

CHARLES H. WELCH

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FROM THE
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EVIDENCE THAT ALL SCRIPTURE IS
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THE BEREAN PUBLISHING TRUST

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Charles H. Welch

Author of

Life Through His Name

In Heavenly Places

Just and the Justifier

An Alphabetical Analysis (10 vols.)

etc., etc.

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FOREWORD

The special testimony of our writings has always assumed that the Scriptures are inspired and authoritative, and their appeal has been to those who thus believe. For over twenty-five years these Scriptures have been the subject of the most rigorous examination, and with the years this study has been accompanied by an ever-deepening conviction of their truth and trustworthiness. Hitherto we have felt no call to enter into the strife occasioned by the attacks of so-called critics. The undermining influence, however, of 'Modernism' does, perhaps, call for some positive statement of fact, and we have accordingly yielded to the suggestion that a small booklet be prepared which will provide the reader with a few initial arguments that will be of service in the fight of faith.

The amount of material ready to our hand is tremendous, and it would have taken us beyond the limits of the space available to have dealt adequately with even one phase alone. The testimony to the historical accuracy of Scripture that is contained in the British Museum alone, for example, would occupy more than ten times the space of this booklet. We have therefore been obliged to make a selection, and have chosen those items that are the more obvious and do not require scholarship for their understanding. The most telling of all evidence makes demands that can only be met by those who are acquainted with the original languages of Scripture, and have the means of first-hand investigation into the evidences of antiquity. For such, this booklet is not intended. If it should lead the reader to qualify himself for fuller investigation we shall rejoice, for the Truth is ever open to the most rigorous enquiry.

TRUE, FROM THE BEGINNING

Evidence that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God

The following is a synopsis of the contents of this booklet, and will prepare the reader for the nature and extent of our enquiry:

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE.

- (1) THE FLOOD.
- (2) AMRAPHEL AND THE KINGS OF GENESIS 14.
- (3) ABRAHAM'S CITY, UR OF THE CHALDEES.
- (4) THE TOWER OF BABEL.
- (5) BELSHAZZAR.
- (6) THE FALL OF JERICHO.
- (7) MOSES IN EGYPT.

Before proceeding to the archaeological evidence for the New Testament we have touched lightly upon such subjects as the:

- (1) TELL-EL-AMARNA TABLETS.
- (2) SENNACHERIB'S CYLINDER, AND THE
- (3) BLACK OBELISK.

The New Testament evidence is treated under the following heads:

- (1) THE TAXATION OF LUKE 2:1-3.
- (2) THE OFFICIALS MENTIONED BY LUKE.
- (3) THE TESTIMONY OF THE PAPYRUS.

THE PHENOMENON KNOWN AS 'NUMERICS'.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

- (1) The evidence of JOSEPHUS, ECCLESIASTICUS, and the SEPTUAGINT.
- (2) An analysis of the quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament.
- (3) The testimony of both friend and foe to the books of the New Testament.
- (4) The presentation of the organic unity of the 49 books of the complete Bible under the figure of a Temple.

This concludes our survey of external evidence. A book so thoroughly attested has the right to speak for itself, and we therefore 'open the book' and consider its internal testimony under the following heads:

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE SCRIPTURES.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES TO THEMSELVES.

Following this testimony we deal with the principle of interpretation known as 'right division', the neglect of which has been the fruitful cause of any number of so-called discrepancies, mistakes and doubts. Finally we present to the reader, in diagram form, the structure of the Epistle to the Ephesians. We have not set out this structure in its purely literary form, as some acquaintance with this line of study is necessary for its true appreciation. The fact that there is a similar underlying structure to every book in the New Testament, and to every book that we have personally studied in the Old Testament, is a fact that cannot be lightly dismissed.

We have but touched the fringe of so vast a subject as the inspiration of Scripture, but we trust that we have brought forward enough evidence to check a too hasty capitulation of the citadel on the part of those who may have been impressed with the high-sounding claims of the critics; and we also trust that those who are already convinced of the integrity of Holy Scripture will find this booklet useful in their contention for the faith once delivered to the saints.

THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE FLOOD - A FACT (Gen. 6-9)

The book of Genesis records as a fact the sending of the Flood, the building of the Ark, the preservation of Noah and his family, and the replenishing of the earth by the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah stands out in the account as, in some respects, a second Adam, and is evidently a figure of great importance. Several books of the New Testament refer to Noah and the Flood, and the reliability and trustworthiness of the Scriptures are therefore seriously imperilled by the Modernist attack upon the Old Testament record. We therefore draw the attention of the reader to the following testimony of antiquity.

The Deluge leaves its mark in history

Mr. H. Weld-Blundell recently purchased in Baghdad some cuneiform tablets for the Ashmolean Museum. Among them was a prism catalogued W.B. 444, to which Dr. Stephen Langdon refers as 'the most important historical document of its kind ever recovered among cuneiform records'. The prism is devoid of the usual embellishments and myths, and gives a list of Kings from the beginning of time. It contains 379 lines, of which we give the following only:

The Prism

Line 1 - Rulership which from heaven descended.

Line 2 - At Eridu rulership began.

Line 39 - The Deluge came up.

Line 40 - After the Deluge had come.

Line 41 - The rulership which descended from heaven.

Line 42 - At Kish there was rulership.

We read in Genesis that God gave dominion to Adam, and that, after the Flood, this dominion, in a modified form, was given by God to Noah. This is suggested by the lines quoted above. Moreover, the expression 'The Deluge came up' is unusual. We should naturally speak of the Deluge 'coming down', but if the record of Genesis 7:11 be the record of a terrific fact, and 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up', then the cuneiform prism is understandable.

Not only has the Deluge left its mark in history; it has also left its mark in the earth.

The Deluge leaves its mark in the earth

During the years 1928-29, Dr. C. L. Woolley carried out extensive excavations at Ur of the Chaldees. Here is his testimony to the fact of a flood as great as that described in Genesis: *

'The shafts went deeper, and suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish, we were in perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by water ... The clean clay continued without change until it had attained a thickness of a little over eight feet. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and we were once more in layers of rubbish ... No ordinary rising of the rivers would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank; eight feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history' (*Ur of the Chaldees*, pp. 26-29).

'The Sumerians regarded the Flood as an historical event marking an epoch in their national annals ... He would have been an optimist indeed who had hoped to produce material evidence for such an event as the Flood of Sumerian legend which is also the Flood of the Book of Genesis; but in no other way can I interpret the facts which our excavations here give us' (*The Times*, March 16th, 1929).

* It seems that this view was somewhat modified later on.

Dr. Stephen Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, writing to *The Times* said, concerning the discoveries at Kish:

‘In this layer there are two precipitations of clay, potsherds, and stranded fish lying perfectly horizontally. They could not have been placed there by the hand of man, and their position in the layer cannot possibly be explained by any other hypothesis than that of a flood over that part of Mesopotamia We were loath to believe that we had obtained confirmation of the Deluge of Genesis, but there is no doubt about it now’.

It is therefore out of date to deny the fact of the Flood. True ‘modernism’ recognises the latest evidences of archaeology.

AMRAPHEL - A FACT (Gen. 14)

The Scriptures, when speaking of Abraham, associate him with a long list of places and persons; so much so, that if the history of the father of the faithful were merely legend or myth, the slightest contact with actual historic documents would expose its falsity. Among those with whom Abraham came into contact was Amraphel, King of Shinar (Gen. 14:1). In 1902 there was discovered at Susa the famous Code of Hammurabi. The date of this King is about 2100 B.C. The critic, Wellhausen, said of Abraham:

‘We may not regard him as an historical person, he might with more likelihood be regarded as a free creation of unconscious art’.

The Kings of Genesis 14 were living persons

It is strange indeed if a ‘free creation of unconscious art’ has dealings with actual historical characters. Not only is Amraphel proved to be an actual person, but Chedorlaomer, and the dominance of Elam, as asserted by the Scriptures but denied by the critics, have been restored to actuality. ‘Arioch, King of Ellasar’, is found in the inscriptions as ‘Eri-Aku, King of Larsa’. Moreover, in the Assyrian Eponym canon, written in Abraham’s day in Abraham’s land, is found the very name *Abu-ramu*. Every investigation brings further and fuller conviction that the record of the life of Abraham is a record of fact.

The laws of Amraphel were in operation

It will be found on examination that the laws of Amraphel are exemplified in the book of Genesis. The following are some examples.

THE LAW OF ADOPTION. Genesis 15. Code 191.

THE GIVING OF HAGAR TO ABRAHAM. Genesis 16. Code 146.

INABILITY OF ABRAHAM TO SELL HAGAR. Genesis 16:6.
Code 119.

COMMERCIAL ENACTMENTS. Genesis 23. Code 7.

TAKING OF LIFE FOR STEALING. Genesis 31:32. Code 6.

DEATH FOR THEFT FROM A PALACE. Genesis 44:9. Code 6.

REUBEN’S PUNISHMENT. Genesis 49:4. Code 158.

Nearly ninety documents belonging to Amraphel have been brought to light.

ABRAHAM’S CITY - A FACT (Gen. 11:28).

The recent excavations of Dr. C. L. Woolley at Ur of the Chaldees have revealed a city occupied by a highly civilized population, containing schools, libraries, temples and well-built houses. Had Abraham been a mere Bedouin sheik, a tent-dweller by nature and preference, there would have been no point in the words of the apostle when he said that he became a tent-dweller ‘by faith’ (Heb. 11:9), and the fact that he had left behind so well organised a city as was Ur of the Chaldees at that time, gives further point to the statement: ‘He looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God’.

THE TOWER OF BABEL - A FACT (Gen. 11).

Closely associated with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 is the record of the building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. Nebuchadnezzar was not only the builder of the new and magnificent city of Babylon, but he was also a restorer and preserver of antiquities. At Borsippa, the modern Birs Nimrod, was found a series of cylinders, one of which gives an account of the rebuilding on an ancient tower.

'The temple of the seven lights of the earth, the tower of Borsippa, which a former king (*or*, the most ancient king) had erected and had completed to a height of 42 yards, whose pinnacle, however, he had not set up, since remote days had fallen to ruin As it was ages before I built it anew; as it was in remote days, I erected its pinnacle'.

A tower that could be said, when Nebuchadnezzar lived, to belong to 'remote days' and 'the most ancient King' must have been ancient indeed. This is the Tower of Babel, left unfinished as Genesis 11 records. The very name given to these towers is also a confirmation of the truth of Genesis 11. They are called Zikkurat (from *Zakar*, 'to remember', as in Zechariah) and so remind us of the purpose given in Genesis 11, 'To make us a name'. The mound of ruins covers an area of 49,000 square feet, and is nearly 300 feet high. The Scriptural statement concerning brick that was 'burned thoroughly' and 'slime (or bitumen) for mortar' is confirmed by examination of the pile. A bronze doorstep (No. 90851) is to be found in the British Museum, which was taken from the temple erected at Birs Nimrod upon the completion of the Tower.

BELSHAZZAR - A FACT (Dan. 5).

In the British Museum can be seen a clay cylinder (No. 91125) which contains the following prayer:

'In the heart of Belshazzar, my first-born son, the offspring of my loins, set the fear of thine exalted godhead, so that he may commit no sin, and that he may be satisfied with the fulness of life'.

Belshazzar's Banking Account

There was in Babylon a great firm of bankers called 'Sons of Egibi'. This firm's history can be traced from 1000 B.C. to 400 B.C. In 1876 several large earthenware vases were discovered. These contained from 3,000 to 4,000 contracts, and proved to be the securities of the Egibi banking firm. Among the transactions recorded is the letting of a house to 'the secretary of Belshazzar, the son of the King'. Another contract reveals that Belshazzar owned a sheep farm. A myth cannot have a banking account, and these records provide definite proof that Daniel 5 speaks of a real person.

THE FALL OF JERICO - A FACT (Josh. 6).

Professor John Garstang has been making some very interesting discoveries in ancient Jericho. He has laid bare the walls of the city, and shown that they 'collapsed' (as the Hebrew words translated 'fell down flat' might be rendered). The record of Joshua 6 tells us also that the city was utterly destroyed by fire. Sir Charles Marston has described the effect that the evidence of fire had upon Professor Garstang, who writes:

'Every room in the palace area tells the same tale of walls half fallen, reddened by fire amid layers of white ashes and masses of charcoal ... While pottery has been found in abundance at Jericho, so far no vessel of bronze or other metal has been found. Yet such perishable stuffs as burnt wheat, lentils onions, etc. have been discovered. The absence of any metal vessels is explained by the statement in Joshua 6:24, where we read:

"And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord"'.

Evidence is being assembled from the presence of Egyptian scarabs in the ruins, for the date of the Exodus.

'The evidence all points, then, towards the year 1400 B.C. for the fall of Jericho ... Everything points to the reign of Amenhotep III (1413-1377 B.C.) as marking the period when Jericho fell' (Marston, *The New Knowledge*, pp. 96,97).

MOSES IN EGYPT - A FACT (Genesis and Exodus).

The testimony of Dr. A.S. Yahuda, formerly Professor of Mediaeval Hebrew Literature in the University of Madrid, has demonstrated beyond controversy that the man who wrote Genesis and Exodus had an intimate acquaintance with ancient Egypt, its language and its people. His work, entitled *The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egypt*, is unanswerable.

The value of the Professor's evidence is beyond the scope of this booklet to reproduce, as it involves the use of Hebrew type and an acquaintance with both Hebrew and Egyptian grammar. This, however, need not prevent our mentioning it here without going into detail.

We must not allow this section of our booklet to go beyond its bounds. We have given a selection of the evidences that abound for the historic accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures. The following are further pieces of evidence that should be considered.

The Tell-el-Amarna Tablets. - These show that the cities mentioned in Joshua actually existed as named, that correspondence was conducted between Canaan and Egypt, that the names of God, *El* and *Jehovah*, were in use, and that the land of Canaan was in great fear of an invader at the very time of the book of Joshua.

The Moabite Stone. - This stone confirms the record of 2 Kings 1 to 3.

Sennacherib's Cylinder (91032). - This cylinder contains the words: 'Hezekiah himself, like a caged bird, I shut up within Jerusalem his royal city'.

The Black Obelisk. - Mentions 'Jehu, the son of Omri'.

Every turn of the spade that brings forth the hidden testimony of antiquity has confirmed the truth of the Bible narrative. The reader has not yet seen the following head-lines in the press:

<p>GREAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERY BIBLE PROVED UNTRUE</p>

and we do not believe he ever will.

THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

There are certain features of the New Testament narrative that the critic has decided are erroneous, and it may be as well to show what has come to light in recent years by way of confirmation of the historical veracity of the documents concerned.

Edouard Naville, D.C.L., LL.D., F.S.A., Professor of Archaeology in the University of Geneva, who should, we suppose, know something about the bearing of recent archaeology upon the trustworthiness of the New Testament, writes in the Introduction to Camden M. Cobern's book:

'Truth will best be reached by the concurrence and the mutual help both of literary and archaeological evidence. Considering only what is within the limits of this book - the New Testament - the recent discoveries compel us, as we said, *to replace* the authors of its different parts in the time when they are said to have lived, and among their readers or the hearers to whom *they spoke*. This seems to the present writer the best answer to the radical criticism and the most telling way of showing how insufficient and often misleading are its results, which are generally brought forward as being above discussion'.

'This goes a long way to disprove many of the critical theories attributing parts of a book like the *Gospel of John* to a later epoch'. (*Our italics*).

Let us adopt the same method that we have used when speaking of the archaeological evidence for the accuracy of the Old Testament, and present a few 'facts' as a set-off to the critical 'theories'.

THE TAXATION OF LUKE 2:1-3 - A FACT.

‘And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city’ (Luke 2:1-3).

This passage in Luke’s Gospel has been set aside by the critic as either a blunder or an invention. Sir William Ramsay says:

‘If an author can be guilty of any such perversions of history as has been attributed to the writer of Luke 2:1-3, he cannot deserve the rank and name of an historian’.

The four critical objections

The critics have objected to Luke 2:1-3 on four counts:

- (1) Augustus did not issue a decree ordering a census.
- (2) There was no regular census under the Empire.
- (3) Where a casual census did take place the presence of the wife was not required, neither was the husband obliged to go to his original home.
- (4) Cyrenius did not govern Syria until A.D. 5-6.

If the critics are true, it is clear that Luke is utterly discredited.

In 1898, 1907 and 1910 the British Museum published volumes dealing with the papyrus discovered in Egypt. In the earliest of these volumes were over 200 documents dating from the time of the apostles (10 B.C. - A.D. 75). In this volume the fact is brought to light that the Roman census was a regular thing. Proof is given of a fourteen-year period, and the census is carried back to 9-6 B.C., the period containing the actual birth year of the Lord. We give one of these documents in full so that the reader may see how Luke’s account compares.

‘Gaius Vibius Maximus, prefect of Egypt, saith: The enrolment by household being at hand, it is necessary to notify all who for any cause soever are outside their homes, to return to their domestic hearths, that they may also accomplish the customary dispensation of enrolment and continue steadfastly in the husbandry that belongeth to them’.

Tertullian says that the Lord was born when a census was made in Syria by Sentius Saturninus. Josephus informs us that Sentius governed Syria 8-6 B.C. It has sometimes been thought that Tertullian contradicts Luke, but this is not so. Luke follows the ancient fashion, as in Luke 3:1,2; Tertullian refers to the actual official who took the census. Sir William Ramsay has discovered at Antioch a stone on which Cyrenius is named, and the date 10-7 B.C. is confirmed by Professor H. Dessau. Servilius, who is named on the same stone as prefect, is shown by Sir William Ramsay to have been governing Galatia in the year 8-7 B.C.

THE OFFICIALS AND EVENTS NAMED BY LUKE ARE FACTS.

(1) Sergius Paulus

We read in Acts 13 of Sergius Paulus, deputy of Cyprus. Is he fact or fiction? Luke calls Sergius Paulus a pro-consul, whereas the critics maintained that he was pro-praetor. There were many changes at this time in the administration of Roman government. At one time a country would be Imperial, and at another time a Senatorial province. Luke never makes a mistake. A coin has been found in Cyprus which reads: ‘In the pro-consulship of Paulus’.

In 1912 Sir William Ramsay brought to light a block of stone upon which was engraved a Latin inscription. The following is a translation:

‘To L(ucius) Sergius Paullus the younger, son of Lucius, one of the four commissioners in charge of the Roman streets, tribune of the soldiers of the sixth legion, etc’.

This is added testimony to the fact that the family of Sergius Paulus were among the ruling classes.

(2) *The Town Clerk of Ephesus*

In Acts 19:27-35 we read that the town clerk appeased the people and referred to Ephesus as ‘the temple keeper’ (margin). An inscription dug up at Ephesus speaks of the city as:

‘The first and greatest metropolis of Asia and twice temple keeper of the Emperors’.

The following is the translation of an inscription dating from A.D. 55:

‘Apollonius ... filled the offices of clerk of this market, prefect, town clerk and high priest ... in the time of the pro-consul Paulus’.

It will be seen that this inscription spells Paulus as Luke does in the Acts, with one l. We should never have associated together the offices of town clerk and high priest, but this inscription demonstrates the association as a fact, and confirms the authority attaching to this office as shown in Acts 19.

(3) *Politarchs and Asiarchs*

Politarchs are referred to by Luke in Acts 17:6,8 where the A.V. translates the title ‘rulers of the city’. This title may be read on an inscription taken from Thessalonica, which now stands in the British Museum. Asiarchs are mentioned in Acts 19:31. This title may be read on a slab that was found at Ephesus. Luke never makes a mistake, wherever his account is tested it is always found to be accurate.

(4) *Mercury and Jupiter*

We learn from Acts 14 that the people of Lystra called Barnabas ‘Jupiter’ and Paul ‘Mercurius’. Now there were many gods that might have been chosen if Luke’s statement had been mere guesswork. In 1909, however, Sir William Ramsay discovered a statue dedicated by the Lycaonians to these two gods, showing that Jupiter and Mercury were classed together in the local cult, and again illustrating Luke’s accurate local knowledge.

(5) *The Famine in the days of Claudius*

Acts 11:28-30 tells us that a prophet named Agabus signified by the Spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius. In the Pembroke collection there is a coin which bears the name of Claudius, having on one side a bushel measure, and on the other a pair of scales, recognised symbols of famine.

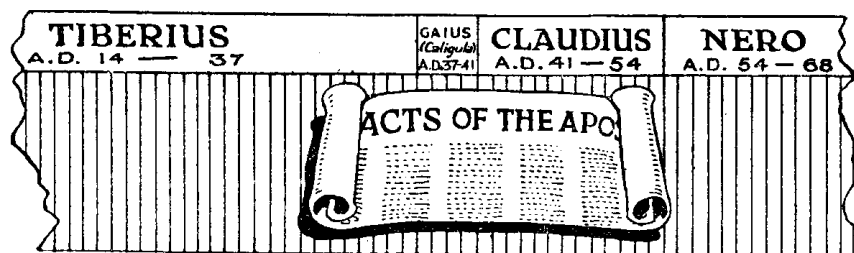
(6) *Herod, his reign and his death*

(i) *When did Herod begin his reign?* - Secular history supplies the answer: ‘Not many days’ after the accession of Gaius, March 16th A.D. 37. If we add 37 and 7 together we have the date of Herod’s death as A.D. 44.

(ii) *When did Herod begin to reign over all Judaea?* Gaius was murdered on January 24th A.D. 41, and on the accession of Claudius (Ant. xix. 8, 2) Herod was made King of Judaea and Samaria. Add to A.D. 41 the three years of Herod’s reign, and again we get A.D. 44.

(iii) *A threefold cord is not easily broken.* - Josephus makes a casual remark to the effect that Herod died during a festival held in honour of Claudius, ‘for his safety’. Claudius returned to Rome from Britain in January A.D. 44, after an absence of six months. The festival was held at Caesarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, where Herod the king died that same year. Again A.D. 44.

In this way we can fix the twelfth chapter of the Acts down upon the calendar of the world with considerable certainty.



In this diagram the Acts of the Apostles is represented as placed upon the calendar, and including the reign of the four Roman Emperors that cover the Acts period. If we now imagine that the scroll is moved along until a pin that is fixed into Acts 12 passes into the date A.D. 44, the other dates of the Acts can be computed with sufficient accuracy to enable us to spread the scroll out to its full length.

We concluded our archaeological survey of the Old Testament with a testimony borrowed from the evidence of language (*The Language of the Pentateuch in its Relation to Egypt* by Dr. A. S. Yahuda). We will conclude this section with one or two notes on the testimony of the papyrus to the credibility of the New Testament.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PAPYRUS.

In 1863 Bishop Lightfoot 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 New Testament generally'.

The dry sand of Egypt have preserved for nearly 2,000 years heaps of rubbish that contain the very evidence that Bishop Lightfoot so ardently wished for. In these buried heaps have been found such items as contracts, letters, petitions, deeds, census returns, a public notice and a will. Many of these were written between 150 B.C. and A.D. 150, and so employ the very language in which the New Testament was written.

It is not within the range of this booklet to set out the influence that this newly acquired material has had upon the interpretation of the New Testament. All that we wish to point out at the moment is that it is now proved that the New Testament was written in the language in use at the time when it claims to have been written. While we cannot enter into detail here, we may perhaps attempt to illustrate the bearing of the papyrus upon the question of the age of the New Testament by appealing to matters of common knowledge among ourselves.

Language as a means of dating.

The A.V. uses the word 'candlestick' to describe a lampstand. No one feels under any necessity to explain this, because it is obvious that in the days when the A.V. was translated the candle was so much in evidence that it gave its name to all kinds of illuminants. This word, however, marks the date of the A.V. Coming to modern times, if the reader travels in the new covered-top buses he will find that the notice reads '28 passengers inside, and 32 passengers outside', in spite of the fact that the 'outside' of the bus no longer exists. The words indicate a transition period. Another familiar example is the term 'electric tram'. The word 'tram' refers to the 'trammel' attaching the horse to the car, and although the horses and trammels no longer exist, the name persists. These two items, taken from our passenger service, today, would be evidence, for dating, if discovered in centuries to come.

We must now turn our attention to other aspects of our subject, and trust that the interested reader will be stimulated to pursue this important study for himself.

We have brought before the reader a few facts, and these facts all point in one direction - the absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures as a record of history. This does not take us far in itself, but it lifts the Bible out of the region of myth and legend, and helps to restore it to its proper place as the revelation of God to man.

FACTS OF ANOTHER KIND.

Here is another line of testimony that is probably unique. We cannot afford the space to print the whole of the letter concerned, but the following extract will give some idea of the nature of the evidence.

The inspiration of the Scriptures scientifically demonstrated.

Part of a letter to the New York *Sun* by Ivan Panin:

'In today's *Sun* Mr. W.R. Laughlin calls for a "champion of orthodoxy" to "step into the arena of the *Sun*" and give him some "facts". Here are some facts:

The first 17 verses of the New Testament contain the genealogy of Jesus Christ. The genealogy consists of two parts. Verses 1-11 contain the genealogy from Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, to the Captivity, when the Jews ceased to be an independent people. Verses 12-17 contain the genealogy from the Captivity to the Christ. Let us examine the first part of this genealogy .

Its vocabulary has 49 words, or 7 sevens, of which 42, or 6 sevens, are nouns; and 7 are not nouns. Of the 42 nouns, 35, or 5 sevens, are proper names, and 7 are common nouns. Of the 35 proper names, 28, or 4 sevens, are male ancestors of Jesus, and 7 are not.

The 49 words of the vocabulary are distributed alphabetically thus: words under the first five letters of the Greek alphabet are 21 in number, or 3 sevens; under the second five letters, 14 or 2 sevens. Under the next 11 letters, also 14 or 2 sevens. Again, these words have 266 letters, or 38 sevens; and these also are distributed alphabetically, not at random, but by sevens. Thus words under the first three letters have 84 letters, 12 sevens; under the fourth letter, 7; under the fifth and sixth, 21, or 3 sevens; under the eighth, 70 or 10 sevens; under the tenth, eleventh and twelfth, 21 or 3 sevens; under the thirteenth, 7; under the fifteenth to the twenty-first, 49 or 7 sevens; under the twenty-second, 7. It is thus clear that this part of the genealogy is constructed on an elaborate design of sevens'.

The writer goes on to show that each succeeding section has its own numerical scheme, and the testimony piles up until at last one is obliged to exclaim, 'Either this is a most fantastic piece of imagination, or, if it is sober fact, nothing short of inspiration can account for it'. We can assure the reader that the whole matter has been checked, and the numerics are as Ivan Panin asserted. If Mr. Laughlin could have found a flaw in the argument, the Editor of the *Sun* would certainly have received another letter.

BIBLICAL NUMERATION.

It is very possible that the reader may not be acquainted with the association between number and the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, and we will therefore take the subject a stage further.

It must be remembered that neither the Hebrew nor the Greek had our system of notation, the numerals 1,2,3, etc., being comparatively modern. When the Hebrew or Greek wished to indicate a number, he used the letters of the alphabet. Hence, for example, the word AB would have the numerical value of 3, made up of A = 1 and B = 2. The reader will be familiar with the number of the Beast, given in Revelation 13:17,18 as 666. He may not, however, know that the name Jesus (*Iesous* in the Greek) has the numerical value of 888. We set this out below as an example of the method of computation.

I	=	10
E	=	8
S	=	200
O	=	70
U	=	400
S	=	<u>200</u>
		888

This is not an isolated example. Other names and titles of the Lord are marked with the same number.

Christos (CHRIST)	=	1480	(8 x 185)
Kurios (LORD)	=	800	(8 x 100)

Soter (SAVIOUR)	=	1408	(8 x 8 x 22)
Messias (MESSIAH)	=	656	(8 x 82)
Huios (SON)	=	880	(8 x 110)

We read that Noah was 'the eighth person' and that 'eight souls' were in the ark; also that Ham became the father of Canaan, who was cursed. It is interesting to discover that the numerical value of the Hebrew names recognises the two classes in the following way:

NOAH	=	58
SHEM	=	340
JAPHETH	=	<u>490</u>
		<u>888</u>

Thirteen associated with evil

If we add the name of Ham, the total is brought up to 936, which introduces the number 13 ($936 = 8 \times 9 \times 13$), a number associated with evil, rebellion and Satan.

The following will demonstrate the suggestiveness of the number 13:

SATAN in Hebrew	=	364	(13 x 28)
SATAN in Greek, in the expression: 'Who is called the Devil and Satan'	=	2197	(13 x 13 x 13)
DRAGON	=	975	(13 x 75)
SERPENT	=	780	(13 x 60)
TEMPTER	=	1053	(13 x 81)

Other phrases associated with evil contain this number in their composition:

'THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST'	=	1482	(13 x 114)
'THE MARK OF THE BEAST'	=	2483	(13 x 191)
'THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS'	=	2756	(13 x 212)
'THE MAN OF SIN'	=	1963	(13 x 151)
'THE SON OF PERDITION'	=	1807	(13 x 139)

And so we could continue. If the interested reader will consult *Number in Scripture* by Dr. E. W. Bullinger, he will find such an array of evidence that something will be demanded of him as a result if he is to retain any remnant of self-respect or common honesty. We have chosen a few examples of the usage of the numbers 8 and 13. These are merely illustrations of the existence of a phenomenon that is too involved and too insistent to be explained by chance. Its presence demands a superintending intelligence. If the reader doubts this, let him attempt to write a simple paragraph, using his own terms, and let him test how far mere chance will provide even one item comparable with the above. We have no doubt of the issue.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.

Before we can proceed in our testimony to the inspiration of Holy Scripture, it will be necessary to devote some space to the question of the canonicity of the books of the Bible.

The meaning of 'Canonicity'

The word 'canon' from the Greek word *kanon*, in its primary sense means a 'reed'; hence a 'cane', a 'cannon' and the 'canon'. Each derived word is related to the idea of something straight; hence *kanon* comes to mean 'rule' and is so translated in Galatians 6:16 and Philippians 3:16. When we speak of the 'Canon of Scripture' therefore, we mean those sacred books which are genuine, authentic and authoritative. It may be as well to see clearly the distinction between these three related terms.

Genuine. - A book is genuine if it was actually written by the person whose name it bears, or, if anonymous, if it contains evidence that it was written at the time when it purports to have been written, either expressly or by undesigned evidence of its contents.

Authentic. - A book is authentic if the matters of fact with which it deals actually occurred.

Authoritative. - In the case of the Scriptures, by their very nature, if they are both genuine and authentic, they necessarily become authoritative.

At the time of the Gospels the canon of the Old Testament was fixed, and the Lord Himself endorsed its threefold composition when He spoke of 'the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms' (Luke 24:44). There is a consistent testimony to the canon of the Old Testament extending back from the days of Christ to the days of the prophets. Let us call some of the witnesses.

THE WITNESS OF JOSEPHUS.

Flavius Josephus, a Jew of a distinguished priestly line, was born in A.D. 37. He wrote 'The Wars of the Jews', 'The Antiquities of the Jews', an autobiography, and 'A Treatise against Apion'. The following is the weighty opinion of Bishop Porteous and Bishop Scaliger with regard to the character of Josephus:

'The fidelity, the veracity and the probity of Josephus are universally allowed, and Scaliger in particular declares that, not only in the affairs of the Jews, but even of foreign nations, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together'.

Here is the testimony of Josephus concerning the Old Testament Scriptures:

'For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twentytwo books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses ... The prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.

"How firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them or take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it becomes natural to all Jews, immediately, and from their birth, to esteem those books to contain divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them' (Apion, Bk. i. Par. 8).

This is the testimony of a man who most evidently expresses his deep conviction, and not his own only, but that of the national mind as well. We draw attention, moreover, to the fact that this man, who would sooner die than add to or take away from the sacred Scriptures, declares that the Hebrew Canon consists of twenty-two books only. Most readers are aware that the English Old Testament contains thirty-nine books, but this is because the twelve minor prophets are reckoned separately, and double books such as 1 and 2 Chronicles are counted as two. In the Hebrew Canon, Ruth is reckoned with Judges, Nehemiah with Ezra, Lamentations with Jeremiah, and the twelve minor prophets are treated as one.

We shall see later that the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples accepted the Old Testament as we have it today, and we have absolute proof that the Canon was fixed centuries before Christ.

A TESTIMONY 232 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.

The book of Ecclesiasticus was written in Syro-Chaldaic about A.M. 3772, or two hundred and thirty-two years before Christ and was translated by the author's grandson into Greek. In the prologue he speaks of his grandfather giving himself to the reading of 'the law, and the prophets, and the other books of our fathers', which is sufficient proof that such a recognised collection of sacred books then existed.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SEPTUAGINT.

We have, however, a more ancient and reliable witness even than the son of Sirach, in the testimony of the Septuagint Version. Speaking roughly, 280 years before Christ the Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures known to us as the Septuagint was complete, *and the books there translated are identical with our own Old Testament*. We are so accustomed to handling this book that its extreme antiquity is lost upon us. Let it be remembered that there is no evidence for any other ancient book that approaches the evidence that we possess of the genuineness and authority of the books of the Bible. There is no authentic book that goes back as far as the books of the Old Testament.

Such, in brief, is the external witness to the Old Testament Canon. In addition, the witness of language, allusions to manners and customs, times and circumstances, form a vast amount of internal evidence, which is too extensive for detailed treatment in a booklet like this. When the subject has been reviewed in its main outlines, we hope to return to these internal evidences and give an indication of their testimony.

EVIDENCES FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The following analysis of the way in which the Old Testament writers and books are quoted in the New Testament may be a useful addition to the evidence already brought forward. A full consideration of this important subject demands greater space than we have to spare in this booklet and is outside its present scope.

In the Gospels the Lord quotes all the books of Moses. He quotes, as authoritative, several of the Psalms, and the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, Zechariah and Malachi. This is, of course, in addition to references to 'the Law' and 'the Scriptures', which would embrace the whole Canon.

The Acts quotes Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Psalms, Isaiah, Joel, Amos and Habakkuk.

Paul quotes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Joel, Habakkuk and Haggai.

James quotes Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Kings, Chronicles, Proverbs, Isaiah and Job.

Peter quotes Exodus, Leviticus, Psalms, Proverbs and Isaiah.

The Revelation quotes Genesis, Numbers, Proverbs, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Zephaniah and Zechariah.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE GENUINENESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The twenty-seven books that compose the New Testament written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter and Jude, have the uninterrupted testimony of antiquity to their genuineness, and there is no reason for supposing deception or fraud. Michaelis says that in the case of the writings of the New Testament, the testimony is much stronger than in the case of any other ancient writings such as Xenophon, Caesar, Tacitus and the like, for the books of the New Testament were addressed to large societies in widely distant parts of the world, in whose presence they were often read, and who acknowledged them as being the autographs of the writers themselves.

UNBROKEN TESTIMONY OF FRIEND AND FOE.

We must remember that, unlike other writings that have come down to us from antiquity, those of the New Testament were read over three-quarters of the known world, and that an unbroken succession of writers, from the very age of the apostles to our own time, make continual reference to them and give quotations from them. And further, these writers include not only friends but foes.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRANSLATIONS.

As Paul had used the term 'Old Covenant' in 2 Corinthians 3:14, it was quite natural that the writings of the apostles should be known as the 'New Covenant' (Eusebius H.E. vi. 25) or 'The Gospels and the Prophets' (Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius, Justyn Martyr and others). Before the close of the second century translations of the New Testament began to be made, and this effectively prevented any alteration, addition or subtraction, for such a fraud would immediately become known and exposed - unless, indeed, we are credulous enough to believe that friends and foes, of different nations, languages and opinions, should all without exception have agreed to countenance such a fraud.

In the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* we read:

'This argument is so strong, that, if we deny the authenticity of the New Testament we may with a thousand times greater propriety reject all the other writings in the world'.

The following facts must be borne in mind by any who would raise objections to the canonicity of the books of the New Testament:

- (1) It cannot be shown that any one doubted the authenticity of any book of the New Testament in the period when such books appeared.
- (2) No account is on record that would lead one to reject any such book as spurious.
- (3) No great length of time elapsed after the death of the writers before the New Testament was widely known.
- (4) The books of the New Testament are actually mentioned by writers living at the same time as the apostles.
- (5) No facts are recorded which actually happened after the deaths of the writers, apart, of course, from prophecy.

SOME OUTSTANDING WITNESSES.

We will now bring forward a few eminent witnesses to the Canon of The New Testament,

Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria

Irenaeus, born A.D. 120, calls the books of The New Testament *Kanona tes aletheias*, 'The Rule of the Truth'. Tertullian says of Marcion, the Gnostic, that he appeared to make use of a *complete document*. Clement of Alexandria, speaking of those who quoted from the Apocrypha, exclaims against following any authority besides 'the true evangelical canon'.

Origen

Origen was zealous in maintaining the *ecclesiastical canon*, recognising 'four Gospels only, which alone are received without controversy in the universal church spread over the whole earth'. He has given us the list of the canonical Scriptures, 'that is, the Scriptures contained in the New Testament'.

Athanasius

Athanasius speaks of three sorts of books:

- (1) The canonical, those recognised at the present time.
- (2) The ecclesiastical, which were allowed to be read in assemblies.
- (3) The apocryphal, which had no place in the Canon at all.

When in A.D. 364, the Council of Laodicea ordained that no other book should be read in the churches but the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, there is no suggestion that this introduced the conception of a canon for the first time. On the contrary, it was the enforcement of a principle already established in the church.

Testimony of Greek, Coptic and Latin Worthies

We will now consider a little more carefully the witness of three of those cited above, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. First of all, in order that these names may represent to the reader real persons, we give a brief biographical note:

IRENÆUS (A.D. 120-202). - Born in Smyrna, educated under Polycarp, who knew the apostle John personally. He became Bishop of Lyons in 177. His writings make a folio volume of about 500 pages. He was martyred under Severus.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (A.D. 150-215). - Became Master of the Catechetical School at Alexandria in 190.

TERTULLIAN (A.D. 155-230). - A Roman, born at Carthage. His writings fill a large folio. Vincentius writes, 'What Origen was for the Greeks, that is to say, first of all, Tertullian has been for the Latins, that is to say, incontestably the first among us'.

These three men, representing three great areas, Greek, Coptic and Latin, are witnesses that cannot be ignored.

The Testimony of Irenaeus

Irenaeus is the most voluminous of all ancient writers who quote the New Testament Scriptures. The New Testament could almost be reconstructed from his works, so full are his citations. *He was born only seventeen years after the death of the apostle John.* Extracts and lists of quotations, cannot give the same effect as the perusal of a few pages of his writings. Many of his citations are without reference, as for example, the following:

'For in that blessed dwelling-place, heaven, there will be that distance placed by God Himself between those who have borne fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty and others thirtyfold; and this is the reason why our Saviour said, that in His Father's house there are many mansions'.

He speaks of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as 'the gospel with the four faces' from which it is evident that there were four, and only four at the time. He quotes the Acts of the Apostles over sixty times, and shows the harmony of the Acts with Paul's epistles. He cites 1 Corinthians more than 100 times, Romans more than 80 times, Ephesians more than 30 times, Galatians nearly 30 times, Colossians 20 times, 2 Corinthians 18 times, Philippians 11 times, 1 Peter 11 times, 2 Thessalonians 10 times, 1 Timothy 5 times, 2 Timothy 4 times, Titus 3 times, 1 John 3 times and 1 Thessalonians twice.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement himself says in the first book of his *Stromata* that he 'approached very nearly to the days of the apostles'. Kirchhoper writes:

'Clement, almost in every page, cites passages taken from the New Testament, from all the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles each of Paul's Epistles, the 1st and 2nd Epistles of John, that of Jude, that of Hebrews and the Apocalypse'.

Tertullian

Although Tertullian is the latest of these three, he is the most ancient of the Latins whose writings have been preserved. Lardner says of him:

'The quotations made by this father alone from the little volume of the New Testament are more extensive and more abundant than those from the works of Cicero by all the writers of all kinds and all ages'.

While the testimony of these three men is sufficient to prove that at a very early date the Canon of the New Testament was recognised and accepted, it is but a tithe of the witness available. Others of the many more who attest the canonicity of the New Testament books are:

THEOPHILUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, converted A.D. 150.

ATHENAGORUS, A PHILOSOPHER OF ATHENS, flourishing A.D. 177.

DIONYSIUS, BISHOP OF CORINTH about A.D. 170.

ASTERIUS URBANUS, BISHOP OF GALATIA, A.D. 188.

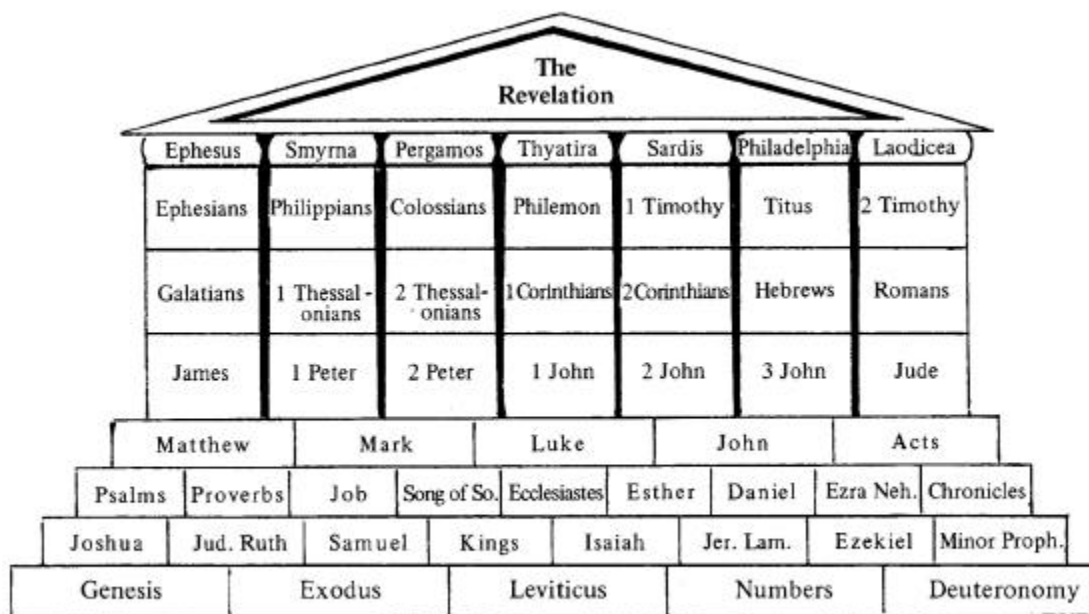
IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, died a martyr, A.D. 107.

CLEMENT OF ROME, died A.D. 99.

It is only right to say that every book of the New Testament is not quoted by each writer, nor perhaps are all the books quoted by the writers as a whole. It is easily understandable, for instance, that such an epistle as Philemon or 3 John should escape, not because it was doubtful, but because it may not have served the purpose of the writer at the time. The strength and beauty of these testimonies lie in the unconscious confirmation they give of the Canon, the writers having a variety of objects in view, but never the mere presentation of catalogues of books set out for the purpose of proving canonicity.

THE PERFECT TEMPLE OF TRUTH.

The importance of the fact that the Hebrew Canon contains twenty-two books may now be seen. The number of books in the New Testament is 27, in the Old Testament 22. Adding these together, we have 49 (7 x 7), the perfect number for the complete Canon. Moreover, of the 27 New Testament books there are seven catholic epistles, seven Pauline epistles written before Acts 28, and seven Pauline epistles written after Acts 28. The Book of Revelation also contains epistles sent to the seven churches in Asia. We have, therefore, the great basis of Law, Prophets, Psalms, Gospels and Acts, supporting the seven columns of Epistles, crowned with the sevenfold cornice of the Apocalypse - a temple of truth, complete, perfect, and divine.



The complete canon O.T. and N.T. in 49 Books = 7 x 7

We have now seen a little of the testimony of Archaeology to the integrity of Scripture, and the challenging phenomenon of Numerics. We have also considered in outline the testimony that exists to the Canon of the Old and New Testaments. A book so far credited by external witness has the right to speak for itself, and we propose, therefore, to deal now with its internal evidence, which we may consider under two heads:

- (1) The testimony of Christ to the Scriptures.
- (2) The testimony of the Scriptures to themselves.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST TO THE SCRIPTURES

To believers in the Lord Jesus Christ the testimony of the Lord Himself must be supreme and conclusive.

‘The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord’ (Matt. 10:24,25).

What, therefore, is viewed as Scripture by Christ our Lord, is Scripture to His servants. If, in the estimation of Christ our Master, Scripture cannot be broken, then it shall remain inviolable to His disciples. If we must trust to Him alone for justification and peace, for present grace and future glory, we must equally trust Him to tell us what our attitude must be to the Scriptures. In His presence we bow, and with unfeigned meekness say, ‘Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth’.

We now come to the first great fact to be faced. Setting aside for the moment any conception we may have of the deity of Christ, we learn from His own statements that the words He spoke and the doctrine He gave were not His own personally, but the Father’s who had sent Him: ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me’ (John 7:16). This doctrine includes the very subject before us, for in the same context the Lord Who declares His doctrine to be given Him by the Father asserts that Moses gave the law, and the law of circumcision (John 7:15-23).

Let us hear further:

‘I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things’ (John 8:28).

‘He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak’ (John 12:48,49).

Can words be set in a more solemn context? In view of the judgment of the last day, the Lord declares that the words He speaks are the Father’s commandment: ‘He gave Me a commandment, what I should say’. And we have no alternative but to believe that He obeyed that commandment implicitly.

‘Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me’ (John 14:10).

Here the Lord’s claim passes our understanding. Here, unlike the prophets of old, is One not only sent from the Father, but One in perfect union with Him, so that it can be said: ‘He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father’. In connection with this mystic union, the Lord declares that He speaks the Word of God: ‘The word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father’s which sent Me’ (John 14:24).

Lastly, in that holy communion of the Son with His Father, in view of approaching death, resurrection and ascension, in full consciousness of the glory that He had before the world was and the glory that was yet to be, we hear once more the emphatic statement:

‘Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me ... I have given them Thy word’ (John 17:7,8, 14).

Surely this is enough for any servant or believer in Christ. If, after this most wonderful revelation we find the Lord endorsing the Mosaic authorship of the five books of the law, that for us is no longer an open question; and, however uncharitable it may appear, we must refuse the title ‘Christian’ to anyone or any system that is opposed to the express testimony of Christ.

The Lord’s Testimony to Moses

‘For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?’ (John 5:46,47).

It is clear that Christ recognised Moses as a real individual, and not as a mythical personage. He believed that Moses 'wrote', and speaks of 'his writings'. Moreover, He believed that Moses was a prophet: 'He wrote of Me'. In John 7 the Lord is more explicit. Not only does He affirm that Moses wrote, and wrote as a prophet, but He declares that Moses gave the law, and refers to one of the commandments: 'Thou shalt not kill'. 'Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill Me?' (John 7:19).

At the end of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus the Lord says, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead' (Luke 16:31). Here the standing testimony of the written Word is presented as greater evidence of truth than the mighty miracle of raising the dead. Let the written revelation of God take the supreme place with us that it had with our Lord.

Specific Testimony to the Prophets.

In the foregoing quotation, not only is Moses mentioned, but with him, 'the prophets'. In this passage the prophets are referred to in a collective way, but in other places the Lord also refers to several individual prophets and quotes their writings. He speaks of *Isaiah* the prophet, of the fulfilment of his prophecy both in Himself and the people, and characterizes his prophecy as Scripture:

'In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias (Isaiah)' (Matt. 13:14).

'The book of the prophet Esaias (Isaiah) ... He found the place where it was written ... This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears' (Luke 4:17-21).

'Well hath Esaias (Isaiah) prophesied of you hypocrites' (Mark 7:6).

The Lord also speaks of *Daniel* the prophet:

'When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ...' (Matt. 24:15).

The second quotation from Daniel in Matthew is set in a scene of the utmost solemnity. The High Priest before whom Christ stands upon trial for His life speaks:

'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: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven' (Matt. 26:63,64).

At this solemn moment Christ quotes from Daniel 7. It is utterly impossible to believe that the Lord could have quoted with approval the writings of a forger.

He speaks also of *Jonah* the prophet:

'The sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights ... so shall the Son of man ... The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment ... they repented at the preaching of Jonas' (Matt. 12:39-41).

We are told that the book of Jonah is allegory and myth. Could the Lord have declared that men who had no existence except in myth would rise in the judgment, and that these mythical men repented at the preaching of a mythical prophet? Moreover, if the three days and three nights of Jonah's experience be merely allegorical and not actual, what of the resurrection? The 'as' and the 'so' go together.

Specific Testimony to the Psalms

The third division of the Old Testament is called 'The Psalms' including not only the Psalms themselves, but such books as Proverbs and Job. This third section is not without testimony from the Lord:

'And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord' (Luke 20:42).

'How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord?' (Matt. 22:43).

The Lord on one occasion when quoting the Psalms, refers to them as 'the law'. 'Is it not written in your law?' (John 10:34, quoting Psalm 82). He pauses in the midst of His explanation to warn His hearers that 'the Scripture cannot be broken'. Here the Lord is teaching and maintaining the most marvellous doctrine of Scripture, His own

deity, and using the poetry of the Psalms with as much confidence as we should the testimony of Colossians 1:15, calling this Psalm 'the law' and pausing to interpolate that 'the Scripture cannot be broken'.

The consistent attitude of Christ to the Scriptures

From the very earliest days the Lord knew and revered the written Word of God. See Him at the age of twelve, sitting in the Temple and astonishing the doctors of the law with His knowledge of the Scriptures (Luke 2:46). See Him at the commencement of His ministry 'opening the book' and finding His full commission in its pages (Luke 4:17-21). See Him meeting the temptation of the Devil in the wilderness with three quotations from the law of Moses (Matt. 4:1-11). Hear Him in the 'Sermon on the Mount' tell the people that He had not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them:

'For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled' (Matt. 5:18).

The 'jot' is the Hebrew *yod*, equivalent to the Greek *iota* and the English 'i' or 'y'. It is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The 'tittle' is a small decoration added to certain letters, and carefully tabulated by the Massorah. Modern scholars confess that they do not know their purpose, but our ignorance does not justify the conclusion that these tittles are meaningless. The Lord assures us that the smallest letter and even the Massoretic notation shall not fail of fulfilment.

'It is written'

John the Baptist's enquiry, 'Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?' is answered by an appeal to Scripture (Matt. 11:1-10; Isa. 29:18; 35:4-6; 61:1). The Sadducees' quibble regarding the resurrection is silenced by the use of a single word in the Old Testament: 'I *am* the God of Abraham'. (The argument depends on the tense of the verb. God did not say 'I was' but 'I *am*'; He is not the God of the dead, but of the living (Mark 12:18-27).

Everywhere and at all times we find Christ and the Scriptures at one. Not one word was ever uttered by the Lord that cast the faintest shadow of doubt upon the Old Testament Scriptures. He Whose birth fulfilled the words of the prophets, Whose ministry was full of the Word of God, fulfilled that Word in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension to glory.

His betrayal and Crucifixion

His betrayal by Judas was already known to the Lord in the Scriptures:

'Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled' (John 17:12).

His crucifixion between the thieves was in harmony with the word of prophecy.

'And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors' (Mark 15:28).

The giving of the wine mingled with gall, the parting of His vesture, and the casting of lots, the very words, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' (Matt. 27:34,35,46) all set their seal to the truth of the Word of God.

Perhaps the Lord's most striking testimony to the supreme place the Scriptures held in His sight is found in John 19:28-30:

'After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst ... When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost'.

As by faith we gaze at the Cross, as we see indissolubly linked together the finished work of Calvary and the finished Word of God, there we take our stand, and with heart and life declare that our Saviour's Bible is our Bible, that His deep reverence for the written Scriptures shall be our example, and that we shall look upon all adverse criticism or denial in the light of that Cross, and see behind the pen of the critic the hand of the Wicked One.

The fulfilment of Scripture did not end with the Lord's death. The Roman soldiers did not break His bones - they could not, *for Scripture had declared otherwise*. They pierced His side - they could not refrain, *for Scripture had declared that they should look upon Him Whom they had pierced*. Joseph of Arimathaea comes out of obscurity and buries the Lord in his own sepulchre, *for Scripture had associated the Lord's death not only with the wicked, but also with the rich* (John 19:31-42).

The crowning testimony of the risen Christ

The crowning testimony is yet to be considered. He Who died in fulfilment of the Word of God, rose again. Did He rise from the dead to teach His disciples that He had now revised His belief in the Jewish Scriptures? Luke 24 supplies the answer. The testimony of the risen Christ is even more complete and definite than before:

'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself' (Luke 24:25-27).

Christ, risen from the dead, believed *all* that the prophets had spoken. He did not speak words of wisdom and power independently, but 'expounded' the Scriptures. Beginning at Moses and pursuing His study through all the prophets, He found in them all, 'things concerning Himself'.

On one occasion the Lord appeared to His disciples in such a way that they were terrified, thinking they had seen a spirit. Was Christ, raised from the dead and possessing the spiritual body of resurrection, still as loyal to the books of Scripture? Luke 24 again supplies the answer:

'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day' (Luke 24:44-46).

Surely everyone upon whom that blessed Name is called, will realise that the inspiration, authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures is no longer an open question. It is as settled and fixed as is the doctrine of salvation or any other revelation from God.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SCRIPTURES TO THEMSELVES

The personal testimony of Christ to the truth of Scripture is so complete, full and direct, that for the rest of our study we shall have no need to prove anything, but simply learn what has been written for our guidance.

How were the Scriptures given? How did they come? Paul supplies an answer to the first question, and Peter to the second:

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

'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. 1:21).

How was Scripture given? - 'By inspiration of God'.

How did Scripture come? - 'Holy men were moved by the Holy Ghost'.

Let us give earnest heed to these statements and examine them in the light of their contexts. Both are the utterances of men in view of death, and there is a suitable solemnity about the two epistles containing them that pervades their whole doctrine. In both instances the immediate contexts speak of death:

'The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith' (2 Tim. 4:6,7).

'Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me' (2 Pet. 1:14).

Thus, on the eve of martyrdom, both Paul and Peter give unambiguous testimony to the absolutely divine origin of the Scriptures. How, then, can we hope to finish our course, how keep the faith, how entertain the hope of a crown or a 'Well done' if we deny or trifle with the Scriptures held so dear by these two servants of the Lord?

'From a child thou hast known the *holy scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All *scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

Two titles are here given to the Scriptures:

- (1) 'HOLY SCRIPTURES', *Hiera Grammata* or 'Sacred Letters'. (The reader will remember the 'hieroglyphics' of Egyptian monuments).
- (2) 'SCRIPTURE', *Graphe* or 'Writing'.

The word *grammata* had a special significance, meaning the Holy Scriptures themselves.

'How knoweth this man *letters* (*grammata*), having never learned?' (John 7:15).

As the word *hieros* gives us the word 'priest' (*hierus*), so *grammata* gives us the companion word 'scribe' (*grammateus*).

The word *graphe* occurs frequently in English - in such words as *photography*, *geography*, *graphic*, etc. - and means something *written*. While *graphe* could, of course, refer to anything written at any time, it assumes a special meaning in the Word of God, and when used without qualification always means 'The Scriptures' - the Writings *par excellence*. In the same way *gegrapti*, 'It is written', has special reference to the Scriptures.

References to writing are abundant

The Old Testament abounds in references to writing and books. Moses wrote all the words of the Lord in a book (Exod. 17:14; 24:4); and Joshua also (Josh. 24:26). Over and over again appeal is made to the *written* law (Exod. 31:18; Deut. 28:58; Josh. 8:31). The foundation of our faith is *written* testimony.

What is implied in 'Inspiration'?

What does Scripture say as to the way in which the subject matter of these holy writings was given? Paul answers in one word, *Theopneustos*. *Theos* is the Greek word for 'God' and is too well known to require comment. *Pneustos* is the third person singular, perfect passive, of *pneo*, 'to breathe'. This word gives us *pneuma*, usually translated 'spirit'. The close association of *pneuma* with 'breath' is seen in our words '*pneumatic*' and '*pneumonia*'; and the connection between 'inspiration' and 'breathing' is apparent in such words as 'respire', 'inspire' and 'transpire'.

Let us now put together the two parts of Paul's statement. All Scripture - that which is *written* - 'is given by inspiration of God', or 'is *God-breathed*'. Now if what is *written* is what was *breathed* by God, there is no interval for the writer to give a vision of his own heart. However intelligently the writer might co-operate with the divine Spirit, or however mystified he might be by the words given him to write, when it was a question of the making of Scripture, and the receiving of the oracles of God, the writers ceased to act merely in the capacity of thinkers or theologians, and became instruments. Thus, while personality is stamped upon every page of Scripture, Moses differing from Isaiah, Paul from Peter, Matthew from Luke, yet all its writers are instruments in the hand of God.

'God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past by the prophets' (Heb. 1:1).

However different the 'manners', one thing remained constant, it was God Who spoke.

Peter's testimony: How Scripture came

'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise' (2 Pet. 1:19 Author's translation).

The word of prophecy is 'sure', sure as the promise (Rom. 4:16), steadfast as the word spoken by angels (Heb. 2:2), fast as the anchor of hope (Heb. 6:19); and, when it is a question of testifying to others, 'more sure' even than

Peter's experience in the holy mount. As our passage stands in the A.V. the 'day star' is to arise in our hearts, which is precisely what many teach who deny the personal return of the Lord. 'In your hearts' should be read with the words 'take heed' and not with the rising of the day star.

What does Peter bring forward to show why this prophetic word is 'more sure' than the sublimest 'experience'? It is that, in the matter of prophetic inspiration, the human element is entirely subservient. All is of God.

'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. 1:20,21).

Prophecy is not self-evolved

What are we to understand by the words 'private interpretation'? Does Peter impose upon us the bondage of Romanism? Are we to surrender to the approved interpretation of Scripture by the 'Church'? Let us examine the words concerned. 'Private' is *idios*, a word occurring 114 times, and nearly always rendered 'own'. The word translated 'interpretation' (*epilusis*) occurs nowhere else in Scripture. In a verbal form, however, it is found in the New Testament twice ('expounded' Mark 4:34 and 'determined' Acts 19:39). In the LXX it occurs in Genesis 41:12. The word means 'to interpret' in the sense of 'letting loose', 'breaking open', or 'unfolding'. Also, in the verse under consideration the word 'is' is not the verb 'to be' but *ginomai*, which means 'to come into being'. Peter is not speaking about systems of interpretation, but of the trustworthiness of Scripture itself, which, he says, is found in this fact: 'No prophecy of Scripture came into being of its own unfolding'. He then proceeds to show why this is so, by adding, 'For prophecy was not brought at any time by the will of man'.

Inspiration a mighty moving force

It is important to keep the rendering 'brought' in this verse, as *phero* occurs again in the passage that follows. The subject is presented negatively and positively: how it was *not* brought, and how it *was* brought.

'But being borne along (*phero*) by holy spirit, holy men of God spake'.

If the reader wishes to understand the force of the word *phero*, he should read through Acts 27 with its vivid description of the storm, the wreck, and the utter helplessness of man in the tempest. In verse 15 we read: 'We let her drive' (*phero*). And again in verse 17: 'Strake sail, and so were driven' (*phero*). The human element was of no avail in that driving Euroclydon, and was brushed aside. Even so it is with the mighty driving power of inspiration.

The subject-matter of Scripture demands revelation

Apart from revelation, the wisest men are baffled and but blind leaders of the blind. 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?' (Job 11:7). This is a question we do well to ponder, in conjunction with the statement of the wise man in Ecclesiastes: 'He hath set the world (age) in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end' (Eccles. 3:11). No eye can see far enough, no human foot climb high enough; no mind has the capacity to grasp in their completeness the purpose of the ages and the way and will of God.

'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit' (1 Cor. 2:9,10).

The Scripture's own claims: 'God spake'

Let us collect some of the passages in which Scripture declares that the Lord hath spoken:

'And God *spake* unto Noah' (Gen. 8:15).

'And the LORD *talked* with Moses' (Exod. 33:9).

'And God *spake* all these words' (Exod. 20:1).

‘*Speak* unto the children of Israel’ (Lev. 1:2).

This is the recurring burden of the books of Moses, and of all the Old Testament Scriptures. ‘The mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it’ and ‘Hear the word of the LORD’ are the recurring statements of the prophets (Micah 4:4, Jer. 9:12; 10:1, Isa. 28:14).

The Scripture’s own claims: ‘The word came’

Again and again we read that ‘the word of the Lord came’ to the prophets:

‘The word of the LORD *came* unto Nathan’ (2 Sam. 7:4).

‘The word of the LORD *came* to Elijah’ (1 Kings 18:1).

‘The word that *came* to Jeremiah from the LORD’ (Jer. 11:1).

Then we have more specific statements such as the following:

‘Now therefore go, and I will be with thy *mouth*, and teach thee what thou shalt *say*’ (Exod. 4:12).

‘With him will I speak mouth to *mouth*’ (Num. 12:8).

‘The LORD put a word in Balaam’s *mouth*’ (Num. 23:5).

‘That the word of the LORD spoken by the *mouth* of Jeremiah might be accomplished’ (2 Chron. 36:22).

‘I have put My words in thy *mouth*’ (Isa. 51:16).

‘The LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy *mouth*’ (Jer. 1:9).

The Scripture’s own claims: ‘By the mouth of’

The testimony of Peter, recorded in the Acts, is very emphatic on this point:

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

Here we have a reference to a Psalm in which David records in the first instance his own sorrows and afflictions; yet the writer is so under the control of the Holy Ghost that what he writes is ‘Scripture’, ‘which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David’ indited. Moreover, this is not an isolated instance. What is true here of David is also true of all the prophets:

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

‘The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken *by the mouth* of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (Acts 3:21).

It is very evident from this testimony that, whoever the individual speaker may have been, the mighty Moses, or the lowly Amos, the royal Seer, or the runaway Jonah, the ungodly Balaam, or the wicked Caiaphas, it was God Who spoke and it is His Word that we hear.

The Prophets were channels, not originators

There are ten passages in Matthew which, in the Greek, put this matter of the instrumentality of the prophets beyond dispute. The subject is of such importance that we give each reference in full, inserting also in each case the vital Greek prepositions:

‘Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken BY (*hupo*) the Lord THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 1:22).

‘For thus it hath been written THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 2:5).

‘That it might be fulfilled which was spoken BY (*hupo*) the Lord THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 2:15).

‘That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophets’ (Matt. 2:23).

‘That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 13:35).

‘That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) the prophet’ (Matt. 21:4).

In these six references, the names of the prophets are not specifically mentioned, but we give them below to show how the same formula is applied to men of widely different times and character:

Matthew 1:22 quotes ISAIAH.

Matthew 2:5 quotes MICAH.

Matthew 2:15 quotes HOSEA.

Matthew 2:23 speaks of ‘PROPHETS’ in the plural.

Matthew 13:35 quotes a PSALM OF ASAPH.

Matthew 21:4 quotes ZECHARIAH.

The remaining four references give the name of the prophet quoted. They are as follows:

‘That it might be fulfilled which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) ESAIAS (ISAIAH) the prophet’ (Matt. 4:14; 8:17; 12:17).

‘Then was fulfilled that which was spoken THROUGH (*dia*) JEREMY (JEREMIAH) the prophet’ (Matt. 27:9).

A cause of stumbling explained

One of the most fruitful causes of misunderstanding of the Scriptures among those who are saved is the failure to distinguish things that differ, or, as Paul puts it in 2 Timothy 2:15, failure ‘rightly to divide the Word of truth’. The words of Miles Coverdale are much to the point here:

*‘It shall greatly helpe ye to understande Scripture, if thou mark
not only what is spoken, or wrytten,
but of whom,
and to whom,
with what words,
at what time,
where,
to what intent,
with what circumstance,
considering what goeth before, and what followeth’.*

THE PRINCIPAL OF RIGHT DIVISION

What are we to understand by the term ‘rightly dividing’? The word in question is *orthotomounta* which is made up of *orthos*, ‘right’, and *temno* ‘to cut’. The word *apodemno* occurs in the Septuagint Version of Jeremiah 36:23, where Jehoiakim *wrongly* cut up or divided the Word of Truth. We mention this because it shows that the idea of ‘cutting’ and ‘dividing’ is an essential part of the word. The Septuagint supplies us with another helpful passage, for in Proverbs 3:5,6 we read:

‘Trust in the LORD with all thine heart;
And lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall RIGHTLY DIVIDE thy paths’.

Here we have a close parallel with 2 Timothy 2:15. In both cases the fear of man and the assistance of man are put aside, and the Lord divides or opens up aright the tangled pathway. There are some who seek to turn the edge of 2 Timothy 2:15 by rendering it ‘Cutting a straight pathway along the Word of Truth’. Now although this is good

advice, it is false interpretation. It is the Word itself that has to be divided in this passage, not the pathway of the believer.

We draw attention to the following chart which sets out in diagrammatic form the Second Epistle to Timothy. In it he will see the symbol of the signpost, which will enable him the better to appreciate the practical meaning of this great principle.



Failure regarding this principle leads to subversion

The Galatian church, recently brought out of pagan darkness into the light of grace, were easily intimidated by the Judaisers who descended upon them, quoting chapter and verse to prove that, apart from the law of Moses and circumcision, they could not be saved. Had they known the great principle of 2 Timothy 2:15 they might have penetrated the deception. A realisation of the distinction between 'law' and 'grace' would have made it clear that the mere quotation of Scripture was not sufficient.

'Chapter and verse' is not enough

These Judaisers could quote 'chapter and verse' for their teaching, but the point was that the dispensation had changed. The apostle Paul, referring to *the very law of God* from this aspect, calls its precepts and ordinances 'weak and beggarly elements' (Gal. 4:9). If the Holy Spirit can speak in this way of the very ordinances given by God when they are applied in an undispensational way the reader should not rest satisfied with current opinions concerning the Church and its ordinances, until he is sure that such are not only to be found somewhere in Scripture, but also in that part of Scripture that applies specifically to the present time. In other words, he must 'rightly divide the Word of truth'.

Right division and the gospel

Passing on to another important reason for 'right division' we would point out that we shall not be clear about the gospel, if we are uncertain about dispensational truth. Many seem to think that a knowledge of the different dispensations is not essential; all they feel called upon to do is to 'preach the gospel'. Without questioning the worthiness of their motives, we should be justified in asking, which gospel? The word translated 'gospel' in the New Testament means 'good news'. The word itself does not tell us to whom the good news is addressed, nor what the good news is about. The following 'gospels' are mentioned in Scripture:

- The *gospel* or good news of the KINGDOM.
- The *gospel* or good news of God concerning HIS SON.
- The *gospel* or good news of the CIRCUMCISION.
- The *gospel* or good news of the UNCIRCUMCISION.
- The *gospel* or good news of the GRACE OF GOD.
- The *gospel* or good news of the GLORY OF CHRIST.
- The *gospel* or good news of the GLORY OF THE BLESSED GOD.
- The EVERLASTING (*eonian*) *gospel* or good news.

We may illustrate our meaning by taking the extreme case of the 'everlasting (*eonian*) gospel', which is found in Revelation 14:6,7. This 'gospel' has nothing to say about the very essentials of the gospel which we have received. There is not a word as to faith, justification, redemption, or pardon. Its terms are:

'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters'.

It is a message of 'good news' to the nations on the earth under the awful reign of Antichrist. To these people the angel preaches this special gospel, calling upon them to give glory to God, and to worship Him as *Creator*.

The gospel as preached by Peter and by Paul

Again, take the expressions of Galatians 2:7, 'the gospel of the uncircumcision' and 'the gospel of the circumcision'. It is not the same gospel sent to different hearers; it is not the gospel *to* the circumcision, but the gospel *of* the circumcision. Paul tells us that when he went up to Jerusalem, and 'communicated unto them *that* gospel which he preached among the Gentiles', the apostles at Jerusalem were perfectly satisfied that the gospel which Paul preached had the authority of God equally with that preached by Peter. Peter tells us in Acts 15:7 that the message he delivered to Cornelius was 'the gospel'. If we turn to Acts 10 we shall discover what this 'gospel' was. Peter's opening words are enough to tell us that we are to hear a message very different from the gospel preached by Paul:

'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and *worketh righteousness*, is accepted with Him' (Acts 10:34,35).

Place these words beside Titus 3:5:

'*Not by works of righteousness* which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us'.

Peter commences with the preaching of John the Baptist and the earthly life of the Lord Jesus, and concludes with the 'remission of sins'. The character of Cornelius ('a devout man', one who 'prayed to God always') is quite different from that of the 'ungodly', the 'sinners' and 'enemies' (Rom. 5) to whom the apostle Paul directs his message of salvation.

Different administrations do not imply contradictions

We cannot deal here with the further differences that are clearly discernible between the ministries of Peter and Paul, but we feel sure the reader will agree that, if a special message has been sent through the apostle of the Gentiles, *that* should be the gospel for the time in which we live, and not the gospel of the kingdom, or the gospel of the circumcision. Needless to say there are no 'discrepancies' here. Peter is perfectly right in Acts 10. Paul is perfectly right in Titus 3. Both are inspired and both are true, but Peter's message would be *untrue* in Titus 3 or Ephesians 2, even though it was true in the Pentecostal period, simply because the dispensation had been changed, and a new order inaugurated.

Some simple illustrations of 'wrong division'

The chapter headings of our English Bible supply a good example of 'wrongly dividing' the Word of Truth. At the beginning of Isaiah 29 we read: 'God's heavy judgment upon Jerusalem. The senselessness and deep hypocrisy of the Jews'. At the beginning of Isaiah 30 we read: 'God's mercies towards His Church'. In Isaiah 29:1 we read of 'the city where David dwelt', and in Isaiah 30:19 of 'the people dwelling *in Zion at Jerusalem*'. Yet, while the judgments are reserved for the Jew, the blessings in the same passages are appropriated by the church. If we will but look for ourselves, we may at once discover the people *to* whom, and *concerning* whom, this prophecy was written, for in Isaiah 1:1 we read: 'The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw *concerning Judah and Jerusalem*'.

All Scripture is for us, but not necessarily about us

This appropriation, or rather misappropriation, of scriptures written concerning Israel and the kingdom is a fruitful source of confusion among believers. Think of the many who have stumbled over the epistle of James. Those who have seen 'justification by faith, without legal works of any kind' to be vital to the integrity of the gospel of grace (Gal. 2:16), have had considerable difficulty in deciding what to do with the teaching of James. Some have laboured to 'harmonize' the teaching of James and the teaching of Paul. Others, seeing the futility of this, have discredited the epistle of James. Luther called it an 'epistle of straw'; while others, of equal orthodoxy, have questioned its canonicity. On the other hand, there are those to whom the emphasis upon works is more palatable than Paul's emphasis upon grace, who have used James to 'water down' the teaching of Romans or Ephesians.

The address on the envelope

If we will but rightly divide the Word of Truth, all this 'vain jangling' will cease. *We* are saved Gentiles. *We* have never been connected with the people or promises of Israel. God has sent to *us* an apostle, the apostle '*for you Gentiles*', and we are responsible for the way in which we receive His message. James did not write his epistle to saved Gentiles, nor to the 'church which is the Body of Christ'. As the first verse of the epistle tells us, he wrote 'to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad'. If any reader is a member of one of these twelve tribes, he may perhaps feel that the epistle has a word for him, although even in that case we hope to show that the dispensation in which we find ourselves (whether Jewish or Gentile believers) is not directly in view in this epistle. If the reader is a believer of the Gentiles, then although he may learn much and profit much by reading this epistle, only confusion will result unless he rightly divides the Word of Truth. If we consider the 'address on the envelope' a little more closely, we shall not be found appropriating the promises and blessings of others, and confusing our own hopes.

Suppose a father, having several sons, sends to them letters of advice, words of encouragement, and promises of help and reward. We can quite understand that one son, John, would be glad to read the letter written to his brother William, and *vice versa*. Each would doubtless find much in the letter written from their father to the other that would be profitable, but neither would think of claiming the promises made to the other, nor of obeying the other's

instructions. If John were a bank clerk, and William an artist, the instructions given to the brother in the bank would be of no service to the brother at his easel. So it is with the children of God. The same Father in heaven has many sons. All the messages of love, cheer, hope, instruction and warning may be profitably read by all, but each one must see that the words sent *to* him and written *about* him, are duly considered and placed foremost.

The 'Gap' in Scripture

Another fruitful cause of misunderstanding is forgetfulness or ignorance of the fact that this present dispensation is the dispensation of the Mystery (or secret) which had been hidden away from all ages and generations by God (Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26).

The Lord Jesus, at the commencement of His ministry as recorded in Luke 4:16-20, shows very clearly the principle which we seek to emphasize. Entering the synagogue at Nazareth, He stood up and read Isaiah 61:1,2. The point to be noticed, however, is that the Lord did not complete the second verse. Immediately upon reading the words 'the acceptable year of the Lord' He *closed the Book*. Why did the Lord stop just at this point? Why did He not read on to the end of the verse? The reason is that the next words belong to a *yet future dispensation*. The Lord was about to make an important statement. His words were: '*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears*'. This could not have been said if He had read on and included the words, 'The day of vengeance of our God'. The day of vengeance will not be ushered in until the Lord Jesus steps forward and opens another book, as recorded in Revelation 5 and 6.

The present dispensation a parenthesis

So far as dispensational truth is concerned, we have to remember the 'closed book', and to see that this present dispensation comes in between the 'acceptable year of the Lord', and the 'day of vengeance of our God'. The Lord seems to have given a hint of an impending change in the words which He spoke to the people after the incident cited above. He emphasized the fact that although there were many widows and many lepers in Israel, yet it was a *Gentile* leper, and a *Gentile* widow that were blessed, as recorded in the Scriptures. The 'gap' and the emphasis upon *Gentile* blessing come together in this chapter in a way that demands careful consideration. So also with other prophets who wrote beforehand of 'the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow' (1 Pet. 1:10,11). So far as we can tell from their writings, there was nothing to guide them as to whether days or centuries would come between the 'sufferings' and the 'glory'.

Much more could be written on this important subject but we hope that sufficient has been put forward to show that not only is it incumbent upon the reader of the Bible to accept all its statements as absolute truth, but that it is also necessary to take into account the varied manners and times, dispensations and economies that qualify the different commands and promises. By thus apportioning the Word of Truth with respect to the Jew, the Gentile, and the dispensation of the Mystery, the reader will obtain a grasp of its wonderful harmony, perceive something of the 'manifold' grace that pervades the whole of God's purposes, and find himself approved unto God, a workman having no need to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the Word of Truth*.

CONCLUSION.

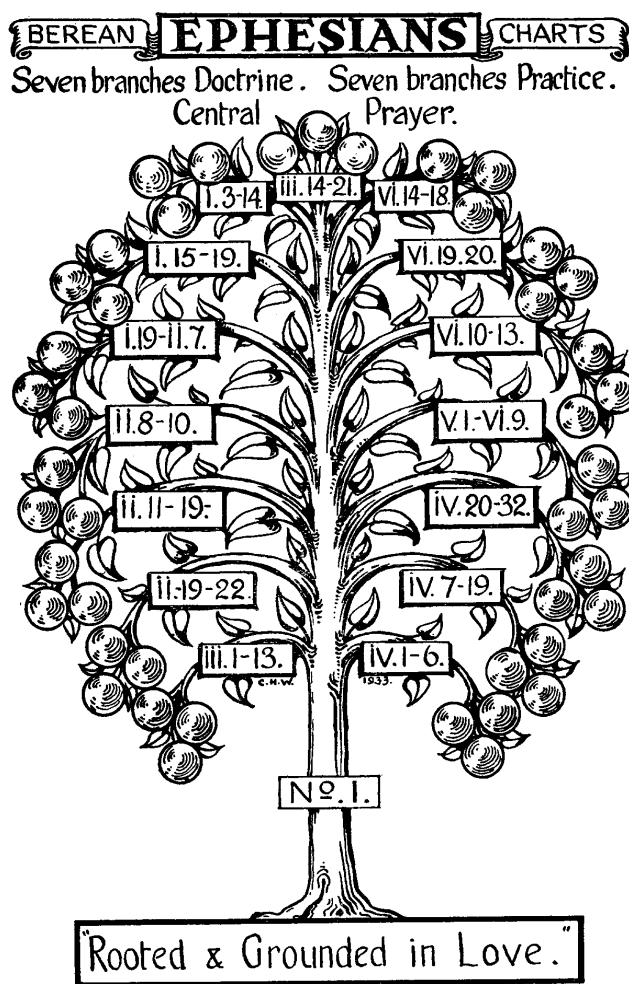
We must now draw to a close. We have no intention of making this a long booklet, but have sought to give sufficient evidence to encourage the reader in his own studies, so that he may not be easily swayed by the pretensions of self-appointed critics.

Perhaps an example of the underlying perfections that may be traced throughout the books of the Bible may not be without usefulness, and we therefore conclude with a diagram of the balance of teaching observable in the epistle to the Ephesians, which is but one example of that which is characteristic of every book in the Scriptures.

The chart represents the epistle to the Ephesians under the figure of a fruit tree, having seven branches on either side, and bearing on each branch three fruits. This visualizes the literary structure of the epistle which has seven

sections devoted to doctrine, and seven devoted to practice. The tree is seen to be 'rooted and grounded in love', and its culmination is the prayer that leads on to 'all the fulness of God' (Eph. 3:19).

The balancing of the doctrinal and practical sections is fairly obvious (as an example note 2:21 and 4:16: 'fitly framed together' and 'fitly joined together'). The triple sub-division of each section, however, is not so obvious, and we therefore tabulate these in the hope that the chart may prove of service to the reader, not only in his own reading, but also as a help in quickening the interest of others.



DOCTRINAL SECTION (Eph. 1:3 to 3:13)

- (1) THE THREEFOLD CHARTER (1:3-14).
 - (a) The Will of the Father.
 - (b) The Work of the Son.
 - (c) The Witness of the Spirit.
- (2) THE THREEFOLD PRAYER (1:15-19).
 - (a) That ye may know what is the hope of His calling.

- (b) That ye may know what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.
 - (c) That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.
- (3) THE THREEFOLD FELLOWSHIP (*Doctrinal*) (1:19 to 2:7).
- (a) Quickened together with Christ.
 - (b) Raised together.
 - (c) Made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.
- (4) THREE WORKS (2:8-10).
- (a) Not of works, lest any man should boast.
 - (b) We are His workmanship.
 - (c) Created in Christ Jesus unto good works.
- (5) THE THREEFOLD PEACE (2:11-19-).
- (a) Far off are made nigh ... He is our peace.
 - (b) Of the two a new man created, so making peace.
 - (c) Reconciliation and access. He came and preached peace to those that were far off, and to those that were nigh.
- (6) THE THREEFOLD FELLOWSHIP (*Dispensational*) (2:-19-22).
- (a) No more strangers but *fellow* citizens.
 - (b) The whole building fitly framed *together*.
 - (c) Builded *together* for an habitation of God.
- (7) THE THREEFOLD EQUALITY (*Doctrinal and Dispensational*) (3:1-13).
- (a) In spirit the Gentiles are heirs on an *equality*.
 - (b) They are members of a body, all on perfect *equality*.
 - (c) They are partakers in the promise of Christ by the gospel entrusted to Paul, on an *equality*.

PRACTICAL SECTION (Eph. 4:1 to 6:24)

- (1) THE THREEFOLD EXHORTATION (4:1-6).
- (a) Walk worthy of the calling.
 - (b) Forbear one another in love.
 - (c) Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit.
- (2) A THREEFOLD MEASURE (4:7-19).
- (a) The measure of the gift of Christ.
 - (b) The measure of the fulness of Christ.
 - (c) The measure of every part.
- (3) A THREEFOLD APPLICATION OF THE TRUTH 'IN JESUS' (4:20-32).
- (a) Put off the old man, concerning the former conversation.
 - (b) Put on the new man which is created in righteousness.
 - (c) Put away the lie, speak every man truth.
- (4) A THREEFOLD WALK (5:1 to 6:9).
- (a) Walk in love. WIVES AND HUSBANDS.

- (b) Walk as light. CHILDREN AND PARENTS.
- (c) Walk circumspectly. SERVANTS AND MASTERS.

(5) A THREEFOLD STAND (6:10-13).

- (a) Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.
- (b) Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.
- (c) And having 'worked out' (see 1:19, 'worked in') all, to stand.

(6) A THREEFOLD EQUIPMENT (6:14-18).

- (a) GIRDLE of Truth and BREASTPLATE of Righteousness.
- (b) SHOES of Peace and SHIELD of Faith.
- (c) HELMET of Salvation and SWORD of the Spirit.

(7) A THREEFOLD PRAYER FOR UTTERANCE (6:19,20).

- (a) That I may open my mouth boldly.
- (b) That therein I may speak boldly.
- (c) As I ought to speak.

THE CENTRAL PRAYER (Eph. 3:14 - 21)

THE THREEFOLD PRAYER (3:14-21).

- (a) In order that He would grant you to be strengthened.
- (b) In order that ye may be able to comprehend.
- (c) In order that ye might be filled unto all the fulness of God.