Jewish believers who were associated with Peter. If we seek a word to justify such an exposure and such a record, we shall find it in the one

word “gospel”. If it had been a matter of defending his own personal honour, Paul would have suffered in silence; but silent he could not be when the very “truth of the gospel” was at stake.

The structure of Gal. ii. 1-14 is so lucid, so transparent and so clearly puts the apostle’s argument before the eye, that we shall be doing a disservice to the truth by holding it back from the reader another moment.

### Galatians ii. 1 - 14.

A		1, 2.		a		PAUL goes to Jerusalem for the faith.
				b		BARNABAS stands fast with him.
B		3-5.		c		Titus a Greek not <i>compelled</i> .
				d		Paul’s stand for THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.
C		6-10.		e		<i>Seemed</i> to be somewhat.
				f		Nothing added to me.
				g		Gospel to Circumcision.—PETER.
				g		Gospel to Uncircumcision.—PAUL.
				e		<i>Seemed</i> to be pillars.
				f		Only . . . remember the poor.
A		11-13.		a		PETER comes to Antioch, faith overthrow.
				b		BARNABAS carried away.
B		14.		d		Peter’s walk against THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.
				c		Gentiles <i>compelled</i> to Judaize.

It was the fatal shadow of “another gospel” (Gal. i. 6) that stirred Paul to the depths and demanded his utmost in countering its dreadful blight. It was the perversion “of the Gospel of Christ” (i. 7), not merely the ingratitude of the Galatians, that set his heart aflame. It was the “truth” of the gospel not some marginal or debateable borderland of doctrine or practice that called him into the arena, as the champion of Christian liberty.

Galatian ii. opens with the visit to Jerusalem and with a date attached, “fourteen years after”. Already, in chapter one, a series of time notes have been given. The starting point is Gal. i. 15 “when”, and the occasion is the apostle’s conversion. This is the great outstanding period of his life, over and over again, both in the Acts and in his epistles, the apostle shows how vividly that momentous occurrence on the road to Damascus was impressed on heart and memory.

We start our reckoning therefore with his conversion. In verse 16 we have the next note of time, “immediately”, which refers to the retirement into Arabia and in verse 17 “again”, which records the return to Damascus. “Three years after” we have the first visit of the apostle to Jerusalem, and the “fifteen-day” visit to Peter (i. 18-19) “afterwards” the work and abiding in Syria and Cilicia (i. 21-24), and so to Gal. ii. 1 “fourteen years after”.

"Here the numbers derive their effect on the reader’s mind from their greatness; and if he had been able to use the number 17 (i.e. by adding together the “three” years of Gal.1:18, and the “fourteen” years of Gal.2:1), he would inevitably (according to my conception of his nature) have taken the expression which enabled him to use the larger number" (Prof. Ramsay).

The fourteen years dates from the apostle’s conversion and if we can translate, as has been suggested, II Cor. xii. 2 “a man who had been fourteen years in Christ” (cf. Rom. xvi. 7), then Paul had received the “revelations” spoken of in II Corinthian xii. at the same time that he had gone up to Jerusalem “by revelation” as recorded in Gal. ii. 1. Indeed there is a marked parallel between the two epistles that should be noted, each stressing his apostleship, gospel and authority.

<b>GALATIANS</b>	<b>II CORINTHIANS</b>
“Seemed to be somewhat” (ii. 6).	“The ‘extra super’ apostles” (xi. 5).
“Another gospel” (i. 6, 9).	“If he that cometh preached another Jesus . . . another spirit . . . or another gospel” (xi. 4).
“False brethren” (ii. 4).	“False brethren” (xi. 26).
“He Who wrought effectually in Peter . . . the same was mighty in me” (ii. 8).	“For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chieftest apostles” (xi. 5).
“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain . . . I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you” (iv. 11-20).	“For I fear, lest, when I come I shall not find you such as I would” (xii. 20).
“I have confidence in you through the Lord that ye will be none otherwise minded” (v. 10).	“I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things” (vii. 16)
“From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (vi. 17).	“Forty stripes save one, five times: thrice beaten with rods: once stoned: thrice shipwrecked . . .” (xi. 24, 25).
“Behold, before God I lie not” (i. 20).	“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not” (xi. 31).
“If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another” (v. 15).	“If a man devour you”; “Backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults” (xi. 20; xii. 20).
“As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach . . .” (i. 9).	“I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present the second time” (xiii.2).
“Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh” (iii. 3).	“That as he had begun, so he would also perfect in you the same grace also” (viii. 6).
“For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (vi.15).	“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (v. 17).

The words “with Barnabas” of Gal. ii. 1 have a bearing upon the date of this visit to Jerusalem. It was evidently necessary for the apostle to explain Titus “a Greek”, and to explain Peter, James and John as “pillars” but Barnabas needs no explanation. Barnabas had been “separated” together with Paul to preach the gospel to the Galatians (Acts xiii., xiv.) and is evidently included in the plural pronoun “we”, when referring to the preaching of the gospel (Gal. i. 8). At the close of Acts xv. Barnabas parts company with Paul and we have no record that he ever accompanied Paul on a missionary journey again. It seems certain therefore that the conference at Jerusalem described in Acts xv. could not be the one referred to in Galatian ii., but rather the contention that led up to the conference, and to the writing of the epistle. The “decrees” formulated at the Council are never mentioned in the epistle. This omission is important. He would have been obliged in all honesty to have referred to them had they already been written (*see* Acts xv. 25, 26; xvi. 4, 5), and to have quoted them would have silenced the Judaizers in Galatia and made the epistle to the Galatians as we now have it, unnecessary. We can have no doubt but that the apostle used the strongest arguments that were at the time available. Altogether

there are five recorded visits of the apostle to Jerusalem, the one before us in Gal. ii. 1 being the second. The visits are as follows:

*PAUL'S VISITS TO JERUSALEM.*

FIRST VISIT (3 years)	Acts ix. 26-30 Gal. i. 17-21	Compare "Cæsarea and "Tarsus" with "Syria and Cilicia".
SECOND VISIT (14 years)	Acts xi. 29, 30 (see also xii. 25), Gal. ii. 1	Before the first missionary journey to Galatia.
THIRD VISIT	Acts xv. 2-4	After the first missionary journey to Galatia.
FOURTH VISIT	Acts xviii. 21, 22	To keep the Feast.
FIFTH VISIT	Acts xxi. 15 - xxiii. 30	Taken prisoner.

"And took Titus with me also" (Gal. ii. 1). The parallel wording that we find in the Acts, concerning the call of Timothy, and this record of Galatian ii., to the taking of Titus, is suggestive of close proximity of date.

<b>GALATIANS ii.</b>	<b>ACTS xvi.</b>
With me.	With him.
Greek.	Greek (mother a Jewess).
Not circumcised.	Circumcised.
Because of false brethren ( <i>dia</i> ).	Because of the Jews ( <i>dia</i> ).
Nothing added at Jerusalem.	Decrees from Jerusalem.
Ministry to Gentiles.	Ministry to Gentiles.

The taking of Titus was something of a test. The Judaizers had intimidated the Galatian converts, quoting chapter and verse, as many of their successors do to-day — but failing rightly to divide the scriptures quoted. They urged the necessity for circumcision to make salvation secure, and had such a view been entertained by the leaders at Jerusalem, Titus, a Greek, would not have been accepted as he was. Yet said Paul:

"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (Gal. ii. 3).

The use of this word "compel" which the structure throws into prominence show how sadly Peter failed at this point. "Why *compellest* thou the Gentiles to Judaize?" said Paul (Gal. ii. 14). Peter's action was not only contrary to the gospel Paul had preached, but to his own interpretation of its liberties (ii. 12) and the attitude adopted finally at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 24).

Upon what a knife edge, sometimes mighty issues are balanced.

"To whom we gave place by subjection, NO, NOT FOR AN HOUR; that the truth of the gospel might continue (right through *dia meno*) with you" (Gal. ii. 5).

The possibilities are too horrible to contemplate — but what might not have happened had Paul yielded that vital "hour"? We rejoice to know that God is over all, and works His will both in heaven and earth — yet we also do well to remind ourselves that there is such a thing as responsibility, that one lone man with God did count, that truth has been rescued from oblivion by men and women of as little account as he that writes or they who read these present words of exposition. The result of this interview at Jerusalem settled for all time the rightful place of Paul and his gospel. Those who "seemed to be somewhat" could not intimidate one of such singleness of eye as Paul, they saw and admitted even to the giving of the right hand of fellowship, that there was as full and complete authority for Paul's

gospel and apostleship to the Gentile, as there was for Peter's apostleship and gospel to the circumcision.

"In conference they added nothing to me . . . . only that we should remember the poor" (Gal. ii. 6-10).

I will admit, says the apostle in effect, that I did not come away from the visit to Jerusalem quite as I went, something was laid upon me by the apostles there — it was not a confirmation of my apostleship — for that they were compelled to recognize (*that I*) stood on parallel grounds with that of Peter, it was not that they attempted the slightest modification of the gospel I preached, Titus being a living witness, they did place upon me one obligation which I was only too ready to shoulder, they said — listen carefully now for the mighty edict, they said, "Remember the poor!". If, said Paul, you can make anything out of that to militate against my independence you are welcome to it.

When men criticize our message to-day we have in Galatians i. & ii. an impregnable position. They say of us sometimes that we are wrong to differentiate between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of Peter and James, and the gospel of the grace of God entrusted to Paul.

We need waste no time in *arguing*, we have a faultless and unassailable *argument* in these two chapters. Whether the gospel of the kingdom, is or is not the same as that preached by Paul, whether the gospel as preached by Peter, James and John is or is not the same as the gospel of the grace of God, let others attempt to decide — for us it is settled. Though an angel from heaven, let alone a preacher of the kingdom, should preach any other gospel than that which was preached by Paul, and found in his epistles "let him be anathema". If men to-day would impose upon us the message delivered by Peter, let them read for themselves that Peter endorsed the *distinctive* gospel of the uncircumcision entrusted to Paul. In this matter we can safely and happily echo the apostle's closing words:

"From henceforth let no man trouble me" (Gal. vi. 17),

not because we can exhibit the scars of conflict as that man of God could, but because the matter is settled and closed for every believer in these two opening chapters of Paul's epistles.

## **#88. The Cross v. Law (GALATIANS ii. 15 - iv. 12), The Structure.**

We have now considered the double affirmation of the apostle, as found in Gal. i. - ii. 14. The first affirmation being the threefold use of "not . . . neither . . . but" in Galatian i., whereby the apostle set forth his independent apostleship, gospel and commission. The second affirmation is set out in Gal. ii. 1-14, where the apostle proves by reference to Peter, James and John that this threefold independence was acknowledged by the apostles at Jerusalem. The remainder of Gal. ii. 15-21 is a record of Paul's personal affirmation regarding the truth of the Gospel.

On page six (*above*) will be found the structure of the epistle as a whole, and Gal. ii. 15 - iv. 12 is set out under the title "CROSS v. LAW", which finds a corresponding member in Gal. vi. 11-16 "CROSS v. WORLD".

The section, Gal. ii. 15 - iv. 12 is a lengthy one, and its teaching is condensed yet full. To attempt a meticulous display of the structure would defeat our object both by its length and its prolixity, for we have learned that a structure that exceeds one page of print is too unwieldy for general use.

We have therefore indicated the great steps that the argument takes, and in one instance, to avoid much sub-division, we have allowed a telescoping of parts in chapter iii. 15-21, which however can be rectified when these parts are set out in fuller detail later. The structure opens and closes with a threefold argument, using the words "by nature" first of the Jews, and then of the so-called heathen gods. Peter's defection, "building again the things which he destroyed", is seen to be the same in spirit

as the “turning back again to the weak and beggarly element” by the Galatians. The problematical exhortation of Gal. iv. 12, “Be as I am; for I am as ye are”, becomes luminous in the light of the corresponding member “I am dead to the law”. For the rest of the structure the words put into prominence, indicate the trend of the argument. *Atheteo* comes twice “I do not *frustrate* the grace of God” (Gal. ii. 21); and “no man *disannulleth*” (Gal. iii. 15). In two passages the Scriptures are personified.

“The scripture, foreseeing . . . . preached before” (iii. 8) and “The scripture hath concluded all under sin” (iii. 22). Twice the apostle uses the word *exagorazo* “to redeem”, once for the redemption from under the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham may be received, and the second time redemption from the servile position of being “under” the law, “under” tutors and governors, “under” the elements of the world, in order that the blessing of adoption might be realized (iii. 13, 14; iv. 1-5).

The reader is asked to give something more than a cursory glance to this structure; it is an attempt to exhibit the hidden handiwork of God, and its presence in such a personal epistle, is surely evidence of the inspiration of God that turns Paul’s personal witness into Holy Scripture.

#### GALATIANS ii. 15 - iv. 14.

A		ii. 15-20.		a		<i>Phusis</i> . “By nature”. Jews.
				b		Build again things destroyed. <i>Palin</i> .
				c		Personal. “I am dead to the Law.”
B		ii. 21 - iii. 7.		d		<i>Atheteo</i> . Frustrate.
				e		<i>Ei gar</i> . For if righteousness come by Law.
C		iii. 8-12.		f		The SCRIPTURE preached beforehand.
				g		Justification by faith. <i>Ek pisteos</i> .
				h		<i>Hupo</i> . Under a curse.
D		iii. 13-20.		i		<i>Exagorazo</i> . Redeemed. Heirs.
				j		Covenant prior to Law.
B		iii. 15-21.		d		<i>Atheteo</i> . Disannul.
				e		<i>Ei gar</i> . For if law could give life.
C		iii. 22, 23.		f		The SCRIPTURE concluded.
				g		Promise by faith. <i>Ek pisteos</i> .
				h		<i>Hupo</i> . Under sin. Under Law.
D		iii. 24 - iv. 7.		j		Schoolmaster before Christ.
				i		<i>Exagorazo</i> . Redeemed. Adoption.
A		iv. 8-12.		a		<i>Phusis</i> . “By nature” gods.
				b		Turn again to elements. <i>Palin</i> .
				c		Personal. “Be as I am.”

The opening member of this section (ii. 15-20), is the account of Paul’s personal testimony which he made when withstanding Peter, a testimony which he made “before them all” (Gal. ii. 14). In it he challenges all who had made a profession of faith, and entered into the free grace of the gospel. In it he defines his terms, and is so careful that justification by faith should be understood as “not by works of law” but by “faith of Jesus Christ”, that verse sixteen upon its first reading seems to contain a great deal of repetition. He condemns both Peter’s defection and withdrawal at Antioch and denies by implication that during his gospel witness he himself had ever “built again the things which he destroyed”. Then with characteristic directness he leaves all lesser argument, and meets all objectors with the one glorious fact, that Salvation is not merely a change of opinion, it is a matter of death and newness of life. So far as Paul was concerned the law was dead to him, and he to the law. The crucifixion of Christ, explained later in iii. 13, to have accomplished redemption from the curse of the law, was his one all-sufficient answer “I have been crucified with Christ”. What place can legal works, ceremonial rites, holy days and other observances of the flesh have with one so cut off, so completely buried, so gloriously translated?

We feel it will be unwise to add to this article a further structure, and so, commending this analysis to all readers, we prepare to take up the apostle's defence (ii. 15-20) in our next article.

## **#89. The argument for faith without works (GAL. ii. 15 - 20).**

Having seen the structure of Gal. ii. 15 - iv. 12 as a whole, we return to the personal testimony of Paul, which he made at Antioch and recorded in Gal. ii. 15-20.

It will be necessary to examine with some care both the terms and the arguments which the Apostle used, for in this most personal testimony is enshrined the "Truth of the Gospel", together with the question of the Apostle's own personal integrity which was so much at stake in those early days of witness. First of all let us consider the general outline of the subject.

- A | 15. Not *sinners* of the Gentiles.
  - B | 16-17. | a | "Knowing." Justification by faith asserted.
    - b | "Believed." Justification by faith. Gospel.
    - a | "For." Justification by faith confirmed by O.T.
    - b | "While." Justification by faith sought.
- A | 17. We ourselves are found *sinners*.
  - B | 17-20. | Peter's action. |
    - a | Is Christ minister of sin?
    - b | God forbid.
    - b | If build again.
    - a | I make myself transgressor.
  - Paul's testimony. |
    - c | I, through law, to law died.
    - d | Dead to law.
      - e | Live unto God.
    - c | I, crucified with Christ.
    - d | Christ liveth in me.
    - e | I live by faith of Son of God.

The Apostle approaches his argument by way of privilege. He contrasts "Jews by nature" with "sinners of the Gentiles".

Israel were called "the natural branches" of the Olive, and the inclusion of the Gentile was compared to a grafting a tree wild "by nature" and "contrary to nature" (Rom. xi. 21, 24). The Gentile is referred to as having "not the law by nature" (Rom. ii. 14), and as "the uncircumcision by nature" (ii. 27).

As compared with the Jew and his religious privileges the Gentiles were called "sinners". In the gospel according to Matthew, we read "The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of *sinners*" (xxvi. 45) which in Luke xviii. 32 reads "He shall be delivered unto the *Gentiles*". Luke vi. 33 reads "for sinners also do even the same". So, too, the expression "publicans and sinners", indicating the thought that any one who had sunk so low as to collect taxes for an heathen government had sunk to the level of the Gentiles and had forfeited the high privileges which he had as a "Jew by nature". In Philippians iii. Paul gives some idea of what ground of boasting a Jew had "in the flesh", which he himself had cast away as worth nothing, to be "found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law.

It is evident therefore that in this argument with Peter, Paul is not using the title "sinners" in the universal and doctrinal sense, but is adopting the current Jewish reference to the Gentiles. This we must not forget when we meet the word again in Gal. ii. 17, otherwise the point of Paul's argument will be lost.

At first reading, there is a deal of repetition in verse sixteen that makes the public reading of this verse something of a test, and its analysis calls for care.

We have suggested in the structure that the references to being “justified” divide into four links in the chain of argument.

- (1) We, that is both Peter and Paul, know that a man is not justified except (*ean me*) through faith. Justification by works of law has already been set aside as hopeless and impossible.
- (2) This is evident from the fact that “even we” believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith, and not by works of law.
- (3) The next clause would be an unmeaning repetition unless the Apostle is seen to be reinforcing his own argument by a free citation of scripture. The introductory “for” *dioti* suggests a quotation, as does the Hebraism *ou pasa* “not all”. The same citation is found in Rom.iii.20 & Psa.cxlili.2 seems to have become the basis of a maxim, a quasi-proverb, that could be cited to clinch an argument.

With these three steps in the argument solidly placed and impossible of denial, Paul proceeds to his conclusion:

- (4) “But”. The *de* here is both adversative and logical. A contrast is now to be instituted. If what has been said is true, if we Jews have believed in Christ in order to be justified, if after all, if seeking thus to be justified by Christ, we ourselves are “found sinners” then the conclusion is inevitable, “Christ is the minister of sin”. Such a thought however is intolerable — away with such an idea, the thought is profane. Our guilt lies not in abounding the law as a means of life and righteousness, our guilt lies in seeking it afresh and using it to supplement the gracious work of Christ.

If we keep in mind the opening words of Gal. ii. 15 and remember that a “Jew by nature” was one who, through circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic ritual, believed that he had acquired merit in the sight of God, while the rest of the world had no interest in the promises, covenants or fathers, and were indeed “sinners of the Gentiles”, we shall be better able to appreciate the conclusion found in Gal.ii.17.

If we ourselves, then (as Peter’s attitude seemed to suggest), through the desire of ceremonial observance become no better than “sinners” (and this we must be if circumcision by indispensable to salvation), what must be the inference? It must be that Christ, in Whose name we have thus acted and believed, by ridding us of this incubus of ceremonial law has but brought us to the level of the uncircumcised, unsaved, sinner of the Gentiles!

Paul as we know from similar argument in Romans vi. & vii. cannot long dwell upon the fallacy which he would expose. Passing from the use of “we”, the apostle gives his own personal testimony and the uses of pronoun “I” which Peter is invited to apply to his own case.

“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor”  
(Gal. ii. 18).

It may be useful at this point to draw attention to the fact that while in the Apostle’s statement of the truth, the great doctrine of justification by faith is uppermost, it must be remembered that the conflict between the apostles was not so much the question of justification by faith, but the defence of the Apostle’s own character, commission and independent message that is prominent.

“The things which I pulled down” *Ha katelusa*.

The charge against Stephen, which the converted persecutor Saul, so soon had to meet was:

“We have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy (*kataluo*) this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us” (Acts vi. 14).

Where there is “no law” there can be “no transgression of the law” (Rom. iv. 15); and if the law be revived, then there must come about a revival of transgression, and so, said Paul, I shall constitute or commit myself of being a transgressor.

The sacrificial death of Christ is the one unanswerable rejoinder of the Apostle to each and every attack upon the believer’s perfect emancipation by faith. This can be seen in other epistles beside Galatians. Does the objector bring forward the specious plea “shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”. The Apostle does not enter into a lengthy disquisition, he cuts the false argument short with his “God forbid. How shall we, that are DEAD to sin, LIVE any longer therein?” (Rom. vi. 2).

Does his Jewish objector look upon the giving up of the law of Moses for the faith of the gospel as a kind of spiritual adultery? The Apostle meets the objection by saying “for the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband *so long as he liveth*, but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband . . . . Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become DEAD to the law by the body of Christ: that ye should be married to another, even to Him Who is raised from the dead” (Rom. vii. 2-4).

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus was no mere change of creed or change of opinion, it was a matter of death, followed by a new life.

This being the basic doctrine of the Apostle’s preaching, it is not surprising that he discontinues the line of argument started in the fifteenth verse, and stakes his all on the death of Christ, and his own death as reckoned in Him:

“For i through the law am dead to the law, that i might live unto God” (Gal. ii. 19).

The word “law” is the Greek *nomos*, which occurs many times in Paul’s epistles, sometimes with the article “the” and sometimes *anarthrous*, or without the article “the”. Here in Gal. ii. 19 both occurrences are *anarthrous* and should read “For i through *law*, to *law* died”. *Nomos* with the article represents a specific code of laws, like for example “the law of Moses” and “the laws of Khammarabi”. *Nomos* without the article represents the idea of obligation arising out of law.

In what way could Paul say that “through (the instrumentality of) law, he had died to law”? The best answer is found in the verse that immediately follows, read in the light of Gal. iii. 13:

“I am crucified with Christ . . . . Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. ii. 20).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. iii. 13).

In some wonderful way Paul realized that the law had been honoured, its curse endured and removed, and that though he personally had been mute and helpless, while the Son of God undertook his complete redemption, yet in the marvelous provision of grace, when Christ died the just for the unjust, he, Paul, had been reckoned to have died too. This matter is so vital, so near the heart of the gospel, so closely related to the whole scheme of redeeming love, that we cannot feel that the closing paragraphs of an article are the proper place for its discussion. We will carry this introductory part of Paul’s argument with us when we resume our studies in the next number of this series.

The preceding article “Emmanuel God with us” (*Emmanuel*38, pp.24,25) was written some years after this present series, and without conscious pre-arrangement takes up this important subject “reckoning”, which we commend to the quickened understanding of the reader.

## #90. The Cross, Life and Law (GALATIANS ii. 19, 20).

We have considered the first part of Paul's argument with Peter upon the defection of the latter at Antioch, and reach the point where Paul gives his own personal testimony to clinch the matter and place it beyond dispute.

"I through law, to law, died, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19).

How Paul died both "through" law and "to" law is not stated in so many words, but the subject is most evidently continued and expanded in the subsequent verse, which we now proceed to examine.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

In the first place, let us attempt a more literal translation of this passage in order that we may build on a good foundation. The apostle is most evidently moved by the solemnity of his subject when he penned these words, for he throws them into a form, named *Epanadiplosis* or Encircling, thereby giving completeness to the statement, and suggesting by the opening and closing members of the circle the most important feature. This is how the passage appears to the Greek reader:

"CHRIST, i have been crucified-together-with, yet i live: and yet it is no longer i that live, but, in me, CHRIST."

In the next place we must draw attention to the verb "to be crucified with". In the A.V. it is cast in the present tense "I am crucified with Christ", whereas the original uses the perfect tense "I have been crucified with Christ".

There are three primary modes of indicating time — present, past, and future — and any action can only be regarded as having happened in one or the other of these three modes. Moreover every action may be (1) finished or perfect, (2) going on, or unfinished and imperfect, and (3) indefinite.

The verb *sunestauromai* is in the perfect or finished tense, and should be translated "I have been crucified with". The thing has been done, gloriously, blessedly, finished, and the perfect or finished tense together with the *Epanadiplosis* of the title "Christ" is no small part of the apostle's conclusive argument.

Alford punctuates the passage thus:

"I have been crucified with Christ but it is no longer I that live but (it is) Christ that liveth in me" and comments that the punctuation as in the A.V. "is altogether wrong".

Gwynne's comment here, however, is salutary:

"In sense varying immaterially from the received construction, it presents a pleasing parallelism to the ear, but dearly purchased at the expense of the old familiar paradox 'I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live' which bears so unmistakeably the impress of Pauline antithesis, see II Corinthian viii.-x.". And of Alford's pronouncement he adds: "It requires something more than mere assertion to sustain the allegation".

The R.V. adopts the following punctuation in the text: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me", and in the margin gives the alternative "or, and is no longer I that live, but Christ, &c.".

The reader will see that whatever punctuation is adopted, the sense remains practically the same, and we therefore, while taking note of these variations, shall continue to use the A.V.

*Stauroo* “to crucify” is used in Galatians three times (iii. 1; v. 24; vi. 14), once of Christ, Who, said the apostle, had been evidently set forth crucified among them, and twice of the believer, of whom he says that they have crucified the flesh, and to whom the world was crucified. Three times, the cross itself, *stauros*, is mentioned (v. 11; vi. 12, 14); speaking of “the offence” and “persecution” which attached to it, and the only ground of “boasting” which Paul left to him.

*Sustauroo* “to crucify with” occurs in Gal. ii. 20 and in Rom. vi. 6, elsewhere only in the Gospels, Matt. xxvii. 44, Mark xv. 32 & John xix. 32. We shall gain light on Paul’s reference in Gal. ii. 20 by considering the teaching both of Romans vi. and of the Gospels.

Romans vi. & vii. contain many expression and follow much the same argument as is compressed into Gal. ii. 15-20. In Romans vi. it is the “old man” that was crucified with Christ, so that the body of sin should be rendered inoperative, and that henceforth the believer should not serve sin. These words illuminate the language of Gal. ii. 20, “I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live”.

Moreover, Paul had said “I through the law, to law died”, and in Rom. vi. 7 he writes: “For he that is dead is freed from sin”, and it is the recognition of an important piece of doctrine to note that the word “freed” is *dedikaiotai* “hath been justified”. Death has vindicated the law and settled its claims. The references to *sustauroo* in the Gospels relate to the thieves who were crucified with Christ on Calvary.

“The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth”  
(Matt. xxvii. 44).

“And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him” (Mark xv. 32).

“Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him” (John xix. 32).

Luke does not use the word, although he records the fact that there were malefactors “one on the right hand, and the other on the left” (Luke xxiii. 33). Luke’s contribution however is of far deeper import than merely to record the literal physical fact of crucifixion, he enables us to hear the confession of one of those thus “crucified with” Christ:

“Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke xxiii. 40, 41).

These words let light in upon the doctrinal intention in the words “crucify with” as used by Paul. Paul as much as said, I too, like that malefactor recognize two facts: (1) that I was condemned by the law, and merited death; this curse of a broken law is set forth under the Hebrew judgment of “hanging on a tree” (Gal. iii. 13); (2) I also recognize that Christ had done “nothing amiss”, that He was indeed without sin and perfectly righteous. Consequently I saw with rapturous faith that “the Son of God had loved me, and given Himself for me”. I realized that He had not only died “for” me as my Substitute, but that by the gracious reckoning of God, I can now be looked upon as having died in my Substitute, that I can indeed take to myself in a sense unknown before the words “crucify with”, and have passed for ever out of the dominion both of sin and law, to find my life in Christ Who died for me. “So far as I now live in the flesh, it is a life of faith” (Lightfoot). The “now” is not used here to indicate a contrast with present life on earth, and future life in glory, but rather a contrast between the old life, the old man, the *ego* of Rom. vii. 14, and the newness of life, the new man, the *ego* of Rom. vii. 25 (see also vi. 4).

All now depends upon the Son of God. The faith of the Son of God refers to His faithfulness, not merely the believer’s faith in Him. Faith “in” Christ, must be distinguished from the faith “of” Christ, the one refers to the believer’s exercise of faith in the person and work of the Saviour, the other refers to the faithfulness unto death and beyond that is the sure anchor of all our hopes. This matter is of sufficient importance to demand our most earnest attention.

“The faith of Christ.” The usual interpretation makes the faith of Jesus Christ nothing more than the believer’s faith in Him. That something is wrong with such an interpretation is manifest the moment we attempt to introduce it into the Scriptures. For example who would tolerate such a rendering of Romans.iii.21,22 that read:

“The righteousness of God has been manifested through the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ”?

Both in Rom. iii. 22 & 26 this aspect of faith is found. The second reference hides it under the translation “him which believeth in Jesus”. The near context provides a proof of the translation suggested, for in Rom. iv. 12 “the faith of our father Abraham” can by no stretch of imagination mean the believer’s faith in Abraham.

The word translated “faith” in these passages is *pistis*. In the LXX of Hab. ii. 4 “the just shall live by faith” the Greek word *pistis* is used to translate the Hebrew *emunah*. This Hebrew word and its cognate *amanah* often mean “faithfulness” as for example:

“His righteousness and His *faithfulness*” (I Sam. xxvi. 23).

“The men did the work *faithfully*” (II Chron. xxxiv. 12).

“All His works are done in *truth*” (Psa. xxxiii. 4).

The “*faith* of God” (Rom. iii. 3) is practically synonymous with “the *truth* of God” (iii. 7) and shows that Paul retained the Hebrew meaning of the word. In Gal. iii. 22 we have the two expressions used together:

“In order that the promise out of the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

The context speaks of another possible source, *ek nomon* “out of law” (Gal. iii. 21). But righteousness cannot arise “out of law”, it can only arise “out of the faith of Jesus Christ”. His faith and faithfulness, not my belief in Him, is the one great foundation of the gift of righteousness.

So in Gal. ii. 20, the apostle’s new life as well as the free justification he had received, originated and was sustained by the faith and faithfulness of his Substitute and Surety, or as he so feelingly puts it “The Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me”.

“Nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Paul who could say “I have been crucified with Christ” could nevertheless affirm that he lived. The words “Yet not I” refer not to Paul absolutely in himself, or to Paul relatively as distinct from others, but to Paul naturally, the old man, the descendant of Adam, the breaker of law. He still had to live “in the flesh” though he no longer was under any obligation to walk after the flesh.

*Sarx* “flesh” has a variety of meanings, each of which must be decided by the context. “Flesh and blood” (Gal. i. 16) is repudiated, “no flesh shall be justified” (ii. 16) gathers up into itself all human nature, “Are ye now made perfect by the flesh” (iii. 3), refers to the activities of a carnal chimerical religion; “infirmity of the flesh” (iv. 13) makes reference to the mortal nature of the apostle. Here, in Gal. ii. 20 “the life which I now live in the flesh” does not stress mortality, carnal religion or mere human nature, it is a way of indicating the present, transitory life, lived here under similar conditions and limitations as before, but now activated by a new power “Christ liveth in me”. “I live by the faith of the Son of God.”

## #91. Structure and Argument of the Section (GAL. ii. 21 - iii. 7).

The structure of the epistle to the Galatians reveals a large member covering ii. 15 - iv. 12, of which the present smaller section ii. 21 - iii. 7 now falls to be examined.

In the structure of ii. 15 - iv. 12 this section is found to be in correspondence with another, and this we will lift out and display here:

B		ii. 21 - iii. 7.		d		<i>Atheteo.</i>	Frustrate.
				e		<i>Ei gar.</i>	For if righteousness come by law.
				*		*	*
				*		*	*
				*		*	*
				*		*	*
				*		*	*
B		iii. 15-21.		d		<i>Atheteo.</i>	Disannul.
				e		<i>Ei gar.</i>	For if law could give life.

While the second member iii. 15-21 must be considered together with its context in the orderly exposition of the epistle, it is important to observe this recurring note. The apostle is keenly aware of the objections that would be made against the free salvation which he preached and taught, objections that found an expression in the accusation against Stephen (Acts vi. 13, 14), and later were to be laid to the apostle's account also (Acts xxi. 21). Neither the grace of God, nor the promise of God can be frustrated or disannulled, neither can the law provide righteousness nor life. Let us therefore with these points or correspondence in mind return to the section **ii. 21 - iii. 7** to acquaint ourselves more intimately with its teaching. Before we attempt any detailed examination of this section, let us note the structural outline.

A		ii. 21.	Righteousness not by law.					
		a		Frustrate.				
		b		Grace.				
		b		Righteousness.				
		a		In Vain.				
B		iii. 1-5.		c1		y		Foolish.
						z		Received ye the spirit.
				d1		By works of law.		
				e1		Or by hearing of faith.		
				c		Foolish.		
				d		Begun in spirit.		
				e		Perfected in flesh.		
				c2		y		In vain.
						z		Ministry of the spirit.
				d2		By works of law.		
				e2		Or by hearing of faith.		
A		iii. 6, 7.	Righteousness comes by faith.					
		a		Abraham.				
		b		Righteousness.				
		b		Children.				
		a		Abraham.				

"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. ii. 21).

The word translated "frustrated" *atheteo*, is composed of *a* the negative, and *thetos* "placed" from *tithemi* "to place". In a mild form this word is used in the sense of "despising" or "rejecting" *persons* (Matt. vi. 24; Luke x. 16; John xii. 48; I Thess. iv. 8; Jude 8), the fuller sense of nullify, abolish or

abrogate is seen in the noun form *athetesis* (Heb. vii. 18; ix. 26), where it is used of the abrogation of the law and of the sin offering. In both instances, something else that takes its place is in view. In Hebrews vii. it is the oath that appointed Christ a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and not the carnal commandment that appointed the priests after the order of Aaron, and in the ninth chapter it is the abrogation of the sin offering by reason of the once offered sacrifice of Christ. In Gal. ii. 21 the sense is to nullify, bring to nothing (I Cor. i. 19) the grace of God.

What is here intended by the expression “the grace of God”? Reading the entire verse we observe that the *death of Christ* is substituted for the grace of God. The evil which the apostle here condemned “frustrated” *the grace of God*, and proved that *the death of Christ* was “in vain”.

There is what is known as “a suppressed premise” in this verse, which can be supplied as follows:

“I do not nullify the grace of God, *which I should do, did I attempt to justify myself by legal works*, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died in vain.”

“In vain” is not a good rendering of *dorean*, for to say that Christ died “in vain” really intimates that his death was “ineffectual”, whereas the intention of the apostle is to give the impression that Christ would have died “unnecessarily”.

“I say *ouk atheto*, for it is an immediate inference, that if the law had been the medium of *dikaosune*, Christ’s death would have been purposeless” (Ellicott).

*Dorean* “in vain” is from *dorea* a gift as in Rom. v. 15. In the adverbial form, the form in which it is used in Gal. ii. 21, it means (1) in a good sense, “freely”, “gratis”, as in Rom. iii. 24 and (2) in a bad sense “undeservedly”, “without cause”, “gratuitously”, as in John xv. 25.

Calvin’s comment on this passage is worth recording:

“If we could produce a righteousness of our own, then Christ hath suffered in vain; for the intention of His sufferings was to procure it for us; and what need was there that a work which we could accomplish for ourselves should be obtained from another? If the death of Christ be our redemption, then were we captives — if it be satisfaction, we were debtors — if it be atonement, we were guilty — if it be cleansing, we were unclean. On the other hand, he who ascribes to works his sanctification, pardon, atonement, righteousness or deliverance, makes void the death of Christ.”

To which quotation we might add that of Theodoret who said:

“The death of Christ was *superfluous*, if the law is *sufficient* for justification.”

The argument which has been put forward in the first person now ceases, and the apostle addresses the Galatians direct. Notice this use of the pronoun “I” in verses 19-21.

“Thus St. Paul courteously uses the first person *I* instead of the second *thou*, and with that delicate refinement and consummate skill of which he is master, leaves St. Peter to adopt his words and apply them to himself” (Wordsworth).

With the opening of the third chapter the apostle addresses himself to the main purpose of his epistle. Up till now, he has not *directly* established the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, but has devoted his attention to the vindication of his apostleship and the authority and nature of his gospel. The way is now cleared for the definite enunciation of the gospel way of righteousness which this epistle was written to show, and with the preparation provided by these studies as a background we hope to take up the main argument of this epistle in our next article.

## #92. GALATIANS ii. 21 - iii. 7. "Jesus Christ . . . crucified" (iii. 1).

With the closing verse of Galatians ii., the apostle leaves behind the personal approach to his great theme, and addresses himself to proof. He had vindicated his apostleship, he had shown that those who seemed to be pillars at Jerusalem were compelled to admit his claims and endorse the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, he shows that Peter was in the wrong when he acted as he did at Antioch under pressure of the Circumcision, and had concluded by giving his own personal testimony.

With the opening of Galatians iii. "he enters upon a course of reasoning as close, as logical, and as conclusive as is to be met with in the works of the most metaphysical of modern writers" (Gwynne). "O foolish Galatians." To address the inhabitants of Phrygia and Iconium as "Galatians" is to take the Roman point of view. "The very fact that only Romans or person speaking decidedly and pointedly from the Roman point of view employed the name in that sense . . . . the 'men of the Province of Galatia' are, therefore, those who desire education, who have shaken off the numbing and degrading influence of magic and superstition . . . . who lay claim to insight and *noesis*. There is a telling innuendo in the juxtaposition *anoetoi Galatia*, 'you who are showing yourselves devoid of *noesis*' 'Galatae who fail the first characteristic of Galatae'." (Ramsay).

This suggestion is put into plain language in Gal. iv. 9-11, which the structure places in correspondence with the argument of Gal. ii. 15-20. Did the apostle open his argument with these believers who were so dear to him, with the somewhat rude and brutal word "stupid"? "Even could it be proved that the Galatians were a stupid people, insult we cannot imagine to have been intended by the apostle" (Bloomfield). There are at least four ways of calling a person a "fool" in N.T. Greek, and each one has its own significance. Had Paul wished to be rude he could have called these beloved saints of God "morons" (Matt. v. 22), a word that has passed into our own vocabulary. He could have called them "senseless" and used the word *aphron* as he did in I Cor. xv. 36. He could have implied that they were lacking in wisdom and used *asophos* as in Eph. v. 15, but he uses none of these terms. He chose the same epithet that was employed by the Saviour in Luke xxiv. 25 when it was evident that "their understanding" needed to be opened (Luke xxiv. 45).

*Anoetos* the word used in Gal. iii. 1 means "thoughtless", being made up of *a* the negative and *noeo* "to understand" (Eph. iii. 4); "to perceive" (Mark viii. 17) and "consider" (II Tim. ii. 7); which in turn is derived from *nous* "the mind" (I Cor. ii. 16); and "understanding" (Luke xxiv. 45).

Dr. Bullinger in his Lexicon explains *anoetos* as "unreflecting, never applying the *nous* (mind) to moral or religious truth" which is similar to Ellicott's remark "it seems to mark, not so much dullness in, as a deficiency in, or rather insufficient application of, the *nous*".

The argument of Gal. iii. 2-7 is an intense "application of the *nous*". It is a deadly and a deadening thing to allow a false deduction from the necessarily evil character of mere human "reasoning" to lead to the assumption that faith is irrational or blind, or that there can possibly exist any divergence between true "reason" and living "faith". Anything that is demonstrably not "right" can form no part of the creed of a moral creature, this turns the noble word "faith" into the base word "credulity" and belongs not to the free but to the enslaved.

Had the Galatians, who had been justified, and who had been set free by grace, but applied their emancipated minds to the Judaistic proposals that had caused such havoc, all might have been well. As it turned out, their lapse has been overruled to provide this great polemic and apology "The Epistle to the Galatians". The apostle, in measure, explains the idea he had when he used the word "thoughtless" — for he continues "who hath bewitched you?" and by so saying shifts the blame somewhat from the Galatians themselves to those emissaries of Satan, who, appearing as they may as angels of light and ministers of righteousness, stultify the truth by preaching "another Jesus", "another gospel" and "another spirit" (II Corinthian xi.).

“To bewitch” *baskaino* becomes in its Latin form the word “fascinate” and had special reference to the bewitching power of the “evil eye”, a spell which was supposed, among other evils, to check the growth of children — a feature that the Galatians would be quick to perceive.

The LXX translators use the word always in the sense of the “evil eye” as may be seen by consulting Deut. xxviii. 54, 56; Prov. xxiii. 6 and xxviii. 22. There is resident also in the word the idea that “envy” is the moving cause of this bewitchment. These Galatians had been “fascinated” — and a philosopher can be quoted as saying that fascination is “evil by the eye” a thought that is suggestive as we read the next statement of Galatians iii. “Before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you” (Gal. iii. 1). The Revised text omits the words “that ye should not obey the truth” which appear to have been interpolated from chapter v. 7.

Paul’s preaching of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” must have been vivid, as we can well believe. He uses a figure borrowed from the hustings, for the words “evidently set forth”, *prographo*, refer to the exhibition of placards which modern though it may sound, was a practice in common use at the time of the apostle.

*Prographo* when used in its primary sense “to write beforehand” occurs in Rom. xv. 4 & Eph. iii. 3. In Jude 4, it indicates rather a notice of trial or condemnation, but when writing to the Galatians, Paul uses the word, as he does the word *diatheke* “covenant” in Gal. iii. 15, “after the manner of men”, and the Galatians would know the practice that was common in their day, of using placards for making public notices and proclamations. There may also be a glance at the practice of both heathen and Jew to resort to amulets and phylacteries as charms to avoid the evil eye, and concerning this Wordsworth has the following comment:

"O foolish Galatians — foolish as *children* — who was it that *bewitched* you with his evil eye of jealousy? who envied you the liberty of Christ, and desired to spoil you of it? Who beguiled you, my children (Gal. iv. 19), whom I was rearing up as a father, unto men in Christ? Who beguiled you back into Judaism, with its rites and ceremonies and external observances? Your false teachers who so deal with you, would have written and bound before your eyes the scrolls of the Law; they would have laid upon you its outward fringes and phylacteries, and thus have entangled you to bondage. Who *envied* you the liberty of the Gospel, which I your apostle, preached to you? Who bewitched you, *before* whose eyes was written and bound by me, as *your true scriptural scroll*, your frontlet of Faith, your *Scriptural Phylactery*, CHRIST CRUCIFIED; and whom I had thus guarded, as I thought, against all the envious fascination of your spiritual enemies?"

The words “among you” are omitted by the Revised texts, though some commentators still reckon that they should be retained. If they are, it is important to remember that they must be construed as a “regular local predicate appended to *prographe*” (Ellicott) and must not be understood as referring to the word “crucified”. The order of the words in the original adds greatly to the pathos and emphasis, “written before, in you, crucified”. The words “in you” moreover must be understood as a reflection of the truth expressed in Gal. ii. 20 “Christ liveth *in me*”, and as here, that the last word of the sentence — for emphasis sake — is the word “crucified”.

The extreme importance that the apostle attached to the Cross of Christ, is most evident from these two references (Gal. ii. 20 & iii. 1), and it would be profitable and illuminating to pause, while we considered all that has been said of this most wondrous theme — yet, it seems better to let the apostle pursue his own argument in his own way. We shall find him introducing the Cross early in the argument (iii. 13) and with great point. Consequently with the atmosphere created by the consideration of Galatians iii. 1, all is ready for the argument which develops with the opening words of Gal. iii. 2 “This only would I learn of you”, which must be the subject of our next article.

### #93. GALATIANS ii. 21 - iii. 7. “Spirit” v. “Flesh”.

The apostle having quickened the interest of the Galatians by the various ways in which he has already approached the main issue before them, now begins to show to them the folly of their actions and the evil they had permitted, by a series of closely reasoned arguments. As we said earlier, there are some who would ban all “reasoning” as evil, but such would have to ban the apostle himself, and incidentally ban their own “arguments” that “reasoning” is evil. It is discoverable upon the surface of the Scriptures that Paul often “reasoned” with his hearers, for the reader of the A.V. can find four such statements in the Acts of the Apostles, there are, however, nine such passages, some hidden from the English reader under the translation “preach”, as though the translators themselves wished that Paul had not used logic so freely. Let us see this series of references, for if Paul be our pattern, then to hide, or disguise any one of his accredited methods cannot be tolerated.

#### **Dialegomai**

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days *reasoned* with them out of the Scriptures” (Acts xvii. 2).

“Therefore disputed (*reasoned*) he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him” (xvii. 17).

“And he *reasoned* in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks” (Acts xviii. 4).

“He himself entered into the synagogue, and *reasoned* with the Jews” (xviii. 19).

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing (*reasoning*) and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts xix. 8).

“He separated the disciples, disputing (*reasoning*) daily in the school of one Tyrannus” (Acts xix. 9).

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached (*reasoned*) . . . . and continued his speech until midnight . . . and as Paul was long preaching (*reasoning*), . . . .” (Acts xx. 7, 9).

“And as he *reasoned* of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled” (Acts xxiv. 25).

It will be remembered from these passages that Paul’s method persisted even though circumstances changed. The first set of references are confined to the synagogue, and we might at first sight have felt that “reasoning” was perhaps a limitation under which the apostle laboured. But upon separating the believers from the synagogue, the apostle “disputed daily” in the school of one Tyrannus — consequently, the change of ground did not call for a change of method. At Troas where the disciples assembled together to break bread, and where the company presumably was mostly made up of believers, Paul occupied a “long time reasoning”, and finally, when dealing with an individual sinner needing salvation, Paul, the one who said of himself “woe is me if I preach not the gospel”, “reasoned” with Felix concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

Instead, therefore, of banning the exercise of reason in the ministry of the Word, we have every “reason” to see that its exercise and use is commended and blessed. The apostle therefore, when he commenced to “reason” the matter of justification by works of law, as over against justification by faith, adopted the best procedure that he knew, and we who follow at a distance would do well to keep his method before us.

“This only would I learn of you” (Gal. iii. 2). He teaches them for the moment nothing. He adopts what has been called the Socratic method of argument, namely, the enforcement of the truth by the asking of questions. Paul is the one who would “learn” — the Galatians are the ones who are to teach him!

Every argument, however it be pursued, consists of two parts (1) that which is proved and (2) the means by which it is proved. The “means” varies from the strictly syllogistic and formal, to the inductive and the appeal to common sense, experience and authority. We shall not expect to find in the epistle to the Galatians, the argument proceeding step by step from one proved syllogism to another, the apostle uses a variety of means to the one end. Let us follow therefore the inspired penman as he endeavours by the grace of God, to overthrow the false teaching that had descended like a blight and a bewitchment upon the churches of Galatia, and let us observe the varying means he adopt to bring them back to the only ground of their acceptance before God.

“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of the faith?” (Gal. iii. 2).

This is the first reference to “The Spirit” in Galatians, but it is evidently of such importance that the apostle was willing to base his whole argument upon its reception and continuance. “This ONLY would I learn of you.” Omitting the two passages where “the spirit of meekness” (Gal. vi. 1) and “your spirit” (Gal. vi. 18) refer to the spirit in a different sense than that intended in Gal. iii. 2, we observe that in this epistle there are fourteen occurrences of *pneuma*, in chapters iii.-v. of which seven passages use the word with the article *to pneuma*, “The Spirit”, and seven use the word without the article, even though in every case the A.V. inserts the article for the sake of the English reader. Let us set out these two sets of references, observing particularly any allusions in the context to the controversy that prompted the writing of the epistle.

#### ***To Pneuma. “THE SPIRIT.”*** (The Seven Occurrences).

- (1) “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. iii. 2).
- (2) “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. iii. 5).

There is but one answer to this repeated question “NOT by works of the law BUT by the hearing of faith”.

- (3) “. . . . Redeemed from the curse of the law . . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

Again the only answer must be “faith”; not “works of law” see verses 10-13.

- (4) “. . . . Redeemed them that were under the law . . . . because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts; crying, Abba, Father” (Gal. iv. 5, 6).

The context shows that by redemption that status of “servant” has been removed, and the glorious position of “son” given, with the cry “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” (Gal. iv. 7-11).

- (5, 6) “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. v. 17).

These, said the apostle, are “contrary” *antikeitai* the one to the other, and we must remember in all our studies that the apostle has placed “flesh” and “spirit” in two contrary categories, so that it is impossible to be in both and one at the self same time.

- (7) “The fruit of the Spirit is love . . . . against such there is no law” (Gal. v. 22, 23).

This “fruit” is in direct contrast with the “works of the flesh” (v. 19-21) with the sequel such “shall not inherit the kingdom of God” and therefore a parallel with the sequel here “against such there is no law”.

***Pneuma. “SPIRIT.”*** (The Seven Occurrences).

(1) “Are ye so foolish? having begun in Spirit, are ye now made perfect in flesh?” (Gal. iii. 3).

We have learned from the preceding set of references that “spirit” and “flesh” are contrary one to the other, so that there can be but one answer to this question.

(2) “But as then he that was born according to flesh, persecuted him that was born according to Spirit, even so is it now” (Gal. iv. 29).

{“But as then he that was born after the (according to) flesh persecuted him that was born after the (according to) Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal. iv. 29) [BE.LXIV.110].}

This as we know is a part of the allegory that the apostle built upon the record of the two sons of Abraham, the son of the bond maid and the son of the free; Mount Sinai with its bondage, and Jerusalem that is above, with its freedom. We have given a more literal rendering of these occurrences than is found in the A.V.

(3) “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we *in* Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal.v.4,5).

(4) “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of flesh” (Gal. v. 16).

(5) “If in Spirit, ye are led, ye are not under law” (Gal. v. 18).

(6, 7) “If we live in Spirit, in Spirit also we should walk” (Gal. v. 25).

We have grouped these passages together as they all insist upon a logical and manifest outworking of the truth, maintained by the apostle, in the daily life and walk.

Although these words found in later chapters of the epistle were not *written* when the apostle asked the question in Gal. iii. 2, this doctrine was already known and was in his mind and teaching. It is clear, before we examine the subject in full detail, that there could be no compromise. “That which *hath been* born of the flesh *is* flesh, and that which *hath been* born of the spirit *is* spirit”, was the utterance of the Lord as recorded by John, was endorsed by the apostle, and is true to-day in the dispensation of the Mystery.

With this preparation we must for the moment stop, but we shall be the better able to appreciate the argument of Galatian iii., since we have seen what “works of law”, “hearing of faith”, “flesh” and “spirit”, mean in the doctrinal language of the apostle.

**#94. GALATIANS ii. 21 - iii. 7.**

**The Argument from the ministry of the Spirit (iii. 2 - 5).**

We have considered the way in which the apostle refers to the “Spirit” in Galatians, and have discovered that it is placed in direct contrast with the works both of the flesh and of the law.

So the Apostle continues in Galatian iii.:

“Are ye so thoughtless? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. iii. 3).

The same two verbs occur together in another epistle:

“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun (*enarchomai*) a good work in you will perform (*epiteleo*) it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil.i.6).

Paul was “confident” that if anything had been “begun” by God, by God it would be “perfected”, and the Galatians were “thoughtless” not to have the same conviction.

Incidentally, should the reader have been troubled by an interpretation put forward to teach that Paul in Phil. i. 6 meant by “perfecting” a bringing to an end so that, for the time being the particular work

should discontinue while something else was put into its place, he now has the corrective in the identical combination in Gal. iii. 3, and should set the interpretation referred to aside.

A passage almost parallel with Gal. iii. 3 is that of II Cor. viii. 6, where the word “begun” is *proenarchomai* “to begin before”, while the word “finish” is *epiteleo* the same as in Gal. iii. 3 and Phil. i. 6.

It is not only unreasonable to think that Paul desired Titus to *discontinue* or bring to an end the offering of the Corinthian Church, it is contrary to the truth, for in verse eleven he uses *epiteleo* again saying “now therefore *perform* the doing of it . . . . so that there may be a *performance*”. The Galatians had “begun in Spirit” and it was illogical to think of being brought to the full end in any other sphere or by any other agency. To allow “works of the law and the flesh” to intrude at the goal, when they were repudiated as valueless at the commencement was neither of faith or reason. To bring the Galatians to a fuller sense of their irrational behaviour, the apostle appeals to their past experiences, even as he appeals later in the epistle to his own.

“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain” (Gal. iii. 4).

At the time of the conversion of the Galatians, suffering normally followed the reception of the gospel, and so the apostle turned aside for a moment to ask, “was all that endured in vain?” Yet it was hard for him to think so “if it be really in vain”, for *ei ge* leaves a loophole for doubt, and *kai* widens this, implying an unwillingness to believe this on the part of the speaker. Reverting to the Galatian defection when writing chapter four, the apostle speaks, not of their suffering “in vain”, but of his labours on their behalf.

“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal. iv. 11).

These persecutions had been endured mainly at the hand of Jews or Judaizers. What an extraordinary thing, said the apostle in effect, you suffered at the hands of the legalists when you were first saved by grace, and now you contemplate attaining the goal of faith by reverting to their questionable and obsolete practices!

In order that the force of his opening question should not be dulled by the subsequent development of his argument, the apostle reverts to it with the phrase *ho oun* “well then, as I said, etc.”

“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” (Gal. iii. 5).

The apostle had before him seven different words that are translated “to minister” in the N.T.; the one he chose here is *epichoregeo*. *Choregeo* meant originally “to lead a chorus”, in course of time it came to mean, especially in Athens, “the defraying of the cost of solemn public choruses”, and so, ultimately to “furnishing” and “supplying” generally. This defraying of the expenses of the Greek Chorus was usually undertaken by a wealthy citizen who found the members, furnished instructions, musicians, and the dresses. The intensive form used by the apostle, *epichoregeo*, adds the thought of completeness to the provision, and so of itself emphasized the folly of the Galatians in their attempt to mingle their own puny works of law with the grace that supplied so liberally and so completely.

The Galatians would discover that Peter himself rebukes their folly for, concerning the conversion of Cornelius, he said:

“God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe (c.f. “the preaching of faith” Gal. iii. 5). And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck (a “yoke

of bondage” indeed, Gal. v. 1) of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they” (Acts xv. 7-11).

In addition to the opening reference to the “Spirit” (Gal. iii. 3), the apostle adds “and worketh miracles among you”. Now it is the testimony of Scripture that “John (the Baptist) did no miracle”, the signs and wonders, that accomplished the preaching of the gospel both during the Lord’s earthly ministry and that of the apostles at Pentecost and after, were definitely a confirmation of this last revelation of Divine grace (Heb. ii. 1-4; I Cor. i. 5, 6; Rom. xv. 19; II Cor. xii. 12), but are never associated in the N.T. record with the law of Moses, its works and its ceremonial. One of the most formidable obstacles to the full reception of the gospel of the grace of God, was the age-long tradition that made Moses and the law he gave, eternal. The Jews who were guilty of breaking the commandment every day, were nevertheless opposing the gospel by enthroning the very law that condemned them.

Paul now moves to his great argument, the age-lasting nature of the promises made to Abraham, as over against the limited character of the covenant of works. The promises are “by faith” and therefore sure, the Old Covenant rested on “works” and was rendered “weak because of the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). Together with this contrast between Abraham and Moses, the apostle introduces another feature. Abraham’s “seed” is not limited to physical descent, it includes those who walk by faith. To enforce this new line of argument the apostle appeals to the Scriptural record of the justifying of Abraham, shows the impossibility of attaining righteousness by works of the law, turns to the Galatian law that governed the making of a will and the appointing of the heir to enforce the claims of the promise made to Abraham, and concludes with the glorious doctrine of “adoption”. This left them no longer “servants” but “sons” and consequent “heirs” of God through Christ with complete exemption from law, its “tutors and governors”.

## **#95. GALATIANS ii. 21 - iii. 7. The realm of faith (iii. 6, 7).**

The apostle Paul had no scruples about using figures borrowed from the race course, the theatre, the pugilistic ring, or the throwing of dice (I Cor. ix. 24-26; iv. 9; ix. 27; Eph. iv. 14) and we are sure that he would appreciate the figure that comes to our mind when we speak of the introduction of “Abraham” into the argument both in Galatians and in Romans, as the apostle’s “trump card”. In each of these epistles the name of Abraham occurs nine times, and every reference is a definite part of a consecutive argument. Let us note these references in Galatians before proceeding.

- (1) *Justification is by faith.* “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal. iii. 6).
- (2) *Children by faith.* “That they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham” (Gal. iii. 7).
- (3) *The Gospel and faith.* “The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8).
- (4) *Blessing by faith.* “So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham” (Gal. iii. 9).

The apostle now reveals the fact that any attempt to be justified by works of the law is virtually putting oneself under a curse. Yet in accomplishing redemption, Christ became a curse for us, with this object.

- (5) *Promise through faith.* “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. iii. 14).

- (6) *Promises made to the Seed, which is Christ.* “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. iii. 16).
- (7) *Inheritance by promise.* “For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. iii. 18).
- (8) *Christ’s are Abraham’s seed.* “If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29).

After an interval in which the figure of adoption is introduced, and the retrograde movement of the Galatians placed on all fours with a turning back to paganism, the last reference to Abraham is made in which the two children, one of the free woman and one of the bondmaid are used as an allegory.

- (9) “It is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman . . . . . mount Sinai . . . . . bondage, Jerusalem, which is above is free” (Gal. iv. 22-26).

These references fall into three groups, each group having one dominating word. The first four references are under the heading of “faith”, the next three deal with “promise”, the last two with “Seed” or “Son”. It would occupy too much space, to go through the nine references to Abraham found in Romans, but we are sure that the reader would gain further and fuller light if this were undertaken. We must now return to Galatian iii., where the apostle introduced Abraham and associates with him the glorious doctrine of justification.

The point of the apostle’s argument concerning justification by faith may be more keenly felt if we remember that the Jews’ tenet concerning the Law as contained in the Talmud and Rabbinical writings descends from:

"The six hundred and thirteen precepts of the law as collected by Moses Maimonides reduced by David to eleven in Psalm xv.; further brought within the compass of six by Isaiah (xxxiii.15); further reduced to three by Micah (Mic. vi. 8), and again to two by Isaiah (lxi. 1), to one by Amos (Amos v. 4), and crystallized by Habbakuk in the words “the Just by his faith shall live.”

"Thus", says Dr. Lightfoot — "the Jews witness against themselves, while they conclude that faith is the sum of the law, and yet they stand altogether upon works: — a testimony from Jews exceedingly remarkable."

This confusion of faith and works accounts for the saying of the Jews concerning Abraham, “Abraham performed all the law, every whit”.

“Even as.” The answer to the question already propounded is assumed, Lightfoot puts it “surely of faith; and so it was with Abraham”. As we have seen, there are four links with Abraham in verses 6-9, and each the word “faith”. First of all, and fundamental to all, is the question of justification. This is the issue before the apostle, before the Galatians, before the church to-day and will be before all men at the last.

In the Garden of Eden, two coverings symbolize the two methods that were then adopted and will always be adopted until the end of time, the one a covering of *leaves*, the other a covering of *skins*, the former a fit symbol of the fading covering of human provision, the latter resulting from sacrifice and provided by God. Outside the garden of Eden, these two ways are again set before us in the two offerings, the one of Cain, like the apron of leaves being rejected, the other by Abel, like the coats of skin being accepted and for this same reason. The apostle here brings this twofold aspect of righteousness up to date. The Judaizers with their “works of law” were treading the way of Cain, the only alternative being the way of Abel. While the cases of Adam and Abel are Scriptural, the apostle knew how proudly these Judaizers clung to the thought that they were the “children of Abraham”. In Rom. iv. 9-11 he demolished this claim by showing that at the time that Abraham was justified he was *uncircumcised*; here, he attacks the same exclusivism by showing that Abraham’s justification, as also the privilege of being Abraham’s children, is “by faith”.

The precise doctrine of justification by faith and the doctrinal meaning of the term “faith imputed for righteousness” is not so much the apostle’s immediate concern as to prove his point that these Galatian believers had “begun” in the realm of faith, whether he uses the ministering to them of the “Spirit” or whether he dwells upon the place that faith occupies in evangelical justification is all one. He is eliciting from them the answer to his question “the hearing of faith”; he is forcing them to perceive that any claim upon Abraham and the clinging to works of law were mutually destructive, for if they were really children of Abraham, they must be children of faith.

“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same (‘these’ emphatic ‘these and these only’, see Rom.viii.14) are the children of Abraham” (Gal. iii. 7).

Among the services rendered to the truth by the R.V. is the observance of the two words translated “children” and “son”. In many passages the A.V. has rendered the word *huios* by the word “child”, and has rendered the word *teknon* by the word “son”. In practically every case the R.V. consistently reads “son” for *huios*, except in the phrase “the children of Israel”, which it was found impossible to change owing to the power of its long associations.

"There is the position of ‘sonship’ (characteristic of the teaching of St. Paul), which suggests the thoughts of privilege, of inheritance, of dignity; and there is also the position of ‘childship’ (characteristic of the teaching of St. John), which suggests the thought of community of nature, of dependence, of tender relationship. Sons may be adopted; children can only be born" (Some lessons of the R.V. of the N.T. by Bishop Westcott).

The sequel Gal. iii. 15 - iv. 12 with its insistence upon the “adoption” demands the recognition here in Gal. iii. 7 that the apostle intentionally used *huios* and not *teknon* “sons” (not “children”) thereby intensifying the correlated thoughts of dignity, inheritance, and liberty, each of which were endangered by the retrograde steps that the Galatians had taken.

“By faith” they had been justified. “By faith” they had become sons. No wonder the apostle should exclaim:

“O thoughtless Galatians who hath bewitched you?”

## #96. GALATIANS iii. 8 - 12. The appeal to the Scriptures (iii. 8).

Before proceeding to the exposition of Gal. iii. 8, which lies immediately before us, we must pause to note that we now pass into another section of the structure.

C		iii. 8-12.		f		The SCRIPTURE preached beforehand.
				g		Justification by faith <i>ek pisteos</i> .
				h		<i>Hupo</i> under a curse.
		*	*	*	*	*
C		iii. 22, 23.		f		The SCRIPTURE concluded.
				g		Promise by faith <i>ek pisteos</i> .
				h		<i>Hupo</i> under sin, under law.

The introduction of Abraham in Gal. iii. 6 is also the first reference to the Scriptures in the epistle. Right through chapters one & two the apostle has followed the method so characteristic of him when dealing with a mixed company of Jews and Gentiles, namely an appeal to experience and present facts, knowing full well that there is no conflict between the ways of God as recorded in Holy Writ and the ways of God in the process of their unfolding, always allowing of course, for dispensational changes. When however the moment comes for the apostle to speak of the Scriptures, there is never any uncertainty in his reference to them or his belief that they are inspired, authentic and authoritative.

To the apostle the Scriptures were “holy” (Rom. i. 2) and “sacred” (II Tim. iii. 15); they are to be received as “the word of God” (I Thess. ii. 13). Then defining the simple foundation of the gospel he preached, the apostle relates the death and resurrection of the Saviour to “the Scriptures” (I Cor. xv. 3, 4), and over and over again the formula “it is written” provides a Scriptural basis for his teaching and arguments. There are at least thirty-seven (37) occurrences of the phrase in the four epistles: Romans, I & II Corinthians and Galatians to which must be added such allusions and quotations that are introduced by such words as “And again he saith ... again ... and again Esaias saith” (Rom. xv. 10-12). Then we find the apostle not only quoting, but seeing in the O.T. prophet a kindred spirit with himself, as for example in Romans x.:

“First Moses saith ... but Esaias is very bold, and saith” (Rom. x. 19, 20).

When the apostle introduces the Scriptures into the argument he does so by using the somewhat remarkable words “the Scripture foreseeing”, this personifying of the Scriptures being very common among the Rabbinical writers who often use the formula “what saw the Scripture?”. When the Scriptures as a whole are referred to, the word *graphe* is generally put in the plural *graphai*, but where some particular passage is intended, we find the singular *graphe* used as in “another scripture” (John. xix. 37); “this scripture” (Luke iv. 21). This rule does not apply when “the whole Scripture” is referred to as in II Tim. iii. 16.

In this passage, Gal. iii. 8, the Scripture is said to have done two things. “The Scripture foreseeing ... preached.” The one other occasion where *proeidon* “foresee” is used is Acts ii. 30, 31:

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing . . . . *he seeing this before* spake of the resurrection of Christ.”

In this passage Peter reveals that the language used in Psalm xvi. was uttered by David as a prophet who saw beforehand what should come to pass. So, the utterances recorded in Gen. xii. 3 & xviii. 18, go further than the blessings associated with the setting up of Israel in the land of promise, they include the blessings of salvation during the gospel period that precedes that era.

While the controversy among the Galatian Christians necessitated some insistence upon the Gentile, as we have already seen in Gal. i. 16, ii. 2, 8, 12, 14, the word must not be unduly stressed in the quotation made from Gen. xii. 3 for the simple reason that when Abraham was called, *there were no Jews in existence*, the word *ethne* then referring to all the nations that were then occupying the surface of the earth.

We do not lose, we gain rather by remembering this all inclusiveness of the gospel — “all nations”, Gentiles as well as Jews, Jews as well as Gentiles, all were to be justified in one way only — “by faith”, no other way ever being conceived, and no other way ever open to man whether he be Jew or Gentile, since the dawn of history. Israel had many privileges and many advantages, but in this respect there has never been any difference, the whole human race including all its tribes and nations standing on an equality both in their need and in the provision of the gospel.

When the gospel was “preached before unto Abraham”, the Mystery was unknown. It is evident that any argument that does not differentiate between the gospel and the Mystery must be fallacious; any argument that does not distinguish between “doctrinal truth” and “dispensational truth” fails at the outset. Objectors to the revelation of the Mystery have instanced Abraham, not realizing that Abraham could have known all the terms of the gospel, without ever having heard of the third sphere of blessing and the dispensation of the Mystery.

So again, the apostle has no hesitation in Galatian iii. of blending into one the grace of salvation by faith and the gift of miraculous powers, the gospel being “doctrinal truth” and persistent, while the gift of miracle was “dispensational truth” and passing.

In order to compel the reader to recognize that justification can only be by faith, the apostle turns to the testimony of Scripture concerning the position of all men who are “of the works of the law” saying of all such that they must be “under the curse”. This statement would naturally be challenged and so the apostle proceeds to prove the point.

“For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

These exacting terms if taken point by point, leave man hopelessly undone, but not only is this so, there is a second argument gathered from the same source:

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

This second argument is strengthened by the observation:

“The law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them”,  
and the whole reduced to impotence in the presence of the cross of Christ:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree!”

And so by way of redeeming love the apostle returns to Abraham’s faith and blessing saying:

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”  
(Galatian.iii.10-14).

The chain of reasoning adopted by the apostle commences and concludes with the reception or promise of the Spirit, the intervening links being:

- (1) The unreasonableness of concluding that having begun in the Spirit one could be perfected by the flesh.
- (2) The sufferings endured at conversion being all in vain if this were to be so.
- (3) The example of Abraham.
- (4) The character of all his sons.
- (5) The preaching of the gospel by the O.T. Scriptures.
- (6) The foredoomed nature of all attempts at seeking a righteousness by the works of the law.

Some of the arguments we have considered, some await our attention; all must influence our judgment and understanding and should deepen our regard for the grace that has been brought to us by our Saviour Jesus Christ.

## #97. GALATIANS iii. 8 - 12.

**“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse” (iii. 10).**

The proofs just considered (Gal. iii. 6-8) are positive in nature, we now advance to a negative argument, the impossibility of attaining to justification by law. Speaking of the Apostle’s method of reasoning, while sometimes it is closely akin to the Rabbinical method that sees proof where a Western mind would see none, he does at times approach nearer to the syllogistic form of argument, as may be seen from what has already been adduced.

“They of faith are the children of Abraham.”

“The children of Abraham are blessed.”

“So then they of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”

We now consider the negative argument, and we can anticipate an objection. Is it not jumping to a conclusion, of admitting prejudice, of damning a man before trial to make so sweeping a statement that “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse”? The relative pronoun *hosos* allows no exceptions. Sometimes it is translated “whatsoever” (Rom. xv. 4); when referring to time it is translated “as long as” (Gal. iv. 1); or in the account of the woman of Samaria “He told me all *that ever* I did” (John iv. 39). “As many as” are of the works of the law, “so many” are under the curse. Such is the statement. Now for the proof.

The Apostle compels the objector to attempt to pass through the sifting meshes of a passage borrowed from the O.T., each mesh in the sieve becoming smaller, and he challenges any one successfully to pass the test, or to produce from history any one who has.

Here are the tests:

- (1) Cursed is EVERY ONE. No respects of persons must be expected, for none will be shown. Every one without exception, without favour, must stand here.
- (2) First demand of the law is “continuance”. No mere perfunctory performance can satisfy the claim of the law. Here is no sabbath day observance, but a day by day, hour by hour performance from cradle to grave.

The word here translated “continue” is *emmeno*, a compound of *en* “in” and *meno* “to abide, remain or continue”. The Apostle uses two other variants of the word in Galatians thus, *epimeno* “to remain upon, or at”, “to abide” (Gal. i. 18), indicating that, for the whole course of the fifteen days, Paul did not change his place of abode, but “remained upon” it.

*Diameno* “to continue right through” as the gospel did, in spite of all the antagonism of Judaistic opponents, by the grace of God and the faithful witness of the apostle Paul, when he stood alone against all “the somebodies and somewhats” at Jerusalem.

*Emmeno* “to continue in”. It is used of the faith in Acts xiv. 22 “exhorting them to continue in the faith” and is used of the failure of Israel “they continued not in My covenant” (Heb. viii. 9).

There are many indications that the epistle to the Galatians was a “covering letter” sent together with the epistle to the Hebrews. The omission of any reference to circumcision in Hebrews is inexplicable taken by itself, but with the matter so thoroughly disposed of, as it is in Galatians, it is understandable. Here are all the references to *emmeno* in the N.T. (omitting a reading in the Alexandrian MSS of Rev.xx.3), and the fact that the epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews use this word in connexion with one subject, the inability of man to continue in the observance of the law, is one of many incidental links between the two epistles. Most, if not all, fail to pass this intense test. But suppose for argument’s sake some could, let us note what is said further.

- (3) ALL things. Just as every one without exception is intended in the opening of the argument, and all the time without reprieve is demanded in the next step, so every commandment without exception must be thus “continued in” or the curse must fall.

Most men, except the utterly depraved, discover that they have their strong points as well as their weak ones. Where one man would be proof against the sin of adultery, he may be an easy victim to covetousness. Where one would scorn to bear false witness, he may be slack in the honouring of his parents, and if we bring the subject forward and understand the law to be the love of God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and the neighbour as oneself, then it is evident that not one can hope to continue in *all things* which are written in the law. Further, both O.T. and N.T. point out that ignorance is no excuse. “Though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity” (Lev. v. 17), “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also Do not kill” (James ii. 10, 11).

Finally, the last test is simple but complete: “To DO them”. Volumes have been written in praise of the Mosaic code. Praise has been bestowed upon the sanity and the salutary nature of its precepts. Comparison with such as the Code of Khammurabi reveals the exalted nature of the law of Sinai, yet God never asked man to pass his opinion upon the law, to extend his patronage to the law, to render lip service to the law, he was simply under the obligation to DO the works of the law, or to come under the curse. Alford sadly misses the argument and misrepresents God, when he says, from Gal. iii. 11 “not even could a man keep the law, would he be justified, the *condition* of justification, as revealed in Scripture, being by faith”. It is untrue to teach that God would repudiate perfect obedience; He would not, the argument is directed to another thought namely, justification, which, if ever it is to be received, will have to be by faith as a free gift, because no one would ever be able to produce the obedience required by the law to merit it.

God shuts no man out. Man shuts himself out by his own failure. To every man God says as he said to Cain:

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, the sin offering coucheth at the door” (Gen. iv. 7).

Man can, theoretically, be justified by a perfect obedience, but practically he can be justified only through the offering of Christ. There is no middle course, and no other way.

In Gal. iii. 11 “law” as such is now set aside. Not merely “the law”, there is no article here, and “by” should be rendered simply “in”. “The more inclusive *en* is thus, perhaps, chosen designedly, as the Apostle’s object is apparently to show that the idea of justification falls wholly *out of the domain of the law*, and is incompatible with its very nature and character” (Ellicott). The argument now adopted by the Apostle may be stated thus:

“It is written that justification is only of faith” (verse 11);

“But the law admits not of justification by faith” (verse 12);

“Consequently, no man under law is justified” (verse 10). (Gwynne).

Throughout this sustained argument the initial question “received ye the Spirit by the works of law, or by the hearing of faith?” is never dropped. It is in view in each step of the argument.

*First.* Blessing is the inheritance of those who are justified by faith (verse 9).

*Secondly.* As many as are of the works of the law (primarily Jews but including all others who place themselves under law) are subjects, not of blessing, but of the curse (verses 10-12).

*Thirdly.* This curse has been lifted from all those who were under the law, by redemption, this being accomplished by Christ coming under a curse in their room and stead; the fact that He died by being “hung upon a tree” revealing the character of His sacrificial death.

This third and last member of the present argument is too important to occupy the few remaining lines at our disposal, so will accordingly be given fuller consideration in our next study.

## #98. GALATIANS iii. 13 - 20. The curse of the law (iii. 13).

With verse thirteen, we enter a new section of the epistle, as indicated by the structure; a section denominated “Redemption”, which together with its corresponding member, iii. 24 - iv. 7 contains the only occurrences in Galatians of the word *exagorazo*.

D		iii. 13-20.		i		<i>Exagorazo</i> .	Redeemed.	Heirs.
				j		Covenant	prior to Law.	

\*   \*   \*   \*   \*   \*

D		iii. 24 - iv. 7.		j		Schoolmaster	prior to Christ.
				i		<i>Exagorazo</i> .	Redeemed. Adoption.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. iii. 13).

It has been a matter of debate among commentators of all times, as to the parties intended by the word “us”. Some have maintained that since the Gentile and his salvation is as much in view as that of the Jew, that the word “us” must comprehend them both, and that the “law” in view is not to be limited to the law given at Mount Sinai, but of that law which came into operation with Adam. The matter is of sufficient importance to justify a careful study. And first, let us observe what “law” has been in mind throughout the epistle so far. There are thirteen occurrences of *nomos* “law” in Gal. i.-iii. 13. Of this number, *nomos* occurs with the article “the” in three places, the remaining ten occurrences being *anarthrous* i.e. without an article.

Those which are *anarthrous* deal with “law” as opposed to “faith”, without exactly specifying the law of Moses. These references are Gal. ii. 16, 19, 21; iii. 2, 5, 10 (first occurrence in the verse), 11. The remaining references which speak of “the law” are:

“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. iii. 10).

“And the law is not of faith” (Gal. iii. 12).

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal. iii. 13).

It is clear that the “curse” is specifically related to “the book of the law”, and if we continue our collection of passages we shall find that this law is dated, being given four hundred and thirty years after the promise made to Abraham (Gal. iii. 17) which (1) makes it impossible for it to refer to Adam in Eden, (2) compels us to limit the expression to the law given by Moses. Further, the statement of verse nineteen “it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” is a reference to Sinai as we shall see later.

Again, if the “us” of Gal. iii. 13 refers to all men both Jew and Gentile, it should have sufficed in verse fourteen to have written:

“Christ hath redeemed US . . . . that WE might receive the blessing” — but the apostle does not so speak. He says “Christ hath redeemed US . . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles”.

Primarily, the pronoun “us” in verse thirteen refers to the Jew, and only in a secondary sense does it include the Gentile, and only so if he should be so foolish to put himself under the law, which is the very heart of the controversy.

To show the utter folly of the Galatian retrogression the Apostle tells them that such is the condition of those naturally “under the law” namely Israel, that they needed to be redeemed at such a cost that the mind almost refuses to believe the statement “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us”. As we shall see when considering verses fifteen onwards, the law stood in the way of the promise; it was temporary, and imposed only for a time, whereas the promise was of a permanent character, and was made four hundred and thirty years before. It was not a covenant that made demands upon the people, but was conceived in grace, addressed to faith, “to the end the promise might be sure” as the Apostle reasons in Rom. iv. 16.

The Apostle does not say that Christ became accursed, but that He became A curse, the abstract for the concrete. This is much more forceful than saying that Christ became a person who was accursed. For the same reason, it was said that the Saviour “was made SIN for us Who knew no sin”, God having laid upon Him the iniquity of us all and to emphasize the enormity of human hostility, He said not that man is an enemy, but that “the carnal mind *is enmity* against God”.

The passage of the law referred to by Paul is found in Deuteronomy:

“And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God); that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance” (Deut. xxi. 22, 23).

Some interpret the words “accursed of God” by “accursed of the judges” for the word *elohim* is translated “judges” in Exod. xxi. 6; xxii. 8, 9. Other interpretations including “an insult against God” have been put forward, and the omission of the words “of God” by the Apostle when quoting the O.T. may have been in order to avoid any unnecessary explanation which would have made no contribution to his main argument.

The word “tree” is in the LXX and in the epistle to the Galatians; the Greek word is *xulon*. The Hebrew word used in Deuteronomy xxi. is *ets* which, while primarily meaning a tree, is also translated “gallows” (Esther.v.14), “sticks” (Numb. xv. 32), “timber” (II Kings xii. 12), & “wood” (Gen. vi. 14). The Hebrew word *ets* does not denote necessarily a *growing* tree, for it is associated with *atsah* to shut or fix and *etsem* “a bone”. In like manner, *xulon* is rendered in the N.T. “staves”, “sticks”, “wood” as well as “tree”. Liddell and Scott give as the meaning of *xulon*:

- (1) Wood cut and ready for use, such as fire wood.
- (2) A piece of wood, which includes “a pole, cross or gibbet”.
- (3) Live wood, a tree.
- (4) A blockhead, A block.
- (5) A measure of length — 3 cubits.

The word enters into several English words, mainly of a scientific character such as xylite, xylophone, xylonite, etc., none of which have reference to a living tree. As the Roman form of gallows was either a stake or a cross, the word “tree” could be used interchangeably with *stauros*. It is noteworthy that Peter, James and John in their epistles never use the word *stauros* “cross”, neither do they use the word *stauroo*. Peter speaks of the Saviour bearing our sins in His Own body “on the tree”, but he was addressing Jewish readers. He used it in Acts v. 30 and x. 39. Paul uses it in Acts xiii. 29 when his audience was composed mainly of Jews (see the context). This avoidance of the word “cross” by the writers to the circumcision (with the two exceptions Heb. xii. 2 & Rev. xi. 8) and the fact that only to the Churches of Galatia (either in an oral address as at Antioch, or in an epistle, as in the epistle to the Galatians) does the apostle Paul use the word “tree” suggests very strongly that in Gal. iii. 10-13 he has the Jewish hearer prominently before him.

This becoming a “curse” and so removing the curse of the law, was:

“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we (both Jews and Gentiles) might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

In the next verse, the Apostle turns from addressing the Jew, to the Gentile portion of the church. This is indicated by a new approach:

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men” (Gal. iii. 15).

The argument takes a new turn; not only is the law set aside so far as salvation is concerned by the cross of Christ, but other equally cogent reasons may be given, and these he borrows from the law, not of Moses, but of the Galatians in connexion with the making of a will and the adopting of an heir.

This must occupy our attention in the next article.

### **#99. GALATIANS iii. 13 - 20. The Galatian Will (iii. 15, 16).**

We have observed the strong Hebrew colouring of Gal. iii. 10-13, and the clearing of the way for the blessing of Abraham to come on the Gentiles through faith, apart from the law and its works. Galatians iii. 15-20 is occupied with a further argument to show how completely the law is set aside in the Gospel, and this appeals not to the Jew or to Jewish customs or O.T. types, but to the existing law of the land in which the Galatians lived.

“Brethren I speak after the manner of men” (Gal. iii. 15).

This expression introduces an illustration from common life in Rom. vi. 19. No knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures was necessary to understand “slavery” for many of those who read the epistle to the Romans were at the time slaves themselves.

Many commentators, because not possessed of certain historical facts now brought to light, and not safeguarded by humility in the presence of the inexplicable in Scripture, have not hesitated to pronounce the Apostle’s argument in Gal. iii. 15-20 as “very weak, and such as the Apostle ought not to use for the confirmation of a matter of so great importance” (Luther). Yet upon consideration it will be admitted, that whereas there was O.T. evidence for the fact that the original promise made to Abraham was addressed to “faith”, no such O.T. evidence was available to meet the next difficulty, namely, that the subsequent introduction of the law of Moses four hundred and thirty years after the promise, cancelled the terms made with Abraham and substituted in their place “works of law”. With a quick wit, sharpened as it must have been by his deep concern for these Galatians as well as used and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle fastened upon the existing Galatian law of adoption to furnish an argument.

“Though it be but a man’s covenant.”

Here, before we can proceed, it will be necessary to settle the meaning of the word *diatheke* “covenant”.

In every case where the O.T. is in view *diatheke* must be rendered “covenant”, agreeing with the Hebrew *berith*, which refers to the ceremony of cutting or dividing the sacrificial victim. Even where it is associated with the word “testator” in Heb. ix. 16, 17 a literal rendering of the passage leaves this translation of *diatheke* unaltered. Realizing this, many commentators have strenuously maintained that *diatheke* in Gal. iii. 15 must be translated “covenant”. Where disputants seem to have missed their way in this matter is the recognition of the clause we have used above: “in every case where the O.T. is in

view". Here in Gal. iii. 15 Paul is turning away from the O.T. Scriptures and appealing to some matter of common knowledge shared by himself and the Galatians.

There is a useful comment in Grimm's Lexicon which reads:

"*Diatheke*. (1.) A *disposition, arrangement*, of any sort which one wishes to be valid; Gal.3:15, where under the name of a *man's disposition* is meant specifically a *testament*, as it is a specimen and example of that disposition . . . . a testament or will (so in Greek witness from Aristophanes). (2.) A *compact, covenant* very often in the Scriptures from *berith* (Vulgate *testamentum*)."

Here, by the happy choice of the word "disposition", we may use it either in the sense of a man's will, or of God's covenant.

Sir William Ramsay, commenting upon the attitude of many writer, says:

"The Biblical usage is a different topic . . . . The commentators have not been sufficiently careful to keep those two questions separate from one another."

The word *diatheke* is often found in inscriptions, and always in the sense of will or testament, and Paul by prefacing his comments with the words "i speak after the manner of men" shows what is in his mind. Dr. Bullinger, who strongly maintains the translation "covenant" in Heb. ix. 16, 17, says in his Greek Concordance:

"*Diatheke*, a disposition, especially of property by will and testament. This word is the usual rendering of *berith* in the O.T. which certainly means a covenant."

The point of Paul's argument in Gal. iii. 15 is that a will once made is irrevocable. If we assume that the law governing the making of an ancient will is the same as that which is in force today, then we certainly find no cogency in the Apostle's illustration; but to quote Sir William Ramsay again:

"Our procedure must be very different. We have to take the word *diatheke* in its ordinary sense, 'after the manner of men'; . . . . then we observe what is the character attributed by Paul to the known classes of will in other ancient nations, and so determine its origin."

Archaeology demonstrates the truth that this irrevocability was a characteristic of Greek law. The making of the will was the appointment of the heir, and this by a process was entitled "adoption". When once such a will had been confirmed, no alteration was allowable or possible. Moreover a will today is secret; then, in Galatia, it was public and open.

The Roman-Syrian Law-Book cited by *Mitteis* well illustrates Gal. iii. 15:

"It actually lays down the principle that a man can never put away an *adopted son*, and that he cannot put away a *real son* without good ground. It is remarkable that the adopted son should have a stronger position than the son by birth; yet it was so."

Every will had to be passed through the Record Office of the city. This illuminates the Apostle's argument "when it hath been *confirmed*". The Galatians, fully acquainted as they were with their own laws, would appreciate the Apostle's argument. Granted that a will had been confirmed, the heir appointed, the adoption made, then "no man disannulleth or added thereto". If this be so, continues the Apostle, see how this bears upon the problem before us. The blessing of Abraham comes to you by a covenant made by God four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; how then can you believe that such a law, coming so long afterwards should either disannul, or make the promise of none effect?

Before this conclusion is reached, however, Paul interposes another rather startling statement:

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. iii. 16).

We must handle with extreme care this argument of the Apostle, otherwise we may do ourselves or others damage. First we remember that Paul was both a good Hebraist and a master of Greek, and he would know that the plural of the Hebrew word “seed” which is *zeraim* could not possibly be used in the original promise to Abraham, for *zeraim* means “various kinds of grain” just as the plural *spermata* does in I Cor. xv. 38. Ellicott’s note here seems so sane and so sound that we feel every reader would benefit by it. He says:

“We may here pause to make a brief remark on the great freedom which so many commentators have allowed themselves to characterize St. Paul’s argument as either artificial or Rabbinical, or as Baur, *Apost. Paul*, p.665, has even ventured to assert ‘plainly arbitrary and incorrect’. It may be true that similar arguments occur in Rabbinical writers; it may be true that *sperma* (like the Hebrew *zera*) is a collective noun, and that when the plural is used as in Dan.1:12 ‘grains of seed’ are implied. All this may be so — nevertheless we have here an interpretation which the Apostle, writing under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, has deliberately propounded, and which, therefore (whatever difficulties may at first sight appear in it) is profoundly and indisputably true. We hold, therefore, that there is as certainly a mystical meaning in the use of *zera* in Gen.13:15, 17:8 as there is an argument for resurrection in Exod.3:6, though in neither case was the writer necessarily aware of it.”

It may be that the true solution of the problem raised by this argument as to the word “seed” lies in the fact that He Who knew the end from the beginning, and intended that Christ should be the true Seed and the one Heir, so worded the original statement, avoiding all plurality, that when in the fulness of time He sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, there should be no obstacle in the way of believing this great and important truth.

If we read on in Galatian iii. we shall come to the words:

“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29),

which is an evident reference back to the statement of verse 16.

The argument is now resumed with verse 17, and continues to verse 20, but as these verses contain much important teaching and at least one great exegetical problem, we must devote another article to its consideration.

### **#100. GALATIANS iii. 13 - 20.**

#### **The argument from the Galatian Will applied (iii. 17 - 20).**

“And this I say.” With these words the Apostle resumes the main argument of this section. It is not true to say that verse sixteen is a digression, or even a parenthesis, it is but the suspending of the main argument for a moment to ensure that Christ, the true Seed, shall be clearly seen in His rightful place before the conclusion is reached.

If verse seventeen ignores verse sixteen, and treats it as a parenthesis, what “covenant” is intended? If it be the covenant which is identified with “the promise” of verse sixteen, all is clear. It is that covenant, not “a man’s covenant” which is now the theme. This covenant, said the Apostle, was “confirmed before of God in Christ”, and that is shown to be the fact by his inspired teaching concerning the word “seed”. Therefore, if a man’s will when once confirmed stands, no man either adding to it or disannulling it, how much more shall not God’s covenant stand? “The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.”

In another series of articles entitled “Time and Place” the chronology of the Scriptures is traced step by step from Adam to the Babylonian captivity, and it is obvious that any chronological note given here cannot demonstrate its accuracy, as no proof can be offered for the dates already assumed, but a word or

two is necessary, as there has been a sorry misconception on the part of many eminent commentators, who by reason of their failure to discern things that differ, and observing that two periods are mentioned, one of 430 years (Exod. xii. 40 & Gal. iii. 17) and the other of 400 years (Gen. xv. 13 & Acts vii. 6), they have given way to such comments as:

“The difficulty lies . . . . in the Hebrew text of Exod. xii. 40” (Alford).

“The length of the sojourn is given in round numbers” (Lightfoot).

“Supposing it could be proved that St. Paul’s knowledge of ancient chronology was imperfect, this need not surprise us” (Conybeare and Howson).

**The 430 years:**

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years” (Exod. xii. 40).

**The 400 years:**

“Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years” (Gen. xv. 13).

“His seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil 400 years” (Acts vii. 6).

The 430 years date from the call of Abraham (Gen. xii. 4); but the 400 years date from the casting out of Ishmael and the weaning of Isaac. The 30 years difference in these two datings is made up as follows:

Age of Abraham at the call of Gen. xii. 4.	75
* * *	* * *
From call to marriage of Hagar (Gen. xvi. 3).	10
From marriage to birth of Ishmael (Gen. xvi. 16).	1
From birth of Ishmael to birth of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 5).	14
	-----
	25
Add five years to the casting out of Ishmael and the weaning of Isaac.	5
	-----
	30

For a complete and detailed chronology of this whole period, the reader is referred to the series of articles entitled “Time and Place” in the *Berean Expositor*, volume XXXVI. The proof is not necessary here. It is sufficient for the purpose of the Apostle’s argument that the promise made to Abraham was given *a long time* prior to the giving of the law, to show that the subsequent introduction of the law at Mount Sinai “doth not invalidate so as to render the promise inefficacious”.

“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise” (Gal. iii. 18).

Very similar in form is the argument of Romans xi.:

“If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. xi. 6).

The abrupt “but God gave it to Abraham by promise” silencing all objection, is similar to “but not before God” of Rom. iv. 2. While “the inheritance” promised to Abraham may include many and diverse blessings, one only is here in view. The one with which the argument opened “received ye the

Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" and this question is never lost sight of in the development that follows. A question now arises, a question that forces itself once more into Romans.vi.&.vii., namely, these things being so, "wherefore then serveth the law?". The answer given by Paul has been given many explanations; indeed, on verse twenty Lightfoot says "the number of interpretations of this passage is said to mount up to 250 or 300. Many of these arise out of an error as to the mediator, many disregard the context, and not a few are quite arbitrary".

It will be obvious to all that the actual person intended by the Mediator of verse twenty, will be decided by the meaning given to the words of verse nineteen "it was added because of transgressions". Looking at the law as a whole we can say that:

- (1) The law instead of bringing life and righteousness actually became "a ministry of condemnation".
- (2) Its pressure stirred up rebellion and revealed and multiplied transgressions.
- (3) It was temporary, given until "The Seed should come" and so in no competition with the age-abiding covenant made with Abraham.
- (4) It did not come direct from God, as did the promise to Abraham, but was mediated by angels in the first instance and by Moses and the High Priest in the second instance.
- (5) It was therefore in the nature of a contract, depending for its fulfillment on the observance of its conditions, whereas the promise made to Abraham in Genesis xv. was so given that Abraham was unable, even as he was unasked, to promise anything.

In one sense, this is sufficient for the purpose of following the argument of the Apostle, but the Word of God is a great deep, there are treasures that await the searcher, and to one, namely, to George John Gwynne, B.A., Rector and Vicar of Wallstown, Diocese of Cloyne, must be given the credit of bringing forward a fuller and more satisfactory interpretation than any other that the present writer has yet seen.

The questions which await solution, and upon which Gwynne was enabled to give fuller light, are:

- (1) What "law" is intended in the words "wherefore then serveth the law?" His answer is "the ceremonial law".
- (2) "It was added"; his contention is that it is a law that was "superadded" to an existing law that is in mind and not the addition of the law to a promise made years before.
- (3) "Because of transgressions"; the primary meaning of *charin* "because" should be retained, not reversed, and that primary meaning is "on behalf of".
- (4) The law that was superadded was temporary "till the seed should come".
- (5) The Mediator is not Moses, but the High Priest.

When we examine this question in our next article, we shall learn that even Gwynne, keen as he was, missed the inspired guidance of one passage, which modifies his exclusion of Moses in the reference to the mediator, and compels us to include much more than the ceremonial law. But of this, more when we have all the material before us.

## #101. GALATIANS iii. 13 - 20. The super-added law.

We commence, as promised at the close of the last article, an examination of Gal. iii. 19, especially on four counts. (1) What was “the law”? (2) Why was it that this was “added” and to what? (3) What is the true significance of *charin* translated “because”? (4) Who is intended by the Mediator?

“Wherefore then serveth the law?” This is a legitimate question. For while we grant that the promise given to Abraham cannot be invalidated by the law subsequently given, yet the law is the law of God and it cannot be lightly set aside. It must have a purpose.

Under the one category *ho nomos* “the law” we must allow three great subdivisions (1) The Moral Law, (2) The Sacrificial Law, (3) The Political and Civil Law. These Galatians were being induced to make their salvation secure by grafting on to the gracious plan of salvation revealed in the gospel *the ritual* of the law of Moses. “Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts xv. 1); and although they may not have been sensible to the implication, the Apostle assures them that if they submit to this rite of circumcision Christ shall profit them nothing; they become debtors to do the whole law, they are fallen from grace (Gal. v. 2-4).

When the Apostle asked the question:

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal. iii. 3),

the words “by the flesh” can well refer to the carnal observances of the ceremonial law. It is to this particular association with the ceremonial law that the Apostle refers in Galatian iv. when he likened their retrograde movement as parallel with a return to paganism, saying:

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years, i am afraid of you” (Galatians iv. 10-11).

Whitby has a comment on this passage which says:

"The Galatians are said to return to those elements, not because they before observed *Jewish ceremonies*, but because the *ceremonies of the law* being in matter mostly the same with those the Gentiles used to their heathen deities, by returning to *them*, they returned to those elements."

This “law” the Apostle said was to continue “till the Seed should come”. In one sense, this is true of the whole law, whether it be the moral law, the ceremonial law, or the burdensome statutes and laws that governed the political life of Israel when in the land. All law, all the works of law, all ideas of ever attaining to righteousness and life by law of any kind, for ever vanish in the presence of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Yet, it must also be remembered that the two epistles that most definitely exclude “the works of law” as factors in salvation, namely Romans and Galatians, are at great pains to emphasize its eternal validity (Rom. xiii. 8-10; Gal. v. 13, 14). The command “Thou shalt not steal” is as binding upon a Christian under grace as it was upon a Jew under law (Eph. iv. 28); the honouring of father and mother was not abrogated and emptied of meaning at the advent of grace (Eph. vi. 2). The ceremonial law however has gone. Christ has “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (Col. ii. 14), and the close proximity of “meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days” (Col. ii. 16) shows that the ceremonial law is in view. The elaborate ritual given to Israel “stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings (literally *baptisms*), and carnal ordinances, impose on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come ...” (Heb. ix. 10, 11), we are certainly safe if we include the ceremonial law in that which was added “till the seed should come”.

“It was added because of transgressions.” *Charin* “because of”. A very great diversity of opinion has been held by commentators on the precise meaning of *charin* here. Ellicott has summed up these differences under three heads:

1.) *Ad coercendas transgressionibus*, to restrain transgressions, as Chrysostom and most of the old expositors; 2.) *Transgressionum gratia*, that is, to call forth transgressions, to multiply them, to bring them to a head, some modern expositors; and 3.) *Transgressionum causa*, in order to make known transgressions, and in this way to compel men to acknowledge their guilt, Calvin.

Ellicott objects to the first that it is untenable “because no satisfactory examples have yet been adduced of such a practically *reversed* meaning of *charin*”. The second though more plausible he rejects as being “open to the grave objection, that in a comparatively undogmatical passage it ascribes a purpose directly to God which would have certainly needed a fuller explanation”. The third he retains “with some confidence, which is lexically defensible, and yields a good pertinent sense . . . . to make man feel his need of a Saviour”. This is true, yet the lexical objection is strong, namely, “that the force of *charin* is *in gratium*” (Meyer).

It is undeniable that *charin* means “in any one’s favour, for his pleasure; for the sake of a person or thing, on account of” (Dr. Bullinger’s *Lexicon*). The number of occurrences is nine, and they are the following: Luke vii. 47 “wherefore”; Galatians iii. 19 “because”; Ephesians iii. 1, 14 “for this cause”; I Tim. v. 14 “no cause of”; Titus i. 5 “for this cause”; Titus i. 11 “for . . . sake”; I John iii. 12 “wherefore”; Jude 16 “because of”. We will return to this word, its place and meaning, after we have considered the rest of the sentence.

“It was added” *prostithemi*. Now this word assumes that there exists something to which the addition can be made. For example, one cannot “add one cubit” to one’s stature unless one is already of some height (Matthew vi. 27); when the promise was given that “all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. vi. 33), the sense is “superadded”, added in addition. It is easy for a reader of Galatians to say “surely it means that the law of Moses” was super-added to the “promise” made to Abraham; but there are strong objections to this namely, the promise was given 430 years previously and there is no hint in Exodus xix. & xx. that either Israel or Moses spoke or thought of the nature of the promise to Abraham which it seems they must have done, if the law of Sinai was actually superadded to that promise, and there is no apparent relation between the promise of Abraham and the law of Moses. Here is “no *epidiatheke*, but a totally fresh institution” (Meyer). The provisions of the promise are diametrically opposed to those of the law, and says Gwynne: “How this can with any propriety of language be said to be ‘superadded’ to it, is a mystery which I am unable to solve”.

When giving credit to Gwynne for directing our attention to the idea that the word “added” in Gal.iii.19 refers to the adding of the ceremonial law to the existing commandments on the tables of stone, we suggested that even he had not observed that there is waiting for us a reference that, if studied, leads us out into even fuller light and certainty. That reference is Heb. xii. 18, 19. Before quoting this and following up its implications, the writer went through the commentaries that were immediately accessible — Lightfoot, Alford, Bloomfield, Ellicott, Webster & Wilkinson, McKnight, Valpy, Conybeare & Howson, Ramsay, Sadler, Lewin, Wordsworth and The Companion Bible, but not one of these valuable and helpful works makes so much as a passing reference to Heb. xii. 18, 19.

If the reader says “why should they?” the answer is that whoever attempts to interpret and explain a passage of Scriptures without putting forward prominently the principle “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” will necessarily, deprived of that light and authority, be compelled to depend upon his own sagacity, and the opinion of others. So it is that men of learning and understanding are found following one another in a blind circle, instead of humbly yet boldly enquiring at the Fountain Head. Every Greek concordance gives a list of *prostithemi*, commencing with Matt. vi. 27 as the first occurrence in the New Testament and ending with Heb. xii. 19 as the last.

In the presence of the names cited above, the present writer must retire if it be a matter of learning, erudition or scholarship, but however modest he may well be, the fact remains that the observance of the principle of I Cor. ii. 13 leads straight to the heart of truth, whereas the learning and the scholarship that ignored this principle never reached clear light. This moment of apparent boasting is allowed us, for what such simple observance can do for the writer, it can do for the reader, however retiring and unlearned he may be.

Let us now turn to Hebrews xii.:

“For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more . . . . but ye are come unto Mount Sion . . . . and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant” (Heb. xii. 18-24).

Here in the phrase “the word should not be spoken to them any more” we have the word *prostithemi* “added” as used in Gal. iii. 19. Dr. Weymouth renders the passage “entreated that no more should be added”. Moses Stuart says of Heb. xii. 19 “the exact shade of the writer’s meaning is the hearers of which (voice) refused that a word should be added to *them*, viz. *autois rhemasi*, to those commands”. Now the Scriptures referred to in Heb. xii. 18, 19 are Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 5, 25; & xviii. 16. A consultation of these passages shows that after the actual giving of the ten commandments, the people pleaded that the rest of the law should be given through the mediation of Moses. Moses reminded the people of this, when reviewing the past in Deuteronomy v.:

“The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to show you the word of the LORD; for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount)” (Deut. v. 2-5).

Enlarging upon this in chapter xviii., Moses brings forward his own typical mediation as prophetic of the work of Christ.

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken; *according to* all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth” (Deut. xviii. 15-18).

The “added” words are explained:

“commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it . . . . all the ways . . . . that ye may live . . . . now these are the commandments, the statutes and the judgments . . . .” (Deut. v. 31-33; vi. 1).

The rehearsal of these “added” laws occupies the bulk of Deut. vi. 1-23. We cannot therefore limit the law that was “added” in Gal. iii. 19 to the ceremonial law alone, although the words “because of transgressions” do focus our attention upon that part of the added law, that had to do with sin and sacrifice, circumcision and ablution. Neither is it possible to exclude Moses from the office of mediator,

that Gwynne in his exposition does, for Hebrews xii. and Deuteronomy xviii. settle that matter. What is true however, is that under the law, the mediation of Moses was not sufficient, the high priest also is a mediator, a type of Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. viii. 6; ix. 15).

Returning to Galatian iii. let us note that in verse fifteen the Apostle said of the Galatian will “no man . . . . added thereto”. In verse nineteen he says the law was “added”. If we interpret this to mean that the law of Moses was added to the promise made to Abraham, we shall compel the Apostle to contradict himself. If we, in the light of Hebrews xii., teach that the “added” law was that part of the law of Moses which was given to him as a mediator subsequent to the ten commandments, all is Scriptural and clear. Paul’s use of this fact in Galatian iii. is to force the Galatians to see how foolish they really were, to allow the imposition of such a law upon the glorious grace of the gospel.

*Charin* “because of” transgressions, retains its primitive sense, the law that was “added” included the provision of priest and sacrifice, shadows of good things to come. Neither the law as a whole nor the ceremonial law as a part, could provide righteousness or life.

“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one” (Gal. iii. 20).

As we have said earlier, between 250 and 300 interpretations have been noted, of this difficult verse. These it will be profitless to discuss, for they all ignore the testimony of Hebrews xii. The innate idea of a mediator demands *two parties*. This is true of the law, God being the One and the people of Israel the other contracting party. In the promise made to Abraham, “God was One”. Abraham was caused to fall into a “deep sleep” (Gen. xv. 12) so that he could promise nothing. The Apostle therefore, picking up the argument started in Gal. iii. 15 concerning the Galatian will, proves the superiority of the promise made to Abraham, and the impossibility that the law, given 430 years afterward, should make it invalid or of none effect.

## **#102. GALATIANS iii. 21 - 23. “Shut up unto the faith.”**

In Gal. iii. 19 the Apostle asked the question “wherefore then serveth the law?” and provided the answer “it was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made”. Now lest there should appear to be any inherent antagonism between the promise of God and the law of God, he puts another question: “Is the law then against the promises of God?” and his answer, like the answers to similar questions in Romans vi. & vii. provides a complete denial of such an idea, “God forbid”. The apparent antagonism is only produced by the attempt to compare things that differ. The promise of God, asks nothing of the flesh, and takes no account of human frailty; the law, however, as a covenant was rendered “weak through the flesh” (Rom. viii. 3), because a “covenant” implies contracting parties. To make the promise “sure”, it was implemented by faith and grace (Rom. iv. 16); the law was not intended as a provider of righteousness and life, but rather that it should reveal human inability of produce righteousness, and lead the sinner to the only source of righteousness and life, the Son of God Himself as proclaimed in the gospel.

“For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal. iii. 21).

The emphasis must not be placed on “given”, for assuredly a law had been given, and life was attached to complete obedience thereto (Gen. ii. 16, 17), but the emphasis must be placed on “*could have given*” for the failure of all men to render such obedience turned the commandment which had been ordained unto life, into an instrument of condemnation and death (Rom. vii. 10). This passage is in structural correspondence with Gal. ii. 21, where the Apostle wrote “if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain”. We proceed therefore to the next step in his argument, where once more the Scriptures are spoken of as though they themselves spoke and thought. Galatians iii. 22, 23 is in

correspondence with Gal. iii. 8-13, and the following extract from the complete structure exhibits this feature quite clearly.

C		iii. 8-13.		f		The SCRIPTURE preached beforehand.
				g		Justification by faith. <i>Ek pisteos.</i>
				h		<i>Hupo.</i> Under a curse.
		*		*		*
		*		*		*
C		iii. 22, 23.		f		The SCRIPTURE concluded.
				g		Promise by faith. <i>Ek pisteos.</i>
				h		<i>Hupo.</i> Under sin. Under Law.

The word “concluded” is a compound of *kleito* “to shut”, which in its turn is connected with *kleis* “a key”. The Apostle uses *ekkleio* in Gal. iv. 17 where the A.V. translate it “exclude”, and it is this same word that he emphasized in Rom. iii. 27 when he said “where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith”.

The word *sugkleio* “conclude” is used once again in Gal. iii. 23 “shut up” unto the faith, and to ignore its presence while attempting an interpretation of the same word in verse twenty-two is of course fatal. In verse twenty-two the Scripture is said to have “shut up” all under sin, in order that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; and in verse twenty-three we learn that before faith came we were kept under the law, “shut up” unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. The words “shut up unto” are found in the Septuagint, as in Psa. lxxviii. 50 “He gave their life over to the pestilence” — shut them up with no way of escape, and Bengel sites Polybius "he was shut up unto the very hopes which his own slaves and friends possessed", and Irenaeus, "the sons of God are shut up to the belief of His coming".

The Apostle, therefore, when writing Gal. iii. 22, 23 does not stress the condemnation that is associated with being “shut up” in prison, so much as that mankind by reason of sin were “shut up” to but one way of escape, and that way by faith in Christ, as distinct from works of law. The same truth is expressed in John’s Gospel and by Peter in different words, but with the same intent:

“No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John xiv. 6).

“There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts iv. 12).

The promise is said to be “by faith of Jesus Christ”, and given to them “that believe”. There is no tautology here, the “faith of Jesus Christ” means something different from them “that believe”. Had the Apostle intended to teach the idea of *our* faith *in* Jesus Christ, he could have said without ambiguity, and indeed has said so in many of his Epistles. The “promise” is “by the faith of Jesus Christ”, that is the Saviour’s Own personal faith and faithfulness even unto death. His faith, not ours, is the source of this indefectible promise that nothing can disannul or make void. It becomes effective and personal to each seeking sinner that “believes”.

As many readers will not possess volume XVIII of *The Berean Expositor* we believe the importance of this expression “the faith of Jesus Christ” will justify the re-printing of the following extract from the exposition of the epistle to the Romans.

#### WHAT IS THE FAITH OF CHRIST?

The usual interpretation makes the faith of Jesus Christ to mean the believer’s faith in Christ, or the faith which Jesus Christ has enjoined. This would interpret Rom. iii. 21, 22 as:

“The righteousness of God has been manifested through the believer’s faith in Jesus Christ.”

This has neither good sense nor good doctrine to commend it. It appears that we must abandon this interpretation and come to the Word afresh. Referring to the structure of Rom. iii. 21-28 given on page.85 of volume XVIII, we see that “the faith of Jesus Christ” (Rom. iii. 22) is balanced by the expression “the faith of Jesus” (Rom. iii. 26), a phrase translated in the A.V. “believeth in Jesus”. The two passages together stand in relation to the great cause of our justification — “to him which is of the faith of Jesus”. We are not left entirely without guidance on this subject, for the very next chapter takes up the expression in connexion with Abraham in a way that leaves little room for doubt as to its true import. In Rom. iv. 12 we read concerning Abraham that he was the father of those “who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham”. The faith “of” Abraham cannot mean my faith *in* him, or faith enjoined by him to me; it simply means Abraham’s own faith. I am enjoined to walk in the steps of that faith. Thus we have presented here the two aspects that are already found in Rom. iii. 22 & 26.

The apostle Paul, quite apart from the question of inspiration, would not, unless he were a careless writer, so soon have used the same expression with a totally different meaning, and that without a word of warning. Romans iv., however, is manifestly an expansion of the argument of Rom. iii. 21-28 and consequently it seems difficult to resist the conclusion that the terms “the faith of Jesus Christ” and “the faith of Abraham” must be interpreted in the same way. In fact the testimony of the law and the prophets spoken of in Rom. iii. 21 is actually the basis of Romans iv., which cites the book of Genesis and the Psalms on this very point (Rom. iv. 3-8).

#### *Pistis*, ITS USAGE IN THE SEPTUAGINT

Paul’s great teaching, justification by faith, is confessedly enshrined in the words of Hab. ii. 4, “the just shall live by his faith”. This one verse is quoted in three different connexions by the Apostle, viz., Rom. i. 17, Gal. iii. 11, and Heb. x. 38. The Hebrew word that is translated *pistis* in the LXX of Habakkuk ii. 4 is *emunah*; this and the cognate word *amanah* are so translated many times, and with the idea of faithfulness, and not simply believing, e.g.:

“His righteousness and His faithfulness” (I Sam. xxvi. 23).

“Did ordain in their *set office*” margin = trust (I Chron. ix. 22).

“The men did the work faithfully” (II Chron. xxxiv. 12).

“All His works are done in *truth*” (Psa. xxxiii. 4).

“We make a *sure* covenant” (Neh. ix. 38).

The Hebrew text of Hab. ii. 4 reads as the A.V.: “the just shall live by his faith (or faithfulness)”. What that faith involved can be seen in Hab. iii. 17-19. The LXX departs a little from the Hebrew and reads: “The just shall live by My faith (or faithfulness)”. The Apostle, who knew both the Hebrew and the LXX, omit both the pronouns (“his” and “my”), and so can use the verse in three different contexts, emphasizing one or other of the shades of meaning as the case demands.

“The just shall live by his and by My faithfulness” is a rendering which approaches the dual teaching of Rom. iii. 22 & 26. “The faith of God” (Rom. iii. 3) is practically synonymous with “the truth of God” (Rom. iii. 7), showing that Paul retained the O.T. meaning of the word. Galatians iii. 22 uses the two expressions “out of the faith of Jesus Christ” and “to them that believe”: “in order that the promise out of the faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe”. To translate this: “in order that the promise out of believing in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” is not good sense, to say nothing of the demands of the context.

The context speaks of another possible source, *ek nomou*, “out of law” (Gal. iii. 21). But righteousness cannot arise “out of law”; it can only arise “out of the faith of Jesus Christ”. His faith and faithfulness, *not my belief in Him*, is the great cause and foundation of the glorious gift of the gospel. To put the law where God puts promise, to substitute a legal righteousness where God puts one by faith, may indicate zeal, even as Israel’s similar action (Rom. x. 2), but, as Gal. iii. 16-18 shows, it is

contrary to Scripture. Abraham's faith had no reference to Sinai and its covenant looked to Christ in Whom the promises were made. It is the faithfulness of Christ as the true Seed both of the woman (Gen.iii.15), and of Abraham (Gen.xii.7), and not His obedience to the law and covenant of Sinai that is ever uppermost in the Apostle's doctrine.

Before passing on we will put the reader in possession of a list of all the occurrences of the expression "the faith of ..." in the N.T. so that all may "search and see" whether what we teach is "so".

"Have faith of God" (margin), i.e. great faith (Mark xi. 22) (See parallels in Matthew and Luke).

"Upon (*epi*) the faith of His name" (Acts iii. 16). (The faith of the lame man in the Lord is not mentioned; faithfulness to all His name implies is rather the thought.) His name was called Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21).

"Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (Rom. iii. 3).

"Even God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith" (Rom. iii. 22).

"Justifier of him who is out of the faith of Jesus" (Rom. iii. 26).

"Who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. iv. 12).

"A man is not justified by the works of law, but through faith of Jesus Christ ... justified by faith of Christ" (Gal. ii. 16).

"The promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 22).

"Boldness of access . . . . . through His faith" (Eph. iii. 12).

"Righteousness . . . . . which is through faith of Christ, the out-of-God righteousness upon faith" (Phil. iii. 9).

"Buried . . . . . also raised with Him through the faith of the inworking of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12).

"Your faith" (the faith of you) (I Thess. iii. 2, 5, 7, 10).

"Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . . with respect of persons" (James ii. 1).

"When a writer would describe a person as the author or owner of a thing, the proper and obvious course is to write the name in the genitive case; if he desires to present him as the object of reference, a variety of forms suggest themselves (which are freely employed by N.T. writers, such as *eis*, *epi*, *pros*, and sometimes *en*, with their respective cases), by which his purpose can be effected without exposing himself to the charge of ambiguity, or the risk of misapprehension. Should he, however, passing over all these forms, select the genitive which is the natural expression of source or proprietorship, it is to be presumed that it was his intention so to do, and the genitive is to be understood subjectively" (Glyne on *Galatians*).

### #103. GALATIANS iii. 24 - iv. 7. Redemption and Adoption.

The passage before us corresponds with iii. 13-20, thus:

D		iii. 13-20.		i		<i>Exagorazo</i> .	Redeemed.	Heirs.
				j		Covenant	prior to Law.	

\* \* \* \* \*

D		iii. 24 - iv. 7.		j		Schoolmaster	prior to Christ.	
				i		<i>Exagorazo</i> .	Redeemed.	Adoption.

The two occurrences *exagorazo* “redeem” occur in these sections in the sense of “buying a slave out of a market in order to set him free”. In the former section, the law is preceded by the Covenant, in the latter, the faith is preceded by the law. In one “heirs” are in view, in the other “the heir” as the word “adoption” implies. Looking at the section iii. 24 - iv. 7 as a whole we observe that the figure employed to enforce the next phase of truth is that of a minor under tutelage who finally enters into the status of a son and heir, and consequently becomes free from the discipline that belongs to childhood. The following structure sets this balance of teaching before the eye.

### Galatians iii. 24 - iv. 7

- A | iii. 24, 25. The Schoolmaster. *Hupo* “under” |
  - a | The law was our schoolmaster.
  - b | Unto Christ.
  - b* | After faith has come.
  - a* | No longer under a schoolmaster.
- B | iii. 26-28. Ye are all children. |
  - c | Ye are children of God.
  - d | Baptized into Christ.
  - d* | Put on Christ.
  - c* | Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
- C | iii. 29. “IF” ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed and  
“heirs” according to the promise.
- A | iv. 1-5. Tutors, Governors, Elements. *Hupo* “under” |
  - a | The child. \
  - b | The Servant. \ The
  - c | The Tutors and Governors. / Figure.
  - d | Time appointed of the father. /
  - a* | When we were children. \
  - b* | The servitude. \ The
  - c* | The elements of the world. / application.
  - d* | Fulness of time; God sent. /
- B | iv. 6. Ye are sons. |
  - e | Ye are sons.
  - f | Spirit of His Son.
  - g | Abba Father.
  - e1 | No more servant but son.
  - f* | Spirit of His Son.
  - g | Abba Father.
  - e1* | No more servant but son.
- C | iv. 7. “IF” a son then  
an “heir” of God through Christ.

The fact that Gal. iii. 24 opens with the word “wherefore” indicates the connexion between the statement of verse twenty-three and the section now before us. The “schoolmaster unto Christ” is an expansion of the condition “shut up into the faith”, but on the surface there does not seem much connection between the office of a schoolmaster and the action of shutting any one up. Upon examination however we discover that the word thus translated, *paidagogos* “pedagogue”, means a guardian rather than a schoolmaster.

"Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood" (*Thayer*).

In chapter iv. the Apostle returns to the figure, this time using the double office "tutor and governor", *epitropos* and *oikonomos*, guardians, having special reference to the manners and morals of the child; and stewards, dealing more particularly with the property of the child. When Paul called himself "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" and went on to speak of the "dispensation" (*oikonomia*) that had been given to him, he knew that many stewards were slaves although promoted to high responsibility.

The Apostle takes one more step in the pursuit of this figure, and this time he speaks of "the elements of the world" instead of pedagogue, guardian or steward. The word "element" is *stoicheion* from *stoichos* a row, rank or series, hence any first thing or principle. It denotes (1) The letters of the alphabet; (2) The elements out of which the universe is composed; (3) The heavenly bodies, partly because of the regulation by them of times and seasons. Thus we have three developments of one argument revolving around the employment of three related figures:

- (1) The pedagogue.
- (2) The tutor and governor.
- (3) The elements of the world.

It is evident that in the last figure, the Apostle reaches his point and consequently, while we need not know much about pedagogues or tutors to appreciate his argument, we need to be well acquainted with his use of the words *stoicheion* "elements" and *stoicheo* "to walk as by rule".

***Stoicheion*** is used by Paul five times as follows:

- "The *elements* of the world" (Gal. iv. 3).
- "Weak and beggarly *elements*" (Gal. iv. 9).
- "After the *rudiments* of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8).
- "If ye be dead with Christ from the *rudiments* of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances" (Col. ii. 20).
- "Ye have need that one teach you again which be the *first principles* of the oracles of God" (Heb. v. 12).

***Stoicheo*** is used of or by Paul five times, as follows:

- "Thou thyself also *walkest orderly*, and keepest the law" (Acts xxi. 24).
- "Who also *walk* in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Rom. iv. 12).
- "If we live in the Spirit, let us also *walk* in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 25).
- "As many as *walk* according to this rule, peace be on them" (Gal. vi. 16).
- "Let us *walk* by the same rule" (Phil. iii. 16).

The reader will doubtless have called to mind the context of some of these references. The Galatians were being put into bondage by the imposition of the *stoicheia* of the law, whereas the Colossians were being put into bondage by the imposition of the *stoicheia* both of a vain deceitful philosophy and of ordinances cancelled by the cross of Christ. Both Galatians and Colossians, though led in different paths, came near the same thing in the end.

To the Galatians Paul wrote:

- "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. iv. 10, 11).

To the Colossians Paul wrote:

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

The parallel between Galatians and Hebrews is found in the reference to the state of children as contrasted with that of adults:

“For every one that useth milk . . . . is a babe, but strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age” (Heb. v. 13, 14).

When we compare the contexts of *stoicheion* and *stoicheo* within the epistle to the Galatians itself we have the “weak and beggarly elements” of the law which pertain to childhood and bondage, contrasted with the walk that is beyond the touch of law, a walk that is in line with the new creation; and it was to wean from the one and lead to the other that the Apostle spent himself in writing this moving epistle. The “time appointed by the father” finds its equivalent in the “fulness of time” when Christ came into the world.

It is evident that if there is a plan and a purpose in the Bible, some control of time is essential if that plan and purpose is to be attained. It is made very clear in Scripture that there is a time and season “to every purpose under heaven”. This purpose is called “The purpose of the ages” (Eph. iii. 11 lit.). When the Saviour commenced His ministry he did so with the announcement “the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark i. 15).

It was the “fulness” of time also in the sense that the necessary preparatory period was finished. Nations had been permitted to grope in darkness and these times are called “the times of this ignorance” (Acts xvii. 30). Many different forms of government had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Israel too had passed through the fire, and it had been proved to a demonstration that, however closely hedged about a people may be, however just the laws, no man can by his own works provide a righteousness that would be accepted with God. Jewish religion, Greek wisdom, Roman power all stood self confessed failures. The time had come for the Redeemer to be born.

“Made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. iv. 4).

*Ek gunaikos, genomenon hupo nomon.*

Many commentators have been tempted to read more into these words than the context demands. There is no *necessary* reference to the Virgin birth, it rather emphasizes the true humanity of the Redeemer. The sayings “man that is born of a woman” (Job xiv. 1), “among them that are born of women” (Matt. xi. 11) make no specific reference to the individual mothers, but rather indicates something universal, something that is true of all men. This universal fact would not exclude the fulfillment of the prophecy concerning “the seed of a woman” made in Genesis iii., it would most naturally direct the thought back to that germ of all prophecy, and in so doing would travel back before Abraham and lead back to Adam, thereby indicating that the Deliverer now come was akin to *all men* and not related only to *Israel*. The added words “under law” revealed that the Redeemer was fully qualified to deal with Israel’s special case, and so reveals how fully the ruined state of all men has been met by the gracious intervention of Christ. He thus came that He might *redeem*; He came that those redeemed might *receive*, and as a result that they may be enabled to cry “Abba Father”.

As we have already seen, the word translated “redeem” is used in Gal. iii. 13 with special reference to the curse of the law, so here He came to redeem them that were under the law. Such receive “the adoption of sons”. We gave some consideration to this subject when dealing with Gal. iii. 15-17, showing that by “adoption” is meant the appointing of the heir.

“Abba Father.” Here we have Aramaic and Greek, Jew and Gentile expressing in their own tongue this closest of all relationships. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The two words come together in Mark xiv. 36 and in Rom. viii. 15. Romans viii. is the chapter of sonship (for structure that reveals this see *Just and the Justifier*) and “the Spirit” of which that chapter speaks is in the main “the sonship spirit” — a precious truth, a priceless privilege, often beclouded by confusing it with the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost and after. The structure shows that the Apostle clinches his argument in its two developments with “IF”.

“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. iii. 29).

This establishes the superiority of “promise” above “law”.

Now, having looked at the condition of “bondage” that is associated with “law”, and the condition of “sonship” associated with “promise”, Paul for the second time uses the “IF” of argument.

“Wherefore thou art no more servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Gal. iv. 7).

#### **#104. GALATIANS iv. 8 - 12-.** **The inexplicable return to “weak and beggarly elements”.**

We now come to the closing appeal of the great argument that occupies Gal. ii. 15 - iv. 12. The Apostle started his argument by appealing to Peter to consider what he was really doing when he attempted “to build again the things destroyed”, clinching the argument with an appeal, “I am dead to the law”.

Now having shown the place that the promise has above the law, the superiority of sonship above serfdom, the passing of the pedagogue and the coming in of the fulness of Christ, the Apostle turns to the Galatians who had been misled by Judaistic enthusiasts and applies to them the same form of argument and appeal that he had used with Peter. The structure demonstrates this, and we give the opening and closing members again so that the evidence shall be before us.

A		ii. 15-20.		a		<i>Phusis.</i>	“By nature.”	Jews.
						b		Build again things destroyed. <i>Palin.</i>
						c		Personal. “I am dead to the Law.”
		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
A		iv. 8-12.		a		<i>Phusis.</i>	“By nature”	gods.
						b		Turn again to elements. <i>Palin.</i>
						c		Personal. “Be as I am.”

“We who are Jews by nature”, said Paul to Peter. “Ye did service unto them which by nature no gods”, said Paul to the Galatians. “If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor”, said Paul to Peter. “How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements”, said Paul to Galatians. Then Paul turns from argument to appeal, and said to Peter:

“I am dead . . . . I am crucified with Christ” — so he turns from argument with the Galatians and appeals to them, “Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are”.

The Apostle is not questioning the real existence of the gods of the heathen. That question does not arise, for however far the Galatians had slipped into ritualism, they had not given up their faith in the true God. Among the heathen there were “gods many and lords many” (I Cor. viii. 5), but, says the Apostle, you once served those who though no gods at all, were ignorantly considered to be so, yet now, even though you have come to a saving knowledge of the gospel, you have gone back in principle to the

self same elements that held you in bondage before your salvation. “How turn ye again . . . . ye desire again.” The Apostle uses the word *palin* “again” twice, and in the second instance he follows it with the added word *anohen* “anew”.

The weak and beggarly elements to which the Galatians were turning were such observances as circumcision, holydays and the like, and at first it may sound strange if not untrue to say that these Galatians were returning to the service of pagan gods. The Apostle, of course, was not accusing them of a lapse into idolatry; what he would make them see by this rather severe method of argument was that by stepping down from the high and blessed position into which free grace had placed them to the “elements” of the law, with its ceremonies, its rites, its days and observances, they were going back at least to “elements” even though they were not returning to idolatry. The Apostle who venerated the law, and declared that the commandment was holy, just and good (Rom. vii. 12) nevertheless does not hesitate to speak of this law as comprised of “weak and beggarly elements” and places it on a parallel with the elements of paganism when such a misuse of the law is permitted so that it becomes either a competitor with, or a perfecter of the Gospel of grace.

The same charge of being “weak” is made against the law in Rom. viii. 3, but the Apostle is careful to say “weak through the flesh”. So here, there is no charge laid against the law as such, but against its misuse, for he has already declared, that “if righteousness come by the law, then Christ died gratuitously” (Gal. ii. 21). The Apostle calls the elements of the law “beggarly”, a word already used in its literal sense (Gal. ii. 10), and translated “beggar” in Luke xvi. 20 & 22, and it was so when contrasted with the riches of grace offered so freely in the gospel. Elements, whether Mosaic or pagan, were weak and beggarly when compared with grace, and for any believer who has been set at liberty to prefer “the yoke of bondage”, or who has been honoured with “sonship” to go back to the status of a “slave”, who has been relieved of the supervision of “tutors and governors” to seek the re-imposition of observances and ceremonials, seemed to the Apostle inexplicable.

He does not merely say “ye desire again” but “ye desire again afresh” *palin anohen*. *Palin* by itself ordinarily means “again” (Gal. i. 9, 17; ii. 1, 18; iv. 9, 19; v. 1 and 3), the addition therefore of the word *anohen* must be intentional and demands translation.

**Anohen.** This adverb is related both to place and to time. When it refers to place, it is translated “the top” (Matt. xxvii. 51) when it refers to time it is translated “from the beginning” (Acts xxvi. 5). When combined, as in Gal. iv. 9 with *palin*, it looks back to the position which was occupied before, and contemplates reoccupying it afresh. This but enforces the idea that to go back to legalism was all one and the same as to go back to paganism; it was but the exchange of one system of bondage for another.

In order that the Galatians should have no misunderstanding as to what the Apostle referred to, he proceeds to enumerate these *stoicheia* or “elements”.

“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal. iv. 10).

The Apostle was no arbitrary martinet; he endeavoured to act in grace, and in Romans xiv., warns the strong believer against an uncharitable attitude towards a weaker brother who “esteemed one day above another” (Rom. xiv. 5). This Galatian movement however was in an entirely different category; it was so serious that if persisted in “Christ would profit them nothing”. In another epistle the Apostle was obliged to speak strongly concerning the “elements” and concerning the observance of days:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (*stoicheia*) of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. ii. 8).

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances” (Col. ii. 20).

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

“I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain” (Gal. iv. 11).

It is untrue to think of the Apostle as being “afraid OF” these Galatians; no servant of Christ was more bold in service; Ellicott renders the passage “I am apprehensive of you”, or as we might say today “I am fearful FOR you”. The words that follow “lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain”, must be regarded as the explanation of the Apostle’s “fear”.

To spend himself was Paul’s practice and desire, but to spend himself for nought was a sacrifice that did not commend itself to him. Earlier in this epistle he revealed how he blended the utmost caution with the utmost boldness “Lest by any means” he said “I should run, or had run, in vain” (Gal. ii. 2). The same economy is expressed in the epistle to the Philippians, when he said: “Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain” (Philippians ii. 16). Yet this extreme caution is immediately followed by exceedingly generosity, for he continues “Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all” (Phil. ii. 17).

So again, writing to the Thessalonians, the Apostle expressed his satisfaction that his entrance in unto them “was not in vain” (I Thess. ii. 1); and later, having heard of the trials through which the Thessalonians were passing, he wrote “For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain” (I Thess. iii. 5). There is no hard and fast rule for guidance in this matter, indeed it is a continual call for watchfulness, yet speaking for ourselves, hardly a week passes but what we willingly spend several hours endeavouring to help one correspondent, while at the very same time, we refuse to spend more than a few minutes on another. If we were asked to explain the grounds of such discrimination, we may be at a loss, but we can only say that unconsciously we have been putting into practice the lesson which is before us; we refuse, willingly to labour “in vain”, while rejoicing to be used to the utmost where sacrifice is rightly demanded.

The Apostle now brings this long section to a close by a personal appeal:

“Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are” (Gal. iv. 12).

Commentators both ancient and modern fall into two groups in their explanation of this appeal:

1. One group, taking the language of I Kings. xxii. 4 as a proverbial utterance say that Paul says “Let us be friends”.
2. The other group consider that the Apostle alludes to the fact that he, a Hebrew and a Pharisee had already become like a Gentile so far as the law was concerned, and that he appeals to the Galatian believers to take their stand with him. Moffatt’s rendering of Gal. iv. 12 is very free, but it gives a pointer “Do take my line brothers, I beg of you — just as I once took yours”.

Ellicott sees in this a “dissuasive from Judaism urged on the ground of his own dereliction of it”; compare I Cor. ix. 20, 21. The structure, as always, decided for us that the sentiment of Gal. iv. 12 corresponds with that of Gal. ii. 19. It is not an appeal for their friendship, it is a parallel with the appeal made to Peter, calling attention to the Apostle’s attitude to the law, and in effect saying “If I, a Hebrew, should have seen it essential to my salvation to die to the law that I might live unto God, how

utterly inexplicable must your conduct be, being by race Gentiles, to turn back to that system after having been made Christ's free men".

With this appeal we bring this most vivid and vital section of Galatians to a conclusion. There is much more close reasoning and earnest appeal to be considered, but before we can proceed further, a survey of the next great section is called for. This we hope to give in our next article.

### **#105. GALATIANS iv. -12 - 20. The travail of an apostle.**

We have now given consideration to the first great central member of Galatians, namely Galatian.ii.15-iv.12, which can be summed up under the heading "The Cross v. The Law", and divided under the sub-headings Faith v. Works and Liberty v. Bondage. We now turn our attention to the corresponding great member, Gal. iv. 12 - vi. 10, which may be summed up under the headings "The Cross v. The Flesh", and subdivided under the sub-headings Spirit v. Flesh and Liberty v. Bondage. This great section must naturally be broken up into smaller portions if we are to study it intelligently, and so we concentrate our attention at the moment on Gal. iv. 12-20, which is in the nature of a personal appeal to the Galatians, referring to their past love and their present zeal and the evil influence of their Judaistic teachers.

The structure emphasizes the great difference which the Apostle observed between the reception with the Galatians had given him on a former visit, even though circumstances were adverse, and the present coldness of their attitude toward him under the influence of their false teachers. Let us see this before proceeding to a more detailed analysis.

#### **Galatians iv. 12 - 20**

- A | 12. Ye have not injured me.
- B | 13. Infirmary of the flesh. At the first.
- C | 14-15. | a | My temptation.
  - b | Not reject, but received.
- Early affection | b | As angel, as Christ Jesus.
- a | Your eyes.
- A | 16. Am I become your enemy?
- C | 17, 18. | a | They zealously affect you.
  - b | But not well.
  - b | They would exclude you.
  - a | That ye might affect them.
- Present affecting | a | It is good.
- b | To be zealously affected always.
- a | In a good thing.
- b | Not only when I am present.
- B | 19, 20. I travail in birth again.

"Ye have not injured me at all" (Gal. iv. 12).

A great deal of discussion has arisen as to the intention of the Apostle in these words. Calvin and many more recent writers take the view that "this is intended to remove the suspicion which might have rendered his former reproofs more disagreeable . . . . So far as respects myself, I have no cause to complain of you".

Ellicott says that the meaning is "ye did not injure me formerly, do not injure me now by refusing ...". Others have suggested that Paul meant "ye have not injured *me*, but Christ". To these suggestions there are objections, both grammatical and contextual. It is proverbial that there are none so difficult to

conciliate as those who have done an injury, consequently the Apostle assures them that rather than feeling that they had injured him at all, he entertained the warmest recollection of the way they had received him, even when the circumstances were adverse. So, he continued, never think that because I tell you the truth, and that truth be somewhat unpleasant, that I can possibly be or become your enemy. We may get a little light on his intention by observing the way he uses *adikeo* "to injure" elsewhere. In Acts xxv. 10, 11, he said "To the Jews have I done no wrong . . . . if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them". Paul was not charged with immoral conduct, with bribery, corruption or theft, he was charged with antagonism to "the law of the Jews, the temple and Caesar" (Acts xxv. 8).

Again in II Corinthian vii., he uses the expression, "Receive us; we have wronged no man" and proceeds to use such expressions as "I speak not to condemn you, for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you". He confessed he had "made them sorry with a letter" (vii. 2-8) yet, as he afterward explained, his object in thus writing, was "not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you" (II Cor. vii. 12).

So the Galatians were to remember that Paul did not allow personal grievances to interpose between himself and his duty. He still loved these erring Galatians; loved them so much that he uses the strange figure of going through the pains of child-birth on their account the second time.

"Ye have not injured me at all" but, he says, you know, on the contrary, how you received me when I first preached the gospel to you. What does he mean by "through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you"?

*Dia* "through" followed by the accusative, as it is here, usually denotes "the ground or motive of an action". It is possible that the rarer meaning "throughout a period of infirmity" may be intended, and it is difficult for anyone at the present time to decide, simply because facts known to the Galatians are unknown to ourselves. The straightforward translation of the passage yields the idea that at the time Paul was suffering some physical infirmity. He had, in such unprepossessing conditions, not only preached the gospel acceptably, but in spite of the trial such a condition imposed upon them and himself, instead of "despising" and "rejecting" him as they might have done, they had on the contrary received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

The word translated "reject" is *ekptuo*, literally "to spit out", suggesting that the sickness which had fallen on Paul, rendered him somewhat loathsome or objectionable. He speaks of this infirmity as "my temptation", which is altered in the R.V. and reads "and that which was a temptation to you". The word "temptation" means a "trial", and while this bodily infirmity of Paul would have been a great trial to himself, it was in fact a greater means of "trial" to the Galatians, and they had been proved worthy by it, for they had not only received the Apostle "as an angel", weak and despicable as he then was, but had manifested such love and esteem for him that had it been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and have given them to him.

There are those who point to various proverbs which speak of "giving the very heart out of one" for another, but there are one or two reasons for believing that Paul refers to a definite affliction of his own eyes, rather than to making a proverbial reference here. In the first case, if this be a proverb, it is rather an extravagant one, and not in line with the usual practice of the Apostle, and secondly, it is not reasonable to use an extravagant proverb, and yet to limit its application by the matter of "possibility"—yet he says "if it had been possible". Then, had this utterance been a proverb it would probably have read "You would have been ready to have given your eyes to serve me", but here, Paul uses the word "to root out" and "give unto me". There can be little doubt but that he suffered some form of ophthalmia, a disease very prevalent in the East in his day, and induced in him by the vision he had received on the road to Damascus. With such a disease, he would be always very conscious of the pitiable spectacle he

presented, and remembered the more with warmest feelings the attitude of the Galatians at such a time. Indeed said he “you felicitated yourselves” (Gal. iv. 15) on having such a teacher in your midst, and now, am I to understand that, seeing you on the brink of spiritual sin, I tell you plainly the truth concerning your violent lapse from grace, that I must therefore be your enemy?

The Apostle now turns from the deceived to the deceivers. Already in chapter i. we became aware of the presence of a pernicious influence at work among the Galatians.

“There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. i. 7).

Was it the association of ideas that made him speak immediately after this about “an angel from heaven”? (see the sequence in Gal. iv. 14-17). Again, in chapter v., reference is made to those which “trouble” the Galatians (Gal. v. 10, 12).

Ellicott and Alford translate the word rendered “zealously affect” as “they are paying court” but there does not seem any evidence that the false teachers were paying court to the Galatians. The word *zeloo* means to be zealous, then to covet or envy. So in I Cor. xii. 31 “covet earnestly”. These false teachers being moved with envy, had attempted to exclude the Apostle from contact with the Galatians.

“So then, I am become your enemy, forsooth, because I tell you the truth! They who persuade you to this effect, desire to gain you over to themselves, not by fair and honourable means, but by artful misrepresentation. They would shut you out from — whom? or from what? from whom, doubtless, but from their spiritual pastor and guide — the man who, of all others, stood directly in the way of their designs, and in order to damage him in their estimations they descended to those base and unworthy devices.”

After this conciliatory and personal note, Paul returns to the serious matter that called this epistle into being.

“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice: for I stand in doubt of you” (Gal. iv. 19, 20).

Then follows the “allegorizing” of the story of Hagar, Ishmael, Sarah and Isaac in a further attempt to demonstrate the “foolishness” of the backward movement of these beloved Galatians, but this must occupy our attention in the next article.

#### **#106. GALATIANS iv. 26. “Jerusalem which is above”. Its dispensational place.**

In the covenants and promises to Abraham, a ‘land’, the land of Canaan, the Holy land, the land known as Palestine, occupies a large place. In the covenants and promises made to David a ‘city’ is very prominent, “the city of David”: a city which the Lord did ‘choose’ of which ‘glorious things’ are spoken, Jerusalem, the holy city, a city to be called in the future by many wondrous names, such as ‘a city of truth’, ‘the city of the great king’. It was to Jerusalem that David took the first evidence of his great triumph (I.Sam.xvii.54); it was in Jerusalem that David reigned over all Israel and Judah (II.Sam.v.5). It is this city both in its desolations and in its glorious restoration that fills such prophets as Isaiah with wondrous imagery. The date line of the great prophecy of Daniel ix. is drawn at the time when the command was given to build Jerusalem and all the sorrow that filled the Saviour’s breast, as all the rejection that He endured, was focused at Jerusalem. He must needs go unto Jerusalem, it could not be but that He must die at Jerusalem.

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

It was the same literal and earthly city that was marked out for the Pentecostal manifestation and further extension of opportunity to Israel; the disciples were bidden to ‘tarry’ in the city of Jerusalem to await enduement from on high, and Jerusalem was the centre from which was preached the gospel by the twelve until the call and commission of Paul recorded in Acts xiii.

While the earthly city Jerusalem dominates these Scriptures, we have the hope of Israel, the hope that the kingdom should be restored again unto Israel, the goal unto which the twelve tribes hoped to come, and its sphere of blessing is the earth. The fitting prayer is “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”, and the hope is focused upon that day when the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.

As the sad fact of Israel’s non-repentance became evident to the illuminated mind, another sphere of blessing comes into prominence. For the first time in Scripture a ‘heavenly country’, a ‘heavenly city’, a ‘city which hath foundations’, a ‘heavenly Jerusalem’, comes into the narrative of Scripture. For the first time we learn that Abraham who received the unconditional promise of the land and of the seed, was encouraged to sojourn in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tents, and looking for a city that was to be prepared for him, a city associated with a heavenly country, and seen ‘afar off’ (Heb. xi. 8-10, 13).

When we turn to Hebrews xii., and read of the two mountains, Sinai with its blackness and darkness, its death and its terror, and Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the parallel between this allegory and that of Galatian iv. is most obvious. It is one of the many incidental evidences that the epistle to the Galatians was the ‘covering letter’ to that addressed to the Hebrews; such a covering letter would fully explain the absence of Paul’s name in the introduction of the epistle to the Hebrews as it also explains the extraordinary omission of any reference to circumcision in that same epistle. Moreover, the fact that both Galatians (Gal. vi. 11), and Hebrews (Heb. xiii. 22) at their close refer to the Apostle’s writing with ‘large letters’ and yet sending them an exhortation in a letter of ‘few words’ is readily understood if the two letters, the one to the Galatians and the other to the Hebrews, accompanied each other.

It is beside the purpose of our present study to attempt a systematic examination of the parallels that exist between these two epistles, or of the way in which the one epistle supplements the other. This we may do at the close of the present exposition. What does come before us with great force is that the emphasis in Hebrews xi. & xii. concerning Abraham’s association by overcoming faith with the heavenly Jerusalem, unites this epistle with that to the Galatians as entertaining a similar calling, for there not only are all believers reckoned as Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise, but Jerusalem which is above and free, is their mother (Gal. iv. 26).

Gentile believers have no place in Israel’s earthly inheritance except as proselytes or subservient nations, but Gentile believers whose faith follows that of Abraham, who was himself one of the Gentile nations and received the promises, being justified by faith before receiving the sign of circumcision (Rom. iv. 9-14), such believing Gentiles have a place in the second sphere of blessing, the heavenly calling of Heb. iii. 1, the heavenly Jerusalem of Hebrews xi. & xii., for Jerusalem which is above is their ‘mother’, the goal of their faith.

In Gal. iii. 8 & 22 the Scriptures are personified, being made to ‘foresee’ and to ‘conclude’. In Gal. iv. 22-31 the Apostle takes this personification a stage further, lifting out the history of Sarah and Isaac, and of Hagar and Ishmael, allegorizing the details, to enforce the essential differences between the two covenants.

The A.V. reads, 'which things are an allegory', but Paul uses the verb *allegoreo*, saying in effect 'I am going to allegorize this piece of O.T. history, but would have you to remember that the record in Genesis is no mere allegory, but a record of sober fact'.

"The modern and common usage of the word *allegoria* is thus quite different from this Scriptural definition. According to the modern sense it is taken to mean a fictitious narrative which has another and deeper meaning than that which is expressed . . . . Allegory is always stated in the *past* tense, and *never in the future*. Allegory is thus distinguished from Prophecy. The Allegory brings other teaching out of past events, while prophecy tells us events that are yet to come" (*Figure of Speech Used in the Bible*.—Dr. E. W. Bullinger).

## **#107. GALATIANS iv. 21 - v. 10 --- The call to Freedom. "To the liberty stand fast" (v. 1).**

In the last two articles we were considering the allegory of the two sons of Abraham which occupies Gal. iv. 27 - v. 1, but did not get so far as to include Gal. v. 1 in our study. This verse concludes the allegory by a call to stand fast to the freedom which Christ has given, the concluding member of this section being Gal. v. 2-10 which is Paul's testimony to those placing themselves under law.

The call to stand fast cannot be passed over without careful examination, for it crystallizes much of the desire of the Apostle and the standing of the believer. It is a call to us as well as to them, and upon our response to this call our peace and experimental growth in grace depends.

A considerable variety of readings are presented by the manuscripts, which, in the language of Lightfoot 'are the more perplexing, in that they seriously effect the punctuation, and thereby the whole texture of the passage'. The reader who could follow any indication of the way in which these various readings occur and are distributed, would be already independent of any help we could give in these pages, and to those unacquainted with the subject, mere citations of manuscripts Aleph, A, B, C, F, G, P, etc., would prove of little value. The various readings found, may be summarized under three headings:

- (1) The position of *oun* 'therefore'.
  - (a) Before "stand" (b) After "liberty" (c) omitted altogether.
- (2) The position of *hemas* 'us'.
  - (a) Before "Christ", (b) After "Christ", (c) After "made free".
- (3) A third and more complicated variation is the presence or absence of *he* 'which' after the word 'liberty'.

With this analysis of the different readings of the Manuscripts, we place together for comparison the A.V. and the R.V. of this verse and pass on to its exposition.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1, A.V.).

"With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Gal. v. 1, R.V.).

As in most cases of various readings, it is rather a matter of emphasis than of any change in doctrine.

"*To the liberty stand.*" The words *tek eleutheria* are 'a dative of reference'. Ellicott looks back for the reference, and says that it refers to the exact sphere *in which*, and to which the action is limited. It appears however upon closer consideration that the Apostle is not referring so much to the sphere in which our freedom is found, but rather to the object *to which* we are to stand. Following immediately

upon the conclusion of the allegory “We are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free” comes the exhortation “To the freedom stand”.

The A.V. reads “Christ hath made us free”, but the verb must be taken *historically* and translated “Christ set you free”. The use of *eleutheroo* ‘to make free’ in Galatians, looks back to the doctrine to be revealed in John viii. 32 and its reference to Abraham’s seed, and looks forward to the fuller presentation of the theme in the epistle to the Romans. This most important doctrinal word occurs just seven times in the N.T. It would be a useful thing to have the complete set of references before us.

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John viii. 32).

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John.viii.36).

“Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Rom. vi. 18).

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. vi. 22).

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. viii. 2).

“Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. viii. 21).

“To the liberty wherewith Christ set us free, stand fast” (Gal. v. 1).

The freedom of John viii. is the freedom that comes from knowing the Truth, a freedom that comes from Christ as “The Son”. The implications of course were that many of His hearers were not free, and this was resented by them.

“They answered Him, we be Abraham’s seed, were never in bondage to any man.”

Christ does not allegorize the record of Hagar and Sarah as Paul does; He differentiates between the true seed of Abraham by another test. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin”, and instead of saying that “Abraham had two sons”, the Saviour pursues another thought and speaks of ‘two fathers’!

“Abraham is our father . . . . If ye were children of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham . . . . ye are of your father the devil” (John viii. 39-44).

In Gal. iv. 21 - v. 1 Paul keeps the issue to one feature “You are either bond or free”, but in Romans he can introduce a second form of service, showing that those who are really ‘free’ nevertheless become ‘servants to righteousness’ and ‘servants to God’. Again in John it is the ‘Truth’ that makes free. The doctrine of Justification by faith is not in view. In Galatians freedom from the yoke of the law is in view, but in Romans the deeper doctrines of freedom from ‘sin’ and freedom from ‘the bondage of corruption’ and ‘freedom from the law of sin and death’ are made known. The whole of Paul’s ministry is characterized by this trumpet call to liberty, the word in one or more of its forms occurring in Paul’s epistles some 28 times.

Had the Apostle intended to speak of entanglement, he had the choice of two words; he could have used a word that meant to be ensnared, as is used in Matt. xxii. 15 “entangle Him in His talk”; or he could have used *empleko* as he did in II Tim. ii. 4 “no man that warreth entangleth himself”. He uses neither however, but selects *enecho*, a word that means ‘to hold in’ as with a ‘yoke’ which Weymouth renders ‘Be not hampered’.

The intention of the Apostle is best perceived by passing from the verb ‘to hold in’ to the noun, the thing that does the holding — he calls it ‘the yoke of bondage’.

Yokes were of two kinds. There was the yoke that was used for cattle (Numb. xix. 2); but we read that Jeremiah made bonds and yokes to fit the human neck as tokens of servitude.

To Israel the Lord said:

“I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright” (Lev. xxvi. 13).

When Isaiah looked forward to the ‘acceptable year of the Lord’ he uses this figure of freedom from the yoke:

“For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian” (Isa. ix. 4).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing” (Isa. x. 27).

“I will break the Assyrian in My land, and upon My mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders” (Isa. xiv. 25).

Acts xv. is devoted to the twofold question:

- (1) Is it needful that Gentile believers should be circumcised and keep the law?
- (2) Should they be asked to abstain from certain practices because of the sensitiveness of Jewish believers?

Paul refers to either this council at Jerusalem or to a similar one in Galatian ii. and his reference to the yoke of bondage would come with force to those who may have been leaning somewhat to Peter’s authority.

The Apostle of the Gentiles was not only “Hebrew of the Hebrews”, he was a citizen of Tarsus, and a Roman citizen also. He had a wide knowledge of the ways and customs of the nations, and he knew that the Galatian Christians would be personally acquainted both with literal slavery and with the process adopted in setting a slave free. To these there are allusions in Gal. v. 1 which must not be missed.

The following is a translation of an inscription found at Delphi, dating B.C.200-199:

"Date. Apollo the Pythian *bought* from Sosibius of Amphissa, *for freedom*, a female slave, whose name in Nicaea, by race a Roman, *with a price* of three minae of silver and a half-mina. Former seller according to the law: Eumnastus of Amphissa. The *price* he hath received. The purchase however, Nicaea hath committed unto Apollo, *for freedom*."

The very words ‘bought with a price’ and ‘for freedom’ show how closely Paul followed the wording of these records.

In numerous records the emancipated slave is expressly allowed henceforth to ‘do the things that he will’, to which Paul makes an allusion in Gal. v. 17; and it is expressly forbidden under heavy penalties that such an enfranchised slave should ever ‘be made a slave’ again. These and other allusions with photographs and original wording of inscriptions can be seen in Deissmann’s *Light from the Ancient East*.

To us today the clarion call of Paul resounds. It is as imperative as ever it was that those whom Christ has set free should ‘stand’ to that freedom, and refuse any attempt, however plausible, to put upon their necks the yoke of bondage from which by grace they have been so gloriously set free.

With this call the Apostle concludes his ‘allegory’ and Gal. v. 2-9 completes the closing member of the section which commences at chapter iv. 21, with the words ‘Tell me’ (*legete*) and closes appropriately with the words ‘I Paul say’ (*lego*).

**#108. GALATIANS iv. 21 - v. 10 --- The call to Freedom.  
Fallen from grace (v. 2 - 9).**

This section opens with a rhetorical question “Tell me?” (Gal. iv. 21) and closes with Paul ‘telling’ in very strong terms the results that must come from the Galatians deflection.

Paul ‘tells’ these wavering believers, three very serious facts:

- (1) That if they should be circumcised, Christ will profit them nothing.
- (2) That every one so circumcised is under an obligation to perform the whole law.
- (3) That whoever attempts self justification by means of the law, is (a) separated from Christ, and (b) fallen from grace.

The three items are prefaced by the emphatic pronoun “*ego*”:

“Behold, *i* Paul, *i* say to you.”

The remainder of the argument is prefaced by the emphatic pronoun *Hemeis* “we”.

“We”, however, “we are waiting, in Spirit, for the hope of righteousness by faith”.

This statement is followed by three observations:

- (1) That in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.
- (2) That they had run well, but someone has hindered them, and this persuasion did not come from him that called them.
- (3) This hindering influence is likened to a little leaven, which leavens the whole lump.

The structure of this passage is as follows:

- A | v. 2. I (emphatic pronoun) Paul say unto you.
- B | 2, 3. Circumcision and the “whole” law. |
  - a | If circumcised. \ Negative.
  - b | Christ profits *nothing*. /
  - a | Every man who is circumcised. \ Positive.
  - b | Debtor . . . *whole* law. /
- C | 4-5. Grace and Faith. |
  - c | Christ — *none* effect. \ Negative.
  - d | Justified by law. /
  - c | Spirit . . . hope . . . \ Positive.
  - d | Righteousness by faith. /
- B | 6-9. Circumcision and the “whole” lump leavened. |
  - a1 | In Christ Jesus.
  - b1 | Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.
  - b1 | But faith.
  - a1 | In-working by love.
  - a2 | Ye did run well.
  - b2 | Who hindered?
  - a2 | This persuasion.
  - b2 | The little leaven.
- A | 10. I (emphatic pronoun) have confidence in you.

When the Apostle would impress his hearers with the solemnity or importance of his message, he occasionally used the expression “I Paul” or “of me Paul”. With such a writer and dealing as he was

with such truth, none of these features should be lightly regarded. Accordingly we observe that the phrase 'I Paul' is used by him as follows:

"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ"  
(II. Corinthian. x. 1).

These words introduce a passage which deals with the Apostle's individual position, his official character and authority and the subject is continued to the end of the epistle. It is therefore fittingly introduced in this very personal way.

Passing Gal. v. 2 which is the passage under review, we come to Eph. iii. 1, where the distinctive ministry and dispensation of the Mystery is introduced. Again, we have the personal formula:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. iii. 1).

This passage finds an echo in Col. i. 23 where, dealing with the same claim he said "Whereof I Paul am made a minister". So to assure the Thessalonians of the intensity of his desire to see them and of the equal intensity of Satanic opposition, he wrote:

"Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us" (I Thess. ii. 18).

In the epistle to Philemon which is so full of the practical outworking of grace, we find the Apostle undertaking to be surety for Onesimus, saying:

"I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it" (Philemon 19).

So, we are prepared by this introduction to Gal. v. 2 to discover that some solemn words are about to be uttered. Solemn indeed must be that defection of the Galatians from truth that makes Christ to profit them nothing.

"If ye be circumcised." The verb is a present subjunctive. It does not refer to anything done in the past. It does not say "If ye are or have been circumcised" for that would have excluded Paul himself. It is the contemplated act that is in mind, imposed upon them with great authority (Acts xv. 1), and having the added inducement of greater security ("Ye cannot be saved"), accompanied by immunity from persecution (Gal. vi. 12). The rite itself is not in question, it is the reason why the Gentile Christian was submitting to it that was the Apostle's concern, for it more than suggested that Christ's redemptive work was not alone sufficient for justification and life.

To all such Paul gave the solemn warning "Christ shall profit you nothing", the R.V. alters this to "Christ will profit you nothing". There is perhaps a glimpse at 'the hope of the righteousness by faith' (verse 5) when all who are thus addressed will find that they have no deliverer, no justifier, no Saviour. Closely associated in the Apostle's mind was this rite of circumcision and 'profit'. As a consequence of the teaching of Romans ii. he puts into the mouth of the imaginary objector the words:

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?"  
(Rom. iii. 1).

In this case, speaking of a Jew who was rightly under the law, the Apostle's answer is 'much every way'.

He had however in Rom. ii. 25 said:

"For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law",

and this gives point to his argument in Gal. v. 3:

"I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."

Paul, by the use of the word ‘again’, seems to suggest that he had told the Galatians this important fact before. What he had said to them during his visits we do not know, except that one address is recorded in Acts xiii.; we are sure however that there would be harmony between his several discourses, and he who so pointedly said:

“By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts xiii. 39),

would not leave his hearers without definitely instructing them regarding this law and its terms. We need not go outside the epistle, however, to discover that Paul had already testified concerning circumcision and the obligation to do the whole law. Galatian ii. should be re-read with this in view. Again, in Gal. iii. 10-12, while circumcision is not actually mentioned, it is implied in the title “As many as are of the works of the law”, for such come under the obligation to ‘continue in all things’ with the dreadful alternative of the ‘curse’ before them. So when Paul ‘testified again’ in Gal. v. 3 he was but saying the same thing. The Apostle emphasizes the ‘whole law’, even as he had said ‘all things which are written in the book of the law to do them’.

While it is convenient for students to subdivide the law into several parts, and speak of the moral law, the ceremonial law, etc., we must remember that for the purposes of justification, the law is one. We are either saved by reason of our perfect law-keeping, or we are saved by grace alone. James equally with Paul saw the oneness of the law, saying “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James ii. 10). “The linsey-woolsey garment” of the Puritan hymn is intolerable; a mixture of the righteousness of God through faith, with the attempts of fallen man to present a righteousness is impossible.

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. v. 4).

Translators have been considerably exercised over the best way of rendering into English the original word translated in the A.V. ‘to become of none effect’, especially as it is in what is known as a ‘pregnant structure’ the verb being followed by *apo* ‘away from’ and implying the mental addition of some such verb as *eschoristhete* ‘separated’. The R.V. reads: “severed from Christ” with a marginal alternative, “Gk. brought to nought”. Young’s *Literal Translation* is “Ye were freed from Christ”. Rotherham reads “Ye have been set aside from Christ”. Weymouth has: “Christ has become nothing to any of you”; while J. N. Darby very freely renders the passage “ye are deprived of all profit from Christ as separated (from Him)”, and to this he appends a lengthy footnote, saying *katergethete* is “a very hard word to translate. The active means to render anything useless and unprofitable, or miss an opportunity. Here it is passive and with *apo*”.

It is evident from these different attempts to give, in English, the meaning of this passage, that it is one of great difficulty. We cannot hope to succeed where so many eminently fitted for the task have scored only partial success, but we can examine the words in question and so provide the reader with a background to whatever translation the limitation of language shall ultimately compel us to accept.

*Katergethete apo Christou*. The root of the word *katargeo* is *erg* ‘work’, a word that the science of physics has made familiar to the English ear. The verb used in Gal. v. 4 is the aorist passive, and is made up of *kata* and *argos*. *Kata* often loses its distinctive force of ‘down’, in combination; it usually intensifies the action of the verb.

*Argos*, meaning idle, is composed of a ‘not’, and *ergon* ‘work’. *Katargeo* does not occur in the Septuagint version of the O.T. so there is no appeal to Hebrew usage or equivalents. It occurs in the N.T. 27 times, of which number 1 is used by Luke and the remaining 26 by Paul. We will not survey the whole of these 26 occurrences, although for a full understanding not one can be passed over, but for our

present purpose we must be content with the occurrences found in the parallel epistle to the Romans. They are 6 in number, and are as follows:

*Shall* their unbelief *make* the faith of God *without effect*? (Rom. iii. 3).

*Do* we then make *void* the law through faith? (iii. 31).

Faith is made void, and the promise *made of none effect*. (iv. 14).

That the body of sin *might be destroyed*. (vi. 6).

If the husband be dead, she *is loosed* from the law of her husband. (vii. 2).

But now we are *delivered from* the law, that being dead wherein we were held. (vii. 6).

In the first two occurrences in Romans, the verb *katargeo* is active, in the remaining four it is passive. The references in Romans vii. show how the word can be used in the sense of complete nullification, abrogation or evacuation of law -- the law being completely abrogated and devoid of power by death. It is in this sense that the Apostle uses it in Gal. v. 4. The believer who puts himself under law dies to the gospel, as surely as the sinner who puts himself under grace, dies to the law. In the one case the law has nothing to do with him, in the other Christ can do nothing for him.

The A.V. says "Christ is become of no effect unto you" whereas the original says rather 'you are beyond the operation of Christ'. Just as Paul could use the word 'free' in an evil sense on Rom. vi. 20 "when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" so he used *katargeo* here.

In the estimate of Paul, and in all who know the truth, conversion and justification is not a mere change of opinion, it is a matter of death followed by newness of life.

"I *by law to law* died, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19).

If after that I "build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor" (Gal. ii. 18).

If after being delivered from the bondage of idolatry, I turn again to weak and beggarly elements, what place can Christ have in my life or future?

As we have earlier indicated the addition of *apo* in this phrase complicates the translation. We must suppose the mental addition of some such word as *echoristhete*, so that the statement reads "ye are as nothing as regards Christ, ye are entirely separated from him" as in Rom. vii. 2, 5 (*Lightfoot in loco*).

To conclude the dreadful list of consequences, the Apostle says:

"Whosoever of you are (seeking to be) justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4).

This is but the doctrinal restatement of the allegory, where the child of the bondwoman was 'cast out'. If, says Paul, you voluntarily take up your stand with Hagar and Ishmael who were 'cast out', you surely will not be surprised if you 'fall out' of grace.

The Apostle has more to teach us before the subject is cleared and his further arguments must be considered in future articles. Meanwhile let none trifle with Grace. It is easier for a believer to fall out of grace by attempting self justification, than for a sinner who falls into sin. For the latter there is abundant provision; for the former, the way is beset with peril.

## #109. GALATIANS iv. 21 - v. 10 --- The call to Freedom. “Faith which worketh by love” (v. 5 - 10).

We have seen how the Apostle viewed the legalizing tendency of the Galatians, and have considered the solemnity of his warning that any one who seeks justification by any other way than that of faith must find:

- (1) That to such, Christ profits nothing.
- (2) That all who thus seek make themselves debtors to do the whole law.
- (3) That Christ becomes of none effect to such.
- (4) That they have fallen from grace.

It is not the Apostle's custom to rely only upon warning; he often turns from such methods to that of personal appeal and personal experience, presenting the positive side of the truth in its warmest and most attractive form. This we have seen him do in Gal. ii. 15-21. He discontinues the use of 'you' and 'ye' and now uses 'we'.

“For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith” (Gal. v. 5).

*Gar*, which is translated 'for' is a logical conjunction, being a contraction of *ge* 'verily' and *ara* 'therefore', and expresses reason, cause, motive, etc., of what has been previously said. Sometimes it introduces a reason that is unexpressed, but which is evidently in the writer's mind, as in Rom. iv. 2. Occasionally it is used in the adversative sense of 'but' as in Rom. xv. 4 & Phil. iii. 20 as Macknight has declared, and if this be the case in Gal. v. 5, we must read the passage, with Bloomfield:

"(But such is not, I trust, the case with us), FOR *we*, etc."

Paul, therefore, is about to institute a most pointed contrast with those who by their defection and legalism were falling from grace.

“For we through the spirit wait.”

*Pneumati* is without the article, it is moreover preceded by *en* 'in', and is put into the dative case. The dative case is that case which is used when we say 'give *me* the book' where of course, the fuller statement must be 'give *to me* the book'.

The Dative implies juxtaposition, and in four ways:

- (1) Association. (2) Transmission. (3) Reference. (4) Accessory.

Under the heading 'accessory' is placed 'sphere' in which some quality inheres. So Matt. v. 3 & 8, 'poor in spirit' and 'pure in heart', and Eph. ii. 3 'by nature' are examples of this usage.

This is the meaning of 'through the spirit' *pneumati* in Gal. v. 5, it cannot refer to the Holy Spirit, or to His gifts, neither can it be construed to mean 'spiritually'; it is the sphere in which justification by faith is attained, and 'spirit' *pneumati* is contrasted with 'flesh' (*sarx*), 'works' and 'law', in this epistle (Gal. iii. 3; v. 16, etc.) and aligned with 'grace' and 'faith'. In this sphere the Apostle said 'we wait'.

*Apekdexomai* occurs 7 times in the N.T., every occurrence being in Paul's epistles. No other writer of the New Testament uses the word. The passages are Rom. viii. 19, 23 & 25; I Cor. i. 7; Gal. v. 5; Phil. iii. 20 and Heb. ix. 28. In every case apart from Galatian v., the expectation is of something future, and is associated in the context either with the word 'hope' or its substance. It does not follow that Galatian v. must therefore be put into future; it is sufficient that there is a 'hope' to be 'eagerly expected'. In Galatian v. it is not the future manifestation of the sons of God, or the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is 'the hope of righteousness' that is expected. It is entirely foreign to the purpose of the Apostle in Galatians to distract attention from the main issue, namely 'justification is by faith

alone', to some future manifestation or conferring of righteousness. He cannot mean 'the hope, namely eternal life, which the righteous have'. The argument surely is not:

"The one rebuked by Paul thinks he *has* righteousness, which he attains to under law, but we just *wait* for it to be revealed in some future day."

The argument surely is rather:

"You indeed expect to attain unto righteousness by the works of law, we on the other hand expect righteousness only in the sphere of spirit and by faith."

Any exposition that diverts attention for a moment from the point at issue namely "How is righteousness attained?" must be wrong. Moreover, justification is a present 'standing'. The genitive 'hope of righteousness' is not necessarily the genitive of possession, it is not necessary to translate the phrase either "The hope whose object is righteousness" or "The hope which the righteous entertain". There is another use of the Genitive which conforms to all the requirement of the context, the genitive of apposition.

"Sometimes the genitive is put by way of apposition, in which case some such words as these have to be supplied; 'that is to say' 'which is', etc."

(*Figures of Speech*, Dr. E. W. Bullinger).

So when we read "The temple of His body" we understand it to mean "The temple, *that is to say*, His body" (John ii. 21).

"The sign of circumcision" was circumcision itself (Rom. iv. 11).

"The earnest of the Spirit" means the earnest, which is the Spirit (II Cor. v. 5).

So Gal. v. 5 can be translated "The hope which is righteousness" or as we should say in modern speech "We hope to be justified in the sphere of spirit through faith".

Following this personal summary of the position of the believer in Christ whose hope is not the flesh, law or works, but in spirit, grace and faith, Paul gives the following conclusion:

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6).

A logical writer like the Apostle would never introduce these words with 'for' unless some logical connection were intended; an inspired writer as he was, must have a perfect reason for this sequel. Yet at first sight the connection is not obvious. Had he said, "For in Jesus Christ, circumcision avails nothing, faith only is of any avail" it would seem to round off his argument. He has, however, most disconcertingly introduced 'uncircumcision' alongside 'circumcision', and has added 'work' and 'love' to faith, thereby, on the surface, robbing his previous argument of the idea of 'faith only'.

There is, therefore, something hidden in this new presentation that challenges our interest and will yield precious truth if investigated in prayerful dependence upon the Lord.

First, we observe that this passage is one of three where something similar is found:

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15).

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (I Cor. vii. 19).

If the statement 'circumcision availeth nothing' sets aside any hope in the flesh, the addition of 'uncircumcision' really sets aside anything the flesh can either do, or be. Treat the flesh ceremonially, or leave it naturally, the result is the same — nothing avails. Paul refuses to go half way, and change

from the circumcision party, to the uncircumcision party. "A plague on both your houses" he might say. "Uncircumcision can become as much a ground of boasting as circumcision — away with both."

The passage I Cor. vii. 19 is parallel with one in I Cor. iii. 7:

“So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase (is EVERYTHING)”

for so the mind must finish the sentence. So in I Cor. vii. 19 “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God is THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS”. The words ‘but faith that worketh by love’ round off the passage much the same as the mentally supplied additions do in these citations from I Corinthians. The only thing that avails is ‘Faith that worketh by love’.

The next question we must ask is why does the Apostle not simply say ‘but faith’ and leave it there? No one who has followed his argument so far can be left in any doubt that ‘faith’ apart from legal or carnal ordinances is the only instrument in justification. The time, therefore, has come when he should make it quite plain that ‘Faith only’ does not mean an empty, lifeless faith. We are reminded by James that the devils believe that there is one God, but although their faith is true, that faith will not save them. We may appreciate the turn taken by Paul here, by turning aside for a moment to consider a parallel argument used by him in connection with the place of the law. In both the epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians the law is said to ‘work wrath’, and to have entered that ‘sin might abound’. The law is shown to have been ‘weak because of the flesh’ (Rom. iv. 15; v. 20; viii. 3).

In Galatians neither life nor righteousness can come by the law, and all who are under the law are under the curse; yet Rom. vii. 12 declares, nevertheless, that the ‘law is holy’, and the commandment ‘holy, and just, and good’, and in Romans xiii. the full glory of the law is established in the saying:

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law” (Rom. xiii. 8-10).

Now this self same teaching awaits us in Galatians:

“For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gal. v. 13, 14).

Here then is the reason for the addition to the argument in verse 6. Circumcision is useless as a means to justification. It is also just as evil to believe that by abstaining from the rite, that any merit will accrue. Faith alone in the finished work of Christ can avail, but, the insistence on ‘faith only’ must not be misconstrued. Just as liberty does not mean licence, just as freedom from the law as a means of justification does not mean freedom from the law as a moral code, so faith alone must not be understood as being a dead faith, devoid of grace, but rather is it faith that works by love. Those who would set up James against Paul, and teach that one contradicts the other, make a fatal blunder. James, in his contention that ‘faith without works is dead’ is but teaching the same truth that Paul is urging here. The only difference between them is, that James does not deal with the initial stages of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but is concerned rather with the ‘perfecting’ of the faith. Paul goes to Genesis xv., where Abraham believed in the Lord, and his faith was counted for righteousness, James goes to Genesis xxii., where Abraham’s faith is put to the test, where his works perfected the faith he already possessed. Paul, as we have seen, speaks first of the law in its ineffectiveness & weakness and then speaks of its value, but James speaks of the law only as ‘the royal law’ and ‘the perfect law of liberty’.

The following extract from the writing of Professor Jowett, may be appreciated at this point:

"There is no trace in the writings of St. Paul of the opposition of faith and love, which is found in Luther. Such an opposition did not exist in the language of Christ and His apostles. It came from the schools; Luther was driven to adopt it by the exigencies of controversy. At some point or other was necessary to draw a line between the catholic and reformed doctrine of Justification. Was it to include works as well as faith? but if not, was love to be a co-efficient in the work of Justification? Luther felt this difficulty and tried to preserve the doctrine from the alloy of self-righteousness and external acts by the formula of 'faith only'.

Whether we say that we are justified by faith or love (Luke vii. 47, 50), or by faith working by love, or by grace, or by the indwelling of Christ, or of the Spirit of God, the difference is one of words and not of things. For although these distinctions admit of being defined by logic, and have been made the basis of opposing systems of theology, the point of view in which the writers of Scripture regard them is not that of difference but of sameness."

The concluding verses of this section are conciliatory; words of encouragement are used after the somewhat severe tone adopted in verses 2-4.

First he commends them for their past, 'Ye did run well', and then asks, not so much because he wants an answer, but because he is astonished, 'who did hinder you?'. The figure of a race, with its possibilities of defeat as well as glorious possibility of a prize is a favourite one with the Apostle. The word used for 'hinder' in the A.V. is *anekopsen* which means 'to beat back', the word endorsed by the majority of textual critics today is *enekopsen*, which means among other things to hinder by breaking up a road, as in a military operation.

To the English ear there is no real affinity between 'obey' and 'believe', indeed there may be a sense of opposition, obedience suggesting law and faith suggesting gospel, and seeing that Paul has made such insistence upon faith without works of law, the reader may wonder why he should now introduce the words 'obey the truth'. Why not 'believe the truth'? There is no such difference in the original words. The verb *peitho* which gives us 'obey' in verse 7, gives us also 'confidence' in verse 10, and in another form, *peismone* 'persuasion', in verse 8. *Peitho* occurs 55 times in the N.T. There are seven occurrences where it is translated 'obey', the remaining passages being rendered agree, assure, believe, have or be confident, persuade, trust, yield and make friend. Moreover, *pistis* 'faith', is actually derived from *peitho* showing that the obedience which Paul had in mind was the persuasion which begins with faith and ends in conviction.

Whether the Galatians had protested that after all the number who were thus influenced was small, or that the number who were teaching this error was negligible, we do not know, but the quotation of the proverb, 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump' suggests something of the sort.

In concluding this section, Paul adopts a conciliatory tone saying:

"I (for my part) (emphatic pronoun) have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded."

With the concluding words of verse 10 a new section opens, and this must be dealt with in our next study.

## #110. GALATIANS v. 10 - vi. 10 --- The Troubler and The Restorer. Love, the fulfilling of all the law (v. 14).

It may be as well, before we begin the examination of a new section of this epistle, to revive the reader's acquaintance with the structure of the epistle as a whole. Reduced to simple headings it is as follows:

- A1 | i. - ii. 14. Faith v. Works.
- B1 | ii. 15 - iv. 12. Cross v. Law.
- A2 | iv. 13 - vi. 10. Spirit v. Flesh.
- B2 | vi. 11-16. Cross v. World.
- A3 | vi. 17, 18. Grace and Spirit.

The section which is occupying our attention is A2 | iv. 13 - vi. 10, which is subdivided as follows:

- A2 | iv. 13 - vi. 10. Spirit v. Flesh. |
- a | Jerusalem. Free.
- b | Circumcision availeth nothing.
- c | Persecution of the Cross.

It is the third of these items, namely c | Persecution of the Cross, that is now before us, occupying Gal. v. 10 - vi. 10. The structure of this section is as follows:

- A | v. 10-12. The Troubler, he shall bear his judgment.
- B | v. 13-14. The law of love "fulfilled".
- C | v. 15-26. Flesh v. Spirit. Works and Fruit. |
- a | Biting and devouring one another.
- b | Walk in the Spirit.
- c | Not under law.
- d | Works of flesh.
- d | Fruit of Spirit.
- c | Against such no law.
- b | Walk in the Spirit.
- a | Provoking and envying one another.
- A | vi. 1, 2. The Restorer bear one another's burden
- B | vi. 2, 3. The law of Christ "fulfil".
- C | vi. 4-10. Flesh v. Spirit. Sowing and Reaping. |
- a | bear own burden.
- b | communicate.
- b | sow.
- a | reap if faint not.

Two very different types of person come before us here. "The troubler" who is the cause of the Galatian defection, and "The restorer" whose tactful and benevolent dealing would help to restore those who had been overtaken by a fault. Two laws are brought into prominence, the law which is fulfilled by love, and the fulfilling of the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens. Thirdly, two greater sections are concerned with the conflict of flesh and spirit, stressing in one case the exemption from law that belongs to those who walk in the spirit, and in the other case stressing the reaping that all must expect who sow either to the flesh or to the spirit. Paul has already referred to 'some that trouble you' who were perverting the gospel of Christ, here he refers to an individual of that company.

As many be supposed, by the very nature of the term, ‘trouble’ represents some 35 or more words in the original Scriptures. Of these, 14 different words occur in the Greek of the N.T. The word used in Gal. v. 10 is *tarasso* and means literally ‘to agitate’ as for example water (John v. 4, 7; Ezek. xxxiv. 18 LXX). This latter example is much to the point, as the prophet addresses the people of Israel under the figure sheep and rams saying:

“Is it not enough for you that ye fed on the good pasture, that ye trampled with your feet the remnant of your pasture? and that ye drank the standing water, that ye *disturbed* the residue with your feet?”

Bishop Chandler speaking of the various and contrary feelings excited in Herod at the arrival of the Magi, said that there was not any one Greek word more proper and expressive than *tarassomai*. It was this word that the Apostle used in his opening charge in chapter i. when he said ‘there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ’ (Gal. i. 7).

Here at the opening of the epistle (immediately following the salutation of verses 1-5) we have reference to the rapid moving from the grace of Christ unto another gospel. This is none other than the work of a ‘troubler’ and his teaching ‘perverts’ the gospel. From this point, every statement in Galatians i.-iv. has been an attack or an exposure of this ‘perversion’, and it would be time well spent by any who value the truth of the gospel, if these passages with their consecutive arguments were **read and** re-read in the light of this term.

A | Gal. i. 6, 7. The charge. The troubler.

B | i. 8 - v. 10. The trouble.

A | v. 10. The judgment. The troubler.

This troubler, said the Apostle, shall ‘bear his judgment whoever he be’. Here are two solemn utterances concerning one who most probably was a believer in Christ. As a teacher he had a tremendous responsibility, and would be ‘judged’, and ‘whoever he be’, that judgment would be ‘without respects of persons’. James uses this same word ‘judgment’ (*krima*) when he says:

“My brethren be not many teachers (*didaskalos*) knowing that we shall receive the greater judgment (*krima*)” (James iii. 1).

If the immediate context of James ii. 14-26 be read in connection with this reference to ‘teachers’ and their ‘judgment’, the connection with Galatians will be more apparent, for both epistles speak of Justification by faith, one stressing the impossibility of combining legal works with faith, and the other stressing the necessity of combining fruitful works with faith, the two presenting the whole truth — namely that the faith that is reckoned for righteousness is a ‘faith that worketh by love’. The judgment of all teachers and servants of the Lord will take place at the judgment seat of Christ, with whatever sphere of blessing such a believer be associated (the highest sphere of all being no exception), for Colossians, an epistle of the Mystery says plainly concerning those who serve the Lord Christ:

“But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. iii. 25).

Commentators find a great difficulty in establishing the connection between Gal. v. 10 & 11. Paul passes from the ‘troubler’ to himself saying “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased” (Gal. v. 11). Some have taught that he had once ‘preached circumcision’ but had now discontinued it, but this is mixing his unconverted zealotry with his apostolic ministry. The little word ‘yet’ causes most of the difficulty, and an examination of its uses is called for. First we observe that in Galatians itself it is used just seven times, as follows:

### *Eti* “Yet”

- A | i. 10. “For if I *yet* pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”
- B | ii. 20. “*Yet* not I (lit. live *no more* I), but Christ liveth in me.”
- C | iii. 18. “If . . . of the law, it is *no more* of promise.”
- D | iii. 25. “After faith . . . *no longer* under a schoolmaster.”
- C | iv. 7. “Thou art *no more* a servant, but a son.”
- A | v. 11. “And I, brethren, if I *yet* preach circumcision.”
- B | v. 11. “Why do I *yet* suffer persecution?”

Thayer groups the usage of *eti* in Gal. v. 11 with Rom. iii. 7; vi. 2 & ix. 19 under the explanatory heading ‘further, longer (where it is thought strange that, when one thing has established itself, another has not been altered or abolished, but is still adhered to or continued).

Dr. Bullinger gives as the meaning of *eti* “Yet, still, implying duration, hitherto; also as implying accession or addition, etc.; yet, further, besides”. We are, therefore, under no necessity to say that Paul had once preached circumcision, but is doing it no more, what he means is that never has he added to his preaching the rite of circumcision as these troublers have done. The same difficulty is met in the use of ‘yet’ in his opening defence of Gal. i. 10. “If I yet pleased men” can mean “if I, further to the endeavour to please God, seek to please men”.

The first and last references to *eti* have to do with the ‘troubler’ and any who might preach any other gospel. “Let him be accursed” (Gal. i. 8). “He shall bear his judgment” (Gal. v. 10).

“I would they were even cut off which trouble you” (Gal. v. 12).

These words have given rise to no little discussion among commentators. The ‘cutting off’ being taken as a reference to the rite of circumcision, and as Lightfoot puts it:

“Why do they stop at circumcision?” he asks indignantly.

“Why do they not mutilate themselves, like your priests of Cybele?”

Yet there is something indelicate about such a remark, something so unlike the general attitude of Paul, that it cannot be accepted, even though it was held by almost all the ancient interpreters. Instead of “a sarcastic paranomasia between *peritemnesthai* (circumcision) and *apokopsasthai* (cut off)” there is a more natural contrast discoverable. In verse 7 the Apostle said ‘who did hinder you’ where the word used is *enekopse*; he now contrasts this by using the word *apokopsontai* ‘I would that, instead *cutting in* to your path and so hindering you, they would *cut themselves out* of the way, and so set you free’.

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. v. 13).

In what way is this verse connected with the words of verse 12? How can Paul say that he wished the troublers cut themselves off ‘For ye have been called unto liberty’? However we strain the meaning of ‘for’, the connection remains artificial. If, however, we will take a wider survey, and not let the peculiarity of the wish of verse 12 blur our vision, we shall see that the Apostle has closed a parenthesis and picked up the earlier reference to ‘liberty’. It may be visualized as follows:

- A | To the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, stand fast.
- B | Paul testifies to the extreme danger into which the Galatians were being lured by the ‘troubler’ and wishes he were completely removed from their path.
- A | Resuming the subject of liberty, then, he now goes on to warn concerning its abuse.

The word translated ‘occasion’ is *aphorme* and is found in Rom. vii. 8, 11 and is a compound of *apo* ‘from’ and *horme* ‘an impetus’ (“assault” Acts xiv. 5), and means “the solid ground from which an impetus is derived; such as the place from which a spring is taken, hence generally a basis of operation. Make not your liberty a position to be taken advantage of by the flesh” (Glynne).

Instead of thus abusing your liberty, rather by love serve one another, and the reason that Paul gives is the remarkable one, in the circumstance, namely that it fulfils the law! The superficial believer would take exception to this; he would object that if Paul had occupied four whole chapters in repudiating the law, he would scarcely stultify his argument by speaking now of ‘fulfilling’ that very law. Such an objection however makes it manifest how little the Apostle’s teaching has been appreciated. True, the law has been entirely set aside *as a means of justification*, but it does not mean that the ensuing liberty of the believer is to be a state of lawless licence. Far from it. We have been partly prepared for this by the statement that “Faith worketh by love”.

No epistle compares with Galatians in its repudiation of the law, like the epistle to the Romans, and a combined set of quotations concerning the inadequacy of the law as a means of justification provides an overwhelming and unanswerable evidence, both to the Apostle’s doctrine, and to this parallel, yet in no other epistles does Paul place the law, as a code of morals, on a higher plane than in these two letters.

The parallel between Rom. xiii. 8-10 and Gal. v. 14 is evident and enables the reader to comprehend the meaning. One well intentioned expositor felt that the Apostle does not refer to the Mosaic law in Gal. v. 14, but rather refers to ‘the law of Christ’ referred to in Gal. vi. 2. It is here that the remote context of Romans xiii. is valuable, for the citation of the commandments dealing with adultery, killing, stealing, false witness and coveting provide positive evidence that when Paul said “He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law ... therefore love is the fulfilling of the law”, he was referring to the law of Moses. Beside we have the testimony of Christ Himself, Who said concerning love to God and neighbour that ‘on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets’ (Matt. xxii. 36-40).

The Apostle not only introduced this correction to misunderstanding and excessive zeal in Romans and Galatians, he introduced the law without provocation and without the pressure of debate into such an epistle as Ephesians, saying not simply ‘Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is RIGHT’ and leaving it there, but extends the exhortation by a full length quotation from the commandment, saying:

“Honour thy father and mother”; (which is the first commandment with promise);  
“That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. vi. 2, 3).

Further, Paul accommodates the citation to the Ephesian reader by omitting the words ‘which the Lord thy God giveth thee’ which were strictly applicable to Israel only, and indicates the reason why he quoted the commandment in extension, by the parenthetical remark concerning the fact that this was the first commandment ‘with promise’.

It is perfectly obvious that the Apostle who so vigorously rejected the law as a means of salvation, gave it a high place as a guide to those who were most truly saved. It is as though he would say to these Galatians who had become so zealous for the law “Instead of submitting to circumcision and making obedience to ‘the whole law’ an obligation, cutting you off from Christ, here is a most gracious opportunity to fulfil ‘all the law’ by walking in love. The one is a fatal intrusion, the other a living expression. The one seeks to earn salvation and must fail, the other manifests a salvation already possessed and gloriously succeeds”.

In the sequel, as the structure reveals, the fulfilling of the law of Christ is put in correspondence with the fulfilling of the law of love. This must be considered in its proper place, but there now awaits us the larger member Gal. v. 16-26 with its conflict between flesh and spirit, its exhortation to walk in the spirit, and its double statement that those who do so walk are not under the law, neither is there any law against those who produce the fruits of the Spirit. To this important theme we must therefore address ourselves.

## #111. GALATIANS v. 10 - vi. 10 --- The Troubler and The Restorer. Flesh v. Spirit (v. 16 - 26).

The Apostle's application of the truth that 'faith worketh by love', and 'love is the fulfilling of the law' is intensely practical and pointed. He does not speak in general terms or of some far off contingencies; he applies the moral to the actual state of affairs which marred the Christian witness of the Galatians. He opens this section with such pointed references as:

"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another",

and closes on the same note:

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. v. 15, 26).

Has Paul put his finger on the root cause of most of the strife that has marred Christian fellowship? He does not speak of zeal for the truth that over-ran the claims of charity; he does not speak of the strain of double loyalties, he speaks of 'vain glory' and 'envy' as being close to the root.

The figures of 'biting' and 'devouring' are borrowed from the habits of wild beasts; the Apostle using such terms to awaken the consciences of his hearers, and by the climax 'consume one another' indicates that such internal strife can end in but one way — the destruction of the whole witness. In the closing words he does not actually accuse the Galatians of desiring vain glory, or of provoking one another or of envying one another; he rather warns them of the danger they were in. These unlovely traits can soon manifest themselves if 'liberty gives an occasion to the flesh'. Just as love indicates by its presence the existence of true faith (Gal. v. 6), and just as love fulfils the whole law (v. 14), so will love prevent the appearance of these evils which spring from the flesh in the believer and not from the spirit.

The exhortation therefore to 'walk in the spirit' is tantamount to saying 'walk in love'. We have indicated in the structure that this section begins and ends with the words 'walk in the spirit', we must now record that two different words are here translated 'walk'.

*Peripateo*. This word translated 'walk' in Gal. v. 16, often means a mode of life, so the Apostle could speak of 'good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Eph. ii. 10). The believer's emancipation from the dominion of sin and death is said to set him free 'to walk in newness of life' (Rom. vi. 4).

*Stoicheo* translated 'walk' in Gal. v. 25, looks rather to the rules whereby the walk is regulated. *Stoicheis* are the 'first principles' (Heb. v. 12). This particular walk is in contrast with the usage of *stoicheia* in Gal. iv. 3 & 9, where Paul refers to the bondage that they had been under the *elements* of the world, and calls their retrograde movement a return to 'weak and beggarly *elements*'. In Gal. vi. 16 this walk in the spirit is associated with the rule of the new creation, and shows what the Apostle intended by the words 'walk in the spirit'. While the Holy Spirit Himself can never be completely absent from anything or any sphere that is 'spiritual', the thought here in Gal. v. 16 & 25 is rather the new sphere of life and activity, 'spirit' as contrasted with 'flesh'. The argument of verse 26 is 'If we live spiritually, or in this new sphere, let us walk also spiritually, or in the selfsame sphere'. Walk is therefore to be understood as life manifested. The reader is doubtless well acquainted with this fact, but even so, a reference to 'walk' in Romans, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians would be helpful.

Immediately *following* the reference to walking in the spirit, in Gal. v. 16, 17 is a double reference to the lusts of the flesh, and immediately *preceding* the exhortation to walk in the spirit in Gal. v. 24, 25 is a further reference to these same lusts.

These passages contain all the occurrences of *epithumeo/ia* in Galatians:

“This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal. v. 16, 17).

“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit” (Gal. v. 24, 25).

The first item to notice is that in verse 16 ‘lust’ is singular, whereas in verse 24 it is plural. That is, in the first case we are looking at a principle, in the second we are looking at particularized lusts. The principle is set before us as in verse 17, in the essential antagonism of flesh and spirit as such; while the particular lusts are enumerated in verses 19-21 under the heading “The works of the flesh”. Most, if not all, are able to discern some one particular sin or short-coming, this passage takes us deeper and reveals the root cause.

Before examining verse 17 more closely a word is necessary regarding the intention of the Apostle in the word translated ‘lust’. Today, the word has lost most of its primary meaning and is limited to ‘libidinous desire, degrading animal passion’, but in earlier days it had the meaning of ‘desire’ without necessarily meaning an evil desire. For example Foxe writes “Little leysure and lesse lust to hear sermons or to read bookes”. We still use the word in the sense of strong overmastering desire in such phrases as “The lust for power”. So in the N.T. *epithumeo* not only refers to the lower lusts of the flesh, but is the word translated ‘desire’ in a good sense (Matt. xiii. 17; Luke xxii. 15; I Pet. i. 12), and “desire” in a bad sense, namely ‘to covet’ (Rom. vii. 7). *Epithumia* also is used in the same way. Paul’s “desire” to depart (Phil. i. 23) had nothing evil or base about it, yet the self same word is found in Colossians iii. 5 where it is translated ‘concupiscence’. Strong desire, however, if it arises from the flesh in which ‘dwelleth no good thing’ cannot but be evil. Consequently the ‘desires of the flesh’ and the ‘desires of the spirit’ are “contrary” the one to the other.

*Antikeimai* ‘contrary’ occurs in the N.T. 8 times, once ‘oppose’, twice ‘contrary’ and five times ‘adversary’. In Galatians the opposition may not always be active, but is always latent. The result of this innate opposition is expressed by the Apostle ‘so that ye cannot do the things that ye would’. It is a poor interpretation that does not see a ground of hope here as well as a reason for sorrow. Uppermost in the mind of the reader and sometimes the only aspect presented by the commentator is that the flesh prevents the believer from accomplishing the good that he sees to be required, and this truth has the full support of such a passage as Rom. vii. 15, 19. There is however another side to the picture, a bright side. The spirit also lusteth against the flesh, so that the believer is prevented from doing some of those evil things to which the flesh unchecked would lead him.

Here in Gal. v. 17, we have a statement of principle and of fact, but no hint is given of the believer’s source of power except that it is derived from the Spirit. In the corresponding verse, where separate and individual ‘desires’ are in view, there the true source of all such spiritual antagonism and overcoming is revealed. “They that are Christ’s” — these will be the ones that live in the spirit. These ‘have crucified the flesh with the affections and desires’. As in chapter ii. & chapter iii. the Galatian believer in this battle of flesh and spirit, of law and grace, of faith and works, is taught to see the great dividing line made by the Cross, and to learn that from the Cross of Christ comes alone the strength to overcome.

“Affection” like ‘lust’ is a word that needs handling with care. Nowhere in the Scriptures is there the slightest thought that human affections are to be denied or deprecated. Such passages that come to mind point all in the other direction. “Set your affection on things above”; “kindly affectioned one to another”; “Being affectionately desirous of you”. Paul not only deplored in Romans i. that the heathen world had been given up to ‘vile affections’, he also deplored that these same heathen were ‘without natural affection’. *Pathema*, the word translated ‘affections’ in Gal. v. 24, is translated ‘sufferings’ in

Rom. viii. 18 & Phil. iii. 10, and out of the 16 occurrences, 14 are used in the highest and best sense, leaving but 2, namely Rom. vii. 5 'the motions of sins' and the passage before us, in a bad sense.

Those who are in the spirit actuated by the spirit, walking and living in the spirit, or as verse 18 sums it up "If ye be led of the spirit", such are not under law. "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God" and have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but have received the spirit of adoption, even as those of the Galatians, whereby they cry Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 14, 15; Gal. iv. 5, 6). "Under law" and "under grace" are terms indicating a complete change of dispensation, the death of Christ intervening and making a boundary never to be re-crossed (Rom. vi. 14).

The Apostle now looks at the 'flesh' and the 'spirit' not so much as they are in themselves, but with regard to their products. These he calls 'works' when speaking of the flesh, and 'fruit' when speaking of the spirit, and the contrast is not only the contrast of work and fruit, but of 'works' in the plural and of 'fruit' in the singular.

Paul makes no exhaustive list of the works of the flesh — he does not say 'The works of the flesh are manifest, *which are* —' but *atina* 'such as are'. In Rom. ix. 4 he uses the word in the sense who are of such a kind that whatever else they may or may not be, they are Israelites. These works of the flesh will be representative, and were the Apostle alive today he would probably omit some and add others. We must therefore not dwell so much upon each individual work of the flesh, as to observe what sort of act it is, consequently we discover upon examination that the works of the flesh to fall into groups:

(1) Sensual passions. (2) Superstitions. (3) Disruptive movements. (4) Excesses.

The inclusion of sensual passions and idolatry may sound strange to our ears, but the pagan world had too long looked upon such practices with condonement for the Galatians to have the same moral outlook as a believer who has never had contact with the awful degradation of idolatry. The works of the flesh that come under the third heading however, are, alas, never long absent from Christian testimony.

"Hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings."

"Hatred", in this, we have the negation of love, and from this lack of true charity, all the rest spring.

"Variance and emulations." "Here we have strife and rivalry, leading to exhibition of wrath and 'factious cabals' a stronger development of 'emulations'; and at 'sedition and heresy' we reach the point where the contending parties separate; such separation is either temporary *dichostasia* (seditions or divisions), or permanent *aireseis* (sects, heresies)" (Lightfoot). After adding murder, drunkenness and revellings to the dreadful list the Apostle said: "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. v. 21). Salvation is not at stake, but all that goes to make up the conception of 'inheriting the kingdom of God' is. This most solemn warning is as applicable to the church of the Mystery as it was to the church of the Galatians.

"Walk in love ... but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v. 2-5).

As in Ephesians v., Paul passes from these works of the flesh, to speak of the 'fruit of the spirit' (Eph. v. 9) so he does here in Galatians v.: he says, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked".

The fruit of the spirit is a lovely cluster, a refreshing subject after the uncleanness of the previous list. If the works of the flesh commenced with 'hatred' the fruit of the spirit commences with 'love'. Those who produce this fruit are in an enviable position "Against such there is no law". After urging the

believer to walk in the same sphere as he now lives, namely in the spirit, the Apostle makes one more reference to the evils arising out of the flesh, this time putting 'vain-glory' at or near the root. The remainder of this section, which occupies verses 1-10 of chapter vi. must be studied in our next article.

## **#112. GALATIANS v. 10 - vi. 10 --- The Troubler and The Restorer. Sowing and reaping (vi. 3 - 10).**

In blessed contrast with the 'troubler', the Apostle places the 'restorer'. The word so translated means to 'mend' as a net (Matt. iv. 21), and is found in medical works of N.T. times for the resetting of a fractured limb. Again, in contrast with the overbearing spirit of the troubler, Paul speaks of the spirit of meekness in which the truly spiritual seek to restore one overtaken either 'in' or 'by' a fault, considering at the same time themselves lest they also be tempted.

In chapter vi. 2 we read "Bear ye one another's burdens" yet in verse 5 "every man shall bear his own burden". There is no contradiction here. Two distinct words are translated 'burden' and two distinct aspects of truth are presented to us. In verse 2 the Greek word *baros* (familiar in the word barometer) refers to pressure or weight, and the believer is enjoined to help his brother when thus overloaded. In verse 5, however, it is the Greek word *phortion*, the lading of a ship, the freight that is a legitimate load, the knapsack and equipment of a soldier. This can be shared with none. The Apostle puts no stress upon doctrine when he speaks of the restoration of a brother who has been overtaken by a fault; no word is uttered as to 'right division', no warning about 'things that differ', his chief concern is the spirit in which the restoration is attempted. "The spirit of meekness"; "considering thyself"; "bear one another's burdens". These are the things that are stressed.

That an argument persists from verse 3 to verse 10 is apparent, for we have the links "For", "But", "Therefore", in these verses, and the words of verse 3 are a continuation of the Apostle's insistence upon the 'spirit of meekness':

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3).

*Dokeo* 'to think' does not mean so much the process of thought that involves perception and reason, it means rather to esteem, to form an opinion, which as Dr. Bullinger in his Lexicon points out *may be right* (John v. 39; Acts xv. 28); but which *may be wrong* (Matt. vi. 7; John xvi. 2). Here, the person who thought himself 'to be something' was wrong, for, said the Apostle 'he is nothing' and so 'deceiveth himself'. There is something familiar about the words *Ei gar dokei tis einai ti* "For if anyone thinketh himself to be something", for we have met similar wording before and in connection with this same contention for the truth of the gospel:

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat" (Gal. ii. 6).

*Apo de ton dokounton einai ti*, where the reference is to Peter, James and John 'who seemed to be pillars'. If, said Paul, such reputable and evident persons of high position in the church, are of no account the moment they antagonize the truth, the troubler in your midst, who has intimidated you by his own estimate of himself, can surely be seen in his true colors. No 'respect of persons' can ever be permitted in the fight of faith.

"When he is nothing." The Greek language has two words with which to express the idea of 'nothing'. *Oudeis* the objective, and *medeis* the conditional negative. Here the Apostle uses *medeis*. It is beside the point to say that "He is nothing, to wit, in himself, but by the grace of God he is what he is" (Whitby), for that is a gracious truth and a blessed acknowledgment, rather does Paul express the impression which such an attitude must leave in the mind and of the opinion that one must entertain of all similar boasters, "He deceiveth himself" but not his neighbour. This self deception meets us again in

the warning of verse 7 ‘be not deceived’, and helps us to see the continuation of the argument. Instead of forming such vain estimations of one’s importance, the Apostle suggests that a more salutary procedure would be to keep in mind the judgment seat of Christ.

“But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians vi. 4, 5).

We have already observed that the word ‘think’ in verse 3 is *dokeo*, and it is important that we should remember this for the thought appears again in verse 4 “Let every man *prove* his own work”, where ‘prove’ is *dokimazeto*. The word means to ‘try’ as one does a metal (see I Pet. i. 7). It is used in II.Tim.ii.15 for the idea of being ‘approved’. The insistence of ‘proving his *own work*’, and having rejoicing ‘in himself alone’ refers to that fallacious standard which often set up ‘comparing ourselves with ourselves’ which is ‘not wise’ (II Cor. x. 12). Paul pursues a similar line of argument to that of Galatians vi. 3-5 in I Corinthian iv.:

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes: that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another” (I Cor. iv. 1-6).

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest . . . . the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (I Cor. iii. 13).

In that day every man shall bare his own burden both of responsibility and of reward, it would be wise to make all our estimates in the light of that day.

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal. vi. 6).

Is this the opening sentence of a new subject? Or is there a logical connection with what has gone before? The adversative conjunction *de* is used by the Apostle; this is left untranslated in the A.V., but is included in the R.V. “*De* arrests a former topic before it passes out of sight” (Lightfoot).

Do not think, Paul seems to say, that because every man must bear his own burden, this exempts any one of you from sharing in the general welfare of the church as a whole or with those who by virtue of their calling may be more dependent upon your liberality. More so, in that in the foregoing sentences, certain warnings and strictures have been made particularly applicable to those who rule and teach in the assembly. Each man must bear his own burden: but this does not exempt any one of you from the responsibility of sharing with those who are teachers of the Word. The figure of ‘sowing and reaping’ with which the Apostle enforces this lesson here, is found elsewhere in the epistles. “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?” (I Cor. ix. 11).

In the closing verses of the epistle to the Hebrews there is a reference to this need for practical ‘communication’, set over against ‘the fruits of the lips’ — thus:

“But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. xiii. 16);

and it is recorded by a thankful Apostle to the continual praise of the Philippians that when he departed from Macedonia “No church communicated” with him “as concerning giving and receiving” but the Philippian church only (Phil. iv. 15).

*Katecheo* ‘to teach’ which is used here, is not of very frequent occurrence, the word commonly used being *didasko* which gives us the word ‘doctrine’ which is either *didaskalia* (the substance) or *didache* (the act). The word used in Gal. vi. 6 will be more familiar to some in its English garb ‘catechize’, ‘catechism’ and the like. Teaching in this form was usually oral, and in the form of question and answer, a method in the hands of those ‘apt to teach’ that is truly excellent. Moreover this form of teaching ‘brings both teacher and taught very close together, and the ‘communication’ consequently could not be one sided.

“God is not mocked.” An undiscerning use of ‘texts’ for preaching purposes has placed undue emphasis upon this text from the point of view of the ‘sinner’, what we need to do is to reinstate the warning as one primarily addressed to the ‘saint’. Moreover, Paul has chosen a peculiar word here. The most usual word for ‘to mock’ is *empaizo*, to treat as a child, but the word used by Paul in Gal. vi. 7 is *mukterizomai*, a word not very familiar to the reader, but which nevertheless appears in the English dictionary as “mycterism, a gibe, a scoff”. The word derived from *mukter* ‘The nose’ and alludes to the habit of putting the finger to the nose, to indicate derision. In writers of rhetoric *mykterismos* is ordinarily treated as a species of irony. Dr. Bullinger gives it separately under *Chleuasmos* or *mocking*, and Luke uses an intensive form of this same word in chapter xvi. 14 where he describes the scoffing attitude of the Pharisees. Just as men ‘mocked’ God by saying ‘corban’ (Mark vii. 11) so the believer may fall into the same evil by a hypocritical parsimony. The Apostle uses the figure of sowing and reaping in II Cor. ix. 6, where the particular reference is to the collection for the poor believers of Judaea. The churches of Galatia also were invited to take part in this gift (I Cor. xvi. 1).

Under this figure of sowing and reaping is included the whole of life’s activities, and without using one word of philosophical jargon nevertheless brings before us the whole philosophy of cause and effect. Every action may be likened to ‘sowing’. Reward and punishment alike may be compared with ‘reaping’, and just as men do not gather figs from thorns, nor grapes from a bramble bush (Luke vi. 44), so any action that has ‘the flesh’ as its goal must assuredly reap corruption, every action that has ‘the spirit’ as its goal must as assuredly reap life everlasting. The brother who undertakes to restore another who has been overtaken in a fault can do it in a spirit of meekness, or a spirit of spiritual pride; one believer may fulfil the law of Christ by bearing the burden of a fellow believer, the other may think himself ‘something’ and refuse to stoop so low, one who is taught in the Word may communicate with him that teaches, or he may withhold such fellowship. It matters not, all such sowing must have a corresponding reaping.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. vi. 9).

The Apostle passes from the beneficence that belongs to ‘him that is taught in the word’ (verse 6) to the general underlying principle of all such action (verses 7, 8), and now in verse 9 he rounds the matter off with an exhortation to continuance and patience, acknowledging the intrusion of weariness at time, but exhorting all to keep the end in sight, bring the practical call to liberal and generous fellowship to a conclusion by saying:

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. vi. 10).

It appears that at this point Paul takes the pen from the hand of the writer, and with evident labour, writes the closing verses. This we must consider in our next article thus bringing the study of this most important epistle to a fit conclusion.

### #113. GALATIANS vi. 11. The Large Letter.

The closing section of this epistle opens with the words: “Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand” (Gal. vi. 11); the R.V. translates this: “See with how large letters I have written unto you (margin ‘or write’) with mine own hand.”

It is remarkable what differences of opinion have been expressed by commentators concerning the meaning of these words, but they may be summarized under the following headings:

- (1) That Paul wrote the whole epistle to the Galatians with his own hand, and calls this epistle “a large letter”.
- (2) That the words “how large a letter” refer to the length of the epistle, being equivalent to “how long an epistle”.
- (3) That Paul wrote the whole epistle to the Galatians with his own hand, and calls the attention of the Galatians to “the large letters” he used, referring to the size of the characters and not to the length of the epistle.
- (4) That Paul dictated, as was his custom, the bulk of the epistle, but at verse 11 he took the pen from the hand of the amanuensis and wrote the postscript himself.
- (5) That the postscript alone was written “with large letters”.
- (6) That the large letters were a sign of the Apostle’s earnestness, the largeness of the letter used being equivalent to the use of CAPITALS or *Italics* on the printed page.
- (7) That the large letters were not adopted by the Apostle for the sake of emphasis, but that owing to his defective eye-sight (already alluded to to arouse the latent affection of the Galatians) he could not write otherwise than with “large letters”.
- (8) Finally, Deissmann’s opinion that to soften the angry tone of the epistle, Paul concluded with a little joke, so that ‘his dear silly children’ should understand that with the “large letters” “the seriousness of the punishing schoolmaster had vanished from his features” (Bibelstudien p.263).

We need spend no time on Deissmann’s fancy, but we must give attention to the alternatives set out under the first seven headings. This we will do, not by taking them *seriatim*, but by keeping them in mind while examining the actual wording of the passage.

First, the structure of the sentence and the words used.

*Idete pelikois humin grammasin egrapsa te eme cheiri.*

*Idete.* “Ye see.” The word is emphatic, and not to be translated ‘ye see’ but rather ‘look ye’, drawing attention to a feature of unusual interest. In Gal. v. 2 the Apostle uses *ide* ‘behold’, as though he said ‘mark well’.

*Pelikois.* Ellicott says that the word *strictly denotes geometrical magnitude* ‘how large’, in contradistinction to arithmetical magnitude expressed by *posos* ‘how many’. *Pelikois* is so used in the LXX of Zech. ii. 2. In Heb. vii. 4 the idea of magnitude in an ethical sense is expressed by this same word. We must, therefore, avoid confusing the ideas of ‘how large’ with ‘how many’ or with ‘how lengthy’.

*Grammata.* Once only does *grammata* signify an epistle, namely in Acts xxviii. 21, where the Jews at Rome declared ‘we neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee’. This, however, is an isolated usage and not used by Paul but by the Jews. Where Paul desires to speak of an epistle he uses the regular *epistole* and that seventeen times.

*Grammasin* is in the dative plural, and we are compelled to translate these words as they are in Luke.xxiii.38 “and a superscription also was written over Him in *letters* of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew”. The fact that the word here in Galatians is in the plural prevents us from translating it by the word epistle in this place.

*Egrapsa*. This word is in the aorist tense, but whether this is what is known as ‘the epistolary aorist’ where the reference would be to the time when the epistle is received, or whether it should be translated ‘I wrote’ or in idiomatic English ‘I have written’ referring to the writing of the epistle itself is something we must attempt to answer presently.

It was the custom of writers in Paul’s time to employ the service of a trained scribe, and one, evidently a believer, has inserted his name in the epistle to the Romans:

“I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you” (Rom. xvi. 22).

It is common knowledge that Rom. xvi. 25-27 was added as a ‘postscript’ to the epistle, and Alford has suggested that ‘we may conceive him (Paul) to have taken his pen off from one of the pastoral epistles and to have written it under the same impulse’. He gives a list of words and expressions found in the postscript and in the pastoral epistles that point to this conclusion. For example, ‘my gospel’ is found in II Tim. ii. 8; *kerugma* ‘preaching’ is found in II Tim. iv. 17 and Titus i. 3; *chronois aioniosis* ‘age-times’ in II Tim. i. 9 and Titus i. 2; etc.

The Apostle makes a pointed reference to his ‘sign-manual’ when writing to the Thessalonians, for they had been deceived by a letter purporting to come from himself (II Thess. ii. 2), consequently he draws their attention to a feature in his salutation:

“The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so i write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all” (II.Thessalonians.iii.17,18).

Here the Apostle draws attention to two features:

- (1) The handwriting ‘so I write’;
- (2) The form of the salutation ‘Grace . . . . with you’.

The Apostle did not always call attention to the fact that he concluded his epistles with a note in his own hand. He does in I Cor. xvi. 21, “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand”, and again in Col. iv. 18. The form of the salutation varies in small particulars in the several epistles, but ALWAYS includes the words “Grace ... be with ...”. As this is a matter of first importance let us not begrudge the time spent in noting this evidential feature, especially as Paul himself has been at pains to call our attention to it.

#### “THE SALUTATION OF ME PAUL WITH MINE OWN HAND”

ROMANS.	“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.” Repeated in verse 24 (xvi. 20, 24).
I CORINTHIANS.	“The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand . . . . the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.” (xvi. 21-23).
II CORINTHIANS.	“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” (xiii. 14).
GALATIANS.	“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.” (vi. 18).
EPHESIANS.	“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” (vi. 24).
PHILIPPIANS.	“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” (iv. 23).

COLOSSIANS.	"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen." (iv. 18).
I THESSALONIANS.	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (v. 28).
II THESSALONIANS.	"I Paul add the greeting with my own hand, which is the credential in every letter of mine. This is my hand writing. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." (iii. 17, 18, Weymouth).
I TIMOTHY.	"Grace be with thee. Amen." (vi. 21).
II TIMOTHY.	"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen." (iv.22).
TITUS.	"Grace be with you all. Amen." (iii. 15).
PHILEMON.	"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." (25).
HEBREWS.	"Grace be with you all. Amen." (xiii. 25).

Here is a consistent witness, made even more definite by observing the concluding words of the epistles of Peter, James, John and Jude. In this list the epistle to the Hebrews finds a place, and while we do not limit the evidence to the Pauline authorship to this one feature, an unbiased reader cannot but feel that unless some evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, the epistle to the Hebrews is as clearly by the Apostle Paul, as any one of his accepted epistles. If the word *egrapsa* be taken as the epistolary aorist, then the actual words written with large letters will be the postscript, Gal. vi. 11-18. If, however, *egrapsa* refers to what has already been written, then the Apostle must be supposed to have departed from his usual custom and to have written the whole epistle with his own hand. The aorist usually refers either (1) to a former letter (I Cor. v. 9) or (2) to an epistle now concluded (Rom. xv. 15), or (3) to a foregoing portion of the epistle (I Cor. ix. 15).

"With this partially conflicting evidence it seems impossible to decide positively whether st.Paul wrote the whole or only the concluding portion" (Ellicott).

Our own conclusion, which coincides with that of Lightfoot, Conybeare and Howson, and *The Companion Bible*, is that the 'large letters' written with Paul's own hand refer to the postscript only. Conybeare and Howson print as a note the following illustrative incident:

"The writer of this note received a letter from the venerable Neander a few months before his death . . . . His letter is written in the fair flowing hand of an amanuensis, but it ends with a few irregular lines in large rugged characters, written by himself, explaining the cause of his needing the service of an amanuensis, namely, the weakness of his eyes (probably the very malady of st.Paul). It is impossible to read this autograph without thinking of the present passage, observing that he might have expressed himself in the very words of St. Paul — *Ide pelikois soi grammain egrapsa te eme cheiri*. "*Humin* 'to you'. Standing after *pelokois* 'large', this word can scarcely be taken with 'I write' or 'I wrote' *to you*, it is connected with *pelokois*, as though the Apostle said 'How large, mark you'."

Whether the large letters were for emphasis, a thought already incipient in the figure of the 'placard' ("evidently set forth") of Gal. iii. 1, or whether Paul's handwriting was, unlike that of the trained slave, rather irregular, to which may be added the affliction of his eyes which he mentions in Gal. iv. 15, may not be easy to decide, but emphasis there is from single or combined causes. Whether Paul wrote the whole epistle in large letters, or whether the postscript only was written by his hand, and the postscript only in large letters, the fact remains that we have an emphatic personal summary given by the Apostle at the close of this most personal epistle.

In Hebrews we have a 'summary' given in chapter viii., where we learn that 'a seated priest in a heavenly sanctuary' sums up what Paul had been teaching in the first seven chapters. Here in Galatians.vi.12-16, we have the Apostle's own underlining, and we should be foolish in the extreme if we neglected a guide so capable to the understanding of the main theme of this most important epistle.

## #114. GALATIANS vi. 12 - 18. The Emphasized Summary and Salutation.

The subjects underlined by the Apostle in this personally hand written summary are:

- (1) Circumcision. (2) The Cross of Christ. (3) Crucifixion of self.
- (4) Creation (new) and (5) Canon (rule).

Of the Circumcision he says:--

“As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrained you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh” (Gal. vi. 12, 13).

After an expansion of the place of ‘the cross of Christ’ in verse 14 the Apostle returns to the place of circumcision, saying:

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. vi. 15).

He then speaks of ‘this rule’ or ‘canon’ namely the rule of the new creation, saying:

“As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God” (Gal. vi. 16).

Paul’s summing up of the circumcision party and their aims is reducible to the following heads:

- (1) A desire for a fair show ‘in the flesh’ and for glorying or boasting ‘in your flesh’.
- (2) This desire to stand well in the flesh ‘constrains’ these teachers to have the Galatians circumcised, but with an added reason, not that they can ever hope to keep the law, but in order that they may avoid persecution for the cross of Christ.
- (3) Instead of ‘glorying’ (or boasting) in the flesh and of attempting to avoid persecution for the sake of the Cross, the Apostle’s attitude was to ‘glory’ (or boast) in nothing save the very Cross that was an offence to the Judaizers, and by this cross he realized that the world and all it stood for was crucified to him, even as he recognized that by the Cross he too had been crucified to the world.
- (4) Yet he would be the last to give colour to the thought that he was forming an opposition party called “The Uncircumcision”.

In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails or ‘is’ (so the texts) anything. He had but one answer to all such alternations: the position of the believer ‘in Christ Jesus’, the state of the believer ‘dead’ to sin, law and the world.

- (5) This was however no mere negative attitude and doctrine; it was definitely and positively ‘a new creature’, or better ‘a new creation’ in which ‘old things have passed away and new things have come into being’. This new creation pulses with life; it is the only ‘rule’ or ‘canon’ by which ‘new creatures in Christ’ can hope to ‘walk in newness of life’.
- (6) The Galatians had been reprov'd for submitting to the bondage of ‘rudiments’ (*stoicheia*) and of returning to weak and beggarly ‘elements’ (*stoicheia*), but now they are reminded of a new, living ‘walk’ (*stoicheo*), a walk that is ‘in the spirit’ and according to the rule of the new creation.
- (7) Upon all such the Apostle writes ‘peace and mercy’ and he adds ‘upon the Israel of God’ — looking to the true believers from among the Jews, who were in vivid contrast with “Israel according to the flesh”.

Even an apostle, strengthened and equipped as he was by the Spirit of God, by grace and by truth, must at some time cry 'Hold, enough'. To say more would be but the multiplication of words, and so he concludes by saying:

"From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. vi. 17).

The "I" is emphatic. "He bore in his body the proofs that by no subterfuge, such as they attributed to him, had he evaded the consequences of a faithful delivery of the doctrine of the cross" (Gwynne). These 'marks' are *stigmata*, the scars left by the scourging, the imprisonment, the stoning, the ship wrecks that had accompanied his ministry, and had, as it were, recompensed his faithfulness by affliction. In the days of Paul, *stigmata* indicated either that the persons bearing them were domestic slaves, or slaves attached to a temple. In accord with this significance is the reading of the Revised Text, which, instead of reading as the A.V. "The marks of the Lord Jesus", omits the word 'Lord', for the personal name of the owner of the slave is all that was wanted. Moffatt's translation of Gal. vi. 17, is "Let no one interfere with me after this, for I bear branded on my body the owner's stamp of Jesus".

The Apostle, from the commencement of his commission, knew that 'suffering' for the name of Christ formed an integral part of it. Not only was Ananias informed by the Lord that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear His name before the Gentiles and Kings and the children of Israel, but the peculiar nature of this commission was emphasized by the added words "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts ix. 15, 16).

When he summed up his early ministry in Acts xx. and looked forward to the next phase of his commission he said, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts xx. 22, 23).

After his imprisonment, when he became "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. iii. 1), he assured the Ephesians that his tribulations on their behalf were their 'glory' (Eph. iii. 13), and realized that there were reserved some sufferings which he now 'filled up' (Col. i. 24). In Philippians, Paul's Lord and Master stooped to the form of a 'slave' (Phil. ii. 7) and a slave could be punished with crucifixion, but a Roman citizen (as Paul was) could not. Nevertheless it was the Apostle's prayer that he might know the Lord and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, 'being made conformable unto His death'. The *stigmata* or brand marks which Paul bore in his body were definitely associated with fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and for ever separated him from those who, to avoid the offence of the cross, adulterated the gospel of grace with the dregs of Jewish ceremonial.

Paul was constrained to write two epistles on the great theme of Justification by faith without works of law, namely Galatians and Romans. In Galatians, at the beginning of the conflict, he threw the whole weight of his apostolic authority and independence into the scale (see structure of Galatians i.), and not until the last word is uttered can he take the attitude which love dictated, namely to subscribe himself, 'a bond slave' of Jesus Christ. At the opening of the epistle he stresses his credentials; at the close, he draws attention to the *marks* his body bears of his faithful adherence to the truth. By the time he came to write Romans, the conflict with Judaism had died down and he was then free to open that great epistle not with his apostolic authority, but with the words "Paul a bond-slave of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle" (Rom. i. 1).

Farrar remarks that in verses 12 and 13 Paul resumed the polemical, and in verses 14 and 16 the dogmatic theses of the epistle; and that the personal (17) as well as the doctrinal truth (18) on which he had been dwelling recur in the last two verses.

The salutation with which the epistle ends contains one unusual word. In every salutation made by Paul there are to be found the core as it were of all his greetings "Grace . . . . be with . . . .". Once this is expanded in II Cor. xiii. 14 to include the Trinity, and the salutation of Ephesians make special reference to those that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, while II Timothy and Philemon, together with Galatians, add the words 'with my (or your) spirit'; but in the salutation of the epistle to the Galatians alone the word 'brethren' occurs. The word is placed at the very end of the sentence (not as in the A.V. at the beginning). Apart from 'Amen' it is the Apostle's last word. It seems as though he would remind them that in spite of all his censure, and in spite of all the trouble they had caused him, they were and always would be 'brethren'. A blessed word with which to end an epistle in which so much feeling has been manifested, and so much error exposed and condemned.

Thus we bring to an end a study that embraces doctrine that lies at the very centre of the gospel of grace. Its importance cannot be overrated; no one can fully appreciate the glories of the dispensation of the Mystery who does not whole-heartedly follow Paul in this great conflict for the truth.

Luther's translation of Galatians was one of the main instruments in promoting the Reformation, and all who have the responsibility of teaching and preaching are urged to give this epistle a place in their witness. We feel we cannot do better than end these studies with the clarion call of Gal. v. 1:

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."