

THE TESTIMONY OF THE LORD'S PRISONER

CHARLES H. WELCH

An exposition of the four Prison Epistles

Ephesians

Philippians

Colossians

2 Timothy



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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

The present volume represents, in the mercy of God, the attainment of a goal. When, at the suggestion of the late and loved Dr. E. W. Bullinger, we first put pen to paper in the interests of the dispensation of the Mystery, the exposition of these four great prison epistles became a goal at which to aim. This was in 1909. The subsequent pathway has been rugged and the difficulties great, but the grace of God has been greater. To speak of all that this volume means to the writer is neither possible nor fitting; sufficient be it to say that its inception and birth have not been without travail. In a sense, perhaps, that it is impossible to convey to others, we believe we can say that in giving this book we give ourselves.

If an honest desire to honour the Scriptures as the very Word of God be any commendation; if a desire consistently to recognise the divine principle of right division throughout its exposition makes for unashamed work; if ever to seek that the whole ministry shall lead both reader and writer closer to Him Who is both Saviour and Lord be the hallmark of the Spirit's witness; if a desire to accept cheerfully the inevitable consequences of such a witness be any plea for a hearing; then we can confidently hope that the testimony of this book will not remain unheard.

It has been our custom hitherto to provide comprehensive indices in our publications, but in the present volume we have provided nothing more than a table of contents. As the four prison epistles are given a continuous commentary, the reader will not have any difficulty in referring to the notes upon any particular passage.

The attainment of one's goal, however imperfectly, is something that calls for deepest thanksgiving, joy and humility, and in this spirit we send forth this third volume of the series to accomplish the good pleasure of Him unto Whom we seek ever to be approved and unashamed.

CHARLES H. WELCH

Hutton, Essex.
1931.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

It is good that a third edition of this study by Charles H. Welch has been called for.

It was hardly necessary 50 years ago to explain that the English word 'mystery' used in the Authorized Version of 1611 translates a Greek word meaning 'secret' and not something puzzling or mysterious, and the writer does not attempt to do so, but this should be borne in mind by the reader. Many modern versions make this clear, such as Rotherham, Weymouth, Cunningham, Charles Williams, and the N.E.B.

For the Bible student who wants a more detailed exposition of Ephesians and Philippians, the author's *In Heavenly Places* and *The Prize of the High Calling* is strongly recommended. May the Lord get glory to Himself and His people illumination from these faithful expositions of His Word of Truth.

STUART ALLEN

1979

FOREWORD

In February of the year 1909, the first number of the magazine entitled *The Berean Expositor* was published, and by the grace of God, it has been maintained. From the commencement its chief object was to draw attention to the claim made by the Apostle Paul that he had received direct from God the dispensation of the Mystery, a peculiar economy filling the interval occasioned by the setting aside of Israel in Acts 28. This witness has been supplemented by the publication of a series of pamphlets and by the issue of two volumes, both preparatory in their nature and having as their goal the present volume, which is now placed before the reader.

The first volume bears the title, "Dispensational Truth, or The place of Israel and the Church in the Purpose of the Ages". This was published in 1912, and a second edition issued in 1927. It is largely occupied with an unfolding of the purpose of the ages, and a demonstration of the essential differences that exist between the earthly kingdom and the church. It leads up to but does not actually enter the sphere of Paul's prison ministry.

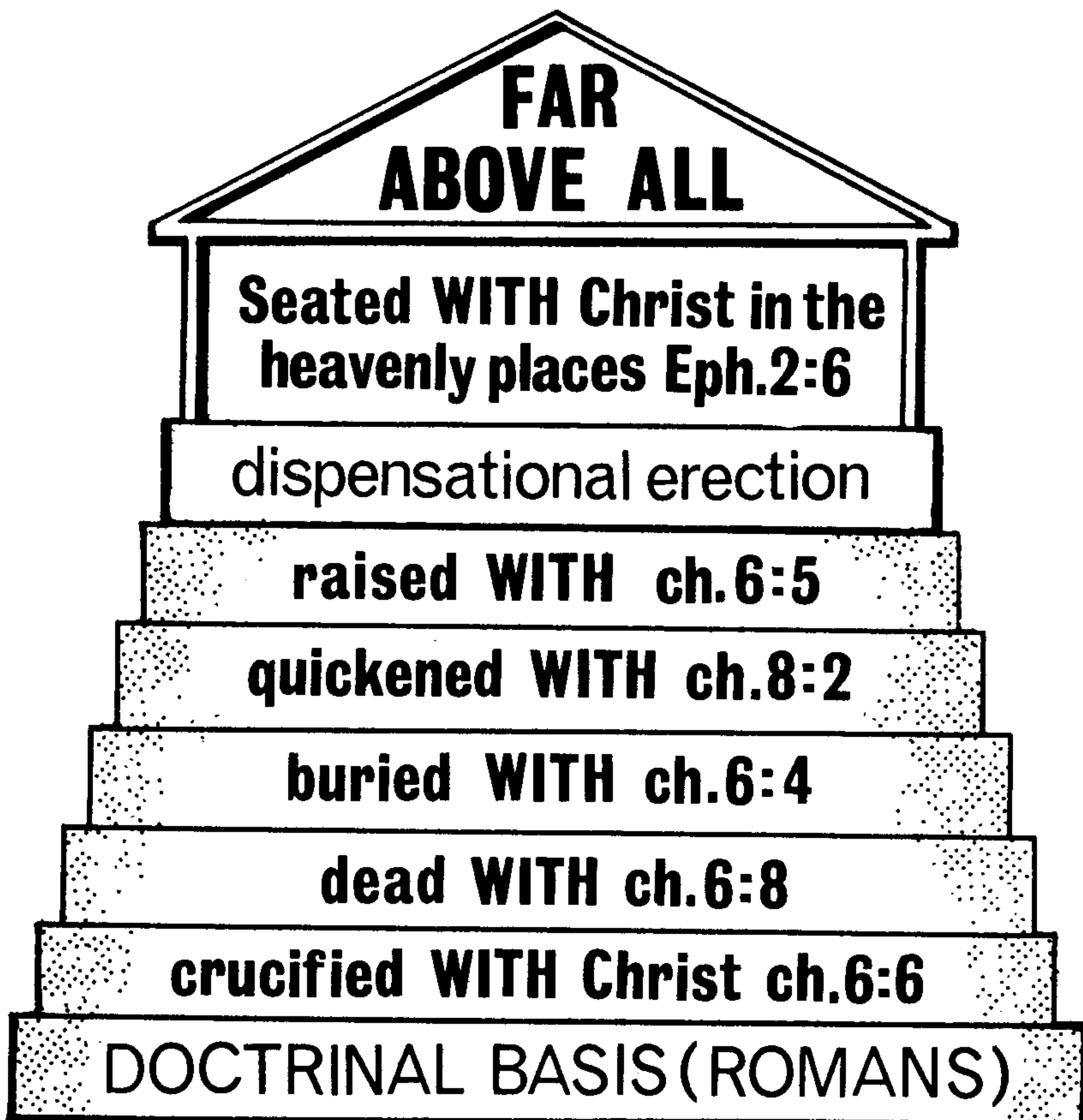
The second volume is entitled "The Apostle of the Reconciliation, or The dispensational position of the Acts and the ministry and Epistles of Paul". This volume was published in 1923, and, taking up the threads of the earlier volume, deals with that set of Scriptures written during the period of the Acts. Quoting from the Foreword, we read:

"The epistles of Paul, which were written during or after his imprisonment, belong to a dispensation which was not instituted until the ministry of the Acts period had come to a close. Their study demands separate treatment, and the present volume will be useful largely in clearing the way for their examination, and in showing the foundation upon which they are built".

From this it is clear that we do not believe that "the church which is His Body" began at Pentecost. We believe that the dispensational landmark, so far as we are concerned, is at Acts 28. We believe that at the setting aside of Israel, and the abeyance of their hope, evidential miraculous gifts naturally ceased, and that the dispensation ushered in by the

Apostle as the Lord's prisoner is entirely distinct from any previous economy.

Having said this with regard to its distinct *dispensational* teaching, we would balance it by referring to the foundation upon which it is built. The great doctrinal basis upon which the new dispensation rests is found in the epistle to the Romans. Redemption and justification remain unchanged, but the dispensational position of the Gentile believer who was once that of "a wild olive graft" into the stock of Israel is essentially altered. To make these two features as clear as possible we set out the relation between Romans and Ephesians in the following figure:



It will be seen that both the doctrine of Romans and the one great dispensational blessing of Ephesians are alike vitally associated with identification with Christ. Identification with Christ in His death and resurrection is true whether for the teaching of Romans or of Ephesians; it is the superstructure that changes. Upon that great foundation now stands the church of the Mystery (Secret) having in common with the church of the Acts period the same redemption and union with Christ, but differing absolutely from it in many important respects — in its *sphere* of blessing — “the super-heavens”, in its *time* of choice — “before the overthrow of the world”, in its *position* — “made to sit together in the super-heavens in Christ Jesus”, in its *hope* — “when Christ Who is our life shall be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory”, and finally in its *constitution* — “the church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”.

Under the chapter headed, “The cumulative fulfilment of Isaiah 6” in *Dispensational Truth*, we have discussed the question of the boundary line of Acts 28, and under the heading, “The dispensational crisis” in *The Apostle of the Reconciliation* this epoch-making chapter is again considered.

In the present volume the dispensational position of Acts 28 is assumed, and the reader who is unconvinced may be under the necessity of acquainting himself with the true teaching of the earlier ministry of Paul before he attempts to understand his final and transcendent ministry as the Lord’s prisoner. We shall start in this present volume with the question of Paul’s twofold ministry, this time devoting our attention to his “prison ministry” and “prison epistles”. These terms, let it be said, are not to be found in Scripture, but they stand for Scriptural facts and are therefore justified.

The Apostle of the Reconciliation completed its task at a time during the course of the Acts when Paul was still free, and had penned the last great epistle of that ministry, the epistle to the Romans. Our present study must begin where that earlier ministry ends, and the new ministry is beginning to appear. Our opening chapter, therefore, must deal with the teaching of Scripture concerning the fact of Paul’s entrance upon a prison ministry, and the rest of the book must be

occupied with an examination of the epistles which bear the mark of prison and their bearing upon ourselves, our hope and our destiny. We are deeply conscious of the enormous task before us. To attempt it seems almost like presumption, yet to evade it would be to leave the witness of the past without its end and climax; the erection of a scaffolding without the completion of the building.

Anticipating our studies, we find that four great epistles are before us — Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 2 Timothy. The first of these alone contains such breadth and length and depth and height as to place it quite beyond the compass of such a volume as this. In view of the immensity of the theme we shall, therefore, contentedly take up a lowly capacity as little more than a guidepost to the truth. The reader will not imagine that the last word has or can have been spoken on this mighty subject. Our little book, instead of being a snare to those believers who are too apt, alas, to lean upon the teaching of others will, by its very character and the fragmentary nature of its exposition, be a witness to the wonders of the love that passeth knowledge and a spur to those who, learning from its pages the A, B, C of this new dispensation, shall be led on by God Himself to spell out that glorious revelation where Christ is all and in all.

CHAPTER 1

THE FOUR PRISON EPISTLES

The Acts of the Apostles is written largely concerning the ministry of two servants of Christ — Peter and Paul. Both have a special endowment of the Spirit (Acts 2 and 13) and both conclude their ministries, so far as the Acts is concerned, with imprisonment (Acts 12 and 28). The conversion and commission of Paul is first recorded in Acts 9, but certain features of it are not mentioned until the earlier ministry of Paul has come to an end. Paul is found speaking in a Jewish synagogue for the last time in Acts 19:8, and in Acts 20 we find him assuring the Ephesian elders that they shall see his face no more. Paul had arranged for these elders to meet him at the seaport of Miletus, because he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. As we listen to his words to these elders, we are quite certain that he is summing up a ministry that has finished, and his subsequent words shew that he has in view a ministry soon to begin. Let us hear the apostle's words:

“Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:18-21).

It is very evident from these words that Paul is about to bid the Ephesians farewell, and he seeks to impress upon them the nature of the ministry they had received. In verses 25-27, he repeats:

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God”.

In this second statement the Apostle not only declares that he did not keep back anything that was profitable, but further, that he did not shun to declare all the counsel of God.

In Acts 26:22,23 we have a further statement which has a bearing upon Acts 20:27:

“Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles”.

It is evident from these words that when Paul declared all the counsel of God, he made no mention of the dispensation of the Mystery (Secret), for that was never revealed either to Moses or to the prophets, but was “hid in God” until the time came for its manifestation, and that, not until Israel had been set aside.

What was it that had come into the Apostle's life to make him realise so definitely this change of ministry? Let him speak once more for himself:

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:22-24).

The reader will recognise the Holy Spirit's sign of a change in the words, “And now”, which are found in other important contexts. It appears quite clear that a new ministry was before the Apostle, a ministry closely associated with imprisonment; and he was prepared by grace not only for prison but death itself so long as he might finish his course. This he was most graciously enabled to do, for in his last prison epistle (2 Timothy), and in view of approaching martyrdom, he could say, “I have finished my course”.

He summarises his future ministry in the words: “To testify the gospel of the grace of God” — a fitting gospel for that “dispensation of the grace of God” which Ephesians 3:1,2 declares was entrusted to him as the prisoner of Jesus Christ.

What Paul anticipates in Acts 20 he declares as an established fact in Acts 26; so we will turn to his statement before king Agrippa for further light upon his prison ministry. Standing before king Agrippa he gives a rapid summary of his early life, his antipathy to the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and his persecution of believers even to strange cities. This brings him to the Damascus road and the revelation of the ascended Christ. He hears from heaven that he is persecuting the Lord Jesus, and the Lord says to him:

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

Here is a twofold witness and commission — *both* “the things which thou hast seen” and “those things in the which *I will appear unto thee*”. Christ not only appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and commissioned him to bear His name before Israel, the Gentiles and kings; He appeared, also according to His promise at some time after Acts 9, commissioning him as the prisoner of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and entrusting to him that dispensation of the Mystery whose terms are faintly foreshadowed in Acts 26:18. A further confirmation is found in Acts 22:15, where Paul tells us the words of Ananias:

“For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast SEEN and HEARD”.

It is a matter beyond dispute that Acts 20 sees the close of one ministry, and the dawn of another. It is beyond dispute on the evidence both of Acts 20 and 26 that the new ministry was a prison ministry, that it was the subject of a special revelation from the Lord, and that it had the Gentiles specially in view:

“The Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee”.

From this imprisoned minister went forth the message:

"The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles" (Acts 28:28).

To find the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Eph.1:13), we must study those epistles written by Paul after Acts 28 which bear the mark of prison upon them. What are these prison epistles? Can we discover them, or must we trust to the teaching of men?

There are five epistles written from prison after the setting aside of Israel, and we have but to read these epistles to discover the fact for ourselves.

Ephesians is a Prison Epistle

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (3:1).

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you" (4:1).

"The mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds" (6:19, 20).

Philippians is a Prison Epistle

"Both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel" (1:7).

"My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace" (1:13).

"Many of the brethren ... waxing confident by my bonds" (1:14).

"Supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (1:16).

"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household" (4:22).

Colossians is a Prison Epistle

"The mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (4:3).

"Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you" (4:10).

"Remember my bonds" (4:18).

2 Timothy is a Prison Epistle

"Be not therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner" (1:8).

"Wherein I suffer trouble ... even unto bonds" (2:9).

"At my first answer no man stood with me" (4:16).

Philemon is a Prison Epistle

"Paul ... a prisoner of Jesus Christ" (1).

“Now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (9).

“Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds” (10).

“He might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel” (13).

“There saluteth thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus” (23).

Here then are five epistles, each one unmistakably written from prison. The epistle to Philemon is somewhat of a private nature. Philemon was host to the church at Colosse, and the epistle shows something of the home life at the time of writing. It is a lovely letter, full of Christian grace, but for the purpose of this volume, seeing that we are seeking the truth committed to Paul the Lord's prisoner, this epistle cannot be included in our exposition. We shall find all that we require in the four epistles that are left, and far more than we can possibly deal with in the space at our disposal. These four epistles have been placed by different editors in every possible order. We feel that there is not sufficient evidence given us in these epistles to decide in what order they were written, but — and this is far more important to us — they have a most definite interrelation that is of the utmost importance for us to observe, for a true realisation of the scope of each epistle is essential to the correct interpretation of smaller passages.

Before we set out this intimate interrelationship, it will be necessary to discuss the presence of a principle that is found throughout the pages of revealed truth. Truth is balanced, not arbitrarily but morally and essentially. The truth revealed in Scripture concerning the Lord's people deals with their *standing* and with their *state*. Not standing only, for all privilege without some responsibility is fatal to growth. Not state only, for the burden of responsibility, with the knowledge of so much failure, would depress and render salvation fruitless. These two sides of the Christian life, standing and state, are expressed in a variety of ways. These are some of them:

Standing	State
Salvation	Service
Free gift	Reward or prize
Not of works	Unto good works
If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.	If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

Two passages from the epistles may be studied here with profit. The first is from Corinthians:

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned up, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire” (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Standing and state are here represented in the figure of foundation and building. The foundation is not in question — “He shall be saved” even though he be saved “so as by fire”. “He shall be saved” even though “he shall suffer loss”. There is the greatest difference between “He shall suffer loss”, and “He shall be lost”. The test, the reward, and the loss relate only to the subsequent “work”. Notice the repeated reference to his work — “Every man’s *work* shall be made manifest”; “Every man’s *work* of what sort it is”; “If any man’s *work* abide”; “If any man’s *work* shall be burned up”.

Before we turn to the second reference, we ought perhaps to anticipate an objection. Someone will say that the whole atmosphere of the revelation of the Mystery is of such grace as to rule out all idea of either reward or loss. Of course this is perfectly true if we confine ourselves to the revelation of our perfect standing in Christ. But even Ephesians, with its wondrous acceptance in the Beloved, warns its readers against some terrible sins, and in the practical section the Apostle writes:

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing a man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:8).

Colossians is even more to the point:

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:23-25).

To those who bow before the authority of Scripture, these two citations are the end of all argument, and as we are not writing to persuade others, we can now pass on to our second illustrative passage in 2 Timothy:

“If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim.2:11-13).

Here are two statements which, if not divided aright, appear contradictory — “He will deny us”; “He cannot deny Himself”. But the first deals with *living*, and the second with *reigning*. Now living is one thing; receiving a throne, a dominion and a crown is another. Both attainments have the necessary qualifications prefixed.

How may we hope to “live with Him”? This is settled once and for ever by the fact that all who believe in Him are reckoned by God to have “died with Him”. This cannot be altered. It can neither be won nor lost. It stands entirely in grace. It is God’s free gift, and even though one thus saved should become unfaithful, nevertheless, He will abide faithful to His work and promise. He cannot deny Himself; such shall be saved, just as surely as the man of 1 Corinthians 3.

How may we hope to “reign with Him”? This does not depend upon being reckoned to have died with Christ. It is connected with a voluntary fellowship with His sufferings. If we endure, we shall reign; if we do not endure, then we shall not reign. No cross, no crown. If in the realm of suffering and reigning we draw back, we cannot lose our life, for that is not in question, but we can forfeit the reward; in that

sphere, and that only, "If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

The reader may well ask why we have digressed from our main theme and entered into this discussion. The reason is that we desire to show that these four great epistles of the Mystery give balanced truth. We have not four epistles written about privilege; neither have we four epistles written about responsibility. We have a pair that lays the foundation, and a pair that deals with the building, the first revealing our standing and acceptance, and the second our state and our acceptableness. They are related as follows:

A	EPHESIANS – <i>Standing.</i>	Accepted in the Beloved.
B	PHILIPPIANS – <i>State.</i>	Work out your own salvation.
		A prize in view.
A	COLOSSIANS – <i>Standing.</i>	Presented unblameable.
B	2 TIMOTHY – <i>State.</i>	Not crowned except he strive lawfully.

The above is merely to focus the attention and display the arrangement of the epistles. It is no proof, however, that the arrangement is true. The reader will, rightly, demand something more than a few random texts, and so we will now show the Scriptural reasons provided by these epistles to justify the above correspondence.

We can scarcely imagine anyone sufficiently interested to have gone so far to be without a fair acquaintance with the content of these four epistles. He will not need a lengthy array of texts to prove that Ephesians and Colossians form a pair. The correspondence between Philippians and 2 Timothy may not be so obvious, but an examination of the parallels, and particularly the last two given, should be enough for the most exacting.

The Prison Epistles

STRUCTURE SHOWING THEIR DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES AND THEIR INTERRELATION

Key Words†

A EPHESIANS	The dispensation (3:2 and 9 R.V.). Mystery (3:3). The church which is His Body (1:22,23). The fulness (1:23; 4:10). Christ the Head (1:22). Principalities and powers (1:21).
Seated together	

Key Words

B PHILIPPIANS	Try the things that differ (1:10 margin). Strive (1:27). Press toward the mark (3:14). Prize (3:14). <i>Depart*</i> (1:23). <i>Offered*</i> (2:17).
The prize	

Key Words†

A COLOSSIANS	Dispensation (1:25). Mystery (1:26). The church which is His Body (1:24). Fulness (1:19). Christ the Head (2:19). Principalities and powers (1:16; 2:10).
Complete in Him	

Key Words

B 2 TIMOTHY	Rightly dividing the Word (2:15). Strive (2:5). Course finished (4:7). Crown (4:8). <i>Depart*</i> (4:6). <i>Offered*</i> (4:6).
The Crown	

† None of these expressions occur in Philippians or 2 Timothy.

* Only occurrences in Paul's epistles.

In its own place we must give attention to the various interpretations that have been given of Paul's desire "to depart", but the reader will expect, with this evident parallel between Philippians and 2 Timothy in view, that we shall reject any interpretation that runs counter to the Spirit's own explanation as given here.

For the moment we are not discussing the interpretation of details, but seeking to establish the fact that the revelation of the Mystery, though unique, and revealing a calling and a standing, a sphere and a constitution hitherto unknown, is no exception to the rule that we have been considering. The wondrous revelation of grace calls for a walk that is worthy, and unless we embrace the truth of the four epistles together, we shall fail to grow and our knowledge will be barren and unfruitful. The *high calling* will be ours, but we shall miss *the prize* of the high calling. The *inheritance* will be ours, but we shall miss *the reward* of the inheritance. We shall have nothing to lay at His feet in the crowning day that is coming.

Having seen the distinctive prison ministry of Paul, and having surveyed the groundwork of these four epistles, we must now commence as comprehensive a study as our limitations will permit. It will not be possible to deal with every aspect of truth presented here; many entrancing avenues will have to be passed by. But if we can focus the reader's attention upon some of the outstanding features of each epistle we shall have done something for which we shall never be thankful enough.

In each case we have prepared a fairly comprehensive structure of the epistle. The reader will find that it is given first of all in large outline, so that the general plan may be understood. It is then followed by a fuller set of details, with distinctive letters, so that when allusion is made to the structures in the succeeding pages, the section under consideration may be easily found and the lesson learned. For the sake of clearness, we should like to mention that the structures of these four epistles have not been transcribed from the writings of others. Naturally the labours of others have helped us, but they have only driven us back again and again to the original fountain of truth, the Scriptures themselves.

CHAPTER 2

EPHESIANS

THE PERFECT BALANCE OF TRUTH

We now commence the study of the first of the four epistles of the mystery — Ephesians, and following our usual practice, which we are persuaded is the true one, we first seek an understanding of the epistle as a whole. The scope of any book or passage is to be discovered by its structure, and its structure by observing the underlying construction of the epistle — its backbone and anatomy. There is no invariable plan upon which an epistle is constructed, but in most cases there is found some element of correspondence, and some features that repeat or that balance.

Long ago we came to the conclusion that headings of our own devising were misleading. On too many occasions we were led to reject the structures of others on this score, so that we resolved to adhere closely to the actual wording of Scripture, and avoid any outlines that were not based upon the actual words used in the passage.

It would take too long to analyse the various outlines that have been put forward by others. We can only say that all known to us have been carefully examined, and that the structure presented in this volume is the outcome of the personal application of the principle mentioned above. Perhaps one or two points may be brought forward to indicate our approach to the subject. We noted that the words “fitly framed together” of 2:21 and “fitly joined together” of 4:16 are identical in the original, and that in the preceding context of 2:21 and in the succeeding context of 4:16 we have a reference to “alienation” — 2:12 and 4:18. This is not much, but it is enough to set us on the right course. We have two pairs arranged in the following order:

A	2:12	Aliens
B	2:21	Fitly framed together (Temple)
B	4:16	Fitly joined together (Body)
A	4:18	Alienated

We next observe that chapter 3:1 and 4:1 open with a reference to Paul as the prisoner — and more than this; in 3:1 he is the prisoner of *Jesus Christ*, and in 4:1 he is the prisoner of the *Lord*. This is an interesting difference, and indicates that in chapter 3 we have doctrine and in chapter 4 we have practice.

We now review the whole epistle with this in mind, and soon realise that, broadly speaking, we have three chapters of doctrine balanced by three chapters of practice. We also discover that the prayer of 3:14 stands centrally and alone between the two sections. Little by little the whole beauty of the epistle unfolds before the wondering eye, and this we have presented to the reader, first as a whole, and then in its separate sections. What a wonderful Word this is, and how the searcher is more than rewarded for his pains! We beseech the reader not to pass this feature by as of little account. At least let him take it point by point through once, and see for himself the exquisite patterning of this work of God.

It will be seen that the practical section opens with an exhortation to walk “worthy”. Now this word “worthy”, *axiōs*, is used in Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, and is therefore a word to be considered carefully:

“I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that ye walk *worthy* of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph.4:1).

“Only let your manner of life be *worthy* of the gospel of Christ” (Phil.1:27).

“That ye might walk *worthy* of the Lord, unto all pleasing” (Col.1:10).

The underlying idea of *axiōs* is fairly well demonstrated by the added words of the A.V. in Romans 8:18:

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not *worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us”

The idea of weighing one thing against another, which is resident in this word, is seen in 2 Corinthians 4:17:

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal (or age-abiding) weight of glory”.

Here the conception of balance is most evident:

“Light affliction” – over against “Weight of glory”.

“For a moment” – over against “Age-abiding”.

With this meaning of “worthy” before us, we can easily see that the epistle to the Ephesians has a perfect balance:

Three chapters of DOCTRINE	}	“Worthy”	{	Three chapters of PRACTICE
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To render assistance to those readers who may find it difficult to visualise these literary features, we give on page 18 a drawing which will set forth in graphic form the perfect balance of doctrine and practice that is the first great feature of this remarkable epistle.

In order to be able to deal in the next chapter with the teaching of the epistle without further preliminaries, we conclude this chapter with a word or two on Ephesians 1:1,2. A great deal has been written for and against the retention of the words, “at Ephesus”, and no good purpose would be served by repeating it here. The reader who has access to the Greek New Testament with notes by Alford can learn what is necessary as to the state of the MSS, the references to the Fathers, etc. Alford’s judgment on the matter is as follows:

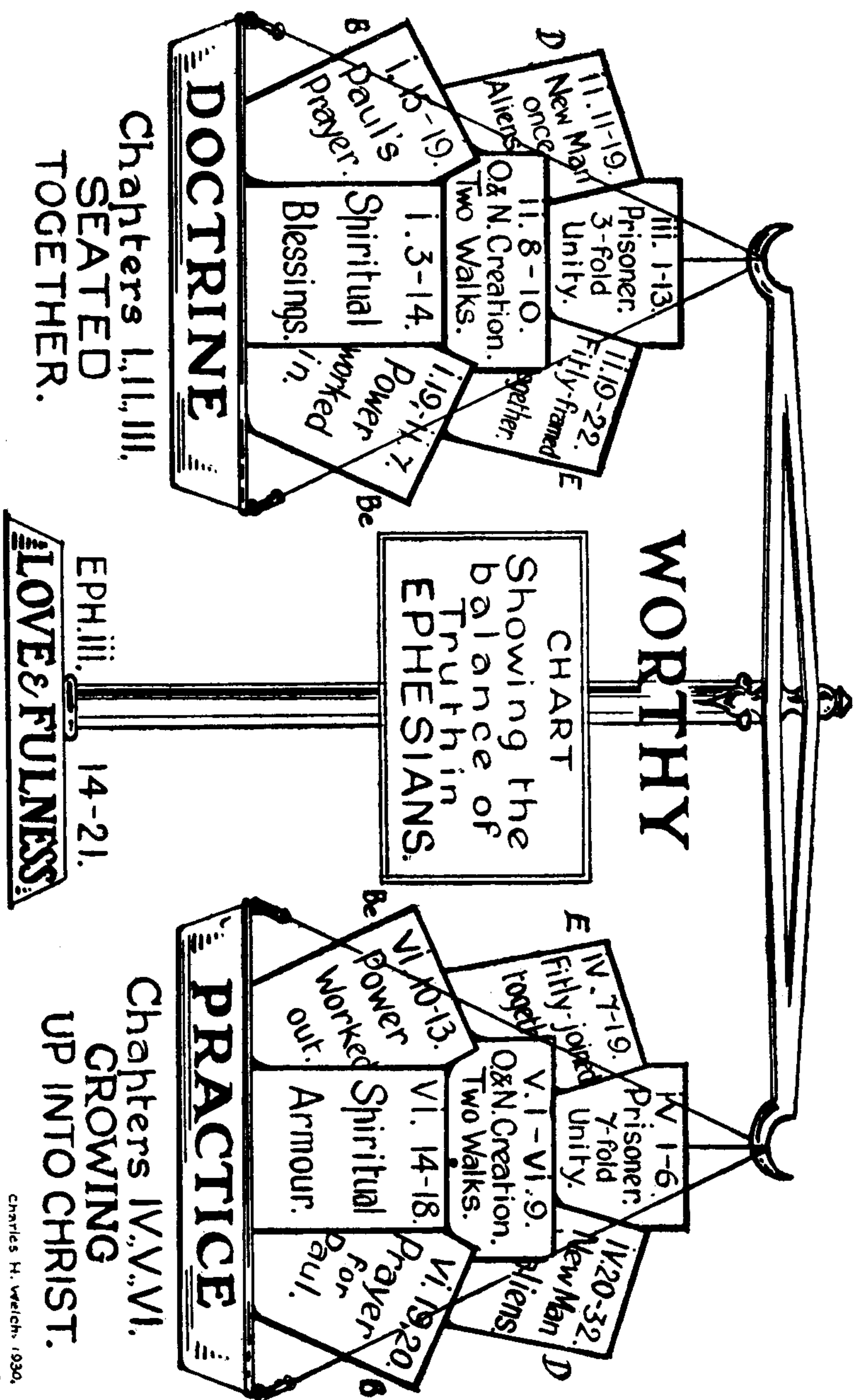
“I infer then, in accordance with the prevalent belief of the church in all ages, that this Epistle was VERITABLY ADDRESSED TO THE SAINTS IN EPHESUS AND TO NO OTHER CHURCH”.

A comparison of Acts 20 with the epistle shows some links with that last solemn address to the Ephesian elders at Miletum. Note particularly the words *periepoiēsato* in Acts 20:28 and *peripoiēsēos* in Ephesians 1:14:

“The church of God *which He hath purchased* with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Until the redemption of the *purchased possession*” (Eph.1:14).

The retention or the excision of the words, “at Ephesus”, is after all of small moment to ourselves. It is of much greater



Charles H. Welch, 1930.

importance that we duly weigh over the other titles of those to whom the epistle is addressed: *To the saints ... and to the faithful in Jesus Christ.*

The title “saint” belongs to all who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and “called saints” (1 Cor.1:2). While every saint should be saintly, saintliness does not make the believer a saint in practice. He is sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. The Corinthians were “saints” yet were very unsaintly in walk.

Added to this title, which belongs to all believers whatever their degree of growth, is another – the “faithful”. Here we have a very different idea. Can it be said that every “saint” is necessarily “faithful”? We know it cannot. Perhaps some would like proof that *pistos* means “faithful” before we go further. The A.V. renders the word “faithful” fifty-two times out of sixty-six occurrences. A few references taken from the epistles will be sufficient proof:

“It is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful*”
(1 Cor. 4:2).

“A brother and *faithful* minister in the Lord” (Eph.6:21).

“To the saints and *faithful* brethren in Christ” (Col.1:2).

“The same commit thou to *faithful* men” (2 Tim.2:2).

Any unfaithfulness in one who is a saint may so blind his eyes, that the glory of this high calling of Ephesians will be unobserved and unknown.

Israel failed to enter the promised land, because “the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb.4:2).

The margin, referring to the faithful Caleb and Joshua, puts it: “Because they were not united by faith to them that heard it”. It is not for us to say who are the members of the Body of Christ. We can only deal with manifestations of faith and love, and remember that this epistle with all its glories is definitely addressed not to saints only, but to saints and faithful ones in Christ Jesus.

The Epistle to the Ephesians

The structure of the Book as a whole

(*Introversion*)

A	1:1,2	EPISTOLARY	
	a	1:1	Paul's Commission
	b	1:2	Salutation — Grace and Peace
B	1:3—2:7	c	1:3-14 All Spiritual Blessings
		d	1:15-19 Paul's Prayer
			{ That He may give
			{ That you may know
			The Hope, Riches, Power of
			The Mystery
		e	1:19—2:7 The Mighty Power
			Inworked (<i>energeō</i>). Seated
C	2:8-10		The New Creation. Its Walk
			(Shortest doctrinal passage, as it really deals with
			the walk which is practical)
D	2:11-19		The New Man. Once Aliens from Common-
			wealth (<i>apēllotriōmenoi</i>)
E	2:19-22		The Temple Fitly Framed Together
			(<i>sunarmologoumenē</i>)
			Apostles and Prophets. Foundation
			Ministry
	F	3:1-13	The Prisoner of Christ Jesus.
			Three-fold Unity (verse 6).
	G	3:14-21	The Central Prayer
			The Love of Christ
			The Fulness of God
	F	4:1-6	The Prisoner in the Lord.
			Seven-fold Unity (verses 3-6)
E	4:7-19		The Body Fitly Joined Together
			(<i>sunarmologoumenon</i>)
			Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors
			and Teachers — Adjusting Ministry
D	4:20-32		The New Man. Once Alienated from the
			Life of God. (<i>apēllotriōmenoi</i>) (see verse 18)
C	5:1—6:9		The New Creation. Its Walk
			(Longest practical passage, applying the doctrine
			to every department of life)
B	6:10-20	e	6:10-13 The Mighty Power
			Worked Out (<i>katergazomai</i>)
			Stand
		c	6:14-18 All Spiritual Armour
		d	6:19,20 Prayer for Paul
			{ That Utterance may be given
			{ That I may make known
			The Mystery of the Gospel
A	6:21-24	EPISTOLARY	
	a	6:21,22	Tychicus' Commission
	b	6:23,24	Salutation — Peace and Grace.

Eph.1:3-14 (B c, page 20). All spiritual blessings

B c	A ₁	1:3-6	THE WILL OF THE FATHER
	A a	3	Blessed be God
		b 3	The believer blessed — In Christ
	B	c 4	The Father's choice — Us
		d 4	The Father's object — Holy
		e 4	The Father's motive — Love
	B	c 5	The Father's predestination — Us
		d 5	The Father's object — Adoption
		e 5	The Father's motive — Good Pleasure
	A a	6	Praise of glory of grace
		b 6	The believer accepted — In Beloved
A ₂		1:7-11	THE WORK OF THE SON
	C ₁	7	Redemption In Whom (<i>en hō</i>)
		D ₁ 7,8	According to riches of grace (<i>kata</i>)
	C ₂	8,9	Mystery of His will
		D ₂ 9	According to His good pleasure (<i>kata</i>)
	C ₃	10,11	Inheritance in Whom (<i>en hō</i>)
		D ₃ 11	According to purpose (<i>kata</i>)
A ₃		1:12-14	THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT
	E	12	The praise of His glory
	F	12	The prior hope
	G f	13	Hearing
		g 13	Believing
	G f	13	Seal
		g 14	Earnest
			{ The Word ... your salvation
			{ The Spirit ... our inheritance
	F	14	The purchased possession
	E	14	The praise of His glory

CHAPTER 3

EPHESIANS

All spiritual blessings (B c Eph.1:3-14)

1. The will of the Father (B c A₁, Eph.1:3-6)

Referring to the structure of Ephesians 1:3-14 given on page 22, it will be seen that the subject-matter is distributed under three heads:

- (1) The will of the FATHER.
- (2) The work of the SON.
- (3) The witness of the SPIRIT.

This is the threefold charter of the church of the Mystery. As we read the first section, verses 3-6, we become aware that there is no reference to sin, death or redemption. We are here given the inestimable privilege of looking into the “will” of our Father, wherein He has made known His heirs, and their inheritance. The question of sin and redemption is not the concern of the “will” of the Father, but, as we shall see in verse 9, is the subject of the “mystery of His will” and belongs to the work of the Son.

To deal adequately with Ephesians 1:3-6 would literally require a volume. The purpose for which this present work has been prepared would not be served by undue elaboration — our object is to survey the epistles of this dispensation and point out the way, so that each member of the Body of Christ may be enabled to see for himself the wonders of God’s grace. We will therefore deal with the will of the Father under the following headings:

WHAT?	All spiritual blessings.
WHERE?	In heavenly places.
WHEN?	Before the foundation of the world (see new translation).

HOW? By adoption.
 WHY? According to the good pleasure of His will.
 SECURITY. In Christ; In the Beloved.

All spiritual blessings — Blessing (*eulogia*) means primarily something that is well spoken of. What a thought! God has blessed His church with every spiritual thing of which He can speak well. We are exhorted here, and surely with reason, to “speak well of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. He has “blessed” us. Should we not “bless” Him? This will exclude boasting; it will stay all murmuring; it will prevent lying and corrupt communications.

These “spiritual” blessings are in contrast with the blessings promised to Israel. Spiritual blessings call for spiritual songs (5:19), and spiritual weapons with which to meet the spiritual foes connected with our high calling (6:12).

The word “spiritual” is too often used as though it referred to a state of mind, combining the qualities of piety, unworldliness and Christlikeness. Surely Enoch approached to this, and Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph and Daniel, yet the word “spiritual” is never used of them in either Old or New Testaments. When we perceive that the word “spiritual” can be used not only to describe “blessings” but to describe “wickedness” we shall realise that it is impossible always to link the word “spiritual” with the thought of piety and Christlikeness. We do not, however, for a moment suggest that “holiness” is not in the forefront of God’s purpose — it is, as Ephesians 1:4 shows:

“That we should be holy and without blame before Him”.

In Ephesians 6:12 “spiritual” is placed in contrast with “flesh and blood”; in Romans 15:27 in contrast with the necessities of life; in 1 Corinthians 2:13-15 and 15:44-46 in contrast with natural things. In 1 Corinthians 3:1 it is placed in contrast with “babes”, and by comparing Hebrews 5:8—6:1 with 1 Corinthians 2 and 3 we find that “spiritual” is an equivalent of “perfect”. In 1 Corinthians 15 the resurrection body is spoken of as heavenly (*epouranios*, though not up in heaven as Ephesians teaches), and spiritual (verses 40-44). This association of “spiritual” with “heavenly” and of both with resurrection bodies illuminates the meaning of

“all spiritual blessings” that are ours in our Father’s will. Today we are enjoying the blessings of the wilderness; today we have the seal of the Spirit and the earnest of the inheritance. Soon we shall be given bodies fitted for our high calling wherein all spiritual blessings in their undiminished fulness may be enjoyed.

In heavenly places – The N.T. uses one word *ouranos* to speak of heaven in all its varied aspects as will be seen by the following passages:

“Glorify your Father which is in *heaven*” (Matt.5:16).

“Till *heaven* and earth pass” (Matt.5:18).

“The earth and *heaven* fled away” (Rev. 20:11).

“Coming in the clouds of *heaven*” (Matt. 24:30).

“*Heaven* is My throne” (Acts 7:49).

Unless we exercise discernment we can easily introduce confusion here. It is evident that “the Father”, Whose throne is “heaven” and Who is in heaven, is not in that part (also called heaven) which is to pass away.

We can see that *ouranos* (heaven) is generic, including all the different spheres called “heaven” – the immediate atmosphere of our earth where birds may fly (Gen.1:20), the vaster space in which the sun and the moon fulfil their appointed tasks (Gen.1:14,15), the heaven with which the New Jerusalem is associated (Heb.12:23), and the “heaven of heavens” (1 Kings 8:27) to which Christ ascended. Hebrews 7:26 tells us that Christ is made “higher than the heavens”; Hebrews 4:14 that Christ, as High Priest, has “passed through the heavens” (*dierchomai*). It is very evident that “heaven” stands for the whole intervening space between the earth’s surface and the right hand of God Himself.

We accordingly find another term used, when the higher sphere is intended; and the wider term must be understood in the light of the narrower. For example, Matthew 5:16 – “Glorify your Father which is in heaven” – uses the wide term. The word itself does not tell us which part of space is intended. In Matthew 18:35, however, a more discriminating word is used – “So likewise shall My heavenly Father do” (*epouranios*). This word is used of the resurrection (1 Cor.15:48,49), of the heavenly kingdom (2 Tim.4:18), of the

heavenly calling of the Hebrews, of the heavenly gift, the heavenly country and the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.3:1; 6:4; 11:16; 12:22). It is also the word used in Ephesians 1:3 to describe the sphere of blessing for the church.

The heavenly calling and city of Hebrews is heavenly *in character*, but will not be enjoyed "at the right hand of God, far above all principalities and powers", for we are told that the city is to come down from God out of heaven.

Accordingly we find that with the word *epouranios* itself there is a need to distinguish between those blessings which are to be entered upon and enjoyed IN heavenly places, and those blessings that are heavenly in *character*, but enjoyed elsewhere, either in the New Jerusalem or on the renewed earth. This leads us to the use of the term in Ephesians. Out of the twenty occurrences of *epouranios* in the N.T. there are only five which use the particular construction *en tois epouraniois*, "in the heavenlies", and these five are found in Ephesians. The expression speaks of *locality*, and by observing what is said in Ephesians, we discover the following facts about these heavenly places:

- (1) They are the sphere of blessing for the church (Eph.1:3).
- (2) It was to this place that Christ ascended when He was made higher than the heavens (Heb.7:26), or as Ephesians 4:10 has it, "far above all heavens", at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power, might and dominion (1:20,21).
- (3) It is there that Christ and His church are seated together (2:6).
- (4) The "heavenlies" are inhabited by principalities and powers (3:10). Consequently Ephesians recognises two parts in this sphere, for if Christ is "above" all principalities and powers, and some principalities and powers are in heavenly places, it follows that where Christ is must be a position higher than that of the subservient principalities, though in the same heavenly places. And inasmuch as the church is seated with Christ, the church is also "above principalities and powers", though how "far" no eye has yet seen nor ear heard.

- (5) The closing reference (6:12) demands a fuller consideration than we can give here, and it will be considered in its place. It does not, however, alter what we have seen in the other four references.

In recognition of this distinct sphere of blessing, and in the endeavour to preserve this exceedingly high calling from being confused with other callings, “heavenly” indeed in character but not enjoyed “in heaven” itself, we have adopted the term “the super-heavens” which recognises the truth involved in Hebrews 7:26 and Ephesians 4:10.

We shall see later that there is an intimate connection between the “super-heavens” and the “foundation of the world”, and in order to establish the link we draw attention to the fact that there are three spheres of blessing, not simply two.

In the beginning there were but two spheres – “the heaven and the earth” (Gen.1:1), but a fearful judgment is indicated in Genesis 1:2, a passage which we must consider presently. The present creation includes a heaven which is destined to pass away, but the blessed sphere of the church is above this heaven, even in the heaven of Genesis 1:1, which is far above all. The church of the one Body links the primal creation with the new creation yet to be by its present association with the super-heavens which are above and beyond the utmost bounds of this present world system.

Associated with these three spheres are three companies, each marked out for “adoption”. The latter term is awaiting investigation, and we accordingly reserve further statements about the three spheres until we can place the adoption in its true position.

Before the foundation of the world – When we turn to Ephesians 2:20 and read:

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone”,

we have no uncertainty as to the meaning of the word “foundation”. If the apostle, therefore, had wished to express the idea – “foundation of the world”, he had a word at once available. The word translated “foundation” in 2:20 is

themelios, but in 1:4 it is *katabolē*. It is evident that a belief in inspiration, as well as in the intelligence of the human penman, demands that some distinction shall be made in the translation. The verbal form, *kataballō*, occurs in 2 Corinthians 4:9:

“*Cast down*, but not destroyed”.

And John uses it in Revelation 12:10:

“The accuser of our brethren is *cast down*”.

We invariably receive light upon the meaning of N.T. words if we can find them in the Septuagint (the Greek Version of the O.T. referred to as the LXX, made some centuries before Christ). The following are a few occurrences:

“They cast up a bank against the city ... and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, *to throw it down*” (2 Sam.20:15).

“A city that is *broken down* and without walls” (Prov.25:28).

“And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and *break down* her towers” (Ezek.26:4,9).

The Hebrew words translated by *kataballō* in the LXX are translated in the A.V., beat down, break down, destroy, batter, waste, mar, overthrow, cast down, make a breach, etc.

One meaning therefore for *katabolē* is that of “overthrow” or its equivalent. We accordingly translate Ephesians 1:4:

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the overthrow of the world”.

This takes us back to Genesis 1:2 and introduces the subdivision of the heavens, and the three spheres.

“And the earth was *without form and void*” (Gen.1:2).

“Without form and void” is a translation of the Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*, and we must now discover how these words are used elsewhere and whether they indicate an “overthrow”.

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth and made it: He hath established it, He created it NOT TOHU” (Isa.45:18).

If the earth was not created *tohu*, and yet was in that condition in Genesis 1:2, how did it become so?

“The indignation of the Lord ... fury ... utterly destroy ... all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ... He shall stretch out upon it the line of TOHU and the stones of BOHU” (Isa.34:2-11).

This is a prophetic reference to the future day of judgment, and leaves no doubt as to the meaning of the terms.

“I beheld the earth, and lo, it was WITHOUT FORM AND VOID (*tohu and bohu*) ... for thus saith the Lord, the whole land shall be desolate” (Jer.4:23-27).

We need no further proof. Ephesians 1:4 looks back to Genesis 1:2 as Ephesians 1:3 looks back to Genesis 1:1.

“In the super-heavens (Gen.1:1) before the overthrow of the world” (Gen.1:2).

There are three passages only that speak of this period – the passage in Ephesians and two others:

“As of a lamb *without blemish* and without spot ... ordained before the overthrow of the world” (1 Pet.1:19,20).

“Thou *lovest* Me before the overthrow of the world” (John 17:24).

Two of the passages speak of Christ alone, the third of one company only, the church which is His Body. Further, what is said of Christ in these passages is predicated of the church in Ephesians 1:4:

“*Without blame* before Him *in love*”.

All other references to the overthrow of the world use the prepositions “from” or “since”, not “before” (see Matt.13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb.4:3; 9:26; Rev.13:8 and 17:8). The intimate connection between the super-heavenlies and the period before the overthrow will be more clearly seen when we have considered the bearing of the next statement.

The Adoption – In the threefold charter of Ephesians 1:3-14 pre-destination occurs twice:

"Having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children" (1:5).

"We have obtained an inheritance, being *predestinated*" (1:11).

Adoption is vitally connected with inheritance. The epistle to the Galatians makes it clear that adoption is the entrance into an inheritance of one who has attained manhood (Gal.4:1-6). And we have the testimony of Sir William Ramsay, that the Galatians would understand the word *huiiothesia* (adoption) to refer to the legal process of will-making. It was the appointing of the heir.

Now we find that three separate callings have this dignity, and these three callings with their distinctive adoptions correspond to the three spheres. The first is Israel. Romans 9:3-5 makes it clear that on earth among the nations there is but one nation that has received the adoption:

"Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the *adoption*".

Israel is God's "firstborn" among the nations (Exodus 4:22). The rest of the nations, in the day of the earth's blessing, will be subservient to this favoured nation:

"Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God" (Isa.61:5,6).

The epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians are linked together, and both minister to the same calling.

As Israel's calling centres in the actual city of Jerusalem, so this calling is linked with the *heavenly* Jerusalem, as Galatians shows:

"Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother"
(Gal.4:26 R.V.).

Here we have a company of those who are neither Jews nor Greeks because they are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. These constitute an adoption higher than that of Romans 9, and in Hebrews 12 we find the city and the position of firstborn:

“But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven” (Heb.12:22,23).

Here we have, not one nation raised to a dignity above surrounding nations, but a chosen company of Jews and Gentiles given the adoption, the firstborn’s place, above innumerable angels. This, however, is not the position of the church of the Mystery. That church is raised so high that angels are not mentioned. Beneath the feet of Christ, the Head and the church His Body, are heaven’s aristocracy – thrones, dominions, principalities. Not one of these high spiritual dignitaries is given the adoption; this is reserved, by grace, for the church of the outcast Gentiles. Instead of the term “firstborn” being repeated, we have in its stead the equivalent “measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ”, and Christ Himself “The Firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18). This adoption finds its citizenship in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

The three spheres of blessing with their three adoptions may be visualised thus:

CENTRAL POSITION – THE ADOPTION		
Principalities	The Church which is His Body Super-Heavenly Sphere Citizenship in Heaven	Powers
Innumerable Company	The Church of the Firstborn Heavenly Sphere New Jerusalem	Angels
The Nations	Israel the Firstborn Earthly Sphere Jerusalem	The Nations

What caused the overthrow of the world? Bearing in mind the references already considered that use the words “without form and void”, we may safely say in answer, “judgment”. As this judgment fell before the creation of man, we gather that it was connected with the fall of Satan and the angels and principalities that fell with him. If there has been a fall connected with heaven itself, as Ezekiel 28:12-19 indicates,

the position lost must be filled by others, or those who fell must be restored, or the position must remain for ever unoccupied.

There is no Scripture that teaches the restoration of the angels or of Satan. There are, however, many Scriptures that point forward to a day of perfect restoration, and the church chosen before the overthrow of the world, and destined for the super-heavens, constitutes the fulness that will completely restore the harmony of heavenly places. Known unto God are all His ways. Though Satan and those who fell with him were in glory first, it does not follow that the church was an afterthought. Rather the reverse; the highest created beings have gone the same way as man when left to themselves, and although their entrance into the inheritance has been so long deferred, the real occupants of heaven's highest places were chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the world.

Deuteronomy 2 supplies us with a principle that will help here. The first twenty-five verses deal with the manner in which several nations, including Israel, took possession of their inheritance:

- ESAU — His inheritance held by the HORIMS. These were "destroyed" by Esau who "succeeded" or "inherited" them and dwelt in their stead (12).
- MOAB — His inheritance possessed by EMIMS. They are described as giants and as the *Anakim* (9-11).
- AMMON — His inheritance possessed by the ZAMZUMMIMS. These also were giants and as the *Anakim*. They were destroyed and Ammon dwelt in their stead (19-22).
- ISRAEL — "As Israel did unto the land of his possession which the Lord gave unto them" (12).

The Amorite was in possession of Israel's inheritance. The presence of the Amorite and the filling up of his iniquity meant that Abraham's seed were strangers, pilgrims or bondmen four hundred years (Gen.15:13-16). Spiritually the Amorites represent the principalities and powers who were spoiled at the cross of Christ, and whose place is to be occupied by the church which is the Body of Christ.

Turning back to the diagram of the three spheres we might add, that each one that attains to the adoption enters a sphere

from which the seed of the wicked one or his fellow-rebels have been expelled. Israel enter their possessions and turn out the Canaanites. The heavenly calling enter their possessions, and angelic war casts out Satan to the earth. The high calling of Ephesians places the church in the highest position ever held by fallen cherub or principality.

Here we can see the close connection between the heaven of Genesis 1:1, the overthrow of Genesis 1:2, the super-heavens of Ephesians 1:3, the overthrow of Ephesians 1:4, the adoption of Ephesians 1:5, and the goal of the ages in the new heaven and new earth.

How had God ensured against future failure? This He has done by choosing and blessing in Christ:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places IN CHRIST: according as He hath chosen us IN HIM before the overthrow of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath highly favoured us IN THE BELOVED” (Eph. 1:3-6).

CHAPTER 4

EPHESIANS

All spiritual blessings (B c Eph.1:3-14)

2. The work of the Son (B c A₂ Eph.1:7-11)

We have looked at the will of the Father, which is occupied with the choosing and predestinating of His heirs. Verse 11 assures us that this mighty purpose of His love shall be fulfilled:

“In Whom we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph.1:11).

The question of sin and redemption does not belong to the “will” of the Father; a different term is used in the section we are now to consider:

“The mystery of His will” (Eph.1:9).

To understand the difference between the “will” of the Father and the “mystery of His will” is important, and can be illustrated by reference to the O.T. Scriptures.

The word “mystery” (*mustērion*) occurs for the first time in the LXX version of the book of Daniel, and its significance there will illustrate the meaning of the “mystery of His will” in Ephesians 1. It was the revealed *will of God* that the kingdom of Israel should be established in the earth, and that establishment will yet surely take place. When Israel’s kings so completely failed, the Lord made known, through Daniel, the mystery of His will — the appointment of a Gentile dominion that should bridge the interval between Israel’s rejection and the setting up once more of Israel’s kingdom. We find the same sequence in the Gospel of Matthew. First the Lord presents Himself as King, but He is rejected in His threefold office (Matt.12:6,41 and 42). This rejection is immediately followed by “mystery”, for in Matthew 13 we read

for the first time of the “mystery of the kingdom of heaven”. Yet again we find the rejection of Israel in Acts 28 followed by a “mystery”; this time “the dispensation of the Mystery” as made known in the prison epistles.

God did not reveal to Adam before he sinned that Christ was the pre-ordained lamb of sacrifice; *that* was the mystery of His will. God did not reveal to Israel before their defection the purpose concerning Nebuchadnezzar. Neither did He reveal the dispensation of the Mystery until Israel had been set aside. To have done so would have countenanced sin, and have involved the holiness of God. His purposes did not necessitate sin, but He had created beings in His own image, giving them the power of choice — a real and not fictitious power, as shown by the introduction of rewards and punishments — and therefore provision was made for the advent of sin and its removal. This provision is the work of the Son, the subject of the mystery of His will, and the theme of this chapter.

While the epistle to the Ephesians contains truth never before revealed, it nevertheless, of necessity, deals also with those basic doctrines that are wider and deeper than the limitations set by dispensational distinctions. The person and work of the Redeemer is one of these grand themes. It will be seen that the work of redemption is mentioned twice in this charter of the church, viz:

“In Whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph.1:7).

“The earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory” (Eph.1:14).

Here, therefore, is a past redemption, and a future redemption, the one issuing in the forgiveness of sins, the other in the acquiring of the purchased possession. Although, strictly speaking, the second mention of redemption occurs in the third section — “The witness of the Spirit”, we can best consider the two aspects together.

There are two words translated “forgiveness” in Ephesians, one used in Ephesians 1:7 — *aphesis*, the other in Ephesians 4:32 — *charizomai*. The latter means “to act graciously”, whereas the former means “to set free”. This meaning of the

word can easily be illustrated from the A.V. In Luke 4:18 *aphesis* occurs twice:

“To preach *deliverance* to the captives”.

“To *set at liberty* them that are bruised”.

This meaning of “forgiveness” in Ephesians 1:7 reveals Christ as the great Passover, by whose blood those who were in the bondage of sin and death have been delivered. Redemption by the precious blood of Christ, the fulfilment by His one offering of all the sacrificial types of the O.T. is a wonderful theme. We regret that the limitations of space will not permit us to pursue many of these gracious themes. Our office in this volume is to open up the general teaching of these epistles rather than to attempt an exhaustive commentary.

It is evident that the bondage of Israel in Egypt and their redemption by the passover lamb will provide the typical background for this great work of the Son as set forth in Ephesians 1:7. We are tempted to allude to yet one more instance of the “mystery of His will” since it actually deals with this period of bondage.

In Genesis 15:5-16 we find:

- (1) An unconditional covenant— “A deep sleep fell on Abram” (verse 12).
- (2) An interval of bondage — “They shall serve them” (verse 13).
- (3) The covenant fulfilled — “They shall come hither again” (verse 16).

In Ephesians 1:3-14 we find:

- (1) An unconditional will — “Chosen, predestinated, His will” (verses 4 and 5).
- (2) An interval of bondage — “Redemption and the deliverance” (verse 7).
- (3) The will accomplished — “According to the purpose” (verse 11).

Why was it necessary that Abram's seed should endure that strange period of bondage, which was to necessitate in due time the shedding of the blood of the passover, and the slaying of the Egyptians? The answer is:

“For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen.15:16).

Why was it necessary for the outworking of the great plan of the ages that those who had been chosen in Christ before the overthrow of the world should be found in bondage more awful than that of Egypt, necessitating a redemption more wonderful than that of the passover? The answer is the same. The spiritual Amorites are “principalities and powers”, “rulers of the darkness of this world”, and their leader is Satan, “the prince of the power of the air”. Their iniquity is not yet full, and the church of the one Body must wait and suffer, even as Israel did in the land of Egypt.

Before we pass on to the second mention of redemption, we draw attention to verse 8. The reader must understand that there is no punctuation in the earlier Greek Manuscripts and verse 8 should actually be divided and rearranged as follows:

“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded toward us”.

“In all wisdom and prudence having made known unto us the mystery of His will”.

Just as the first occurrence of redemption found its type in the O.T. story of Israel’s bondage in Egypt, so the second mention of redemption finds its type in the work of the Kinsman–Redeemer, and its classic is the book of Ruth. We must assume that the reader knows the general story of the book of Ruth, or that he will make himself familiar with it before going further. For our present purpose we commence with a reference to chapter 2.

Naomi had wisely allowed Ruth to go out in ignorance of the relationship that Boaz held, and when she saw the evident hand of the Lord in leading Ruth to the fields of Boaz she said:

“Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, *one of our next kinsmen*” (Ruth 2:20).

The margin reads, “One that hath right to redeem”. This is another aspect of redemption. An inheritance is at stake, the

name of the dead must be raised up, and in accordance with the law of Deuteronomy 25:5-10, Ruth could not marry a stranger. Her action, therefore, was right when she sought out Boaz at night and said:

“Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman” (Margin, “one that hath right to redeem”) (Ruth 3:9).

The transaction is carried through in chapter 4, and Ruth enters into the “purchased possession” made hers by “redemption”.

It is important to know that every occurrence of the word “redeemer” in the O.T. is a translation of the one word *goel*, the “kinsman-redeemer”.

If we read such a book as the prophecy of Isaiah, we find various titles of the Redeemer — “The Holy One of Israel”, “The Creator”, “The King of Israel”, “The Lord of Hosts”, “The Lord thy God”, and “The Lord of the whole earth”.

This raises a question of great importance: How can God the Creator be man's kinsman? Isaiah, whose prophecies create the problem, supplies the answer:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (God with us) (Isa. 7:14).

“Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ... His name shall be called ... the Mighty God” (Isa. 9:6).

The testimony of the New Testament confirms this wonderful fact:

“The Word was God” (John 1:1).

“The Word became flesh” (John 1:14).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb.2:14,15).

Just as Ruth found her lost inheritance in union with Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, so the church of the one Body will enter into its inheritance in union with Christ, whether a bridal union as that of Israel, or as united to the Lord as

members of His body, as of the church. “All things, both which are in heaven and which are on earth”, are to be headed up in Christ (Eph.1:10) and in immediate connection with this headship the passage continues:

“In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance”.

This, then, in broadest outline, is the second section of our charter – “The work of the Son”. The strange interval of bondage is cancelled by the blood of Christ, the inheritance is secured in Him, our great Kinsman, and we belong already to that “dispensation of the fulness of the seasons” (Eph.1:10) of which Christ is Head – another aspect of the dispensation of the Mystery.

The will of God is assured by the work of Christ, as it is written in another part of Scripture, “Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me), to do Thy will, O God”.

CHAPTER 5

EPHESIANS

All spiritual blessings (B c Eph. 1:3-14)

2. The witness of the Spirit (B c A₃ Eph. 1:12-14)

Succeeding their deliverance from bondage, the heirs of heavenly glory, like the seed of Abraham, find a stretch of wilderness before them, and it is in this portion of their experience that we have the "Witness of the Spirit". We find accordingly that hope and faith figure here ("trust" here is "hope"); here also we read of the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, the seal and the earnest of the Spirit, all in view of the day of redemption and the entry into the purchased possession. The covering term here is "the holy Spirit of promise". This does not refer so much to the fact that the holy Spirit has been promised, as to the fact that while the promised inheritance awaits the people of God, He comforts them in the wilderness interval with a spiritual anticipation of it. To convey the meaning more exactly we might perhaps adopt the translation, "the holy promissory Spirit". Just as we learn from Colossians 1:27 that the very preaching of Christ now among the Gentiles is their hope of glory, so the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit among Gentile believers is in itself an indication that God is with them and that blessing awaits them. The thought of the holy promissory Spirit, and His relation to the actual future inheritance, can be appreciated better as we read the parallel case of Romans 8.

We have been blessed with "all spiritual blessings" and have been predestinated unto the "adoption". Our blessings, too, are to be enjoyed "in heavenly places", but we are not yet there. Just as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the heirs of promise, yet pilgrims and strangers, rejoicing in the earnest of the inheritance vouchsafed to them, but dying in faith, not having received the promises, so the church of the one

Body will not enjoy its blessings until in resurrection it is found in the heavenly places at the right hand of God.

Romans 8 speaks in two places of the adoption pertaining to the dispensation of that period:

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15).

“And not only they, but we ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body, for we are saved by hope” (Rom. 8:23,24).

It will be seen from these passages that the “Spirit of adoption” is the present pledge of the future adoption, to wit, the “redemption of our body”. So in Ephesians, the seal and earnest of the Spirit is the pledge of the yet future “redemption of the purchased possession”. Romans 8 speaks also of “the firstfruits of the Spirit”, related to the future harvest. The holy promissory Spirit of Ephesians 1 must be viewed in this light.

Both “seal” and “earnest” are terms of commerce; they clinch a transaction, even though its fulfilment awaits completion. In the days of the earlier dispensation the seal and the earnest were accompanied by confirmatory gifts and anointing. Although these external spiritual accompaniments do not pertain to the dispensation of the Mystery, the reality of the earnest and the seal remain.

“Now He which confirmeth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor. 1:21,22).

The word “earnest” is the Hebrew word *arrhabōn* in Greek characters and is translated “surety” in the O.T. Grotius considers that the Greeks had received the word from the Phœnicians in the intercourse of trading; Hesychius explains it by *prodōma*, something given beforehand as a pledge. We find the word again in 2 Corinthians 5:5:

“Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, Who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit”.

Here the Spirit is the earnest of the future resurrection, and with the parallel of Romans 8:15 and 23 in mind, we can see that the same idea of a present pledge of future possession is intended in Ephesians 1:14.

The holy promissory Spirit, being a seal and an earnest, must have some evidences, and they are given in the context. While some may look for those signs and wonders which accompanied the baptism of the Spirit in the dispensation of the Acts period, this epistle directs us to something quieter and less spectacular — “hearing” and “believing” the word of truth. At first this seems too everyday a matter, but a consideration of what is involved, and the parallel teaching of 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6, enable us to appraise this evidence more correctly.

“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God” (1Thess.1:4).

How did the Apostle know? Had he access to the book of life or the secret counsels of the Almighty? No, he had humbler yet no less weighty evidences:

“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ... and ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thess.1:5,6).

The hearing and believing in Ephesians 1:13 is the hearing and believing of the word of the truth, “the gospel of your salvation”. While this would naturally include the acceptance of the Holy Scriptures, it means more than that here. “The truth” is specific, and is contrasted with “the lie” (not “lying”) in Ephesians 4:21-25. To hear and believe the word of “the truth” was in itself a witness and pledge of future glory. The A.V. rendering of Ephesians 1:13 has given colour to a false doctrine, connected with what is known as “the second blessing”. The A.V. reads:

“After that ye heard ... after that ye believed”.

The R.V. corrects this and translates:

“Having heard ... having believed”.

If the seal and the earnest had included supernatural gifts and a “second blessing”, we should have read of them here.

They are absent, and in close conformity with the true character of our calling, the Spirit's activities are largely associated with the Word of truth.

Anticipating a future study, we draw attention to a second witness to this fact by comparing a passage from Ephesians with one from Colossians. The comparison will show the close connection between the witness of the Spirit and the Word:

“Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18,19).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Returning to Ephesians 1 we notice a difference in translation in verse 12. Where the A.V. reads, “Who first trusted in Christ”, the R.V. reads, “Who had before hoped in Christ” (A.V. margin reads “or hoped”; R.V. margin “have” for “had”).

A reference to the structure of Ephesians 1:12-14, page 22, will show that “The prior hope” has as its corresponding member “The purchased possession”. “Before hoped” is a translation of *proelpizō*, and it is a nice question as to whether *pro* here means “before” in time, place, or dignity. Actually all senses of the word are applicable here.

When we deal with the hope of the church, we trust that we shall be able to show that it must be realised before the hope of Israel, and before the hope of 1 Thessalonians 4. That this hope is “before” in the sense of place is also evident when we remember the intimate connection established between the members of the Body and the Head, and the “seating together” in heavenly places. The conception of priority of place approaches very closely the third idea of dignity and high glory [(as in *proechomai*, “better” (Rom.3:9) and *proēgeomai*, “prefer” (Rom. 12:10)] .

Further evidence is supplied by the correspondence shown below:

Ephesians 1:5, 6

- a Predestinated to adoption
- b According to the good pleasure of His will
- c To the praise of the glory of His grace
- d HIGHLY FAVOURED IN THE BELOVED

Ephesians 1: 11, 12

- a Predestinated to inheritance
- b According to the purpose ... will
- c To the praise of His glory
- d WHO PRE-HOPED IN CHRIST

Favour in the Beloved is reflected in the prior-hope which pertains alone to the church which is His Body; and while we cannot and would not exclude the element of time, we must include the element of dignity.

Before concluding this survey of the charter of our calling, let us observe the way in which all blessing is found "in" Christ and "in" Him only. The spiritual blessings that are ours in heavenly places are "*in* Christ". These blessings are ours as the Father hath chosen us "*in* Him", and we have been made accepted or highly favoured "*in* the Beloved". Redemption is found "*in* Him"; the good pleasure of His will is "*in* Him"; all things in heaven and earth are to be headed up "*in* Christ"; "*in* Whom" we also have our inheritance. We have a prior hope "*in* Christ" — "*in* Whom believing ye were sealed until the day of redemption". Also let us not forget that the seal and witness of the Spirit is "*in* Christ" and not on or in ourselves.

What can we say to these things? What can we do but take this cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

Eph.1:15-19 (B d page 20). Paul's prayer

B d H 15,16 Faith according to you in the Lord Jesus. *Kata*
I *That* h_1 17 Spirit of wisdom and revelation
 He may h_2 17 The knowledge of Him
 give h_3 18 Eyes of heart enlightened

I *That* h_1 18 What is the hope of His calling
 ye may h_2 18 What the riches of His inheritance
 know h_3 19 What the greatness of His power

H 19 To usward who believe. *Kata*

CHAPTER 6

EPHESIANS

Paul's prayer (B d, Eph. 1:15-19)

It will be remembered that the passage dealing with the witness of the Spirit mentions both faith and hope, and the earlier verses of the chapter reveal the calling of the church and its heavenly inheritance. These three features — “faith”, “hope” and position “far above all”— figure prominently in the prayer we are now to consider. When we come to study the unity of the Spirit in Ephesians 4 we shall find, in the structure, closely ranged on either side of the ascended Lord, faith and hope. In the prayer that is now to occupy our hearts' attention, we find, in the structure, that it opens and closes with a reference to faith, concentrating upon the subject of the hope, the riches and the power. At the close of the doctrinal section (Eph. 1:1—3:13), and before the opening of the practical section (Eph. 4:1—6:24), we find another prayer. Upon examination we discover that the general trend of the first prayer is upward to the right hand of God where Christ sitteth, whereas that of the second prayer is downward, Christ Who is at the right hand of God descending to dwell in the heart “by faith”. The order of these two prayers must ever be the order of true experience. Before the believer is occupied with Christ dwelling in his heart, he must be fully persuaded of the basic truth of the first prayer, that the One in Whom all his acceptance is found is there, seated at the right hand of God. If the attention is turned within first, strange spiritual aberration may ensue.

This comparison of the two prayers is but superficial; they have much in common, and in contrast, that will repay investigation. The following is presented with the object of stimulating patient search and demonstrating the value of comparative analysis.

The Two Prayers

Eph. 1:15-19

Eph. 3:14-21

The prayers are addressed to

The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.		The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
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That He may give

A spirit of wisdom and revelation.		Strength by the Spirit in the inner man.
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That ye may know

Hope, riches, power.		Love.
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Something "exceeding" (*hyperballō*)

Exceeding power.		Knowledge — exceeding love.
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The means

We in Christ.		Christ in us — "The inner man".
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The power is

The power wrought in (<i>energeō</i>) Christ.		The power that worketh in (<i>energeō</i>) us.
--	--	---

The might (*ischus*) is

The might exhibited at the resurrection.		The might necessary to compre- hend with all saints.
---	--	---

The goal in each case

The fulness of Him that filleth all in all.		That ye might be filled up to all the fulness of God.
--	--	--

Heavenly powers mentioned

Every name that is named.		Every family in heaven and earth is named.
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Coming now to Ephesians 1:15-19 we notice that the new section opens with the word "Wherefore" — *Dia touto* — "on this account". The prayer is evidently an outcome of the revelation already made in verses 3-14. We have seen that section to be threefold, dealing with the calling of the church from before the overthrow of the world, its deliverance from

bondage, the assurance of its inheritance, and the witness of the Spirit sealing every believer “in Christ”.

The prayer of the Apostle, without slavishly adhering to the threefold subject of the previous section, is that we may know these things for ourselves. The correspondence is clear from the following arrangement:

The Will of the Father “What is the hope of His calling”.
 The Work of the Son “What is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”.
 The Witness of the Spirit ... “What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe”.

The A.V. of Ephesians 1:15 reads:

“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints”.

This is somewhat modified in the R.V.:

“For this cause, I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus, which is among you, and which *ye shew* toward all the saints”.

The Revisers omit the word “love”, adding a marginal note that many ancient authorities insert it, and add *ye shew* to help out the sense. A rendering that keeps close to the actual wording would be:

“For this cause, I also, having heard of the faith according to you in the Lord Jesus and which is for all the saints”.

The parallel passage in Colossians 1:4, which mentions both faith in the Lord and love unto all the saints, is a strong argument in favour of the A.V. and a check upon making too much of the words, “the faith according to you”. In both places – Ephesians 1 and Colossians 1 – prayer is consequent on the faith manifested. Faith also is the concluding member in the structure of the prayer – “to usward who believe”. This links faith with the mighty power wrought in Christ at the resurrection; the opening and closing members are linked also by the word *kata*, “according to”:

“Faith according to you (*kath’ humas*) in the Lord Jesus”.

“Faith according to energy of resurrection (*kata tēn energeian*) which He wrought in Christ”.

The expression “in Christ” emphasizes position. The expression “in the Lord Jesus” includes the thought of reverence and affection, and moreover has in view His resurrection and triumph, anticipating that blessed day when every tongue shall confess Him Lord.

The Apostle says that he prayed “without ceasing”. This ceaseless ministry of intercession is referred to again in other epistles:

“For this cause we also ... do not cease to pray for you” (Col.1:9).

“I thank God ... that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day” (2 Tim. 1:3).

“For God is my witness ... that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers” (Rom.1:9).

“We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing” (1 Thess.1:2,3).

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing” (1 Thess. 2:13).

When we survey the labours of the Apostle, it is evident that he could have found very little time to attend prayer meetings, and very few opportunities to spend long seasons in prayer. Possibly unceasing prayer is a thing deeper than any prayer meeting has ever known. Have we never prayed as we walked, as we spoke, as we wrote, as we enjoyed an hour's recreation? If not, may be we have never realised the true inwardness of prayer. There is a difference between such “praying” and “saying prayers”.

The prayer has a threefold preparation:

- (1) A spirit of wisdom and revelation.
- (2) The knowledge of Him.
- (3) Enlightened eyes.

The structure shows these under the covering heading, “That He may give”.

This threefold preparation leads to the threefold prayer :

- (1) The hope of His calling.
- (2) The riches of the glory of His inheritance.
- (3) The greatness of His power.

The structure shows these under the covering heading: "That ye may know".

The prayer is directed to "The Father of glory". Some would translate these words, "The glorious Father", but this translation must be rejected. Genesis 4:20 and 21 illustrate the usage of "father" in this sense. The expressions, "Father of mercies" (2 Cor.1:3), and "Father of lights" (James 1:17), show its extension. From the Father of mercies flows all comfort, and to the Father of lights temptation to sin cannot be attributed. So, to the Father of glory Paul prays, that we may perceive what that glory is and what it embraces.

The first part of the prayer is a request for the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Without wisdom, knowledge is vain, and a well-pleasing walk is impossible (Col.1:9). The unfolding of the mystery of His will is in all wisdom and prudence — knowledge that outruns the power of assimilation is disastrous. In the prison epistles, wisdom is found only in those epistles which speak of Christ as the Head, and which tell of His fulness.

Revelation, in one sense, is finished; the Scriptures which we possess contain the complete revelation of God's will and purpose for the church today. And yet how many of us, though in possession of the written Word, are also in possession of its teaching? Revelation means the removal of a veil — a conception elaborated in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. The Apostle did not pray that the Ephesian saints should receive further visions and revelations, but that they should receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation "in the knowledge of Him". All Scripture points to Christ. Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms speak of Him. The volume of the book is written of Him, and He Himself is the Word. But to attain to the meaning of the letter of the Word is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end — to lead to the personal knowledge of Christ. May He never say of us, as He said of the Scripture searchers of His day:

"Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me, and ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5:39, 40).

The word "knowledge" here is *epignōsis*, implying full knowledge. It is used in Ephesians but twice, and in both cases in direct connection with Christ:

"Wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph.1:17).

"The unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13).

The third pre-requisite to this prayer is the enlightened eye. For this the Apostle does not pray here, but rather takes it for granted. Without it nothing that he has said or can say will be of any profit. The clause should be translated: "The eyes of your heart having been enlightened". After these three necessary spiritual qualifications have been given the Apostle proceeds. The first petition is:

"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling" (Eph.1:18).

Where the believer's hope is mentioned in Ephesians it is again closely linked with calling:

"Even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph.4:4).

Hope is essentially connected either with "His calling" or "your calling", and any interpretation that attempts to deal with hope irrespective of calling is unscriptural.

Covering the whole period of the Acts of the Apostles is "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20), a fact to which the epistles of Paul written during this period conform. The hope of 1 Thessalonians 4 is associated with the voice of the archangel, whose name is given in Jude as Michael. Daniel 12 states that when Michael stands up:

"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake".

This hope, moreover, is connected with the trump of God.

The term used in the early epistles for the Second Coming of the Lord is *parousia*, a word never used by Paul for the hope of the church of the Mystery. Instead of "meeting the Lord in the air" the church of the one Body looks forward to

“being manifested with Him in glory”. When Israel were set aside in Acts 28 the hope of Israel was necessarily set aside too. The coming of the Lord within the lifetime of that generation was rendered impossible through Israel’s unrepentance, and the great parenthesis of the Mystery brought with it a new standing, a new calling, a new constitution and a new hope. To teach that the theme of Ephesians is the revelation of a mystery never before made known, and in face of the fact that hope and calling go together, to teach that the hope of the church of the one Body is the hope of the Acts period is inconsistent and unscriptural. Just as faith is the substance of things hoped for, so hope when realised will be the consummation of things already believed. No other company has its sphere of blessing “in heavenly places” “above principalities and powers”, and the hope of any other company would necessarily fall far short of the expectation of the church of the Mystery.

The Apostle then prays that the Ephesians might know –

“what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints”
(Eph.1:18).

The Scriptures do not reveal in detail the riches of the glory of this inheritance. Pages could be written filled with details of Israel’s inheritance; the boundaries of the land, its delightsomeness and its blessedness; its verdure, its blossoms, its fruits, its peace and perennial sunshine. The second sphere, too, is vividly described. The New Jerusalem is set forth in all its blazing glory; its measurements are given, and its gates and streets described. When we come to all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, what terms can be used to describe them aright? Will *that* glory submit to a description that is limited to blazing colour, lavish splendour, or tremendous size? It will not. Nothing can be known of the riches of the glory of that inheritance except as we have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the *knowledge of Him*. This cannot be explained. It cannot be written. It is only known and realised as the blessed facts concerning the ascended Lord are appreciated. We are confident of one thing, that however we may progress in this knowledge, the reality will so fully eclipse our conceptions that like the queen of Sheba we shall exclaim:

“Behold, the half was not told me”.

What is intended by the expression "in the saints"? And what is meant by "His inheritance"? Not only did the Lord deliver Israel to lead them into their inheritance, but Israel were in truth chosen to be the Lord's inheritance:

"To be unto Him a people of inheritance" (Deut.4:20).

"Yet they are Thy people and Thine inheritance" (Deut.9:29).

He will have an inheritance not only in the saints on earth, but also in the heavenlies. While it is blessed to contemplate the riches of the glory of *our* inheritance, surely it is beyond words to think of His condescension, the Lord God Himself finding His inheritance in His redeemed people.

The third petition concerns power:

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe" (Eph.1:19).

The three petitions correspond to the three sections of the previous part of the chapter. The hope of His calling is concerned with the realisation of those spiritual blessings in heavenly places, which are contained in *the Will of the Father*. The riches of the glory of His inheritance are the outcome of the riches of grace manifested in *the Work of the Son*. The power to usward who believe is connected with *the Witness of the Spirit*.

Here for the first time we have the word *hyperballō*, "exceeding".

Creation speaks of power:

"He hath made the earth by His power" (Jer.10:12).

"That which may be known of God ... His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom.1:19,20).

Redemption speaks of power:

"They are Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou broughtest out by Thy mighty power and by Thy stretched out arm" (Deut.9:29).

"The preaching of the cross ... is the power of God" (1 Cor.1:18).

But resurrection calls for *exceeding greatness* of power. We have the same word in Corinthians. The glory of the new

covenant so surpassed the glory of the old that —

“Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that *excelleth*” (2 Cor. 3:10).

Paul does not pray that we may know how Christ was raised from the dead — idle speculation along that line he had already discountenanced (1 Cor. 15:35,36). The point of his petition is that this exceeding power is “to usward who believe”. The reader will perhaps realise that when we drew attention to “believing” in Ephesians 1:13 as a part of the Spirit’s seal, we were Scripturally right. Believing involves life, and a life from the dead involves resurrection. This being so, we may understand better the words immediately following a reference to faith — “It is the gift of God”. This exceeding power is for present life and witness. Paul could say that he had died to the law, yet was alive unto God; that he had been crucified with Christ, yet lived. Such life could only be by virtue of resurrection. The Apostle carried on his wondrous ministry by this same power (Eph. 3:7). Answers to prayer that were abundantly beyond asking or thinking were according to the same mighty power (Eph. 3:20). The complete armour of God was effective because of this mighty power (Eph. 6:10). Apart from resurrection as hope, standing and present power, the epistle to the Ephesians would be an impossibility. Spiritual blessings will be fully enjoyed when the believer receives his “spiritual body” in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:44). Heavenly places are only accessible to those who possess “heavenly bodies” in resurrection (1 Cor. 15:40). The adoption, too, necessitates resurrection (Rom. 8:23). And we might continue in this vein throughout the epistle. There is no need, however, and space is limited. When one contemplates the poverty of many prayers, the selfishness, the littleness, the pitifulness of so much that passes for prayer, and when one comes to the Lord with the petition, “Lord, teach us to pray”, may we not expect that He will direct us to this great pattern prayer? Until we know, even as we are known, can we cease to feel the need for this threefold request — “that we may know”?

The remainder of verse 19 belongs to the expansion of this wonderful theme, and must be reserved until the next section of Ephesians is before us in the following chapter.

Eph.1:19–2:7 (B e page 20)
The mighty power inworked

B	e	J	i	19	Energy (<i>energeia</i> , <i>energeō</i>). Mighty power	
		j		20	Wrought in Christ	
		K		k ₁	20	Raised HIM
				k ₂	20	Seated HIM
				k ₃	22,23	Gave HIM
						Heavenly places. This age or the coming one
				L	23	The Church, the Body, and Fulness
J	i			2:1,2	Energy (<i>energeō</i>). Prince of power	
		j		2:2,3	Wrought in sons of disobedience	
		K		k ₁	4,5	Quickened US
				k ₂	6	Raised US
				k ₃	6,7	Seated US
						Heavenly places. The ages to come

CHAPTER 7

EPHESIANS

The mighty power inworked (B e, Eph. 1:19–2:7)

We have now passed in review the threefold charter of our blessings, and the threefold prayer for knowledge concerning them, the last subject of prayer being the “power that is to usward who believe”. This power is evidently the dynamic of the church, and instrumental in all its activities and realisations. For the further elucidation of the character of this power we now turn to the section of Ephesians occupying 1 :19 – 2: 7.

If the reader will consider the structure of this section on page 56, it will be seen that in the centre is the Church, the Body and the Fulness. The church is evidently the object of this mighty power, and on either side we have the energy and power of God, and the energy and power of Satan. In each section there is a threefold result closely associated with heavenly places. In the first this power is found at work in raising, seating and giving Christ to be Head over all things to the church. In the second this power quickens, raises and seats His church in association with Christ in the same exalted sphere. This age, the coming age, and the ages to come, are all covered by this great resurrection power of the Lord. Let us now consider some of the more outstanding features of the passage.

The energy of God and of Satan – Two great energizing powers are placed in contrast:

“According to the energy of the strength of His might, which He energized in Christ” (Eph.1:19,20).

“According to the prince of the authority of the air, the spirit that now energizeth in the sons of disobedience” (Eph.2:2).

We learn from Ephesians 2 that we all lived once in this realm of disobedience. This satanic energy reached us in two ways: through our environment — “the age of this world” — and through the flesh — “the desires of the flesh”. Further on in Ephesians 2 we are reminded again of this twofold besetment:

“Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the FLESH ... without God in the WORLD” (Eph.2:11,12).

The believer, after he is saved, can still “give place to the Devil” through these means (see 4:27). As we look back over our unsaved years, can we say that we were conscious of this satanic energy? Did we not do as we pleased? There are instances of evident demon possession, but these do not represent the normal experience of the unsaved. We call attention to this because of its bearing upon the relationship of faith and the energizing of God. The thought that the believer may experience the resurrection power of God, might lead one to look for signs and wonders, and thrilling feelings. But this is not right. Just as the unsaved follow the desires of the flesh and are unconscious that a mighty evil power energizes them, so the redeemed of the Lord follow the lead of the truth, walk worthy of their calling and put on the new man, without any consciousness of the mighty power apart from which they would neither “will nor do His good pleasure”.

Not only does this section place in vivid contrast the two great energies at work; it emphasizes the two spheres of operation in very clear terms.

Satan's limited power is expressed in Ephesians 2:2 — he is the “prince of the authority of the *air*”. Christ's authority is so vast that He is not only above principality and power, might and dominion, but “every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the coming one”. This being so, the church which is the Body of Christ, and seated with Him there, must be far above the realm of Satan's authority. Whatever Satan's authority may have been before the overthrow of the world, or even while Christ was in the flesh (e.g., Matt.4), it is clear that at the present time he has no authority in heavenly places where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, for his authority is expressly limited to “the

air”. In harmony with this is the statement of Colossians 1:13:

“DELIVERED OUT of the authority of darkness

TRANSLATED INTO the kingdom of the Son of His love”.

The mighty energizing power to usward who believe is sometimes spoken of as “resurrection power”. This, while true, does not go far enough. The resurrection of Christ was the prelude to more than one activity. Peter tells us that Christ was raised from the dead *to sit on David’s throne* (Acts 2:30), which is not the same as the exaltation of the Lord to the right hand of God far above principality and power. Even the Lord’s exaltation to the right hand of God had several phases of purpose in view. In Acts 5:30,31 we learn that He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness to Israel. In the epistle to the Hebrews He sits at the right hand of God, as the great High Priest. In Ephesians He ascends far above all that He may fill all things, and in that capacity is given to the church as Head. The mighty energizing power is not only the power that raised Christ from the dead, but the power that —

“set Him at His own right hand far above all” (Eph.1:20,21).

The ascension of Christ is somewhat neglected. It is no uncommon thing to read in evangelical literature: “Christ *crucified*, Christ *risen*, Christ *coming again*”. While we rejoice in these three parts of a great whole, we must not omit that which renders all complete. Our Lord’s first resurrection message must have been of supreme importance. What was it?

“Go to My brethren and say unto them, I ASCEND” (John 20:17).

The mystery of godliness is incomplete without the ascension:

“God was manifest in the flesh ... received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

It is the proof of the finished work of Christ:

“I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do ... and I COME TO THEE” (John 17:4,11).

“A body hast Thou prepared Me ... sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb.10:5,12).

The ascension of Christ has in view the ultimate purpose of the whole plan of the ages:

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

When, therefore, we speak of the mighty power that energizes the church, let us remember that it is associated not only with resurrection, but ascension. This is evident in the sequel of chapter 2:4-7, where the members of the church are said to have been quickened together, raised together, and seated together.

The church in this section receives a twofold title, “the Body” and “the Fulness”. The title presents two aspects of truth. During the present dispensation, at any point of time, the existing church of the Mystery on earth is “the Body”. When Ephesians was written, millions of members of that church were then unborn; at the time that these lines are being penned millions of members of that church are dead, yet it is true at each moment that the church is the Body. Will it still be “the Body” when the last member is added and the church is manifested in glory? Or will that title merge into the highest and eternal one, “the fulness of Him that filleth all in all”?

Perhaps we may gain a more intelligent view of this suggestion if we discover what the term “the fulness” involves.

The word is specially connected with the teaching of Ephesians and Colossians. In Colossians 2:9 we read:

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”.

Note the word “bodily” and its link with Colossians 1:15 and 18:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature”.

“And He is the Head of the body, the church, Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead”.

It would appear from the above that for the purposes of creation and redemption, the invisible God manifested Himself “bodily” in “the Image” and “the Head”.

By comparing the teaching of Colossians 2:9 with Ephesians 1:23 it appears that just as Christ is the fulness of God, and that in relation to the Body, so the church is the fulness of Christ, and is “His Body”. In this church Christ is even now “ALL and IN ALL” (Col.3:10,11). In the day when the purpose of the ages is attained, God shall be “ALL IN ALL” (1 Cor.15:28). At the present moment the church which is the Body is called the fulness of Him that filleth “ALL IN ALL”. This all-embracing expression may be understood in the light of Ephesians 1:22:

“And hath put ALL THINGS under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over ALL THINGS to the church”.

What He is now to the church, He will yet be in the vaster sphere of God’s purpose. And as that great purpose can be expressed by the term “fulness”, so that church may be called His “fulness” — a present small anticipation of a future vast reality.

This, too, can be seen in the use of the word “Head”. The Greek word translated “Head” is *kephalē*, and is found in a verbal form, *anakephalaionai* in Ephesians 1:10, where “to gather together in one all things in Christ” should be rendered “to head up again all things in Christ”. What Christ is now to the church, He is yet to be to all in heaven and earth.

What are we to understand by the word “fulness”? Commentaries offer a great variety of interpretations, which, however varied in detail, seem to agree in the main idea that the “fulness of God” indicates His perfections, His gifts, His attributes. This does not appear to be correct, for we can hardly believe that the Apostle taught that the church would possess the attributes of the Deity. Let us bring together once more several passages where this term occurs, and note the way in which it is used:

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

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and you are filled to the full in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power” (Col.2:9,10).

“He is the Head of the body, the church ... for it was well pleasing that in Him all the fulness should dwell” (Col.1:18,19).

It will be seen that in some way this fulness is closely linked with Christ's Headship both of the church and of principalities and powers, and has particular reference to the goal of the ages. We turn afresh to Him Who is the only true teacher, and, seeking a spirit of wisdom and revelation, we turn to the passage containing the first occurrence of the word in the N.T. spoken by the Lord while on earth:

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh away from the garment, and a worse rent is made" (Matt.9:16).

The Emphatic Diaglott renders the verse:

"No man puts a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; because the PATCH itself would tear the garment; and a worse rent be made".

Here we have the word *plerōma* used to refer to a "patch", and we are sure that in inspired Scripture a word is never out of place. Moreover we have the safeguard of an alternative. What is the alternative to "fulness"? We might reply — "emptiness". The verse before us speaks of a "rent" (in the Greek the word *schism*). Has there come into God's creation and purpose a "rent" or "schism"? Ephesians 1:4 speaks of the great schism — "the overthrow of the world" — and Ephesians 1:10 and 23 reveal the great plan to fill that gap. The "rent" or "schism" involved "heaven and earth" (Gen. 1:1), and not until we reach a "new heaven and a new earth", with "no more sea" and "the former things passed away", will that fulness be complete.

The first step towards the construction of this *plerōma* was the creation of Genesis 1:2—2:25, with man in the image of God. The entry of sin and death into this new realm necessitated the reconciliation, which has been sadly confused with the greater purpose that antedated man's fall. The great work of redemption being accomplished, the new heaven and earth of Revelation 21 speak of complete restoration. God is once more all in all, and the "fulness" completely restores the "rent" of Genesis 1:2. It is the peculiar privilege of the church which is the Body of Christ to set forth this blessed day of restoration. The restoration of Israel partly sets forth this future day, as do all the varied companies of the

redeemed. From Christ, Who is Himself the Fulness, is derived a series of redeemed companies, so that heaven and earth are reunited in Him.

Israel are to be a “fulness” of nations (Gen.48:19, margin). “The glory of the Lord is the fulness of the whole earth” (Isa.6:3, margin). In “the fulness of time” Christ was born (Gal.4:4), and in “the dispensation of the fulness of the seasons” God’s purposes were more fully revealed (Eph.1:10). The various lines of teaching that pertain to the church which is His Body we hope to deal with in a later chapter, as one most important passage in our present section awaits consideration. What are we to understand by the words of Ephesians 2:1: “Dead in trespasses and sins”?

Before we proceed we would take this opportunity of stating that we believe Scripture teaches the total depravity of all mankind, that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”; that “there is none righteous, no not one”. We do not question this doctrine at all. What we question here is whether Ephesians 2:1 teaches this doctrine. We must not allow our zeal for one phase of truth to rob us of truth belonging to another part of God’s teaching. When we are reading an epistle like that to the Romans, we realise that we are dealing with the question of sin and sins. The words “trespass” and “offence” occur there nine times, and “sin” and “sins” over forty times. In Ephesians, however, the only references to sin and trespass are 1:7; 2:1 and 2:5. The epistle to the Ephesians was written to make known the dispensation of the Mystery, its doctrinal foundation having been already laid in the epistle to the Romans. Ephesians 2:1, instead of referring to our state by nature, refers to our state by grace, and this we must now attempt to show. As it will involve a careful consideration of the original, we will first provide the reader with a transliteration:

Kai humas onias nekrous tois paraptōmasi kai tais hamartiais.

There is no word for “in” in the original, the preposition being supplied by the translation of the dative case in which the words trespasses and sins are written. The translation of the verse we hold to be as follows:

“And you being dead (ones) to the trespasses and to the sins” (Eph. 2:1).

Our justification for such a rendering is the A.V. itself in other places:

"We that are dead *to sin*" (Rom.6:2).

"He died *unto sin*" (Rom.6:10).

"Dead indeed *unto sin*" (Rom.6:11).

"Dead *to the law*" (Rom.7:4).

"Dead *to law*" (Gal.2:19).

"Dead *to sins*" (1 Pet.2:24).

The above quotations show that in six other places the A.V. has translated the dative case as we believe it should have been translated in Ephesians 2:1.

We dare not substitute "in sin" in Romans 6:10; it would seem almost blasphemous. We cannot insert it in Romans 6:2, for those who are dead *in sin* cannot live unto God. The passage in 1 Peter 2:24 is identical with Ephesians 2:1 inasmuch as it uses the plural where Romans 6 uses the singular. The argument of Ephesians 2:1 is — we have died *to sin*; now we should die *to sins*. Romans 6 deals with the root; Ephesians 2 with the fruit. Romans 6 teaches that the old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Ephesians 2 and 4 teach that what is already true of *sin* should become true of *sins*, so that we read in Ephesians 4 of the putting off of the old man "concerning his former conversation" and in Colossians 3:9 of the putting off of the old man "with his deeds". Not only is the truth for us that we "died to sin", but that we are "dead ones to sins". Not only is the body of sin destroyed and the dominion of sin broken, but "all bitterness, malice, and anger" should also be put away.

The context of Peter's reference to "being dead to sins" illuminates the expression. He tells us that Christ's sufferings leave us a "copy" (*hupogrammos*, the copy set for a pupil) with the object that we may:

"Follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth (works and words, of Ephesians 4:28,29 "hands" and "mouth"); Who being reviled, reviled not again: suffering, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously; Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet.2:21-24).

The introduction here of “example”, and the illustration of the guilelessness and meekness of Christ, show what is intended by our being dead to *sins* in addition to our having died to *sin*.

All our holiness is found “in Christ”, but we cannot walk worthy of our calling if we do not realise that, having died to sin, we should also be dead to sins. Even the truth of Romans 6:6 is not expressed if we stop short of the end of the verse:

“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, *that henceforth we should not serve sin*”.

The passage in Colossians parallel to Ephesians 2:1 must be translated in harmony with the above facts:

“And you being dead ones to your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh” (Col. 2:13).

Does the reader feel somewhat overwhelmed with the tremendous character of this teaching? It is right that he should, so that he may the better appreciate the provision of that mighty resurrection power that worketh in us. The two words used in Ephesians 2:1 — “trespasses” and “sins”, are very comprehensive.

TRESPASSES (*paraptōma*) — “A falling when one should have stood upright, a mishap; hence a falling from right or duty, the particular and special act of sin from ignorance, inadvertence, or negligence; sin rashly committed by one unwilling to do an injury” (*Dr. Bullinger’s Lexicon*).

What untold harm is done in the church by such “trespasses”. How often one says “I forgot” or “I did not know”. How much is done to weaken the unity by “inadvertence” or “rashness”.

SIN (*hamartia*) — This word is from *hamartanō*, “to miss” as a mark, or as a way; a deviation, a failure. The tragedy of sin lies not only in its corruption and its criminality, but in the fact that it writes “failure” across the life of man. Having died to sin, the believer should stand in the full reckoning of God and “be dead” to these sins of rashness, of ignorance, of failure and of deviation.

All this, in Ephesians 2:1, is to lead on to the following steps of being quickened, raised and seated together in the heavenlies. So great, however, is the theme that the Apostle leaves it for a moment at verse 1, to expand the nature of these "trespasses and sins" in verses 2 and 3, before returning to the theme in verse 5.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | Eph.2:1 | Dead ones to trespasses and sins. |
| B | Eph.2:2,3 | A walk according to the age of this world. |
| | What these trespasses and sins involve. | An energy from the prince of the power of the air, constituting such sons of disobedience.
A conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the wills of the flesh and of the mind, constituting such children of wrath. |
| C | Eph.2:4 | Rich. Mercy and love. |
| A | Eph.2:5 | Dead ones to sins. |
| B | Eph.2:5,6 | He hath quickened us together with Christ. |
| | What being dead to these things leads to. | He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. |
| C | Eph.2:7 | Exceeding riches of grace and kindness. |

We must now pass on to the positive results of this union with Christ. There is a tendency to omit the first of these three. We often hear a brother in prayer or praise express the blessedness of being "raised" and of being "seated" together, but frequently the "being quickened together" is passed over.

We seriously miss our way both in Romans 6 and Ephesians 2 if we stress death as an end in itself, instead of a means to an end. Why death to sin? That we may live unto God. Let the reader peruse the opening of Romans 6, giving prominence to the fact of resurrection life or life unto God:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Let it not be so. How shall we that are dead to sin LIVE ANY LONGER THEREIN? Know ye not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also IN THE LIKENESS OF HIS RESURRECTION ... Now if

we died with Christ, we believe that WE SHALL ALSO LIVE WITH HIM ... For in that He died, He died unto sin once, BUT IN THAT HE LIVETH, HE LIVETH UNTO GOD. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, BUT ALIVE UNTO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD" (Rom.6:1-11).

Here we have not merely a new lease of life, but an altogether new life, resurrection life, life from the dead. Throughout this passage the resurrection of Christ is dominant, and this is "the power" that is "to usward that believe". The Apostle's personal testimony shows what being "quickened together with Christ" means:

"I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal.2:20).

"We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor.4:11).

When considering the next step, "raised together", it is well to realise that the word is *sunegeirō*. The other words, *anastasis* and *anistēmi*, are never coupled with *sun*, "together with". The difference between the two words is illustrated in Ephesians 5:14:

"Wherefore He saith, Awake (*egeirō*) thou that sleepest, and arise (*anistēmi*) from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light".

A good translation, which sets the two words together, is to render the one "to rouse" and the other "to raise", the one visualizing sleep, the other death.

The climax is reached in the words, "made us sit together"; that is the climax of the dispensational teaching of the epistle. Glory and blessing beyond our dreams is indicated in verse 7, the "seating together" of verse 6 being but a necessary prelude. Referring back to the diagram on page 2 we see that this "sitting together in the heavenlies" is peculiar to this epistle, for the word occurs nowhere else in the Scriptures. It is gloriously unique. No other company of the redeemed have heard of such a height of blessing. Apart from revelation

it would savour of the presumption of Lucifer. And it is just because the church of the Mystery is associated with that period before the overthrow of the world, that this is its high destiny.

The epistle to the Hebrews shows us what is meant by a seated Priest, but it is left to this wondrous Ephesian epistle to associate a company of the redeemed with that august Presence, in the Holiest of All, in the light. Nothing that we have done, or can do, can make us meet for this. "By grace are ye saved" must ever be our grateful recognition.

What the ages to come may bring, we do not know, apart from such passages as Ephesians 2:7, but what is there revealed leaves us destitute of expression, for it reads:

"That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding (*hyperballō*) riches of His grace, in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus".

Eph.2:8-10 (C page 20). The new creation. Its walk

C	M	1	8	For ye are saved by grace
		m	9	Not of WORKS
		N	9	In order that (<i>hina</i>) none should boast (<i>Negative</i>)
	M	l	10	For we are created in Christ Jesus
		m	10	Unto good WORKS
		N	10	In order that (<i>hina</i>) we should walk (<i>Positive</i>)

CHAPTER 8

EPHESIANS

The new creation. Its walk (C Eph. 2:8-10)

The mighty power that raised Christ from the dead, and which quickened, raised and seated us together in the heavens in Christ, expresses itself in a new creation. This section is the smallest in the epistle, but has the largest corresponding section in the practical half (see structure, page 20). A glance at the structure on page 70 will show that the subject-matter is divided into two parts, each containing three members. Salvation by grace is balanced by a work of creation. "Not of works" is completed by "unto good works", while the object (*hina*, "in order that") is expressed both negatively, "in order that none should boast", and positively, "in order that we should walk in them".

It is of the utmost importance that we should have a clear conception of grace:

"And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work" (Rom.11:6).

This is by no means an isolated reference. The Lord has been pleased to emphasize this distinction by repetition, and it is to our profit that we give heed:

"*Not by works* of righteousness which we have done ... being justified *by grace*" (Titus 3:5-7).

"Who hath saved us ... not according *to our works*, but according to His own purpose and *grace*" (2 Tim.1:9).

This salvation by grace (Eph.2:8) is made known by the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24) during the dispensation of grace (Eph.3:2). It may be of service to note the way in which this

word "grace" is distributed throughout the epistle to the Ephesians:

"Grace" in Ephesians

A	1:2	Grace to you — Salutation		
B	1:6	Grace exhibited in salvation	a	1:7 Riches
			b	2:5 Saved
			a	2:7 Riches
			b	2:8 Saved
C	3:2	Dispensation of the grace of God		
B		Grace manifested in service	a	3:7 According to gift
			b	3:8 Preach
			a	4:7 According to gift
			b	4:29 Ministry
A	6:24	Grace with all — Benediction		

How truly does the divine arrangement of this word emphasize its place and importance. No salvation is complete without it, and the very benediction is enriched by it. It runs through the whole fabric of redemption, covering the ages past and to come with its unction. It gives its name to the special dispensation committed to the Apostle Paul, marking it off as pre-eminently one of grace. It vitalizes the outcome of redemption, namely service, being as much a necessity for the inspired and gifted Apostle while preaching the Word, as for the individual believer in his everyday conversation.

In the passage before us this salvation which is by grace is declared to be through faith, and this statement is followed by the words: "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God". If the latter asseveration be limited to faith, it is apt to lend colour to a hyper-calvinistic view that becomes almost fatalism. The word rendered "that", however, in the expression: "and that not of yourselves", does not agree with the word "faith": rather must we conceive of "a grace-by-faith-salvation" as a whole, and realise that *this* is the gift of God. The gift is evidently unique, for it is a remarkable fact that the word used occurs nowhere else. To understand the abyss of sin and the power of its dominion; to ponder the vanity of life which ends in the grave; to know, only too well, the utter inability of the flesh to accomplish justification by works, is to realise something of the blessedness of this great

salvation. It is nothing less than the exchange of the horrible pit and the miry clay for solid rock. This puts a new song into our mouths, a song that glories in *grace*.

Had such a salvation as this cost us our all, it would have been beyond our estimation; what then shall we say when we realise that this, which has verily lifted us from the dunghill and seated us with princes, is the *gift of God*? He has done all, provided all, and we are the unworthy recipients. This is salvation by grace through faith, not of works, but the gift of God. It is expressly so planned to exclude boasting. Salvation in all its parts, wisdom, and righteousness, as well as sanctification and redemption, is in Christ,

“in order that, according as it hath been written, He that boasteth, let him boast in the Lord” (1 Cor.1:30,31).

This salvation is not of works, yet is unto good works. Just as balance is exhibited in the epistle as a whole, so is it in its parts. To emphasize the complete exclusion of works as a cause of salvation is right: to omit reference to the need to produce good works, after salvation, is wrong. The only thing that is true is proportionate emphasis upon both doctrines. This quality of balance may be seen in other of the Apostle’s writings. What can be clearer than the following:

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

Yet in the next verse or so comes the balance:

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou insist strenuously, that they which have believed God might be careful to maintain good works” (Tit. 3:8).

which is a complete parallel with Ephesians 2:9,10:

“Not by works ... good works ... ordained that we should walk in them”.

Both in our words and our works we may deny the Lord:

“They profess that they know the Lord, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16).

“Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine ... in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works” (Tit.2:1,8).

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches us that ... we should live ... looking ... zealous of good works" (Tit.2:11-14).

The last reference is another close parallel with Ephesians 2:9,10. The grace that saves us teaches us to "live ... looking". The redemption that saves us has a twofold object, viz:

- (1) To redeem us *from* all iniquity.
- (2) To purify us *unto* good works.

Speaking of good works in the third chapter of Titus, the Apostle adds, "that they be not unfruitful". That figure supplies the needful truth. Good works can be produced only as a result of living union with the risen Lord. This union is brought about by nothing short of *creation itself*. We are not reasoned into this salvation, we do not accept it as one of many good things presented to us, but we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

Four times does the word "create" come in Ephesians, and in such an order as to challenge attention:

"Create" in Ephesians

- | | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| A 2:10 | GOD. The church His creation |
| B 2:15 | The NEW MAN doctrinally considered |
| A 3:9 | GOD. All things His creation |
| B 4:24 | The NEW MAN practically exhibited |

This new creation has a characteristic walk. Exactly what the walk involves is outside the province of doctrine to explain; all it does is to state the fact and leave it to the practical section to develop, and this it does very thoroughly. In the doctrinal view there are but two walks known to God, the walk related to the old creation (Eph.2:2,3), "in time past ye walked", and the walk of the new creation (Eph.2:10), "unto good works that we should walk in them". Between these two walks, what miracles are to be found. Dead, quickened, raised, seated. No attempt is made to *alter the walk*, but God made a new creature. Life is not altered by the walk; the walk but expresses the life:

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also WALKED some time, when ye LIVED in them" (Col. 3:6,7).

“As ye have therefore RECEIVED Christ Jesus the Lord, so WALK ye in Him” (Col.2:6).

What is the meaning of the expression “before ordained” in this section? Does it teach that, after salvation, every word and action is fixed by predestination? That in the sphere of the new creation the believer has no responsibility? If so, why reward for service? Why suffer loss? Why exhort a believer to “walk worthy”, if all is ordained beforehand? Evidently the Apostle did not entertain such an idea, for he says:

“Walk in love ... let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience” (Eph.5:2-6).

The words “before ordained” translate the Greek word *proetoimazō*. “I go to *prepare* a place for you” (John 14:3), “The *preparation* of the gospel of peace” (Eph.6:15); “They that were *ready* went in” (Matt.25:10), “The third time I am *ready*” (2 Cor.12:14): these are examples of *etoimazō*, *hetoimos* and *hetoimōs*. The word *hina*, translated “that”, may be rendered “in order that”, and the passage stands as follows:

“For good works, which God prepared beforehand, in order that we should walk in them”.

Titus 3:1 says, “Be ready to every good work”, the readiness or preparedness being on the part of the believer. 2 Timothy 2:21 speaks of the believer being prepared unto every good work. The Emphatic Diaglott translates Ephesians 2:10:

“Good works, for which God before prepared us, that we might walk in them”.

This is but an expansion of the great passage in Ephesians 1:4:

“Chosen in Him before the overthrow of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish”.

Here then is a new creation, and there is accordingly a new walk suitable to the new creation. This walk is expressed in good works, and for these good works each member of the Body has been before prepared.

When we come to the practical section we shall find this walk is threefold; a walk in love, light and wisdom, and the good works are threefold, applying to wives and husbands, children and parents, servants and masters. The highest and holiest of callings is associated with the humblest and lowliest of walks. "*Walk worthy ... with all lowliness*".

Eph.2:11-19 (D page 20). The new man

D	O ₁	11,12	IN TIME PAST
		P ₁	n 11 Gentiles IN THE FLESH
	<i>Distance</i>		o 12 Without Christ p 12 Aliens from Commonwealth p 12 Strangers from Covenants o 12 Without hope n 12 Godless IN THE WORLD
	O ₂	13,14	BUT NOW
		P ₂	q ¹ 14 He is our PEACE
	<i>Peace</i>		r ¹ 14 "THE BOTH" made one s ¹ 14 Middle wall broken t ¹ 15 Enmity in flesh s ¹ 15 Decrees abolished r ¹ 15 "THE TWAIN" created one new man
			q ¹ 15 So making PEACE
			q ² 16 Reconciled to GOD
	<i>Reconciliation</i>		r ² 16 "THE BOTH" in one body s ² 16 Through the cross t ² 16,17 Enmity slain. Peace s ² 18 Through Him r ² 18 "THE BOTH" in one Spirit
			q ² 18 Access to the FATHER
	O ₃	19	NO LONGER
		P ₃	19 Strangers and foreigners

CHAPTER 9

EPHESIANS

The new man (D Eph.2:11-19)

The crown and goal of the six days' creation was man made in the image of God; the goal of the new creation of Ephesians 2 is the new man.

If the reader consults the structure of this section, he will discover that the subject-matter is divided into three time periods:

- (1) In time past What we once were.
- (2) But now What grace has done.
- (3) No longer The complete reversal of
the past.

Each part of Ephesians 2 deals with a time past in contrast with a time present, with its accompanying change. It is important to observe the distinctive features of these two parts, the former dealing with death and life, the latter with distance and nearness. Ephesians 2:1-10 uses such words as "dead", "trespass", "sin", "disobedience", "wrath", "quickened", "saved", "faith" and "walk". Ephesians 2:11-22 uses an entirely new vocabulary. Instead of sin and death, we have "Gentiles", "uncircumcision", "aliens" and "far off"; instead of being quickened and raised, we have a "middle wall broken down", "ordinances abolished", "one new man created" and the thought of "fellow-citizens" and a "holy temple". Instead of trespasses we have dispensational distance; instead of the flesh with its lusts we have the flesh in its uncircumcision and enmity. In the first section we have a new creation, and in the second the creation of a new man; in the first, believers are seated together in the heavenlies, in the second builded together as an habitation of God. These differences are

important, for if the section before us deals with dispensational distance rather than with sin and death, this will materially colour the meaning of the reconciliation referred to here by the Apostle. The trend of the two parts of this chapter may be seen if set out as follows:

Ephesians 2

A	DOCTRINE	a	1-3	Once.	Walk.	World and flesh.
		b	4	But God.	Mercy.	Love
		c	5-10	Made alive together	Raised together	Made to sit together
A	DISPENSATION	a	11,12	Once.	Gentiles.	In flesh. In world
		b	13-18	But now.	Nigh.	One
		c	19-22	Citizens together	Fitly framed together	Builded together

The Gentiles who composed the majority of the members of the one Body had no Scriptures full of promises made unto their fathers; they were not only alienated from the life of God, but were also aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The structure of the epistle as a whole (see members D and *D*, page 20) throws into prominence two features – the new man, and this twofold alienation. For the moment our attention is to be directed to the dispensational alienation, the dispensational disability of being a Gentile as contrasted with the dispensational privilege of being a Jew.

What was the position, dispensationally, of those who are now members of the one Body? This passage bids us remember that we were once:

- A Gentiles *in the flesh*
- B Without Christ
- C Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel
- C Strangers from the covenants of promise
- B Having no hope
- A Godless *in the world*

There was nothing personally wrong in being a Gentile, but being born a Gentile carried with it great dispensational disabilities.

“He sheweth His word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them” (Psa.147:19,20; see also Amos 3:2; Rom.3:2).

We observe in Ephesians 2:11,12 that the sphere of Gentile disability is “in the flesh”; *so also is the sphere of Israel’s privileges*. Some of these privileges are set out by the Apostle in Romans 9:

- A According to the flesh ... Brethren
- B Israelites
- C Adoption (placing as sons)
- D Glory
- E Covenants
- E* Law
- D* Services
- C Promises
- B Fathers
- A According to the flesh ... Christ (Rom.9:3-5).

In the flesh, the Gentile is without Christ. He can only reach Christ “in Spirit”; in the flesh he is without hope, for it was *of Israel* according to the flesh that Christ came. Thus the words *en pneumatī* (Eph.3:5) really preface the three-fold fellowship of the Mystery detailed in verse 6, of which more when we reach that passage.

At the close of the dark list of Gentile hopelessness are the words “in the world”. The world is at the present time an abandoned evil, the enemy of God and of truth. Its prince is the devil, for the Saviour’s kingdom is not of this world. The whole world lieth in wickedness, and its rudiments are antagonistic to Christ. It is totally oblivious of the work and witness of the Spirit. Its elements hold the Gentiles in bondage. Nothing but utter hopelessness, therefore, can be the condition of those who are “in the flesh” and “in the world”.

From this pit of corruption and from this godless, Christless, hopeless wilderness; God, in His rich mercy, stooped and saved those whose destiny is to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ.

The Syrophenician woman (Matt.15:24) shows us something of the meaning of the words:

“Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise” (Eph.2:12).

The Gentile was by nature “far off”. How could he be made nigh? The answer is that, while the dispensation that included the nation of Israel lasted, Gentile believers could be grafted into the olive tree of Israel. Romans 11 does not refer to a merely national position — those addressed were “brethren” and were reminded that they stood “by faith” (Rom.11:20,25). The justified Gentile during the Acts period did not become a member of the Body of Christ; he became a graft in the olive tree of Israel of which Abraham was the root.

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph.2:13).

When we realise something of the slavery of Satan and the dominion of sin (Eph.2:1-3), with what relief do we read the words of Ephesians 2:4, “but God”! Again, when the helplessness and the hopelessness of the Gentiles’ case dispensationally, as set forth in Ephesians 2:11,12, is realised, how blessed the “but now” of verse 13! The blood of Christ which accomplished deliverance from the bondage of sin (Eph.1:7) now breaks down all barriers and gives perfect access. The former condition of alienation is closely linked with a special enmity. The new status brings in peace, evidently the result of the cessation of that enmity.

It will be necessary to turn to the structure of this passage once more. Member D P₂, page 78, shows us a twofold division of theme. In the centre (t¹ and t²) we have the enmity, and at the four extremes (q¹ and q²) we have:

“He is our PEACE” ... “So making PEACE”

“Reconciled to GOD” ... “Access to the FATHER”

To understand these terms will enable us to understand both the dispensational condition of things during the Acts and earlier, and the mighty change brought in at the opening of the dispensation of the Mystery. Christ is evidently our peace, because He has:

- (1) Made the both one, and
- (2) Broken down a middle wall of partition.

What is this middle wall? As the salvation of the sinner is not in view, but the dispensational distance of the Gentile who needed to be “made nigh”, we shall not accomplish much by interpreting this middle wall as sin. A further consultation of the structure (s^1 and s^1) will show that the middle wall stands in correspondence with ordinances or decrees that have been abolished.*

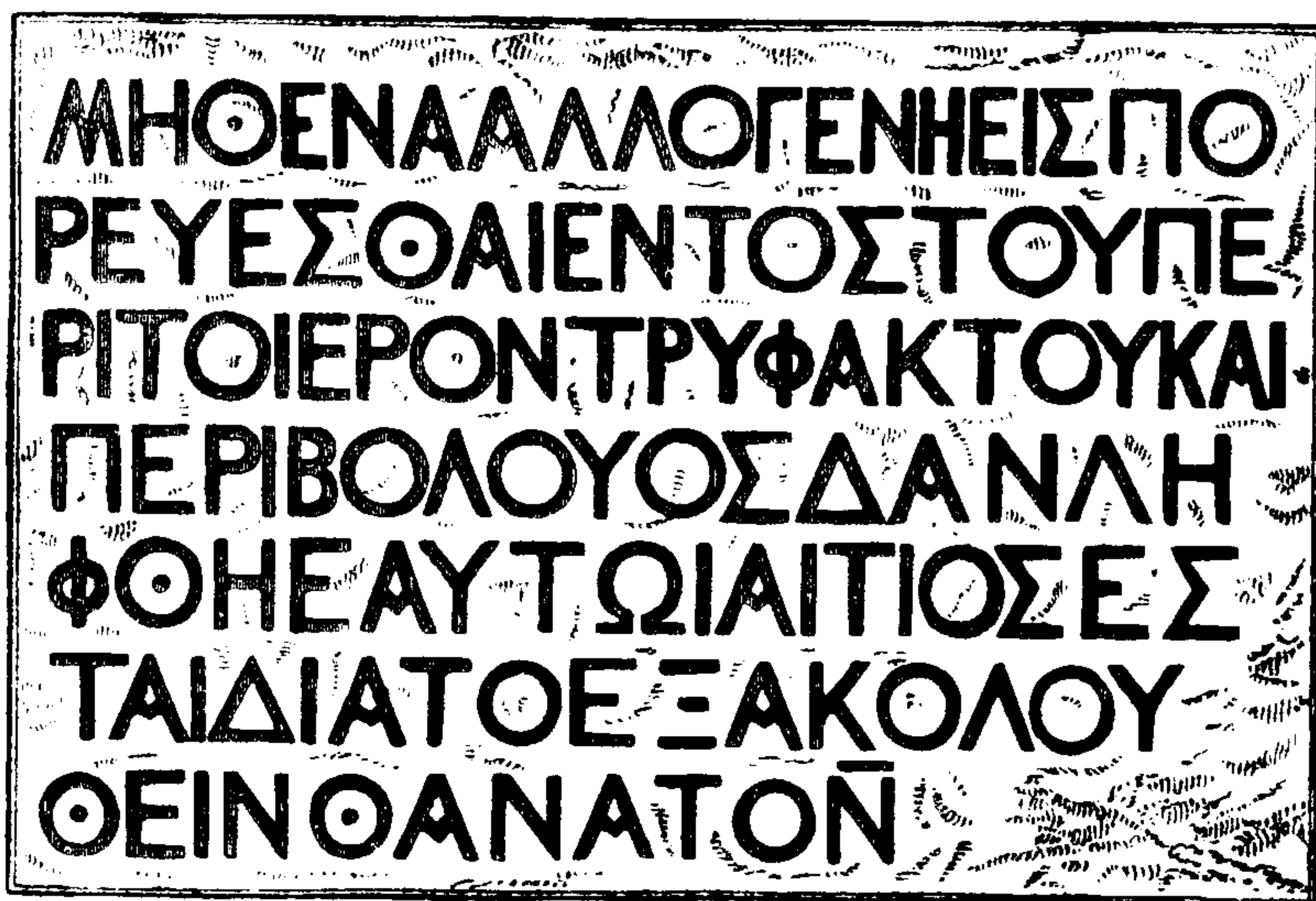
What did God intend by these ordinances, and what did He mean by this middle wall of partition? The reference to the latter is an allusion to the temple that was standing at Jerusalem in the days of Christ and His apostles. This temple consisted of an outer square some six hundred feet wide, and a second, inner, area. Josephus describes it as follows:

“On advancing to the second temple a stone balustrade was thrown around it four feet and a half high, and withal beautifully wrought, and in it stood pillars at equal distances proclaiming the law of purity, some in Greek and some in Roman letters, that no alien might pass within the sanctuary”.

“Such was the first enclosure, and not far from it, in the middle, was the second, ascended by a few steps and encompassed by a stone balustrade for a partition, which prohibited by inscription any alien from entering, under penalty of death”.

In our own time one of the very stones spoken of by Josephus has been discovered by the side of the *Via Dolorosa* in Jerusalem. A cast of the stone is now in the British Museum. We reproduce the inscription here:

*While we do not believe that the Lord's Supper has any place in the church of the Mystery, we do not use this reference to ordinances in proof of our belief. The term “ordinances”, as applied to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, is of purely human invention.



Facsimile of Greek inscription on one of the obelisks which stood round the Temple in the time of our Lord and his Apostles.

The translation of the inscription is as follows:

“No one, being a foreigner, may enter into the enclosure around the holy place. Whosoever is apprehended will himself be to blame for his death which will certainly follow”.

This was an outward and visible sign of an inward and real enmity. While this obtained, absolute unity and equality among believers was impossible. While both Peter and Cornelius were sinners saved by the same precious blood, the one had an access which the other was denied. Now, had this difference merely related to the Jerusalem temple it might not have mattered very much, but the middle wall of the Temple represented a very real middle wall in fact. This difference, dispensationally, that existed between Jew and Gentile is seen quite clearly in the Saviour's words to the Syrophenician woman. (We say dispensationally, advisedly, for in the realm of doctrine and salvation Romans 3 and 10 declare that there is “no difference”, whereas Romans 3 and 9 are just as emphatic upon the privilege that pertains to the Jew only). To this woman of Canaan the Lord said:

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt.15:24).

Peter’s attitude when he visited Cornelius shows the existence of the middle wall very clearly:

“Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation, but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean ... I ask therefore for what intent you have sent for me?” (Acts 10:28,29).

Peter, by his own admission, is still a Jew, still keeping the law that regulated ceremonials, still calling Gentiles, however devout and God-fearing, “common” and “unclean”, and so far removed from the missionary ideal as actually to ask for what intent Cornelius had sent for him!

This middle wall was not, however, exclusively related to Peter. The assembled apostles and elders at Jerusalem, in solemn council, and uniting with their decision the “Holy Ghost”, perpetuated this middle wall between Jewish and Gentile believers:

“Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood, for Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day” (Acts 15:19-21).

It is evident that while the Gentiles were asked to observe these four “necessary things” (verse 28), the Jewish church was still intent upon the whole ceremonial law. This could have but one effect – division. The Jewish believer would, no doubt, consider himself upon a higher plane of sanctity than the Gentile who was allowed only to observe the four basic things. This decision at Jerusalem is called “the decrees”, exactly the same word as is translated “ordinances” in Ephesians 2:15:

“They delivered them *the decrees* for to keep, that were *ordained* of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4).

There is one further reference to this middle wall and the decrees or ordinances, and that is found in Colossians 2.

Whether "the decrees" of Acts 15 and 16 are in view in Ephesians 2 may be open to question; the passage in Colossians 2, however, is beyond doubt. The passage uses the same words as are found in Ephesians 2:1: "and you being dead to trespasses", and proceeds:

"and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, He hath made alive together with Him, having freely forgiven us all trespasses, having blotted out *the handwriting of ordinances* which was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col.2:13,14).

What these contrary ordinances were is immediately made known:

"Let no man *therefore* judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or new moon, or sabbaths, which are a *shadow* of things to come, but the *body* is of Christ" (Col.2:16,17).

For the Jewish believer the setting aside of these ordinances was symbolized in the rending of the veil, and is set out in the epistle to the Hebrews. For the Gentile believer the slaying of that enmity was symbolized by the destruction of the temple itself some forty years after, when the middle wall was demolished. The removal of this enmity is a distinctive feature of the dispensation of the Mystery.

Let us give due heed to the very emphatic language used with reference to the setting aside of these ordinances:

"Broken down", "abolished", "slain" (in Ephesians).

"Blotting out", "taking away", "nailing to the cross" (in Colossians).

Here is no reform, but abolition followed by a new creation.

Referring once again to the structure on page 78, we observe that four times mention is made of those who were once at enmity, but have now been made one. They are three times referred to as "the both" and once as "the twain" (r^1 and r^1 ; r^2 and r^2). The thought here is entirely opposed to the idea that the Gentile who was once an alien is now admitted into the fellowship of the covenants; it is entirely opposed to anything similar to the graft in the olive tree.

The both are made one — “for to create in Himself of the twain one new man”. This blots out both the Jew and the Gentile, as such.

We can hardly conceive of any reader of this volume entertaining what is known as evolution, yet some who would repudiate evolution, and stand by the doctrine of creation as given in Genesis, are found denying a new creation and admitting evolution into the second chapter of Ephesians. Wherever we read of a new creation in Scripture, we find, as essentially connected with it, the passing away of former things:

“If any man be in Christ there is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold new things have come into being” (2 Cor. 5:17).

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away: and there was no more sea ... the former things are passed away” (Rev.21:1,5).

“Behold I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind” (Isa.65:17).

Ephesians 2:11-19 is dispensational, and while the great foundation doctrines of Romans are as true as ever, the dispensational position of Romans and Corinthians has “passed away”. New things, dispensationally, have come into being. Nothing that belongs peculiarly to the earlier dispensation must be allowed to intrude into the new. This new man is reconciled to God through the cross; and the both have access to the Father. The reconciliation is “in one Body”, the access “in one Spirit”, the reconciliation is “to God”, the access to “the Father”. The one views the whole company; the other views the individual and is experimental.

We now draw to the conclusion of this section with the third time period — “No longer”. Once we were strangers; we are strangers no longer. Once we were foreigners; we are foreigners no longer. Not that we have merely been placed on a level with Israel. We have been blessed in a realm of which Israel never dreamed.

Into this new creation we resolutely refuse to admit anything that has not the divine sanction. Baptism in water, the Lord’s Supper, and miraculous gifts, belong to “the former

things". Here is a new creation and a new man. Here is the beginning of the one Body. Here is the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace.

When we were considering the opening verses of Ephesians, we found that the subject was threefold. We had the will of the Father, the work of the Son, and the witness of the Spirit. We drew attention to the way in which the three sections of the prayer that follows seem to keep this threefold division in mind. We meet these features once more in Ephesians 2:18:

"Through Him (the Son) ... we both have access by one Spirit ... unto the Father".

Eph.2:19-22 (E page 20). The Temple

E	Q	u	19	Fellow citizens (<i>sun</i>)
		v	19	Of the saints (<i>hagios</i>)
		u	19	Household (<i>oikeitos</i>)
		v	19	Of God
	R	w	20	Built. On (<i>epi</i>)
		x	20	The foundation
		y	20	Apostles and prophets
		y	20	Christ Jesus Himself
		x	20	Chief Corner Stone
		w	21	The building. In (<i>en</i>)
	Q	u	21	Fitly framed together (<i>sun</i>)
		v	21	Holy temple in the Lord (<i>hagios</i>)
		u	22	Builed together (<i>oikodomeō, sun</i>)
		v	22	Habitation of God in Spirit

CHAPTER 10

EPHESIANS

The temple (E Eph. 2:19-22)

The sequence of events in Genesis 1 and 2 is: creation ... man ... paradise. The sequence of Ephesians 2 is similar: creation ... the new man ... and the temple. The section we are now to consider goes on to explain the new position into which the far-off and alienated Gentiles have been brought. This is no mere union with Israel, nor an entry into Abrahamic blessings, but an unveiling, in some measure, of “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places”.

The saints are builded together for an habitation of God in Spirit. A dwelling place for God is an objective that never seems far removed from any part of Scripture. We may reverently say that when Adam and Eve were turned out of paradise, God Himself found no further delight therein. Noah, in a way a second Adam, declared prophetically that God would dwell in the tents of Shem. Moses is instructed by God concerning the tabernacle, that God may dwell among the people. Solomon builds a temple according to divine plan, and Ezekiel sees from afar a future day when the very name of Jerusalem shall be Jehovah-Shammah, “The Lord is there”. The book of the Revelation places at its climax the words: “The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them” (Rev.21:3).

In the structure of Ephesians 2:19-22 given on page 90, we have drawn attention to two words into whose composition *oikos*, “house” enters. In these few verses there are six different words used involving the use of the word *oikos*.

- FOREIGNER (2:19) *paroikos* — Alongside the house.
HOUSEHOLD (2:19) *oikeios* — The family side of the house.
BUILT (2:20) *epoikodomeō* — To build upon as on
a foundation.
BUILDING (2:21) *oikodomē* — To build as a house.
BUILT-TOGETHER ... (2:22) *sunokodomeōmai* — To build together
as a house.
HABITATION (2:22) *katoiketērion* — A certain or durable
dwelling.

Not only must we observe the transition from creation to the new man, and from the new man to a dwelling place, but we must also notice the transition from the thought of a body to that of a temple:

Ephesians 2: 11-22

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--------|
| A | Once — Strangers and aliens | } | Body |
| B | Now — Made nigh | | |
| C | Unity — The two made one | | |
| D | Access — In one Spirit | | |
| A | No longer — Strangers and aliens | } | Temple |
| B | But — Fellow-citizens | | |
| C | Unity — Fitly framed together | | |
| D | Habitation — In Spirit | | |

We Gentiles were once aliens, but are such no longer as verses 11,12 and 19 show. The way in which this alienation has been cancelled occupies verses 13-18. It was cancelled by the blood and cross of Christ, which made nigh the far-off and slew the enmity, the result being the creation of a new man and access to the Father. The second section, starting from the fact that the Gentiles are now “no longer” aliens, leads this time not to a body, but to a temple; not to access to the Father, but to a dwelling-place for God; not to a creation, but to a building. The making nigh was “in Christ Jesus”; the habitation is “in Spirit”. The company of believers made nigh is called “the Body”; the company made a dwelling is called “the Temple”. This association of body and temple is not new. Christ Himself used it in John 2:21, and the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.

The threefold use of *sun*, “together with”, in Ephesians

2:1-10 (quickened *together*, raised *together*, and seated *together*) finds an echo in the threefold use of *sun* in Ephesians 2:11-22 (*fellow-citizens*, fitly framed *together*, and builded *together*). Nowhere else in the N.T. do we find either the words “seated together” or “builded together”; they belong exclusively to the dispensation of the Mystery.

A further link between the Body and the Temple is found in the words “fitly framed together”. The identical words are found once more in Ephesians 4:16: “from Whom the whole body fitly joined together”. The Temple is the figure used to indicate dispensational privilege and position “in Spirit”, in contrast with the far-off condition of the Gentiles “in the flesh”. The Body is the practical manifestation here and now of this new relationship, while the title, “the Fulness” (Eph. 1:23), will be realised when the whole church is complete and enters into its glorious inheritance. To appreciate the associations and the differences between the three conditions — the Temple, the Body and the Fulness — is to have made some progress along the road of acknowledging the Mystery.

There is still another explanatory statement that we must consider — the opening words of this section: “fellow-citizens with the saints” (Eph. 2:19). Strictly speaking there is no word here for “with”, the actual reading being, “fellow-citizens of the saints”. This translation, which is given in *Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible*, does not seem to yield good sense. How can one saint be a fellow-citizen “of the saints”? Or to look back to Ephesians 1:18, what exactly is meant by “His inheritance in the saints”? Or again, to anticipate, what is intended in Ephesians 4:12 by the words, “for the perfecting of the saints”?

We are on firm ground when we assert that “our citizenship is in heaven”. Here the word “conversation” or “citizenship” is *politeuma*, and the word “fellow-citizen” *sumpolitēs*. This fellow-citizenship of the saints will be a fellow-citizenship of heaven. The original of Ephesians 1:18 — “in the saints” — is *en tois hagiois*. The dative plural is exactly the same whether it be masculine or neuter, so that *hagiois* here may refer to persons or things. The phrase “of the saints” in Ephesians 4 is *tōn hagiōn*, the same case ending being used for masculine, feminine or neuter gender. *Tōn hagiōn*,

therefore, means, "of the holy persons", places or things. Now in Hebrews 9:8 and 10:19 we read of a way into the holiest of all, and in both passages the words *tōn hagiōn* are used. Further, Hebrews 9:24 reveals that the Tabernacle was a figure "of the true", or of "heaven itself". The Temple also was a figure of "heaven itself". There is the possibility, therefore, that some of the passages we have translated "of the saints" and "in the saints" would be more correctly rendered "in or of the holiest of all".

Let us set out the passages in these epistles that allow of this new rendering:

"What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the holiest of all" (Eph.1:18).

"Made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the holiest of all in the light" (Col.1:12).

"Fellow citizens of the holiest of all" (Eph.2:19).

"For the re-adjusting of the holiest of all" (Eph.4:12).

This rendering, in the light of the further comment — "heaven itself" — links the expression *tōn hagiōn* with "heavenly places".

Let us now look at the Temple that is here described. First we read of its foundation and its chief corner stone; then of its being fitly framed together, and finally its purpose, a habitation of God.

When we consider salvation, we rejoice to know that:

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.3:11).

When we come to the temple of Ephesians 2, however, we have a dual foundation:

- (1) The foundation of the apostles and prophets.
- (2) The chief Corner-Stone.

There are some who teach that the "prophets" here are the prophets of the O.T. This cannot be, for we are dealing with a mystery not made known in earlier ages. Also the order of the words is not, "prophets and apostles", but

“apostles and prophets”. In 2 Peter 3:2, where the writer intends O.T. prophets, the latter are placed first before the apostles:

“That ye be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”.

Further, the order of Ephesians 2:20 is observed in 3:5 and in 4:11, where without question the reference is to N.T. prophets. How are we to understand the statement – “the foundation of the apostles and prophets”? The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3, “I have laid a foundation” and in Ephesians 4:11 the apostles and prophets are given with a view to “re-adjusting the holiest of all”. The foundation of this new and heavenly temple was laid by the “gifts” of the ascended Christ (Eph.4:8-11), and is to be distinguished from the foundation laid “in Zion” (Isa.28:16 and 1 Pet.2:6-8). We remember, however, that it is the same Christ Who is the great foundation in each of these three spheres.

Christ is the Chief Corner Stone; and while Jeremiah 51:26 distinguishes between a stone for a corner, and a stone for a foundation, Isaiah 28:16 definitely speaks of the corner-stone as a “sure foundation”. The chief corner-stone was the most important part of the whole building. Without it the temple could not be “fitly framed together”. It will be found, when we are dealing with Ephesians 4:11, that the ministry of the apostles and prophets can be rightly called “a foundation ministry”, but that will come in its right place.

Whether the figure be that of the body or that of the temple, great emphasis is placed upon unity:

“Who hath made the both one” (Eph.2:14).

“He might reconcile the both unto God in one body” (Eph.2:16).

“All the building fitly framed together” (Eph.2:21).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit” (Eph.4:3).

“From Whom the whole body fitly joined together” (Eph.4:16).

Dislocation means ruin and loss. Above all things true unity is essential. This is the reason why an attack upon the truth is usually accompanied by schism and disruption. Let us watch, and endeavour to keep the unity thus made.

There is an interchange of figures in this passage which is suggestive. We read of the Temple "growing", and of the Body "building" itself up and at the same time "increasing" or "growing". The same mingling of figures is found in the expression, "rooted and grounded", the one referring to a tree, the other to a building. If these figures were used of the work of man, we might suspect some incongruity, but when we remember that God builds with "living stones", the "growing" of the temple becomes a blessed truth and not a strained figure.

The purpose of this Temple is simple. We are apt to look upon priests, altars and sacrifices as essential to a temple. But they are only essential because of sin, the ministry of the priest being necessary to remove the barriers to perfect fellowship. Are we to believe that all this elaborate preparation and removal is without an end or goal? While priesthood and sacrifice may pass away, because their work is done, the essential purpose of the temple remains — a dwelling-place for God with His people. This was *the* purpose of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, to which all else was subsidiary. This was also, at least in type, the supreme object of Solomon's Temple. And it is the definite statement of Revelation 21:3.

The word translated "habitation" in Ephesians 2:22 is *katoiketērion*. The less intensive word *oiketērion* occurs in 2 Corinthians 5:2 and Jude 6, where it refers to the resurrection body of the believer and is used in contrast with the frail tabernacle of this present body. Jude uses it in connection with angels, and in a connection into which space will not permit us now to enter. The *oiketērion* or resurrection body of 2 Corinthians 5 is surely permanent. If, therefore, Ephesians 2:22 uses the intensive form, we should allow the expression its full value, and believe that, unlike the Tabernacle and the Temple made with hands, this habitation of God will never pass away. Solomon uses *katoiketērion* (in the LXX version of 1 Kings 8:39) for the true dwelling-place of God, heaven itself, in contrast with the house of Solomon's building. Although we do not believe that 2 Corinthians 5:2 reveals anything of the glorious mystery of Ephesians, the association of 2 Corinthians 5:2 with Ephesians 2:22 is suggestive, as indicating one further link between the Body and the Temple. The Vatican MS reads in Ephesians 2:22,

“an habitation of Christ”, instead of “an habitation of God”. It is impossible at the present moment to decide between these readings. The Vatican MS is a great authority and often decisive, but standing alone without the corroboration of “two or three witnesses” we cannot build upon it with certainty.

The prayer that flows out of this passage, that of Ephesians 3:14-21, speaks of Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, which is an anticipation of that great dwelling-place of God of which each member of the Body is a part. This prayer leads on to the fulness of God and enables us to see that just as in Christ the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, so His fulness is in the church, His Body.

We have seen the Father, the Son and the Spirit, in chapter 1:3-14, and similar allusions have been made during the exposition of the intervening verses. The Apostle speaks of the Trinity again in this closing verse: “In Whom (the Son) ye are also builded together for an habitation of God (the Father) in Spirit”.

The three figures of Body, Temple, and Fulness must be carefully distinguished. Ever since the truth of the Mystery was made known there has been the Body of Christ on earth. If this title is intended to include the complete church with all its members, then we must admit that this church and this Body has never yet been complete. Centuries ago some of its members lived, loved and died, and centuries after, others came. In the Apostle’s day some members were yet unborn, while others had actually died, yet the title “the Body” was used. The Body is the title of the church at any time in manifestation here and now. When that church is complete, and the last member is added, its title changes, the Body becomes the Temple, and that Temple the Fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The Body, therefore, belongs to time, the Fulness to eternity. Those who are already members of the Body may pray that they may be filled up to all the Fulness of God, for that is the goal before us.

Eph.3:1-13 (F page 20). The prisoner of Christ Jesus

F	S	1	Prisoner for you (<i>huper humōn</i>)		
	T		Dispensation of grace of God. Revelation of mystery.	a	2 Dispensation given
				b	2 To you-ward
				b	2 To me
				a	3 Mystery revealed
	U		Two mysteries and two ministries.	d	4 Mystery of Christ
				e	5 Apostles and prophets (<i>Plural</i>)
				f	5,6 The mystery
				g	In Spirit
					h ₁ Joint-heirs
					h ₂ Joint-body
					h ₃ Joint-partakers
				g	In Christ
				e	7 Paul alone (<i>Singular</i>)
				d	8 Unsearchable riches of Christ
	T		Dispensation of mystery. Making known wisdom of God.	a	9 Dispensation hidden since the ages
				b	9 By God who created through Christ
				c	10 Knowledge through the church
				a	11 Purpose of the ages
				b	11 Which He made in Christ
				c	12 Access through faith of Christ
	S	13	Afflictions for you (<i>huper humōn</i>)		

CHAPTER 11

EPHESIANS

The prisoner of Christ Jesus (F Eph.3:1-13)

The reader who has followed the exposition of Ephesians so far will have had brought before his notice a series of new facts and characteristics, any one of which, rightly considered, demands an explanation on the grounds of a new dispensation, and, in fact, makes such a new dispensation absolutely imperative.

<p>All spiritual blessings In heavenly places Before the overthrow Seated together The both made one No longer foreigners A habitation of God</p>	}	<p>“The dispensation of the Mystery”</p>
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These seven items are possible only if God has revealed some new mode of dealing with man, other than that already revealed in the Gospels, the Acts and the earlier epistles of Paul. Consequently we encounter, at the threshold of Ephesians 3, Paul as the prisoner of Christ Jesus and the revelation committed to him of a dispensation having the Gentiles specially in view.

By looking at the structure, set out on page 98, we find that this section is bounded by references to the ministry and sufferings of Paul for them. The next item, and its corresponding member, speak of a dispensation:

- “The dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward”.
- “The dispensation of the Mystery”.

Then, centrally, come two distinct but related mysteries —

the mystery of Christ, as it has been unfolded with increasing fulness through the ages, and the mystery itself, the peculiar character of which distinguishes the present dispensation, its declaration constituting the special ministry of Paul as the Lord's prisoner.

It will be observed that the title changes from "the prisoner of Christ Jesus" in 3:1 to "the prisoner of the Lord" in 4:1. The title "Lord" recognises His authority and so stands at the beginning of the practical section.

As to Ephesians 3:1, it will be seen that the R.V. reads "Christ Jesus" instead of "Jesus Christ". While both titles refer to the same blessed person, the title "Christ Jesus" seems to stress His risen and ascended position. According to the R.V. Paul is the only writer who uses this title:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles" (Eph.3:1).

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father" (Eph.3:14).

The opening words, "For this cause", show that the Apostle is about to speak of something arising out of the revelation of the last chapter. As we read on, however, we are conscious that he has not pursued this theme, but has, according to his custom, turned aside to make an explanation that appeared necessary, returning, when that explanation has been made, to the original theme. The connection of these parts of the epistle may be better realised if set out as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| A Eph.2:19-22 | The church a temple, a habitation or dwelling of God in Spirit |
| B Eph.3:1 | For this cause |
| C Eph.3:1-13 | A parenthesis made necessary by Paul's claim that his imprisonment was connected with the blessing of the Gentiles, which he explains as linked with a dispensation given to himself. He returns to the matter of his tribulations which are for their glory, and repeats the words: |
| B Eph.3:14 | For this cause |
| A Eph.3:14-21 | The individual believer should pray that he may experimentally enjoy this privilege of 2:19-22, which for the present is expressed in the words: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith". |

What we are to consider in this chapter is the parenthesis of Ephesians 3:1-13. Paul had made a claim — “I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles”. He asserted that his imprisonment had no reference to any fault of his own, but that it was essentially a part of the Lord’s purposes of grace for the Gentiles. He then stopped. Here was a claim which he knew was true — but he had many adversaries. The newly-formed church needed that every item of its faith should be beyond question. How could Paul prove his claim? Its very character made proof almost impossible. He could bring no letters of commendation; he could show no authorization by man or church. Once, when the Lord was on earth, His adversaries murmured about a claim that He had made. How could He demonstrate that His words to the sick of the palsy were words of truth? No man can give a public exhibition of the fact that his sins have been forgiven, but he can demonstrate that the word of Him Who speaks is with power, and so we read:

“For whether is easier *to say*, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or *to say*, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house” (Matt.9:5-7).

Here the Lord says, in effect, If I prove true where a test is possible, believe Me where the test is not so easy to apply. Paul adopts a similar attitude. If, he says, I prove that I have a fuller knowledge of that which is shared among many, you may be more disposed to credit my claim to having one revelation in particular from the Lord, that I share with no other messenger.

We have already canvassed the subject of the prison ministry of the apostle Paul, and should the theme be unfamiliar to any reader, it would be well worth while to revise the subject before going further. Paul views his imprisonment as Joseph viewed his:

“I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life” (Gen.45:4,5).

When the Apostle bade farewell to the church at Ephesus he said:

“And now brethren, I commend you to God and to THAT word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all those having been sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

He now writes to that church and speaks of the dispensation of the grace of God which he had received for them.

There is an insistence in Ephesians 3 upon the fact that this new dispensation is peculiarly Gentile:

“For you Gentiles ... Which is given me to you-ward” (Eph.3:1,2).

“That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs” (Eph. 3:6).

“To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8).

“My tribulation for you, which is your glory” (Eph.3:13).

The word “Gentiles” occurs five times in Ephesians:

“Gentiles” in Ephesians

A	2:11,12	What the Gentiles were.	Aliens
B	3:1	Paul's prison ministry	
C	3:6	The threefold fellowship of the Mystery	
B	3:8	Paul's special evangel	
A	4:17,18	What the Gentiles were.	Alienated

The word occurs in Colossians 1:27, where the context speaks of the church which is His Body, and the dispensation of God “given to me for you”.

In 1 Timothy 2:6,7 the Apostle speaks of himself as “a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles”, and uses the strong expression, “I speak the truth in Christ and lie not”. This threefold position — preacher, apostle and teacher of the Gentiles — is repeated in 2 Timothy 1:11, and the Apostle sees that his first deliverance was but an opportunity of fulfilling that ministry:

“At my first defence no man stood with me ... notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear” (2 Tim. 4:16,17).

Thus he who had stood upon the threshold of this dispensation, and had counted not his life dear to himself so that he might finish his course, could say at the close:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim.4:7).

We have discussed in earlier volumes the meaning of the word “dispensation”, a discussion which we will not repeat here. We drew attention when dealing with Ephesians 2:19-22 to the prevalence in various combinations of the word *oikos*, a house. Dispensation is *oikonomos*, and indicates that the house of God has its appointed steward. The phrase, “that was *over* the household” in Isaiah 37:2 and elsewhere contains the word *oikonomia* in the LXX.

“As I wrote afore in few words” (Eph. 3:3).

To what does the Apostle refer here? There are fourteen epistles to the credit of the apostle Paul in the Scriptures, but it is not to be believed that these comprise his total literary output. With all the burning questions of the times, and the care of all the churches upon him, to say nothing of letters to his assistants and to other believers, we can readily believe his written ministry to have been very extensive. Do the words quoted above refer to a letter written to the Ephesians or to some other church, accessible to them but lost to us? It is evident that whatever was “written afore in few words” by the Apostle was of great value. If it had but a private and personal meaning for the Ephesians, it would not have been introduced here. It is clear that we need the information referred to even more than did the Ephesians. If such information be lost, then God has inspired a reference to a letter that He was unable or unwilling to preserve. There is no need for such a thought. What Paul wrote afore in few words is found in Ephesians 1. He tells us that upon reading these words we shall appreciate the nature of his knowledge in the Mystery of Christ, and so be more willing to believe his claim to have received exclusively the revelation of the Mystery itself. The Mystery of Christ began to be unfolded to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Through the ages this revelation has grown until its zenith is reached in Ephesians 1:19-23. Paul can confidently say that to himself and those associated with him there had been revealed as never

before the Mystery of Christ:

“which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets” (Eph. 3:5).

It is important to observe that the word “ages” in Ephesians 3:5 is really “generations”, as in the following passage in Colossians:

“According to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to complete the Word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but is now made manifest to His saints” (Col.1:25-27).

It is evident that we have here two subjects. One was revealed in some measure in other generations; the other was not revealed at all in other generations. The one is the Mystery of Christ, shared in its revelation by apostles and prophets; the other the Mystery itself, shared in its revelation by none. The reader is asked to consult the central member U of the structure on page 98 entitled “Two mysteries and two ministries”. It opens with the Mystery of Christ and the ministry of apostles and prophets; it closes with the unsearchable riches of Christ and the ministry of Paul alone.

The Mystery of the present dispensation is, of course, twofold; it deals with Christ and it deals with the church. Now Christ is the theme of all Scripture, the Hope of all callings, the Foundation of all structures. Consequently, while fuller and higher revelations were necessary to declare His exalted position at the right hand of God, such were in their nature an advance upon what had gone before. The revelation that pertains to the church, however, was entirely new. Nothing, in any shape or form, was known of it in Scripture. Its constitution, sphere of blessing and time of choice are all absolutely unique. Nowhere else throughout the whole range of revelation was it ever revealed that Gentiles should be “seated together” in the heavenly places; never elsewhere that of Jew and Gentile should a new man be created, associated with a fellowship of absolute equality.

This fellowship occupies a central position in the witness of Ephesians 3:1-13. It is enshrined in the structure of the Mystery. It is bounded by the terms “in Spirit” and “in

Christ", and has a threefold equality, a fellowship without precedent, expressed, so far as the English will permit, by the words "joint-heirs", a "joint-body", and "joint-partakers". The words "in Spirit" of verse 5 do not refer to the revelation made to the apostles and prophets, but, as at the end of Ephesians 2, indicate the only sphere in which such an equality is possible. In the flesh, Israel can brook no peer; in Spirit only can such an equality be possible.

Three times does the Apostle use the word *sun*, "together with". As translations we can use the terms "fellow-heirs" and "fellow-partakers", but hardly "fellow-body". The best plan we can adopt is to translate the *sun* by the word "joint", remembering that it indicates perfect equality. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we have "one body, *whether* we be Jews or Gentiles"; this could not be written of the church of the Mystery, for here there is *neither* Jew nor Greek — both have been blotted out, and of the twain a new man has been created.

We must remember, when reading verse 6, not to pause at the end of the verse, but to read straight on into verse 7. It is not the gospel simply, but "the gospel whereof I (Paul) was made a minister". A reference to Galatians 2:7 will show that the members of the "Body" of Ephesians could not have been equal partakers of the promise in Christ according to the gospel there set forth. The gospel in which these members equally share is that gospel of the grace of God which is in view in Acts 20:24, a gospel exactly fitting the dispensation of the grace of God, even as the gospel of the Mystery exactly fits the dispensation of the Mystery.

The words of Hebrews 11:9, though dealing with another calling, are very similar: "Heirs with him of the same promise". God is not the God of Abraham only, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Nowhere else in Scripture do we meet with the word *sussōma*, "joint-body". We read elsewhere of kingdom, church of the firstborn, body, bride, flock, etc., but never of a "joint-body". This is exclusively the character of the church of the dispensation of the Mystery.

In connection with this Mystery, the Apostle speaks of three phases of its ministry:

- (1) The ministry of the gospel according to the gift of grace.
- (2) The preaching among the Gentiles of the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- (3) The enlightening of all as to the dispensation of the mystery.

The two mysteries are elaborated here. The Mystery of Christ finds its expansion in the "unsearchable riches", and the Mystery itself in the enlightening of all as to its dispensation.

Dealing first with the reference to the unsearchable riches, we notice that it is a *gospel* — "That I should preach" (as an evangel). We are apt to limit the idea of gospel preaching to the unsaved. This is far from the truth. The evangelist of the present dispensation is commissioned not only to preach "the gospel of your salvation" (Eph.1:13), but to "preach peace" (Eph.2:17) in its relation to the new man. He is commissioned also to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, dealing with His hitherto unrevealed glories and touching the question of His present rejection of Israel and His present position at the right hand of God as Head of the church.

The unsearchable character of these riches of Christ is suggested by the word used. In Romans 11:33 the word is translated "past finding out". It is a compound of *ichnos*, "a step", and suggests something untraceable and without foot-mark. The main features of Messianic prophecy are plainly visible on the pages of the O.T. The Mystery of Christ and the Mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were not quite so plainly written, but of the special phase of the Mystery of Christ which pertained to the church, the one Body, not a trace can be found. Until these new riches of Christ were made known there was no ground of hope for the Gentile should Israel fail. Colossians 1:27 makes it clear that the fact that God could send a message to the Gentiles after Israel's rejection was of itself a pledge that a new dispensation had come into operation:

"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ among you, the hope of glory" (Col.1:27).

The A.V. of Ephesians 3:9 reads “the fellowship of the mystery”, but the R.V., “the dispensation of the mystery”. Fellowship is *koinōnia*, dispensation *oikonomia*, and the double reading is due to one of those many slips of the scribe, with which the student of the text is familiar, for the two words sound and look much alike.

We have in Ephesians three references to this dispensation:

- (1) “Having made known unto us the mystery of His will ... with regard to a dispensation of the fulness of the seasons, to reunite all things under one Head in the Christ” (Eph. 1:9,10).
- (2) “The dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward” (Eph. 3:2).
- (3) “And to enlighten all as to what is the dispensation of the mystery” (Eph. 3:9).

There is a very definite statement appended to the third passage which is essential to its understanding:

“Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ ... according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:9-11).

As the passage stands in the A.V. it is clear that this dispensation is something hitherto unrevealed; a closer study only makes this more evident. The words translated “from the beginning of the world” are *apo tōn aiōnōn*, “from or since the ages”. The word “eternal” is *tōn aiōnōn*, “of the ages”, so that the clause should be rendered as the R.V. margin shows: “According to the purpose of the ages”. The ages are subdivided into times, seasons, days, and dispensations. They span the interval from Genesis 1:1 to 1 Corinthians 15:28:

“In the beginning God created ... then cometh the end ... God all in all”.

The dispensation of the Mystery is an integral part of this great purpose of the ages. In the wise counsels of God it was hidden, and not made known until after the rejection of Israel in Acts 28. It relates to that section of God’s universe about which little is revealed in the bulk of Scripture, the

heavenly places which are at the right hand of God, far above all principality and power. It was revealed to one selected messenger, Paul, and to him was the glorious privilege granted to "enlighten all". Since his day it has been passed down by other vessels of mercy as a good deposit, a theme we shall deal with when studying the fourth prison epistle, 2 Timothy. In spite therefore of all apparent failure, in spite of present weakness and sorrow, "In Him, we have boldness of access with confidence by the faith (faithfulness) of Him" (Eph. 3:12). Like Asaph, surrounded by evil, we have obtained a new view-point. We have been into the sanctuary of God, and have understood the end (Psa. 73).

Before concluding this survey of Ephesians 3:1-13, we must draw attention to the closing verse. As the section opens, so it closes — Paul's imprisonment and sufferings for the Gentiles. Judged by the standard of English grammar, Paul's statement is incorrect: "My tribulations for you, which *is* your glory". The R.V. has changed "is" to "are" to help the sense. Some commentators would regard "which is your glory" as referring back to the purpose of the ages. Both *Valpy* and *Macknight*, however, draw attention to this use of "is" and the singular "which", commenting as follows:

"The relative being placed between the two nouns 'tribulations' and 'glory', the one in the plural, and the other in the singular number, it may, according to the idiom of both Hebrew and Greek languages, be made to agree with either. Here it agrees with *doxa* (glory) which is in the singular number.

We find passages elsewhere which show a connection between Paul's sufferings and the church to which he ministered:

"Who now rejoice in my sufferings *for you*, and fill up that which is lacking of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Col.1:24).

The Apostle suffered much and deeply because of his ministry among the Gentiles. He was the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. He was an ambassador in bonds. At the close of his ministry he says:

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles, *for which cause* I suffer all these things" (2 Tim.1:11,12).

Again, in 2 Corinthians 1:5,6:

“For as the sufferings *of Christ* abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is *for your* consolation and salvation”.

It is an unspeakable comfort to all who seek to follow in the steps of this blessed Apostle, to know that the wrath of man is entirely in the hands of the Lord. Not one stroke could touch Paul without the Lord’s sanction:

“He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake” (Acts 9:15,16).

Some translations of Ephesians 3:13 read: “Therefore I ask that *I* may not faint in these afflictions on your behalf”. We remember that the Apostle asks for prayer for himself that he may open his mouth boldly; we remember, too, that he does not disguise the fact that at times his ministry is with “fear and trembling”. Strictly speaking, however, the original of verse 13 leaves the matter open, saying simply “Therefore I ask not to faint”. Whether Paul, or the saints, or both, are intended is not stated. Whether it refers to either, or both, the secret of strength is the faithfulness of the Lord: “Boldness of access with confidence through His faithfulness”*

Paul is now ready to return to the theme begun at the end of Ephesians 2. He resumes in verse 14 with the repeated words, “For this cause”.

The prayer of Ephesians 3 stands midway between doctrine and practice, and includes both. Before we deal with this prayer, a brief resumé of the doctrine already surveyed seems called for, the extreme importance of its subject matter being a full justification for the halt and recapitulation.

*For a discussion as to this translation the reader is directed to *The Berean Expositor*, Vol. XII pp. 91-94.

CHAPTER 12

EPHESIANS

A recapitulation of the doctrinal section
(Eph. 1:3 – 3:13)

The seven triads of blessing

Such is the wondrous revelation of grace in the dispensation of the Mystery that no amount of repetition can exhaust or spoil it, and in the language of the Apostle we may say:

“To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe” (Phil. 3:1).

1. THE THREEFOLD CHARTER (Eph. 1:3-14).

- (a) The will of the Father.
- (b) The work of the Son.
- (c) The witness of the Spirit.

Here we are taken into the secrets of the Most High, and perceive the workings of His grace, choosing the members of the church before the overthrow of the world, blessing them in a sphere never before opened to man, “in heavenly places”, and granting them the “adoption” in that glorious sphere. The fact that the heirs of such glory are in bondage to sin and death is next faced, redemption from the bondage of sin being effected now (1:7), and from death in the future day of redemption (1:14). Our blessings being “all spiritual”, the earnest of our inheritance is “the holy promissory Spirit”.

2. THE THREEFOLD PRAYER (Eph. 1:15-19).

Things that take place here and now are possible of explanation in human language. Things that are to take place upon the new earth are also possible of explanation. But the glories of an inheritance so far removed from all known

conditions as is the inheritance that is to be enjoyed in heavenly places at the right hand of God, can only be apprehended by the Spirit, as the believer increases in the knowledge of the Lord Himself in His present exalted position. Consequently when the Apostle turns from the subject of the charter of the church to deal with the manner of the present appreciation of that charter, he turns from teaching, and resorts to prayer. The prayer is threefold:

- (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 (or in the true holiest of all).
- (c) That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe.

3. THE THREEFOLD FELLOWSHIP (Doctrinal)

(Eph. 1:19 – 2:7).

In this section we discover that the mighty power which is to usward who believe is the power which was wrought in Christ when He was not only raised from the dead, but when He ascended up far above all principality and power, to the right hand of God, there to be made the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The revelation of verses 19-23 is the crowning feature of the Mystery of Christ referred to by the Apostle in 3:3,4. Intimately connected with this Mystery of Christ is the Mystery itself, which shows that where Christ is, at the right hand of God, there His church is also:

- (a) We being dead to sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.
- (b) And hath raised us up together.
- (c) And made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

4. THREE WORKS (Eph. 2:8-10).

It is very evident that nothing short of a new creation could make it possible for sinners of the Gentiles to be heirs of such glory, and this new creation is marked by two features. It is all *of* grace, not *of* works, but *unto* good works, and between these two contrasting features stands the workmanship of God. This is the shortest section of the epistle. The walk of this new creation is developed in chapters 5 and

6, and occupies the largest section of the whole book.

- (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 (Eph. 2:11-19).

In this section the great theme is the way in which the dispensational distance in which the Gentiles were situated has been annulled. A middle wall stood between them and the privileges that Israelitish believers enjoyed. In the creation of the New Man two things are abolished, viz :

- (1) the decrees both of Acts 15 and of the law (Col.2), and
- (2) "the both", neither Jew nor Gentile appearing, as such, in the newly created man, the one Body reconciled to God. The whole section revolves round the subject of the removal of enmity that existed and the resultant peace:

- (a) Far off are made nigh ... for 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) (Eph. 2:19-22).

The new man thus created, and destined for the highest glory, was not conceived and wrought without purpose. Each member of this New Man and reconciled Body is a living stone, and the stones are being built together to form a holy Temple, a dwelling-place for God in Spirit:

- (a) No more strangers ... but *fellow* citizens of the saints (the heavenly holiest of all).
- (b) In Whom the whole building fitly framed *together*, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.
- (c) In Whom ye are also builded *together* for an habitation of God in Spirit.

7. THE THREEFOLD EQUALITY (Doctrinal and Dispensational) (Eph. 3:1-13).

The prison ministry of the apostle Paul and the dispensation of the mystery are allied. Not until that prison ministry

was revealed was this Mystery made known. The Mystery of Christ, however, is necessarily allied to every phase of the purpose of the ages, but that part of it which is allied to the dispensation of the Mystery is called “the unsearchable riches of Christ”. While Paul shared with others the knowledge of the Mystery of Christ, he nevertheless had a greater measure of light upon it than had any who preceded him. No comparison with others, however, is permissible in connection with the dispensation of the Mystery, for it was entrusted to Paul alone, and it was he who received the commission to enlighten all.

The peculiar features of this mystery are focused in the threefold equality that is expressed in 3:6:

- (a) In Spirit the Gentiles are heirs on an *equality*.
- (b) They are members of a Body, all on a perfect *equality*.
- (c) They are partakers in the promise in Christ by the gospel entrusted to Paul, on an *equality*.

Nothing like this had ever been known before, for it was the outcome of a secret purpose hid in God from the ages.

Here then are the seven triads of Gentile blessing revealed in the dispensation of the Mystery. They are our priceless possession, the title deeds of our inheritance, the delineation of our high calling, the basis of our hope of glory and of our present walk and witness.

Between this and the seven corresponding practical sections is the great prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21, to which we now turn our attention.

Eph.3:14-21 (G page 20). The central prayer

G	V Prayer		i 14	Prayer to Father	
		j	15	Every family in heaven and earth	
	W	Threefold petition and threefold endue- ment.	k ₁ 16	In order that (<i>hina</i>)	} According (<i>kata</i>) to riches of glory. Strengthened with might (<i>dunamis</i> and <i>krataiō</i>).
			l ₁ 16,17	He may grant	
			k ₂ 18	In order that (<i>hina</i>)	} To have strength enough (<i>exischuō</i>).
			l ₂ 18	You may comprehend	
			k ₃ 19	In order that (<i>hina</i>)	} Able to do (<i>dunamai</i>), according (<i>kata</i>) to power (<i>dunamis</i>) that worketh (<i>energeō</i>) in us.
			l ₃ 19,20	You may be filled	
	V Doxology		i 21	Glory to Him	
		j	21	All the generations of the age of ages	

CHAPTER 13

EPHESIANS

The central prayer (G Eph. 3:14-21)

We have now mounted together the seven steps of doctrine in this epistle, and in this prayer we enter the innermost shrine. Here the purpose of the ages and the special part played by the church of the one Body are brought to a focus. Doctrine, dispensation and practice blend. Like the prayer of Ephesians 1 it is threefold; a threefold petition marked by the recurring preposition *hina*, “in order that”, and a threefold enduement, the necessary accompanying power. This can be best seen by turning to the structure given on page 114.

The first petition is that these believers may be “strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man”; the second, that they may have strength enough (*exischuō*) to comprehend with all saints the love of Christ; and the third, that they may be filled up to all the fulness of God. The prayer concludes with the confident ascription of praise to Him Who is able (*of power*) to answer, and more than answer, these requests, according to *the power* that *energizeth* us.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that the prayer of Ephesians 3:19-21 is closely linked with Ephesians 2. The words “For this cause” of Ephesians 3:1 and 14 are repetitions, necessitated by the parenthesis that vindicates the Apostle’s claim to be the prisoner of the Lord for the Gentiles. If we adopt the reading of the Vatican MSS, the connection between the close of Ephesians 2 and the prayer is more evident.

- A A *dwelling place* for Christ in Spirit
- B For this cause I pray
- A That Christ *may dwell* in your hearts by faith

In the first case it is the whole Temple that is in view; in the second it is the individual and the experimental side of the truth. Much the same is found in 2:16 and 18. It is one thing to belong to that company which is "reconciled to God in one Body"; it is another, individually and as a spiritual sequence, to have "access to the Father in one Spirit". In each part of 2:18 there is an advance on 2:16:

Reconciliation is followed by access.
One Body is followed by one Spirit.
"To God" is followed by "to the Father".

The Apostle sought that collective truth should be made experimental and living. He was not content that his hearers should endorse the teaching of the Mystery and lose themselves in the vastness of heavenly places, or that they should think themselves of no account as they contemplated the backward sweep of the ages to that time before the overthrow of the world. With all true humility, they were not insignificant specks that mattered little; they were the elect of God, the members of the Body of Christ, His fulness. Should not every member of that reconciled Body seek the access to the Father that is their blood-bought privilege? Should not every member of that living Temple, designed to be the dwelling-place of God in Spirit, seek some personal and experimental acquaintance with its blessedness now? And so the Apostle proceeds, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father".

The "Habitation" of Ephesians 2:22 is *katoikētērion*; the word "dwell" in Ephesians 3:17 *katoikeō*.

In both prayers there is an allusion to a name:

"Every name that is named" (Eph.1:21).
"The whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph.3:15).

The English and Greek conceptions of the family are slightly different. The English word "family" is of Latin origin, from *famulus*, "the servant", whereas the Greek word is *patria*, derived from *pater*, "father". The R.V. correctly reads "every family" instead of "the whole family" as in the A.V. rendering. The "families" on earth are spoken of in Acts 3:25:

“In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed”.

Apart from the use of the word *patria* in Luke 2:4 where it has to do with the house and lineage of Joseph, Acts 3:25 and Ephesians 3:15 are the only occurrences. In the first Israel holds the pre-eminent position; in the second it is held by the church of the one Body. This is true division coupled with true unity. Heaven and earth are different spheres of blessing, but there is one Father of all the families, and Christ is to head up all things, whether in heaven or on earth. Christ is the Head of His church, and the Head also of principality and power (Col.1:18; 2:10). Every family finds in Him its Head, and in God its Father.

The prayer of Ephesians 1 includes the request that we may know what is the mighty power that is to usward who believe. In this prayer that power is to be experienced:

“That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Eph.3:16,17).

Speaking of redemption in another place the Apostle uses the phrase, “the riches of His grace” (Eph.1:7); speaking of the inheritance, “the riches of His glory” (Eph.1:18). Here it is not the riches of grace but the riches of glory, the future blessedness of His inheritance in the holiest (see page 94) being anticipated here and now, where Christ dwells in the heart by faith.

This strengthening is “through His Spirit”; for it is the office of the Spirit to minister Christ to His people. During the dispensation of the kingdom, the ministry of the Spirit followed the principles of Pentecost, with a definite reference to the risen Lord and the throne of David (Acts 2:30-33). When the dispensation of the Mystery commenced, the Spirit’s witness ceased to run along Pentecostal lines, and He now ministers the glory of Christ as Head of the Body, seated above all heavens.

Omitting, with the R.V., the reference in verse 9, we have fourteen occurrences of the word “Spirit” in Ephesians. It is beyond the scope of this book to deal with these passages, but it is possible that some may be stimulated to study more fully this important line of truth, if the subject be presented as follows:

"Spirit" in Ephesians

- A¹ a 1:13 Sealed ... redemption of purchased possession
 - b 1:17 Spirit of wisdom and revelation in knowledge of Him
- B¹ 2:2 Spirit that now worketh. The old creation
 - C¹ 2:18 Access by one Spirit to the Father
 - D¹ 2:22 Dwelling of Christ in Spirit
 - E¹ 3:5,6 Threefold equality of the Mystery
 - D² 3:16 Dwelling of Christ in the heart
 - C² 4:3,4 Unity of Spirit, one Spirit
- B² 4:23,24 Renewed in Spirit. New creation
- A² a 4:30 Sealed unto day of redemption
 - b 5:18 Filled with the Spirit
- B³ 6:17 Sword of the Spirit
 - C³ 6:18 Prayer and supplication in Spirit

Perhaps a more pointed feature in reference to the work of the Spirit in this dispensation is found in the phrase, "*en pneumati*", "in Spirit", which occurs five times.

"En pneumati" in Ephesians

- A 2:18 Access. The whole Body
 - B 2:22 Dwelling. The temple aspect of the church
 - C 3:5,6 The threefold equality of the Mystery
 - B 5:18 Filled (see Col.3:16: "Dwell in you")
- A 6:18 Supplication. For all saints

These features cannot be developed further here; we must concentrate upon the prayer before us.

The first clause of this prayer — the realisation of Christ dwelling in the heart by faith — is so wonderful that it at first seems impossible that there should be anything beyond it. It is good for the heart to be moved at the wonders of grace, but the mind must be free also to perceive the purposes of grace. God has an object toward which all His dealings with His children contribute. We found at the conclusion of the prayer in chapter 1 that the ultimate title of the church is not the Body, but the Fulness. We can readily believe that behind the formation of the "temple fitly framed together" — which is linked by the words "For this cause" (3:1 and 14) with the close of this second prayer — there is also a purpose, and this, once again, expressed by the "fulness" (3:19). Christ dwelling in the heart by faith, His position as Head over all things to

the church, and His position as the Chief Corner Stone, all have this great object in view — the “fulness”. Let us now consider the second step towards this goal.

The words, “In love having been rooted and having been grounded”, occupy much the same place in Ephesians 3 as the words, “The eyes of your understanding having been enlightened” in Ephesians 1. There is no petition that the eyes may be enlightened, and there is no petition that the believer may be rooted and grounded; the prayer goes forward with the assumption that such is already the case.

Objection has been raised to the double figure “rooted and grounded” — “rooted” referring to a tree, whereas “founded” or “grounded” refers to a building. The double figure again occurs in Colossians 2:7: “Having been rooted and having been built up in Him”. There is no incongruity in these terms when we remember that God’s building is made with living stones, and that that which is “built” upon a foundation, nevertheless “groweth” unto a holy Temple. The very fact that the double figure can be used indicates life; though, while life necessarily underlies the whole conception of the Body, the emphasis here is upon love. The comprehension with all saints reaches out to nothing less than the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and nothing less than love thus wrought can dare attempt to comprehend such love.

The words, “may be able to comprehend”, are changed in the R.V. to “may be strong”. Even this does not do justice to the word used. *Exischuō*, which occurs nowhere else in the N.T., is derived from *ischuō*, which gives us *ischus*, “might”, in Ephesians 1:19 and 6:10. There is, therefore, a definite laying hold upon the resurrection power that is “to usward who believe”. “Comprehend” is the word rendered “obtain” and “apprehend” in Philippians 3:12,13. It is rendered “perceive” in Acts 10:34, where Peter does not arrive at this point by a process of reasoning, but by the compelling effect of external happenings. While in some things we must be intensely individual and personal, in other matters the intrusion of the individual is inappropriate. When we approach this glorious fulness, and attempt to survey its breadth and length, the individual is swallowed up in the immensity of the whole; we perceive not the separate stones

used in its construction, but the whole temple fitly framed together in its oneness and completeness.

We are to "comprehend" and we are to "know":

To COMPREHEND — The breadth, length, depth, height.

To KNOW — The love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

There is a little particle *te* in this passage that should not be ignored. The Emphatic Diaglott expresses it by rendering verse 19:

"To know even that which surpasses knowledge".

Bloomfield suggests:

"And (in short) to know the immense love of Christ ... though indeed, to *completely* know it surpasses the powers of all finite beings".

We get some indication of what is in view when we remember Proverbs 25:3: "The heaven for height, and the earth for depth".

The "breadth" and "length" find, also, some interpretation in the epistle itself.

THE BREADTH — "All saints". "Far off made nigh". "Gentiles".

THE LENGTH — "Before the overthrow of the world". "The ages to come". "The generations of the age of the ages".

THE DEPTH — "The lower parts of the earth". "Children of wrath even as others".

THE HEIGHT — "Far above all principality and power". "Far above all heavens".

We have in this passage a spiritual "fourth dimension" and it is at least suggestive that the three spheres of inheritance are Scripturally defined in three distinct dimensional terms:

The first sphere: the earth. In terms of two dimensions.

"Arise, walk through the land, in the LENGTH of it and in the BREADTH of it: for I will give it unto thee" (Gen.13:17).

The second sphere. The new Jerusalem. In terms of three dimensions.

“The city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth ... the LENGTH and the BREADTH and the HEIGHT of it are equal” (Rev.21:16).

The third sphere. Heavenly places. In terms of four dimensions.

“May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the BREADTH and LENGTH and DEPTH and HEIGHT ... the FULNESS of God” (Eph. 3:18,19).

The fourth dimension lies outside of our experience, and like “all *spiritual* blessings” cannot be defined in language belonging to “flesh and blood”. There is no attempt to define these things in Ephesians 3; the writer turns from the abstract to the concrete and gives us, though that, too, “passeth knowledge”, the most wonderful exhibition of breadth, length, depth and height ever known – “the love of Christ”.

We are told that this love exceeds knowledge, but this is not written to deter us from seeking to know it, any more than the fact that the peace of God passes understanding prevents enjoyment of it. Something of the vastness of the love of Christ is suggested in Ephesians 2:7, words that overwhelm the mind with their immensity:

“That in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”.

Even though this love of Christ is so much beyond our grasp, the Apostle does not hesitate to use it as an example in the practical section:

“Walk in love, as Christ also loved us” (v.2).

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church” (v.25).

We have now seen two of the steps in this prayer; and we now approach the third and final step. The A.V. reads:

“That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God” (Eph.3:19).

The R.V. corrects this and reads, "unto all the fulness of God". The word translated "with" and "unto" is *eis* and often conveys the idea of a goal or object. Perhaps the translation:

"That ye may be filled *with a view to* all the fulness of God"

expresses the meaning as well as any other. We have already seen that the "fulness" refers to that great purpose of the ages which is destined completely to rectify the great schism that brought about the conditions of Genesis 1:2 — the "overthrow of the world". That fulness and that purpose are very intimately related to the thought of God dwelling among His people, as may be traced out in the Scriptures that speak of the Tabernacle and the Cherubim. The Temple of Ephesians 2 and the Body of Ephesians 1 alike look forward to the fulness and the dwelling. As we have seen, the prayer of Ephesians 3 is the sequel to the revelation concerning the Temple in Ephesians 2:19-22. The dwelling of Christ in the heart by faith is an individual foreshadowing of what the "fulness" will be when the schism is completely healed.

This mighty dwelling of God, this fulness that embraces heaven and earth in its height and depth, that embraces Jew and Gentile and all the ages, is not only conceived as a vast Temple beyond human measurement, but as the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.

This expansion of heart, from the individual to all saints, leads to the goal — that we should be filled, completed, set in place with a view to that great fulfilment of the purpose of the ages when God shall be all in all.

With this prayer we reach the utmost bounds of revelation. The fulness of God as expressed in the love of Christ fills all breadth, length, depth and height. All that lies beyond is not a matter of present revelation, and is no part of Christian doctrine. No amount of inference or deduction before Acts 28 would have led any to perceive what God had reserved for this present dispensation; and no amount of argument will lead anyone rightly to visualize what lies beyond the limits of revealed truth. We would rather, with the Apostle, bow in adoration and voice once again the great doxology:

“Now unto Him Who is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all* that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, for all the generations of the ages of the ages, Amen” (Eph.3:20,21).

Resurrection power, that can alone accomplish the mighty task, is the power whereby our prayers are answered. Possibly the closing generation referred to here is placed in contrast with the first. The generation of the heavens and the earth that occupies Genesis 2 – 6 saw the introduction of sin and death, the two seeds, and the judgment of the Flood. The generation of the age of the ages will see the introduction of the “fulness” which will restore and complete all that was spoiled and stained at the beginning. Then everything shall be to the glory of the Lord, and centrally in that vast creation will stand the church – “in the church in Christ Jesus” – giving the glory due to His name. “Amen” is the closing word – “So may it be”. The opening of the practical section is the exhortation to “walk worthy”, which is but the heart’s “Amen” working out in life and witness.

This brings us to the next section of Ephesians, the seven-fold practical parallel. This must now occupy our hearts and minds as we ponder the teaching of the Scriptures relating to the walk of those who have such a vocation.

Eph.4:1-19 (*F* and *E*, page 20). The prisoner
and the body

(These two members being originally one, the
structure cannot be divided)

<i>F</i> and <i>E</i>	X	1	In the Lord. I beseech		
	Y	1	Walk worthy of the calling (<i>Positive</i>)		
	Z	2	Humility of mind	m Humility of mind n Meekness m Longsuffering n Forbearance	In love (<i>en</i> <i>agapē</i>)
	A ₁	o ₁ 3-6	UNITY of Spirit (sevenfold)	o One Body p One Spirit q One Hope r One Lord q One Faith p One Baptism o One God and Father	
		p ₁ 7	MEASURE of gift of Christ		
		q ₁ 8-12	MINISTRY for adjustment		
	A ₂	o ₂ 13	UNITY of faith (sevenfold)	s Of the faith Of the knowledge Of the Son t Of God s Of the stature Of the fulness Of the Christ	
		p ₂ 13	MEASURE of fulness of Christ		
		q ₂ 14,15	MINISTRY for growth		
	A ₃	o ₃ 16	UNITY of the body (sevenfold)	u Out of (<i>ek</i>) whom v The whole Body w Every joint x Every part v The Body w Building itself u In (<i>en</i>) love	
		p ₃ 16	MEASURE of every part		
		q ₃ 16	MINISTRY for growth and building		
	X	17	In the Lord. I testify		
	Y	17	Walk not as Gentiles (<i>Negative</i>)		
	Z	17-19	Vanity of mind	m Mind, vain and darkened n Alienation, ignorance m Blindness and past feeling n Lasciviousness and all uncleanness.	In greedi- ness (<i>en</i> <i>pleonex- ia</i>).

CHAPTER 14

EPHESIANS

The prisoner

The sevenfold unity (*F* Eph. 4:1-6)

We now pass from the glorious revelation of grace, with its seven features of doctrine, to the equally wonderful exhortation to walk worthy, with its seven corresponding features of practice. Without repeating the structures that are set out in the earlier articles, we feel the appreciation of this balance to be of sufficient importance to justify the following presentation:

Doctrine	Practice
(1) All spiritual blessings.	(1) All spiritual armour.
(2) Paul's prayer for the saints.	(2) Saints' prayer for Paul.
(3) Mighty power worked in.	(3) Mighty power worked out.
(4) New creation: its walk.	(4) New creation: its walk.
(5) The new man. Once aliens.	(5) The new man. Once alienated.
(6) Temple. Fitly framed together.	(6) Body. Fitly joined together.
(7) Prisoner. Threefold unity.	(7) Prisoner. Sevenfold unity.

Following the order of the teaching of the epistle, we commence the practical sections at the end of the list given above — the seventh subject of this section.

The heart and centre of all practical walk is the truth of the unity of the Spirit. All our energies are to be directed to the endeavour to keep this unity in the bond of peace. When this is assured, individual gifts of ministry for the edifying of the Body can be brought in (4:7-16), and the realm of "the truth" — as opposed to "the lie" (4:20-32) — can be made manifest with its bearing upon anger and other things.

The walk is then again taken up, and this time expanded until it embraces every human relationship, showing how each may in daily practice manifest the truth of the one Body and of the Mystery. The mighty power inworked (1:19) is now to be worked out (6:10-13); the whole armour of God is to be put on in order to withstand the attacks of spiritual foes; and the section closes with prayer for all saints, and for Paul himself, that utterance and boldness may be given him in connection with the ministry of the Mystery.

“Walk worthy” — We have already shown that the word “worthy” conveys the idea of a balance, and the diagram of the scales on page 18 should be kept in mind. Seven times does the word “walk” occur in Ephesians (2:2,10; 4:1,17; 5:2,8,15). Twice it is the kind of walk that should no longer characterize us, the remaining passages expanding the “good works” that were beforehand ordained, and the walk that is worthy of the calling.

In the doctrinal portion Paul is the prisoner of Christ Jesus (R.V.); in the practical he becomes the prisoner of the *Lord*. The title “Lord” speaks of our relation to Him in service and practical walk. It occurs but once in the doctrinal section (2:21), and fifteen times in the practical. “In Christ” speaks of our position and acceptance. “In the Lord” refers to our practice and acceptable service. The words “walk worthy”, by themselves, merely link the practical to an abstraction. Of what are we to walk worthy? The Apostle focuses our attention upon the calling: “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called”. It is impossible to walk worthy of such a calling as is revealed in this epistle, and to have a proud or unforgiving spirit. The calling is so high that the corresponding frame of mind must be one of lowliness. The object of our whole energy of heart and mind, and the standard by which we must walk, are embraced in the unity of the Spirit. A reference to the structure on page 124 will show that the unity of the Spirit is one of three unities to which the Apostle refers.

- (1) The unity of the Spirit — Sevenfold.
- (2) The unity of the Faith — Sevenfold.
- (3) The unity of the Body — Sevenfold.

The unity of the Spirit with its sevenfold subdivision is an epitome of the practical aspect of the dispensation of the Mystery. Spiritual blessings and heavenly places belong to the doctrinal portion; we cannot “keep” these. “Endeavour” indicates active, watchful diligence; it is translated elsewhere “forward” (Gal.2:10), “study” (2 Tim.2:15), and “do thy diligence” (2 Tim.4:9,21). To keep the unity of the Spirit is our sacred trust.

There are a number of words translated “keep” in the Scriptures:

- Boskō* – To keep as a shepherd.
- Phulassō* – To guard as a soldier.
- Echō* – To hold as the servant did the pound.
- Poieō* – To keep as Israel did the passover.

The word used in Ephesians 4:3 is different from all these. It is *tereō*, to keep as one would a treasure, as Mary who treasured (*diatereō*) certain things in her heart, or as Paul who “kept” the faith. Here then is our trust and our example. We are to keep the unity of the Spirit as Paul kept the Faith; through good report and evil report, through honour and dishonour, ever guarding this sacred trust.

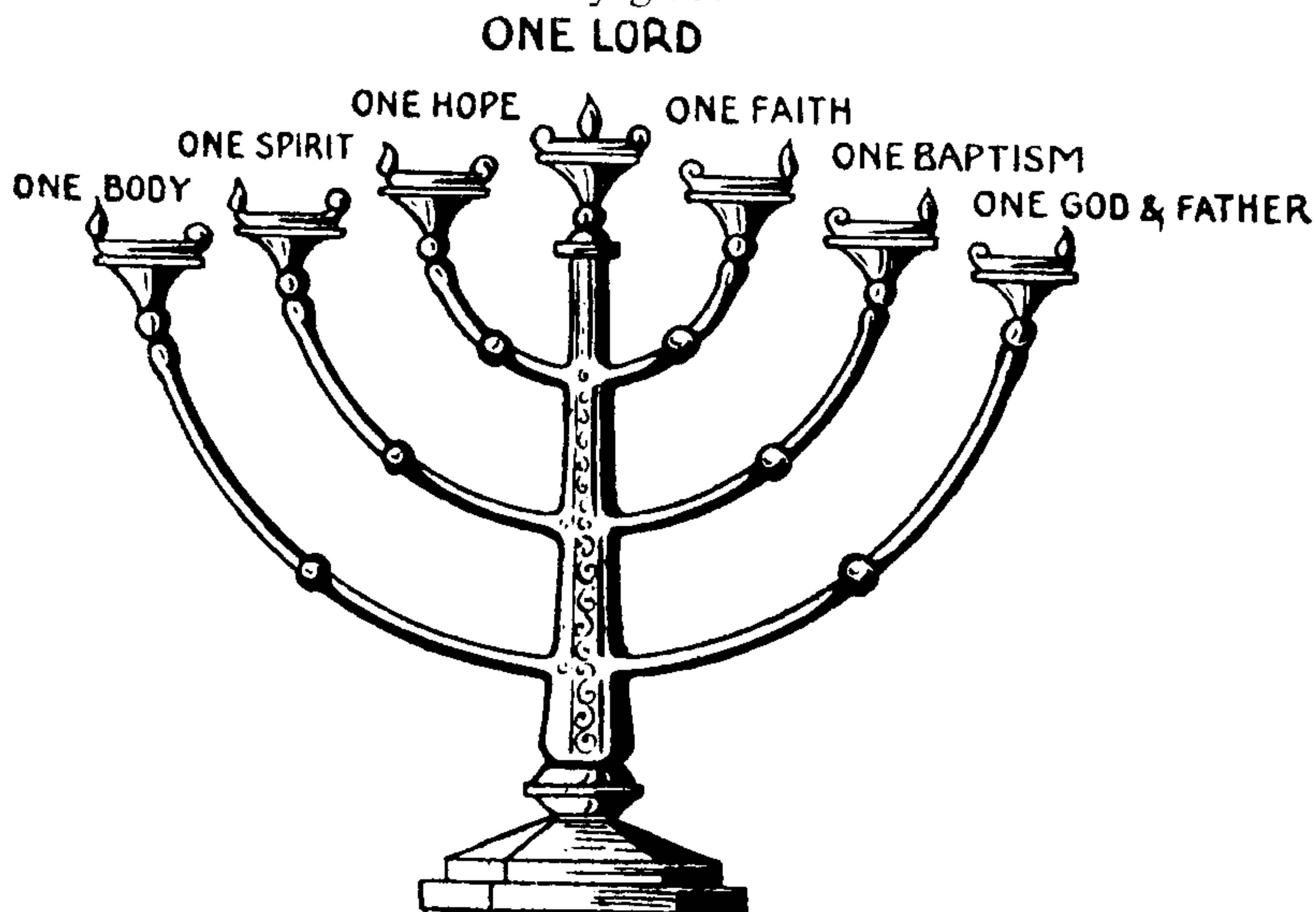
How are we to keep the unity of the Spirit? The answer is—“in the bond of peace”. This peace has already been considered in Ephesians 2, where it is written:

“He is our peace, Who hath made the both one ... for to create in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace” (Eph. 2:14,15).

We cannot carry over into this unity the “former things” that have passed away. We must resolutely stand against any attempt to re-erect the middle wall of partition. We must be willing to be called narrow, bigoted, proud, anything however untrue and unmerited, but through it all we must endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit with all the grace and strength God gives us.

It will be very evident to the reader, that unless we know what this unity of the Spirit comprises, we shall not be able to keep it as we should; consequently the Apostle proceeds to give the details of this blessed trust. There are six parts in this unity arranged in the structure in two groups on either

side of the ascended Lord. The arrangement may be presented to the eye in the form of the six-branched lampstand used of old. We trust no reader will be misled, as one of our critics was, into believing that we teach that this unity of the Spirit was actually set forth in the Tabernacle of old. How could it be set forth then if it was a mystery or secret "hid in God"? While making this clear, we need not be robbed of any help that such an illustration may give:



The central feature is the "One Lord". Without the ascended Christ there would be no Head, and so no Body; no Chief Corner Stone, and so no Temple; no hope and no faith and no love. With the risen and ascended Lord we have both hope and faith. The hope is the "one hope of your calling". Hope and calling are inseparable; what our calling is here and now, our hope is in the future. The prayer of Ephesians 1:18 has the knowledge of this hope as its central petition: "That ye may know what is the hope of His calling".

Other callings have other hopes; among them "the hope of Israel" which covers the whole period of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 28:20). The Second Coming of Christ as set forth in Matthew 24, 1 Thessalonians 4, 1 Corinthians 15, and in the epistles of Peter, James, John and Jude presents phases and aspects of the hope that was entertained by both

believing Jews and Gentiles before the revelation of the Mystery. While Christ and His glory are and ever must be at the centre of the hope of all His own, the hope of each calling will be related to its own sphere of blessing:

The super-heavenly calling

The calling of the church which is His body, essentially connected with “heavenly places” at the right hand of God.	It finds its realization <i>there</i> , where Christ is at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1-4).
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The heavenly calling

The calling of those Jews and Gentiles who walk in the steps of Abraham and whose mother is the heavenly Jerusalem.	It finds its realization in the heavenly city, and is connected with the Second Coming of Christ into the air, the archangel’s voice and the last trump.
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The earthly calling

The calling of Israel and the families of the earth yet to be blessed on the earth.	It finds its realization in the millennial kingdom and the new earth; it is linked with the second coming “immediately after the tribulation” and the standing upon the Mount of Olives.
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To the church of the Mystery belongs the prior hope. It does not look for signs or wonders. There is no prophetic calendar that marks off the day or the hour of the realization of its hope. It is not associated with the *parousia* (the word used by Peter, James, John and in Matthew 24 and Paul’s earlier epistles), but with the manifestation in glory (Col. 3:1-4 – *phaneroō*).

If we would “keep the unity of the Spirit” we must strenuously insist that the only hope before us is the “one hope of our calling” and allow no confusion with the hopes of other callings.

The subject of the one faith is more fully expanded in verse 13 which treats of the “unity of the faith”. As our space is limited we must pass on.

It is clear that the two balancing members of the structure

— “one Spirit” and “one baptism” must be kept together, and inasmuch as but “one” baptism is allowable, it must be the baptism of the Spirit. There has been a steady advance in the place of baptism as the dispensations have changed.

John the Baptist, the last of the prophets, practised water baptism, but spoke of a future baptism of the Spirit. During the Acts of the Apostles and in the churches of that period two baptisms were in order, but with the coming of the new dispensation, water baptism, the shadow, ceases, and only the substance remains. The transition is perhaps made more evident by the following diagram:

John Baptist	Acts Period	The Mystery
Water only	Water and Spirit	Spirit only

Baptism, so far as it pertains to the church, is directly connected with union. Israel were all baptized unto Moses at the Red Sea (1 Cor.10:2). Believers at Rome were baptized into the death of Christ and were planted together in the likeness of His death (Rom.6:3-5). The circumcision of Israel finds its spiritual equivalent in the church of today; it is now “without hands”. And the baptism that pertains to the church today is one in which the believer is not only buried with Christ, but also risen with Him. It is quite untrue to say that those who believe the truth of the Mystery do not believe in baptism. They must do so, for how otherwise could they keep the unity of the Spirit? The truth is that, in view of the fact of two baptisms, one of water and one of Spirit, and that the unity of the Spirit demands that this baptism should be of the Spirit, and further, that the whole trend of the dispensation of the Mystery is away from observances, ordinances, ceremonies, and in the direction of the substance and the antitypical reality, there is no option. Faithfulness will not allow the intrusion of two baptisms into the unity of the Spirit, any more than it will allow the choice of water baptism in preference to the baptism of the Spirit. Baptism, in essence, indicates the fellowship of the believer with Christ, expressed by the words:

“Quickened together, raised together, seated together”.

“Joint-heirs, joint-body, joint-partakers”.

The type, water baptism, no longer obtains; the reality which water baptism but symbolized remains.

We have examined the parts of the structure that come closest to the central figure, but in the actual order of enumeration the one Body is at the beginning. If we fail here, what remains is spoilt. If we bring over from 1 Corinthians 12 the Body mentioned there, and endeavour to insert it in the unity of Ephesians 4, we shall fail to keep the unity of the Spirit. For the bonds that bind that unity together are the bonds of that peace which followed the obliteration of “the two” and the “creation” of a new man – a creation that took place after 1 Corinthians 12 had been written. We cannot attempt here an exposition of 1 Corinthians 12; any reader who is not clear as to its teaching is referred to the volume entitled *The Apostle of the Reconciliation* (pages 154-160).

The theme of 1 Corinthians 12 is spiritual gifts, and the figure of the body with its many members is used to illustrate the diversity of gifts, but with the self-same Spirit. This, however, has no reference to the “joint-Body” of Ephesians. Christ, as the One Who has ascended far above all, is the Head of this church which is a joint-Body, a Body in which every member is equal, a standing hitherto unknown. The Body mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 is not a “joint-Body”; its members are far from being equal, for some are “comely” and some are “less honourable” and “feeble”. There is but one way in which the true character of the one Body may be discovered, and that is by prayerfully reading the only parts of Scripture that speak of it – Ephesians and Colossians.

The thought of the one Body in the structure is balanced by that of the one God and Father. Just as Christ is Head over all things to the church, though not yet Head over all things in the fuller sense, so God is Father to the members of the church, though not Father to all. We have already had before us the passage which speaks of “every family in heaven and earth” (Eph.3:15), and the church of the one Body is among the families of which the one God is Father. Not only so, but He is over all, and through all, and in all

things to us — a glorious anticipation of that day when God shall be all in all throughout the whole redeemed universe.

Here, then, is the first step in the walk that is worthy. It is vain to think of engaging in the conflict of Ephesians 6 if this initial step is not taken and maintained. Seven perfect parts of a perfect unity; a unity not made by man, but by God; a unity having no ties of the flesh; a unity where Christ is central and pre-eminent, where the Father is all and in all, where all things of sight and sense give place to substance and spirituall reality. Let us mark with all due reverence and solemnity our first charge: "Endeavour to keep".

There are seven charges in this epistle that will come before us in due course. This is the first, and corresponds with the doctrinal section that gives us the revelation of the Mystery. It is evident that, in the mind of God, these things are of supreme importance. The understanding of the section that reveals the dispensation of the Mystery is the key to all the doctrine of this epistle, and the true endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit is the great essential to all worthy walk.

CHAPTER 15

EPHESIANS

The prisoner

The threefold measure (*E* Eph. 4:7-19)

The first thing that is stressed by Paul as he opens the practical section of Ephesians 4 is unity. A dislocated body is useless for service, and its members do not assist its growth. When unity has been seen to be of first importance, the Apostle then leads to the individual and to his part. This is salutary, for we are all too apt either to lose our individuality in the whole, or else, by asserting our individuality, to forget the essential unity of the whole. Proceeding, therefore, at once from the thought of the unity of the Spirit the Apostle says:

“But to each one of us was given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Eph.4:7).

“But” is disjunctive, and marks something different that pertains “to each one of us”, that is the individual member is viewed as contrasted with the whole Body. Each member has a responsibility, each has his gift from Christ. This does not refer so much to supernatural gifts and the working of miracles, as to the fact that each member of the Body has its appointed place, and draws from the Head its power and its instruction. There are three measures in this passage that should be seen together:

- (1) “The *measure* of the gift of Christ” (4:7).
- (2) “The *measure* of the fulness of Christ” (4:13).
- (3) “The *measure* of every part” (4:16).

These three measures are associated with three unities:

- (1) "The *unity* of the Spirit" (4:3-6).
- (2) "The *unity* of the Faith" (4:13).
- (3) "The *unity* of the Body" (4:16).

The structure given on page 124 shows that each of these unities has seven parts. Central in the structure of the unity of the Spirit is the One Lord; in the unity of the faith, the Son of God; and centrally in the unity of the Body, the willing activity of every part. These three measures and three unities have a practical goal; they are followed by three ministries:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) The <i>ministry</i> for the readjustment (2) The <i>ministry</i> for growth (3) The <i>ministry</i> for edification | } | of the Body. |
|---|---|--------------|

Our attention must now be directed to the necessity for this ministry, and its distinctive character, both as to its source and its origin.

**"The measure of the gift of Christ". The ministry
for the readjustment.**

Between the statement of verse 7 — "The gift of Christ" — and its expansion in verse 11 — "And He gave" — comes an important parenthesis intended to emphasize that these gifts, which include apostles, come from the ascended Christ. Let us first note what is said of the ascension, and then of the peculiar gifts that follow. Verse 8 links together the ascension, the triumph, and the "gifts unto men":

"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men".

The Apostle pauses further before expounding the nature of these gifts, in order to throw additional light upon the place of the ascension in the purpose of the ages, and its relation to the church of the Mystery. He that descended is the same that ascended "far above all heavens" (*huperanō pantōn tōn ouranōn*), with this specific object, "that He might fill all things". The fulness, as we have already seen (pages 60-63) sums up the purpose of the ages and completely restores the perfectness and amity of the universe, once

ruined, as recorded in Genesis 1:2. While the redeemed of all times and dispensations will be apportioned different spheres according to the sovereign will of God, and while each company cannot be blessed “in the earth”, “in the heavenly city” and “far above all principality” at the same time, it is necessary that Christ, Who is to head up in Himself all things in heaven and earth, should fill *all* things. Consequently He descended to the lower parts, that is to say, the earth (not necessarily “descend into the lower parts of the earth”, the earth itself being “the lower part”, as viewed from heaven). He also ascended up far above all heavens, and so unites the whole fulness in Himself.

In direct association with this fulness and ascension “He gave some apostles”. The word is plural and therefore includes more than Paul himself. We have shown elsewhere the Scriptural proofs that Matthias was rightly appointed in Acts 1, but waiving that for the moment, and so leaving Paul out of the question, we must still recognize an order of apostles separate from those called and named while Christ was on the earth. The apostles who are enumerated in Matthew 10 cannot be spoken of as the gifts of the *ascended* Christ, and it is impossible to exclude Paul from this new order. To conceive of the dispensation of the Mystery without Paul as the chief Apostle is, to use a figure often quoted, like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. This new order of ministry must now be studied. It is fourfold:

A APOSTLES	}	Inspired and foundational.
B PROPHETS		
A EVANGELISTS	}	Uninspired and continuous.
B PASTORS AND TEACHERS		

That this order of ministry differs from that which obtained during the pentecostal period is demonstrated by 1 Corinthians 12:

“And God hath set some in the church,
 First apostles,
 Secondly prophets,
 Thirdly teachers, after that
 Miracles, then
 Gifts of healing, etc.” (1 Cor. 12:28,29).

The difference is twofold; first, in the inspired order — the words “first”, “secondarily” and “thirdly” are not our own, but God’s — and then, in the close association of this ministry with miracles, healings etc. Both of these features make it impossible to consider the two ministries as identical.

Glancing above to the structure of this ministry from the ascended Christ, the reader will see that we have divided it into two groups: (1) Inspired and foundational. (2) Uninspired and continuous. A reference to Ephesians 2:20 will show that the apostles and prophets are associated with the foundation of the church of the Mystery. When that foundation was once laid, others followed whose ministry was to build, so that when we come to 2 Timothy we find the “evangelist” and the “teacher” succeeding the apostle and prophet:

THE EVANGELIST — “Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered” (2 Tim. 4:5,6).

THE TEACHER — “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

We have designated this ministry as “uninspired”, for the truth had by this time been revealed. What was required at the time of the second epistle to Timothy was not revelation of the Body itself, but faithfulness to what had already been revealed.

One further point awaits consideration — the association of “pastors” with “teachers”. The word “pastor” is strictly a “shepherd”, and the figure of sheep and a shepherd is not used of the church of the Mystery. Yet it is inconceivable that the ascended Christ should definitely appoint shepherds unless there were sheep who needed their care. For a full exposition of this point the reader is directed to the articles on the “Dispensational place of John’s Gospel” in Volume XX of *The Berean Expositor*; we can but give a summary here. The Gospel according to John is in many ways appropriate to the present period. We summarize some of its special characteristics below:

- (1) It is world-wide in its address, and not limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as is Matthew’s Gospel.

- (2) It is written to non-Jews, for the Gospel of John abounds in explanations that no Jew needed (e.g. John 2:6,13; 4:9, etc.).
- (3) It is written in view of Acts 28, for the opening chapter declares that, “He came to His own and His own received Him not”.
- (4) John’s Gospel omits details concerning the Lord’s Supper; the Supper is linked with the New Covenant, which cannot be in operation apart from the people of Israel.
- (5) John stresses the ascension more than any other Gospel.
- (6) The opening words of John, speaking of Christ as the Word Who was in the beginning, and Who made all things, are nearer to Colossians 1:16 than any passage to be found in any other Gospel.
- (7) The prayer of John 17 is not “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth”, but that the world may know and believe that Christ is the Sent One.
- (8) The word “miracle” is omitted from John’s account, and in its place the word “sign” is used.

In John’s Gospel the Lord declares:

“Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd” (John 10:16).

These other sheep are not of the “fold” of Israel, but they shall at the end be united and form one “flock” (see R.V.). While the chief concern of the present time is the building up of the one Body, the Lord has not neglected these “other sheep” and has provided “pastors or shepherds” in His gifts as the ascended One.

This new order of apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers was given:

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

“For (*pros*) the readjusting of the saints:

- (1) Unto (*eis*) a work of ministry.
- (2) Unto (*eis*) a building up of the Body of Christ”.

At Acts 28 we reach a dispensational crisis. With the setting

aside of Israel went the olive tree, and with the tree the engrafted branches. Before the new position and the new dispensation could be realised, a ministry of readjustment was necessary. This is expressed in the A.V. by the word "perfecting".

Had the church of the Mystery been the "perfect" state of which the church of 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 was the immature form ("in part"), then this development of doctrine and status could have been expressed by the word so often translated "to perfect" — *teleioō*. This, however, is not used here; the word for "perfecting" the saints indicates a rupture, a break, a dislocation, such as we might expect when such a crisis as that of Acts 28 was reached. The word is *katartismos*, which, according to Cremer, is used in classical Greek in medical works only. *Katartizō* occurs in Matthew 4:21 — "Mending their nets" — where the primary idea of restoration after a rupture is evident. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 it is used in contrast with the divisions springing up in the Corinthian church:

"I beseech you ... that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be *perfectly joined together*".

In Galatians 6:1 it occurs in the same sense:

"Ye which are spiritual *restore* such a one".

The ministry of the apostles and prophets was for this purpose, to readjust the saints to their new calling and to the new revelation. These laid the foundation as Ephesians 2:20 teaches. They were followed, as 2 Timothy 2 and 4 show, by evangelists and teachers, whose ministry it was to continue this readjusting wherever the truth of the Mystery laid hold of a new company for the first time. The subsequent ministry of the one Body is by the mutual help of every member, as taught in Ephesians 4:16. In the readjustment, some things were carried over, and some were left.

In 1 Corinthians 11 and 12 there are three things which we may consider:

- (1) The position of women in relation to men in public ministry.
- (2) The Lord's Supper.
- (3) The miraculous gifts.

Apart from revelation no one could say with certainty whether all or some of these should be carried over into the new dispensation. We can only be guided by Scripture. In 1 Timothy 2:8-15 the relation of the sexes in public ministry is repeated with certain readjustments. This settles the matter for all who believe God's Word. As to the Lord's Supper and supernatural gifts, they are not mentioned. To mention all the doctrine and practice that was *obsolete* would be cumbersome and unnecessary: the fact that one item in 1 Corinthians 11 is repeated (that dealing with women) shows that these things were not forgotten, and we add to our instructions to our loss.

The readjusting of the saints we have seen was for a two-fold purpose:

“Unto a work of ministry; unto a building up of the Body of Christ” (Eph.4:12).

This ministry is definitely directed to “the saints” and for the “building up” of the Body; it is not primarily evangelistic. While of course it is ever a blessed privilege to preach the gospel of salvation to the unsaved, we must not adopt the attitude of some, that gospel witness is of more importance than the one before us. What constitutes importance? Surely nothing else than the fulfilment of the will of God. Consequently some have devoted their lives to the ministry of building up even though others have criticised them for not taking up “gospel work”. It is good to know that to our own Master we stand or fall, and His “Well done” is sufficient.

We are apt to pass over lightly the ministry of edifying or building up, and we may profit by a more careful meditation of the Apostle's repeated exhortation: “Let all things be done unto edifying”. In all ministry of this kind we should keep prominently before the mind the words:

“For we are fellow-workers together of God. Ye are God's tillage; ye are God's building” (1 Cor. 3:9).

So in Ephesians 2:21,22 the church “groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord” and is “builded together in Spirit”. This doctrinal passage is balanced in the structure by the passage under consideration. In the practical section the Body is

"built up" by the human instrument, given and equipped by the ascended Lord. All ministry is but fellowship in the great work of God Himself. What an unspeakable privilege it is to have any part, however small, in the construction of that fulness towards which the purpose of the ages presses.

The first great unity in this chapter is the unity of the Spirit; the second is the unity of the faith. The first measure is the measure of the gift of Christ; the second is the stature of His fulness:

"Until we all should arrive unto the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph.4:13).

The word *kai*, translated "and", is explained in Dr. Bullinger's *Analytical Lexicon* thus:

"*Kai* (the conjunction of annexation, uniting things strictly co-ordinate), *and*; sometimes not merely annexing but implying increase, addition, something more, *also*; or only emphasis, *even*".

We take *kai* here to bear the meaning "even": "the unity of the faith, *even* the knowledge of the Son of God". No creed was ever so simple; none so exhaustive and complete. This reference to the Son of God is unique in the Prison Epistles. If the knowledge of the Son of God constitutes the unity of our faith, there can surely be no more important subject for our study. We cannot attempt such a study here, but the nature of the subject impels us to give the following working outlines:

The Son of God in Paul's Epistles (omitting Hebrews)

The Son revealed in Paul and preached among Gentiles (Gal.1:16).

The Son of God. His faith. His life. Lived by Paul (Gal.2:20).

The Son sent in the fulness of time (Gal.4:4).

The Spirit of His Son in all God's sons (Gal.4:6).

Waiting for His Son from heaven (1 Thess.1:10).

The fellowship of His Son (1 Cor.1:9).

The final act of the Son (1 Cor.15:28).

All promises of God, Yea and Amen in the Son (2 Cor.1:19,20).

The gospel of God is concerning His Son (Rom.1:3).

Declared Son of God with power by resurrection (Rom.1:4).

The gospel of His Son (Rom.1:9).

Reconciliation by death of His Son (Rom.5:10).

Sent in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom.8:3).

Conformed to the Image of His Son (Rom.8:29).

God spared not His Own Son (Rom.8:32).

Evangelical truth, church fellowship, individual experience, dispensational truth, age purpose and promises, all find their goal, their assurance, their centre, in the Son of God. These are the facets of truth illuminated by the apostle Paul. There is moreover a vast field in the Gospels and the Acts, where Messianic prophecies, the kingship of Israel, *aionian* life, the resurrection of the dead, and other themes are associated with this title. It will be seen that the unity of the faith is vastly comprehensive.

In four places Paul uses the exact title, “The Son of God”, and these may well be taken as heads, dividing the revelation concerning Him into their various sections. They are as follows:

Life now by faith of	}	THE SON OF GOD
Promises being Yea and Amen in		
Resurrection declaring Him with power as		
Unity of the faith being the knowledge of		

While there are creeds of all kinds, here is one awaiting our prayerful and heartfelt comprehension. This is the true Apostles’ Creed beside which all others pale into insignificance.

A glance at the structure on page 124 will show that verse 13 contains seven items, but for our present purpose we must be content with the threefold division suggested by the recurring word “unto”:

“Until we all should arrive –

Unto (*eis*) the unity of the faith, even the full knowledge (*epignōsis*) of the Son of God.

Unto (*eis*) a perfect man.

Unto (*eis*) the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ”.

The perfect creed is to lead on to the perfect man. The word usually translated "man" is *anthrōpos*, a term which includes men, women and children, but the word so translated here is *anēr*. This word means an adult man, and can never refer to a woman or child. Five times in chapter 5 it is translated "husband", and in its fifty occurrences in Paul's writings it always refers to a man and not a woman. If this church has as its goal the attaining of the perfect *man* (or *husband*), how is it possible for it to be at the same time the *bride*?

There is also an element of experimental truth indicated here, for this verse is in the practical section. The word "perfect" is apt to be misunderstood by the English reader. The Greek word *teleios* enters into our own language in such words as *telephone*, *telegram*, *telescope*, *television*; in each case the idea of distance is implied. *Telos* means "the end", and the "perfect man" suggests one who has gone on to the end of his calling, in contrast with "children" tossed about with every wind of doctrine (verse 14). This contrast with childhood is found in 1 Corinthians 13:10,11 and Hebrews 5:12-14.

The church of the one Body is "the fulness", the *plerōma* of Him that filleth all in all, and that, and nothing short of that, can be its measure and its goal: "Unto the measure of the stature of the *plerōma* of Christ".

Here is a definite ministry, with a definite object:

- (1) For the readjustment.
- (2) For the ministry.
- (3) For the building up of the Body of Christ.

Till we all arrive:

- (1) Unto the unity of the faith.
- (2) Unto a perfect man.
- (3) Unto the stature of the fulness of Christ.

In contrast with this unity of the faith is the deeply planned snare of the devil (Eph.4:14), a subject which will be dealt with later under the heading of "The truth and the lie". The antithesis to the "systematic deception" of the

devil is given in Ephesians 4:15. *Aleutheuontes* means something more than speaking the truth; it means “being true”. The whole world is ranged under the two heads, the truth and the lie, and the only real and effective opposition to the lie is the putting on of the new man – a line of teaching awaiting us in Ephesians 4. There is so much that demands attention in these verses that it is difficult to pass on, but, as explained in the Foreword, only the essential features of these four epistles can be touched upon within the limits of this outline. We must therefore pass on to the third measure of this section:

“Out of Whom (the Head, even Christ) all the Body being fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in measure of each several part, the growth of the Body is making unto the building up of itself in love” (Eph.4:16).

In the doctrinal portion, where “the Temple fitly framed together” is spoken of, it is said to grow “*in* the Lord”. In the practical section it grows “*out of*” Him. “In” often expresses doctrine and position; “out of” often expresses corresponding practice and responsibility. The source and origin of all growth is Christ the Head; its channel is the members of the Body, united together. “All the Body ... makes for growth”. All the Body is concerned with the growth of the whole; one member does not merely minister to itself.

“*Fitly framed and knit together*” – A very slight acquaintance with anatomy and the functioning of the body impresses the mind with the perfect adaptation of its various parts. Along the vertebrae of the spine are a series of nerve centres, each regulating its own special department. When these are in perfect alignment – “fitly framed together”, the whole body makes for growth. We are not sufficiently instructed in the matter of physiology to speak of the great pulsing energy of human life, but we are instructed in Ephesians and Colossians as to the essential power for the growth of the one Body. Not only is it “fitly framed together”, but it is “knit together”. Colossians 2:19, also, speaks not only of “joints” but of “bands”. To the question, What are the bands? Colossians 2:2 supplies the answer – “Being knit together in love”; or as Colossians 3:14 puts it,

"The bond of perfectness" — love. Ephesians 4:15,16 opens and closes with the words, "in love". In 1 Corinthians 13 love characterizes the perfect man; much more then should it be true now.

"*Every joint supplieth*", or, more literally rendered, "Through every joint of the supply". The joints are but channels, the supply comes from above. One thing more is needed — life, for a dead body may have joints perfectly framed together.

"*According to the working in measure of each several part*" — The life-giving power to usward who believe is the power of His resurrection (Eph.1:19,20). It is the power not only of resurrection, but of ascension "far above all" (Eph. 1:21). It is the power of victory — "All things under His feet" (Eph.1:22). It is the power of the fulness, the goal of the ages (Eph.1:23). And this mighty energy is not confined to apostles and prophets; it is "in the measure of every part".

Such is the threefold measure of the ministry for the Body. The section is completed by a reference to an earlier subject — the walk that is worthy, this time dealing with the negative side — "That ye walk not as Gentiles walk".

Ephesians reveals a twofold alienation:

- (1) "*Aliens* from the commonwealth of Israel" (Eph.2:12).
- (2) "*Alienated* from the life of God" (Eph.4:18).

The alienation of chapter 2 is expressed in terms of *distance*, and is cancelled by the blood of Christ; the alienation of chapter 4 is expressed in terms of *death*, and is cancelled by the resurrection power of Christ.

There is a very close connection between the "walk" and the "mind":

"Walk worthy ... with all humility of mind" (Eph.4:1,2).

"Walk no longer ... in the vanity of your mind" (Eph.4:17).

To attempt to deal with the usage and doctrine of the mind is beyond the scope of this volume; a suggestion will be found in *The Berean Expositor*, Vol.XV, pp. 100-106.

Life (*zōē*) occurs but once in Ephesians – “the *life* of God” (4:18). A compound form occurs in chapter 2, where it is translated “quicken together” (2:5). There can be no living unto God apart from the resurrection power of Christ. The sphere of this life is “the truth”, even as the sphere of this death is “the lie” – as Romans 1:25 testifies. This leads us to the next section and must be considered in the light of its context and structure.

There are some who seem to think that the teaching of the Mystery makes us vague visionaries and who demand “something practical”. If Ephesians 4:1-19 comprised the whole of that epistle’s practical teaching, it would be a standard so intensely and searchingly practical that no man in his senses could contemplate its obedience apart from almighty power and wondrous grace. When we have completed our survey of the practice of this marvellous revelation, and seen how it deals with the truth and the lie, the old man and the new, the domestic and business life of the believer, and the conflict with spiritual powers, nothing more will be necessary to refute all charges of being vague and visionary than a presentation of the teaching of Ephesians 4 – 6.

Eph.4:20-32 (*D*, page 20). The new man

<i>D</i>	<i>B</i> 20,21	The truth in Jesus (<i>en Iēsous</i>)	
	<i>C</i> 22-24 The old man and the new.	<i>a</i> Put off old man <i>b</i> According to (<i>kata</i>) former conversation <i>c</i> Renewed in spirit of mind	
		<i>a</i> Put on new man <i>b</i> According to (<i>kata</i>) God <i>c</i> Created in righteousness and holiness of truth	
	<i>C</i> 25-32 The truth and the lie.	<i>d</i> 25 <i>e</i> Putting away the lie <i>f</i> Speak truth <i>g</i> One to another (<i>allelon</i>)	
		<i>h</i> 26 Question concerning anger <i>i</i> 27 Give no place to the DEVIL <i>j</i> 28 <i>k</i> Steal not	
		Works <i>l</i> Labour that which is good <i>m</i> Work with hands <i>n</i> Supply need (<i>chreia</i>)	
		<i>j</i> 29 <i>k</i> No corrupt speech Words <i>l</i> That which is good <i>m</i> Out of mouth <i>n</i> Build need (<i>chreia</i>)	
		<i>i</i> 30 Grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT <i>h</i> 31 Answer as to anger	
		<i>d</i> 31,32 <i>e</i> Put away all bitterness <i>f</i> Be kind <i>g</i> One to another (<i>allelon</i>)	
	<i>B</i> 32	Forgiveness in Christ (<i>en Christō</i>)	

CHAPTER 16

EPHESIANS

The new man (D Eph. 4:20-32)

It is sometimes difficult, in an involved argument, to “see the wood for the trees”, and the passage just considered and the one now before us contain so much detail that it is quite easy to miss the essential points. We are now to consider the subject of the new man, but it is important that we should appreciate its connection with what has gone before. The exhortation to walk worthy of our calling is followed by the threefold measure and its ministry, culminating in the expression — “the perfect man”. The exhortation concerning walk is resumed, this time negatively, and is followed by reference to the new man. “The perfect man” in contrast with the immature — “that ye henceforth be no longer children” — is the goal of the church. “The new man” is the experimental approximation to that position of perfection. The relation of the two sections is more easily understood if set out thus:

Ephesians 4:1-32

- A 1,2 Walk. Positive. Humility of mind.
- B 3-16 The perfect man. Truth. The Head (15).
- A 17-19 Walk. Negative. Vanity of mind.
- B 20-32 The new man. Truth. Members one of another (25).

It will be seen moreover that “truth” is an underlying thought in both passages, regulating the attitude of the members of the church to the Lord and to one another. The section before us (4:20-32) is introduced by the words “The truth in Jesus” (see structure, page 146). Moreover, “The old man and the new” correspond to “The truth and the lie”. The old man is to be “put off”; the new man to be “put on”; and the lie to be “put away”.

The section before us will necessarily be experimental and intensely practical, although a great deal of added doctrine must be interwoven to make the practice real and living. A further consultation of the structure of this section will show in the first half (C 22-24) that the putting off of the old man is according to (*kata*) the former conversation, or manner of life, and that the putting on of the new man is according to (*kata*) God. Moreover, in the one case there is a renewing of the mind, and in the other a creation in righteousness.

The alienation of the Gentile from the life of God was because of the domination of the lie. Bear with the play upon words for the sake of their solemn truth. It is either the *life* of God, or the *lie* of the devil, whether in Genesis 3, Genesis 11, or the closing chapters of the Revelation.

“They gave themselves up to uncleanness” (Eph.4:19).

“God gave them up to uncleanness” (Rom.1:24).

Why was this? The reason is given: “They changed *the truth* of God for *the lie*” (Rom.1:25). In Ephesians 4 we change *the lie* for *the truth* of God.

“Ye however have not thus learned Christ, if at least it is Him ye heard, and by Him ye have been taught, even as truth is in Jesus” (Eph. 4:20,21).

To every reader who is acquainted with the epistles of Paul, the introduction of the name “Jesus” here suggests enquiry. It is so unusual for Paul to use this name alone of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be sure some phase of truth demands it.

In the epistle to the Hebrews the name “Jesus” occurs eight times (omitting of course 4:8 which refers to Joshua). In the church epistles the word “Jesus” is used eight times directly, and three times when dealing with unbelievers and the testing of evil spirits. Standing alone, these facts may not impress us, but when we remember that the numerical value (*gematria*) of the Greek letters of the name Jesus is 888 (a pointed contrast with the number of the beast, which is 666), and that 8 is suggestive of resurrection (see “the eighth person” and “eight souls” 2 Peter 2:5 and 1 Peter 3:20), then the use of the name “Jesus” in Ephesians 4 may

have a pointed reference to the fact that this “truth” belongs to resurrection life. It is a “renewal”, a new “creation”; and just as Adam was the head of the one creation, so “Jesus” is the Head of the other. The old man and his alienation from the *life* of God demand a new man and newness of life.

When we read the statement:

“By Him ye have been taught ... to put off ... the old man” we must remember two things:

- (1) We are in the practical section, and
- (2) Underlying all that is here written is the doctrine of Romans 6:6.

Let us be sure of one thing. No believer is told *to put off the old man* in an absolute sense. This is an undertaking beyond the power of any living soul, and nothing but the power of the cross of Christ can effectuate it.

“Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative, that henceforth we may no longer be enslaved to sin” (Rom.6:6).

Three most important divisions of truth are presented in this verse, and failure to apportion its teaching correctly has led some children of God to the brink of despair. The first statement refers to a work entirely outside of ourselves: “Our old man was crucified with Him”.

The verb is *passive* — indicating something in which we ourselves had no part; it is *aorist*, an indefinite tense, in this case referring to the past, by reason of the added words, “with Him”. No believer is ever told to crucify the old man; this was the work of the Son of God alone, and is finished. The second statement arises out of the first: “that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative”. The body of sin being no longer dominant, the third statement follows: “that henceforth we may no longer be enslaved to sin”. The “henceforth” of Romans 6:6 finds its parallel in Ephesians 4:17: “that ye henceforth walk not as the Gentiles walk”.

Coming to Ephesians and the companion epistle, Colossians, we find that these Scriptures deal with the “deeds” and “conversation” of the old man, but not with the old man

himself, who has been dealt with by Christ.

"That ye put off *concerning the former conversation* the old man" (Eph.4:22).

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man *with his deeds*" (Col. 3:9).

This former conversation is characterized by two adjectives — "corrupt" and "deceitful". In the sequel we read, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth" and "speak every man truth". Here we have the LIFE *versus* the LIE in operation.

We must be particularly careful to guard against "half-truths". The truth in Jesus is *not* expressed merely in the negative "putting off"; it is complete only when the positive "putting on" is included. Moreover it is essential to remember that, following each statement is a reference to a creative act of God, without which all the effort to "put off" and to "put on" would be but the ineffective struggling of worms of the earth.

- A That ye put off
- B To be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- A That ye put on
- B Created in righteousness

The new creation has begun, with the mind. It will be completed in resurrection glory, with the body. This sequence is observed in Philippians 2 and 3:

"The *mind* of Christ" — NOW.

"The *body* of His glory" — THEN.

The word *ananeoō* "to be renewed", does not occur elsewhere in Scripture. It is composed of the two words *ana* and *neos*, *neos* being one of two words used to express newness, the other being *kainos*. *Kainos* looks backward, excluding the old and the past; *neos* looks forward, suggesting youth. The two words occur together in Colossians 3:10:

"And having put on the new man (*neos*), being renewed (*anakainoō*)".

In other words, we have put on the new, young, rejuvenate man, fresh and vigorous, with all the glorious future stretching out in its limitless possibilities by the grace of God; and we have been renewed with a life, that, beside the empty tomb, looks back at a past, dead, buried, excluded and finished. *Neos* turns our faces towards Christ, the last Adam; *kainos* looks back to the first Adam. The one affirms “Life has begun”; the other, that “Life has finished”.

The expression “the *spirit* of your mind” takes us back to Romans 6–8. There we learn that the seat of sin is in the members of our mortal body (Rom.6:6,12,13,19). The mind is held in subjection to the flesh (Rom.7:14,15,18,22); and nothing but the law of the *Spirit* of life can set us free, the *Spirit* of His Son in which we cry, Abba, Father.

The translation “true holiness” in Ephesians 4:24 is inexact. The R.V. rectifies it by the rendering, “righteousness and holiness of truth”. Inasmuch as “the truth” is placed in contrast with “the lie” in the next verse, the article should be translated:

“And to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of THE TRUTH. Wherefore putting away THE LIE ... ” (Eph.4:24,25).

The word is not merely “lying” but “the lie”. Satan is “a liar and the father of *it*” (John 8:44). “The lie” goes back to “the beginning”, and includes the deceit that caused the downfall of our first parents. It concerns the purpose of the creation of man and the antipathy manifested by Satan. The theme is too vast for notes like these; we can but indicate the way:

“They changed *the truth* of God for *the lie*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom.1:25).

“They changed *the glory* of the incorruptible God for *an image* made like to corruptible man” (Rom.1:23).

2 Thessalonians 2 shows the culmination of “the lie”; the man of sin, sitting in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.

Closely linked with “the lie” is an “image”; as we find also with “the truth”:

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man and his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image* of Him that created him" (Col.3:9,10).

"After the image" and "righteousness and holiness of the truth" seem to express two sides of one doctrine.

We must not forget, however, that our chief concern here is with practice; so, leaving these deep things, we turn our attention to the working out of the truth in Ephesians 4: 25-32, the second member (C) of the structure given on page 146. It will be observed that at verse 26 the structure reads: "Question concerning anger", and at verse 31: "Answer as to anger". The A.V., however, gives no suggestion of a question, the reading being: "Be ye angry and sin not". That anger can exist without sin Mark 3:5 testifies. The question is whether we can be sure that when we are angry our anger will not soon become sin. Can any reader ever remember being angry, and feeling that he could go afterwards to the Lord in prayer and give Him thanks for the anger thus displayed? We are sure that many a time "righteous indignation" is a cloak for sin. Who are we, that have received such grace and mercy, such longsuffering and love, to be angry with any fellow-saint or sinner? We might well spend the nervous energy in genuine sorrow or sympathy.

The word here — *orgizesthe* — can be translated either as a command or as a question. The corresponding member (h 31) does not counsel us to put away sinful anger and only to retain righteous anger, but definitely enjoins:

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger ... be put away from you".

Anger opens the door to sin, and sin gives place to the devil; and this grieves the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. Instead of such things we are by word and deed to manifest the things that belong to truth. The lie belongs to Babel, and in Zechariah 5 we find that it excuses stealing and swearing falsely. *The Companion Bible* points out that this passage should read:

"For every one that stealeth ... sweareth, hath been let off or declared innocent".

This is the attitude of the lie to sin; it excuses and minimises it. Not so the truth; its witness is:

“Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Eph.4:28).

The old spirit is “that he may have”; the new, “that he may have to give”. So with the words of the mouth; the old manner of speech gives place to the new. Corrupt speech is destructive; gracious words tend to edification or “building up”. Not only in works but in words each member of the Body may minister to another in the building up of itself in love.

A close parallel with Ephesians 4:20-32 is found in Colossians 3:8-14:

“But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him ... even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye”.

A further light upon this new and incorruptible speech is found in Colossians 4:6:

“Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt”.

Both the lie and the truth are enforced by example:

“I speak that which I have seen with My Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father ... Ye do the deeds of your father ... If God were your Father, ye would love Me ... ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do” (John 8:38-44).

The new man is “after God”, and seeks to follow His steps:

“Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, EVEN AS GOD for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers (imitators, *mimētes*, our word ‘mimic’) of God, as children of love” (Eph.4:32; 5:1).

We have now considered the subjects arranged in alternation in the structure; walk, and the perfect man; walk, and the new man. And now we are to take up the question of walk once more in chapter 5. Here, instead of a further development of the new man, we have the intensely practical nature of the truth expressed in home and business life. Putting on the new man involves the relations of wife and husband, of child and parent, of servant and master. To walk worthy of the calling has little to do with churches and chapels, missions and leagues, but it has a great deal to do with the humble and more intimate affairs of home and business. The lie is a powerful influence in the home life of many; and it must be recognised and avoided by all who love the Lord and belong to the truth.

Eph.5:1–6:9 (C, page 20). New creation. Its walk

C	D Three- fold walk.	E ₁ In LOVE	F ₁ 2 Positive. As Christ loved
			G ₁ 3-5 Negative
			o ₁ Three unclean acts p ₁ Not to be named o ₂ Three unclean words p ₂ Not fitting o ₃ Three unclean persons p ₃ No inheritance H ₁ 6,7 q Let no man deceive you r Be not partakers
		E ₂ As LIGHT	F ₂ 8 Positive. As children of light
			G ₂ 9-11 Negative.
			s Fruit of light t Prove will u Have no fellowship s Unfruitful darkness t Reprove H ₂ 12-14 u Light makes manifest (<i>phaneroō</i>) v Awake sleeper v Arise from dead u Christ will shine (<i>epiphanō</i>)
		E ₃ As WISE	F ₃ 15 Positive. Walk circumspectly
			G ₃ 15-17 Negative
			w Not as fools x Redeeming time w Be not unwise x Understanding will H ₃ 18-21 y Be not drunk with wine z Be filled with Spirit.
	D Three- fold sub- mission	E ₁ 22-33	WIVES AND HUSBANDS
		F ₁ 22-24	WIVES
			a Wives submit to own husbands b As unto the Lord c For husband is head of wife d As Christ is Head of church c And He is Saviour of the Body b As church is subject to Christ a Wives to husbands in everything

(cont'd)

Eph.5:1–6:9 (C, page 20). New creation. Its walk
(continued)

*G*₁ 25-33 HUSBANDS
d Husbands love your wives
e As Christ loved the church
f g That He might sanctify
h Water and Word
g That He might present
h Holy and without blemish
f i Love wife as body
j No man hated his flesh
i Cherisheth as the Lord
j They two one flesh
e Christ and the church
d Every man so love his wife

*E*₂ 6:1-4 CHILDREN AND PARENTS
*F*₂ 1-3 CHILDREN
k Children obey your parents in the Lord
l For this is right
k Honour thy father and mother
l That it may be well

*G*₂ 4 FATHERS
m Fathers do not provoke
n Your children
m But train them up

*E*₃ 5-9 SERVANTS AND MASTERS
*F*₃ 5-7 SERVANTS
o Be obedient to masters
p With fear and trembling
o In singleness of heart
p As unto Christ
q Not with eyeservice. As servants of
Christ
r Doing will of God from heart
r Good will doing service
q As to Lord and not men

*G*₃ 8,9 MASTERS
s Knowing
t Receive of the Lord
u Whether bond or free
v Do the same
s Knowing
t Your Master is in heaven
u No respect of persons.

CHAPTER 17

EPHESIANS

The new creation. Its walk (C Eph. 5:1 – 6:9)

The new man of Ephesians 2, with the ecclesiastical and dispensational repudiation of the middle wall, finds its parallel experimentally in the “putting on of the new man”. And those who have known the blessedness of the middle wall of partition being abolished, also realise something of the abolition of the body of sin. We now come to the working out of that salvation which is not of works, but unto good works. The doctrinal section (Eph.2:8-10) is the smallest in the epistle; the corresponding practical section (Eph. 5:1 – 6:9) is the largest. If we needed proof that “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” do *not* lead to dreams and visions without practical results, this very patent fact would furnish it.

The structure on page 155 shows a twofold division: (1) Threefold walk; (2) Threefold submission. The threefold walk is characterized by love, light, and wisdom, each being contrasted with its opposite – lust, darkness and folly. We sometimes fail in our witness because we do not follow the condescension of the Lord. It would seem sufficient for God to tell us to walk in love. But He does more; He speaks of the alternative and tells us what to avoid. In chapter 4:1 His words are, “Walk worthy”; in verse 17 He adds, “Walk not as the Gentiles”. Moreover, the exhortation to walk in love is followed by the example of the love of Christ, and each section closes with a warning. H₁ 6,7, H₂ 12-14, H₃ 18-21. We are not left to stumble along the pathway of life and truth; we are encouraged, we are warned, we are assisted.

Let us note, in the first place, that we are not enjoined to walk *in* love, *in* light, and *in* wisdom. Only once do we find the word “in” – “in love”. Love is the one great all-embracing

atmosphere; light and wisdom are two characteristics of those who are in this way. Light without love may be cold and deadly; wisdom without love may be devilish and cruel.

Wherever we read of example we can be certain that salvation is not in view. We are saved by the death of Christ, not by His example. After we are saved, however, that self-same death may serve as an example, as it does here.

What does it mean to walk in love? Books might be written and yet fail to explain it. In the passage before us the example of Christ immediately follows the exhortation:

“Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

Christ *loved*; and we are to imitate His love. He loved and *gave*; and that kind of love should be ours. He loved and gave *Himself*, which is the essence of both loving and giving.

“Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift ... not as we expected, but *first* gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us” (2 Cor.8:4,5).

The love that we are to imitate is the fulfilling of the law; it is toward God and our neighbour. He gave Himself “for us ... to God”. Not “for us” only, not “to God” only; but “for us ... to God”. Many of us who attempt to walk in love limp and halt. Some interpret love as christian charity and philanthropy, and forget the aspect that is “to God”. Others, with a disdain for all things human, seek to walk exclusively “to God”. God has no pleasure in monasteries or nunneries; neither is He satisfied with mere “charity”. The two-sidedness of love will alone suffice. It must be the essence of the milk of human kindness; and it must be in the full blaze of the claims of God’s holiness. There is only one way to walk in such love; and that is “as Christ also hath loved us”. The Apostle does not hesitate to apply the full force of Christ’s offering to us; he dares to speak of “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour”.

Not all the offerings of the law were of a sweet-smelling savour. Those that dealt with sin were in a different category. In the sacrifice for sin the Saviour is alone; we cannot and

dare not enter there. But imitation *is* possible in the sweet-savour offerings. It might seem almost impossible of attainment, but it is not only written here in Ephesians 5, but repeated in Philippians 4:18:

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well-pleasing to God”.

The Apostle walked this path of love himself, for he was willing to be “offered” or “poured out” as a drink offering “upon the sacrifice and service of your faith” (Phil.2:17). He filled up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh for the church (Col.1:24). What a walk this walk in love must be. As we contemplate its characteristics we feel that we have scarcely commenced to tread this way of holiness at all.

In solemn contrast with this great sacrificial love, are placed the lusts of the flesh. At first one would wonder why it is necessary to introduce such awful things as “fornication” when dealing with the members of the Body of Christ. Alas, a close acquaintance with the life of any assembly soon reveals that God knows what is in man, and to what depths he may sink. It is not for us to rake over this heap of corruption; the Apostle said that such things should not be named among us. The glimpses we sometimes get of our own hearts will probably be more than sufficient confirmation of the awful truth of these words. We cannot, however, pass by the warning of verse 6 without condemning ourselves as unfaithful stewards.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye partakers with them” (Eph.5:5-7).

What is this inheritance that can be lost, even by a member of the Body? A reference to Colossians may help us. In chapter 1 we have an inheritance which is ours by grace, unearned, unmerited, impossible to win or lose. In chapter 3 we have “the reward” of the inheritance held out as an

incentive to faithful service (Col.1:12; 3:24). The inheritance which is ours by predestination (Eph.1:11) and purchase (Eph.1:14) is one thing. To have an inheritance in "the kingdom of Christ and of God" is another; and we are warned against any advocacy of grace that would make the solemn consequences of unfaithfulness of none effect.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through ... vain deceit ... let no man beguile you of your reward" (Col.2:8-18).

It is only rational that there should be an outward expression of an inward change. Once we were darkness, and walked in darkness; now we are light in the Lord, and should consequently walk as children of light. The revised text of Ephesians 5:9 reads, instead of "the fruit of the Spirit", "the fruit of the light". Darkness and death and unfruitful works go together. Even in the world of nature, fruit is impossible without light. The exhortation is to awake and arise, and to walk in the light that Christ gives (Eph.5:14).

The third aspect of the walk is contained in the words — "as wise" or "circumspectly". *Akribōs*, the word translated circumspectly, is possibly derived from *eis akron benai*, "going up to the summit" of a hill, and carries with it the idea of carefulness and exactness.

Akribeia — "Taught according to the *perfect* manner" (Acts 22:3).

Akribestatos — "The *straitest* sect" (Acts 26:5).

Akribesteros — "The way of God more *accurately*" (Acts 18:26).

Josephus speaks of the Pharisees as:

"The sect ... who are thought to excel others in their *exactness* about their national institutions" (Life 38).

There can be no doubt from the above usage of the word what the Apostle intends to teach in Ephesians 5:15. Grace does not mean laxity or lack of diligence. The same word that describes the zeal of the formalist under the law, describes the consecrated zeal which moved Aquilla and Priscilla in their endeavours to lead Apollos into fuller light, and which should characterize those of us who have the high calling of the Mystery.

This is the last of the seven occurrences of the word “walk” in Ephesians. The first, in the practical section, exhorts the believer to “walk worthy”; the last to “walk accurately” — the first, “with all lowliness” and the last, “with wisdom”.

In Ephesians the Apostle’s words are:

“Walk worthy ... walk accurately as wise ... Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is ... Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph.4:1; 5:15-18).

In Colossians he says:

“That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful” (Col.1:9,10).

One of the ways in which we may walk wisely is expressed in the words: “redeeming the time, because the days are evil”. *Ex agorazō* means “to buy out of the market place”, implying the meaning of the English word “forestall”. To forestall is to buy a thing before it is placed upon the stall in open market, and so exhibits a keen business sense. Are we keen to snap up the bargains of opportunity as we should be? The word “time” here is *kairos*, a fitting time, a season, or an opportunity.

It has been said: “Opportunities are *for* eternity, but not *to* eternity”. It is true, also, that: “Some men only recognize opportunity by its back”. What of the week now past. Have there not been many neglected opportunities? The past is beyond us; let us seek grace that, for the future, we may more readily “forestall the opportunity, because the days are evil”. For this we need wisdom and power, the source of which is given in Ephesians 5:18,19:

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”.

What is it to be filled with the Spirit? The passage first contrasts it with the unseemly mirth of a drunken Gentile singing the loud praises of Bacchus or Venus. It is, however, necessary to distinguish between the Pentecostal experience of the period covered by the Acts and that intended here.

To appreciate the meaning of this passage, we must understand something of the usage of the Greek verb "to fill". *Pleroō*, "to fill", takes three cases after it:

- (1) As an active verb, followed by the *accusative*, it indicates *the vessel that is filled*.
- (2) As an active verb, followed by the *genitive*, it indicates, *with what it is filled*.
- (3) As a passive verb, followed by the *dative*, it indicates *the filler*.
- (4) As a passive verb followed by the *genitive*, it indicates *with what the vessel is filled*.

In the passage before us the verb is used as in the third case above. The Spirit is the One who fills.

To make the meaning more plain to those who may not follow the grammatical allusions, let us put it this way. A cup may be filled *with water*, and it may be filled *with a pump*. No one would misunderstand this. There would be no idea that the *pump* actually went into the cup, but the pump carries out the operation of filling the cup with water. So the "Spirit" in the passage before us is the Agent, the One Who fills. With what are we to be filled by the Spirit? Colossians supplies the answer:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col.3:16).

The Spirit fills us with the word of Christ. This gives the renewed conversation, in place of, for instance, the drunken speech of unsaved days. The testimony of Ephesians is that Christ may dwell in the heart by faith, and the filling by the Spirit is to this end. He fills us with the things of Christ.

We now reach the last clause of the section:

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph.5:21).

Before the Apostle exhorts the wife to submit to her husband, he exhorts all to submit themselves one to another; husbands to submit to wives, fathers to children, and masters

to servants. How can this be? The difficulty is partly the idea resident in the English word “submit”. *Hupotassō* is a compound word. *Tassō* means to set in order, as in Luke 7:8; *taxis* indicates order, arrangement (1 Cor.14:40; Col.2:5). A similar word occurs in 1 Corinthians 15:23: “Every one in his own *order*” or rank (*tagma*, from the same root).

The “submission” of one to another has nothing servile about it; it is rather a recognition of God’s sovereign disposal of the several members of the one Body. The hand, the eye, the foot, all “submit” to their assigned place. So, the wife submits to her allotted sphere, and the husband as surely submits to his own appointment. This submission is in the fear of God – the word for “fear” being *phobos* (compare “reverence” in Eph.5:33: *phobeomai*). All submission one to another is in the fear, or reverence, of God; all individual submission is in reverence for one another. What a difference it would make if we each felt some degree of reverence one for another! Peter uses the same argument in 1 Peter 3:1-8:

“Likewise ye wives, be in submission to your own husbands ... your chaste conversation coupled with reverence ... even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord ... not put in fear by any terror. Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint-heirs of the grace of life ... Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate”.

Paul nowhere exhorts wives to “obey”; that word he reserves for “children” and “slaves”. In Titus 2:5 the word “submit” is wrongly translated “be obedient”. This does not mean that upon occasion the wife will not obey her husband; it means, rather, that there will be a ready compliance with what the Lord has ordained.

The intimate relationship of husband and wife is a sacred thing in itself; and how much more so when both may sanctify it by manifesting the union of Christ and the church.

“Wives submit ... as the church unto Christ”

“Husbands love ... as Christ the church”.

The husband in Christ is “submitted” to an obligation that cannot be computed. He is to love his wife “even as Christ loved the church and *gave Himself for it*”. When a wife is thus

loved, there will never be any controversy about the question of the word "obey".

There are some who, in their zeal to establish the doctrine that the church is the Bride, resort to this passage for proof. The fact that they pass over the repeated emphasis upon "the Body" and "the members" with Christ as "Head", also the specific statement that the goal of the church is "the perfect husband" — and not "the perfect Bride" — reveals the weakness of their arguments. While we remain in the flesh, whatever our church position may be, there will be husbands and wives, and such will need instruction. Moreover, the use of Ephesians 5 and 6 to prove that the church is the Bride proves too much, for by the same argument the church is a "child" and a "slave".

Some, too, are misled by ignorance of the fact that Greek words may be masculine, feminine or neuter, without implying any corresponding sex. The French language provides an illustration. In French, *la table* is feminine; but this does not prove that a table is a female. And it would be quite incorrect to speak of the table as "she" in an English translation from the French. Yet some have taught that the word for church being feminine, with feminine pronouns, demonstrates that the church is the Bride. But the word *kephalē* is feminine, and must have a feminine pronoun; yet it is the word translated "Head" in Ephesians 1:22:

"And gave Him (*masculine*) to be Head (*feminine*) over all things to the church (*feminine*) which is His Body (*neuter*)".

While, then, Christ here is masculine, that which He is given to be is feminine, and the church, though feminine, is the "Body", which is neuter. Gender in grammar does not indicate sex. When Christ said, "I am the true *vine*" or, "I am the *door*", He used feminine words for door and vine, and many more examples could be given. The church cannot be shown to be either the Body or the Bride by the gender of the words used. Any who attempt to do so are either ignorant or purposely deceptive; and in either case such teaching must be rejected.

Returning for a moment to the union of husband and wife, and its reflection of the relation of Christ and the

church, we note that every true marriage refers back to Eden:

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Eph. 5:31).

Writing in 1 Corinthians 6:17 the Apostle says that “he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit”, which is implied also in Ephesians 5:31,32.

When the exhortation to husbands and wives draws to a conclusion, the Apostle says:

“This is the great mystery, but I am speaking concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32).

That there is a mystery in marriage, the words of the Lord in Matthew 19:5,6 indicate: “Wherefore they are *no more twain*, but one flesh”. “But”, says the Apostle, using the disjunctive, “even so, I am now speaking of that greater mystery, Christ and the church”.

The relation of child and parent is a most important factor in the walk that is worthy. Children are to obey, not because their parents are under grace, or because the children themselves are in this high position, but because “it is right”.

Fathers are specially addressed here:

“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph.6:4).

The inroads made by modern civilization into the home life have robbed the child of its birthright. God provides the child with two parents, but for all practical purposes of training the child for the first few impressionable years is left to the mother. The mother’s love is protective and immediate; the father’s corrective and prospective. Blessed is the child that knows both. The Apostle gives in his own language the characteristics of the relation between parent and child in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11, where he is both spiritual mother and father to the saints:

“We were gentle in the midst of you, as a nursing mother cherisheth her own children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us”.

"Ye are witnesses and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children".

Two words of caution are given by the Apostle to the fathers:

"Provoke not your children to wrath" (Eph.6:4).

"Lest they be exasperated" (Col.3:21).

Have we never entered a home and felt the baneful effects of this "exasperation" and "discouragement"? Children often have no words to explain their motives, but are very sensitive to injustice. In this way, often, an ever-widening breach is made between parents and child, until the parents lament the lack of confidence and understanding on the part of their children that they themselves have brought about. Fathers who do not practice Ephesians 6:4 are in this regard failing to walk worthy of their calling, and it is because the home is the citadel of the faith still that we call earnest attention to these intimate things. The bishop, among other qualifications, must be:

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all dignity. For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:4,5).

And centuries since have confirmed the implication of the question.

The slave is given very special encouragement to persevere in his trying condition:

"Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph.6:8).

A very unbalanced interpretation of these words was once presented to us. It was noted that only "good" things are in view, and the deduction drawn was that only the good we do will be dealt with by the Lord in that day; for this verse says nothing about anything wrong we may have done. The good will be recognised; the evil will have been forgiven. Now this

is very comfortable doctrine, but it does not agree with the parallel passage in Colossians 3:24,25, written to the same class of people, and under the same dispensation:

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that *doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done*: and there is no respect of persons”.

Masters are exhorted to “do the same things”, to “give that which is just and equal”, to “forbear threatening” and to remember that they also have a Master in heaven. To the slaves at Colosse and to the masters at Ephesus the warning is given: “Neither is there respect of persons with Him”.

Among the unmerited charges made against those who hold the truth of the Mystery is that we have exchanged realities for dreams, and that we have ceased to be a practical force in the church or the community. We wonder how many husbands and wives would rise to the intensely practical measure of Ephesians 5? How many homes would survive the scrutiny of Ephesians 6:1-4? And how many businesses would survive the audit of Ephesians 6:5-9? We are convinced that God knows what is important. Not a word is said in Ephesians of societies for making known the gospel; these may after all be evidences of our failure — they should never be necessary. “Charity begins at home”. If every house in the village kept its own door-step clean, the whole street would be in order. And if every believer ensured that, by the grace of God, his or her home and business life were in harmony with the teaching of these chapters, the hosts of darkness would receive a blow that no prayer meeting or aggressive campaign could ever inflict. Why not let God’s instructions hold? Why try to conduct the church of the Mystery upon lines of our own divising? There are cries of “Back to Pentecost” and “Back to the primitive Church”. Might we not more rightly say — “Back to the base line of Ephesians 5 and 6?”

Eph. 6:10-20 (B page 20). Mighty power worked out

MIGHTY POWER WORKED OUT

B e G 10 Be strong in the Lord and power of His might
(10-13) H 11 w Put on whole armour of God
x Able to stand against wiles of devil
I 12 Not flesh and blood. Spiritual wickedness
H 13 w Take whole armour of God
x Able to withstand in evil day
G 13 Having worked out all (reference to the inwrought
power of 1:19).

ALL SPIRITUAL ARMOUR

<i>B c</i>	J 14	Girdle (under). Truth or faithfulness
(14-18)	K 14	Breastplate (heart). Righteousness
	L 15	Shoes (feet). Firm base of gospel
<i>J</i>	16	Shield (over all). Faith or faithfulness
	K 17	Helmet (head). Salvation
	L 17	Sword (hand). Word of God

PRAYER FOR PAUL

<i>B d</i>	M 19	For me. Utterance
(19,20)	N 19	Open mouth. Boldly
	O 20	Mystery. Ambassador in bonds
	N 20	Speak. Boldly
	M 20	As I ought to speak

CHAPTER 18

EPHESIANS

The mighty power worked out (*B* Eph. 6:10-20)

“Finally” — The Apostle has marshalled his forces, and now leads up to the conclusion. It is unwise to commence our study with the word “Finally”. We must take note of what immediately precedes it — the exhortation to husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and servants. Unless a believer is in some measure in harmony with the teaching of these intensely searching and practical passages, he is certainly unqualified to take up the sword. It is tragic to read some hymns, and to hear some addresses, where the most immature believers are called upon to engage in this most critical of all contests before they have any knowledge of the weapon with which they must fight, the foe against whom they are ranged, or the purpose of the conflict.

“Every one that useth milk is *unskilful* in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe” (Heb. 5:13).

The regulation that was in force in the days of Israel has its spiritual counterpart today:

“Every male *from twenty years old* and upward, all that were able to go forth to war” (Num.1:20).

That this was a responsible age can be seen in Numbers 14:29:

“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness ... from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me” (Num.14:29).

Another application of O.T. principles may be seen in 2 Timothy 2:4:

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please Him Who hath chosen him to be a soldier”.

The word "life" here is "livelihood", as in Mark 12:44 — "All her living". How many believers are hopelessly disqualified for service such as this by the entanglements of daily living! In Deuteronomy 20 are given the various grounds of exemption from military service:

"What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it ... a vineyard ... not yet eaten of it? ... a wife ... and not taken her?" (Deut.20:5-7).

It does not require much spiritualizing to enable us to see in the exhortation to husband, wife, parents and children in Ephesians 5 and 6 the spiritual parallel to the dedicated house; and a little meditation and comparison brings all three grounds of exemption into line.

There are three things, which either separately or together, make for defeat:

- (1) No armour, or armour that is untrustworthy.
- (2) A consciousness that the fight is unrighteous.
- (3) An ignorance of the object of the fight.

Blessed be God, the first two things are assured by the Word. The third is more directly connected with the believer. Let us ask ourselves as before God, *What should we be fighting for?* How many of us can give a consistent Scriptural answer? Is our inheritance in jeopardy? Can we lose our membership in the one Body? Neither of these possessions can be lost. What then can we gain or lose? The answer is, a crown and a prize.

Immediately following 2 Timothy 2:4, which speaks of the soldier, are the words:

"If a man also strive for masteries, *yet is he not crowned*, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim.2:5).

Immediately following Paul's personal declaration, "I have fought a good fight", are the words, "*henceforth a crown*".

"Let no man beguile you of your reward" (Col.2:18).

Satan cannot rob you of your *calling*, but he may rob you

of your *crown*. This fact enables us to appreciate better the reference in Numbers 14, for those who perished in the wilderness were not types of the unsaved, but of those who, being saved, did not go on unto perfection (Heb.3 and 4).

The words of Ephesians 6:13 – “having done all” – are a translation of *katergazomai*, elsewhere translated “to work out” (Phil.2:12,13, and 2 Cor.4:17). The structure of the epistle as a whole (see page 20) compels us to translate the word accurately. It is the “working out” of the mighty power that was “worked in” Christ; the only possible power that can counter the “inworking” of the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2).

Another important fact is that no military terms are used in Ephesians 6 so far as the conflict is concerned. We are exhorted to “stand” to “withstand” and to “wrestle”. Even apart from inspiration, no one of Paul’s calibre would speak of “wrestling” in “armour” without previously explaining the “armour” in such a way as to avoid incongruity. It is common knowledge that the Greeks wrestled naked; our very word gymnasium is derived from the Greek *gymnos*, “naked”. Before we can go any further it is incumbent upon us to ascertain what “armour” symbolizes in the teaching of Paul.

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Rom.13:12).

It will be observed here that “casting off” is parallel with “putting on”; and “works of darkness” with “armour of light” – “works” on the one hand and “armour” on the other. Let us read on, watching for any military terms and any further parallel with the armour, endeavouring to discover the battle ground and the opponents:

“Let us walk honestly (decently), as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:13,14).

Instead of exhorting to fight, the Apostle drops all reference to “armour” as such, and speaks of “walk”. The

opponents are not soldiers or external foes, but "the lusts of the flesh" such as drunkenness and wantonness. To leave the matter beyond dispute, Paul returns to the theme, and in place of the exhortation, "Let us put on the armour of light", we have, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ".

If this is what "armour" means to the Apostle, then it is perfectly fitting for him to speak of "wrestling". In 1 Thessalonians 5:7,8 he speaks of armour once more in a very similar context:

"For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night; but let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation".

The context of this passage will be examined in vain for any allusion to fighting. The only foes are those of Romans 13, the foes within, the lusts of the flesh and the works of darkness.

In our next reference the word "armour" is translated "weapons"; and here at last we find the word "warfare". Perhaps, at last, we shall now see the field of battle and the nature of the conflict:

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor.10:4).

Here at last are military terms: weapons, warfare, pulling down strongholds. The next verse reads:

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor.10:5).

The fortress that is besieged is that of the "imaginings" or "reasonings", prompted by the spiritual power called "height" in Romans 8:39. The captives taken are the "thoughts" brought into obedience to Christ. There is nothing here approaching "warfare" in the military sense. The words of Proverbs 16:32 are still true and can be applied to our present theme:

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city".

When we examine the one remaining reference to *Hopla*, translated “armour” or “weapons”, we shall have further grounds for avoiding the military figure:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments (weapons, armour) of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments (weapons, armour) of righteousness unto God” (Rom.6:12,13).

These references provide conclusive evidence as to what the Apostle intended by the word “armour”. Ephesians 6 is the last occurrence of the word, which is therefore adequately explained by its earlier usage.

Another important fact, parallel to that concerning the “armour”, is the way in which the figure of the soldier and the fight merges into that of the athlete and the race, strengthening our conclusion that the fight is concerned with the prize, and is not so much a question of a campaign or conquest of enemies.

In 2 Timothy 2:4,5 the transition is most clear. “Strive for masteries” (A.V.) becomes, “contend in the games” in the R.V.; the verb *athleō* giving us the word *athlete* and *athletics*. The soldier is mentioned in connection with “endurance”; the figure is then set aside for that of the athlete and the crown. Again, in 2 Timothy 4:7,8, we have the fight and the crown, as we have already seen; the word “fight” is *agōn*, which is translated “race” in Hebrews 12:1. It is impossible to translate 2 Timothy 4:7: “I have fought a good race”. Perhaps the best rendering is: “I have contested a good contest”. This keeps the figure within the bounds of athletics – its true setting.

We can now come to some definite conclusions:

- (1) The Apostle’s use of the word “armour” must be our guide as to its meaning; and not our own ideas drawn from military figures.
- (2) The Apostle’s use of the word “armour” is consistent. It concerns the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so makes Ephesians 6 echo Ephesians 4, where we “put on the new man”.

- (3) The figure of the athlete striving for the crown involves the keeping under of the flesh. The flesh, as Ephesians 2:2,3 has already made plain, is acted upon by the prince of the power of the air, and so brings the believer into conflict with "spiritual wickednesses" who are the "rulers of the darkness of this world".
- (4) The attack of these spiritual foes is not directed against our salvation, our membership of the church or our standing, for these are outside all possible attack. The attack is against the believer's chance of winning a prize, a crown, a reward.

With these things made clear from the Word itself, we can now return to Ephesians 6 to obtain further light upon its teaching. The "high places" of Ephesians 6:12, as the margin tells us, are, more correctly, "heavenly places". Now the earlier references to "heavenly places" leave no doubt about the fact that they are at the right hand of God. Are these "spiritual wickednesses in heavenly places", then, at the right hand of God? It is imperative that we seek a Scriptural answer to this question, for we must remember that Satan's authority is limited to the "air", and that Christ and His church are "far above all principality" and therefore far above the realm of Satan himself. In a footnote to an article written years ago by the author in *Things to Come*, Dr. Bullinger drew attention to the true disposition of the verse:

"For we wrestle not | BUT WITH PRINCIPALITIES | in heavenly
with flesh and blood | ... OF THIS WORLD | places"

We do *not* wrestle with flesh and blood; *neither* do we wrestle in heavenly places. We *do* wrestle with spiritual wickednesses who are the rulers of the darkness of *this* world, not of *that* world at the right hand of God. The reader may appreciate a confirmatory passage where a similar division of subject is necessary. As 2 Peter 1:19 stands in the A.V. it lends colour to the erroneous teaching that the Second Coming of Christ is not to be understood as a literal future event, but as the "day star" arising in our hearts. We get the truth by dividing the verse as we divided Ephesians 6:12:

"Whereunto ye do well | as unto a light ... and the day | in your
that ye take heed | star arises | hearts"

What is "the evil day" of Ephesians 6:13? We know that

there is yet to be war in heaven between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels (Rev.12:7). We know that when Israel crossed the Jordan and entered their inheritance, Jericho was encircled and its walls fell. So, too, there may be a day for which we are now preparing. For the present, however, it is certain that no campaign or conquest is in view in Ephesians 6. Our orders are to “stand”, to “stand against” and to “withstand”. To exceed our orders is as much disobedience as to refuse to obey.

It will be observed that there are six pieces in the whole armour of God detailed in Ephesians 6:14-18 (see Structure, page 168). They need no elaboration here; their significance is apparent. Some have felt that as six is the number of man, and as this armour is perfect, being the whole armour of God, “all prayer” must be added to make seven. This is not necessary. Arms and weapons of themselves speak of a day of failure; in glory they will have no place. The armour is rightly sixfold. While Paul had numerous opportunities of observing the accoutrements of Roman soldiers, most if not all of his imagery was ready to his hand in Isaiah (see Isa.11:5; 59:17; 52:7; 49:2). Satan did not commence his operations in Ephesians 6; neither did God wait until this time before providing His people with complete armour. Eve must have laid aside the armour of light when attacked by Satan. She tampered with truth; she entertained doubts of God’s faithfulness; she failed to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, and she handled the sword of the Spirit deceitfully.

Immediately following the exhortation to put on the whole armour of God comes prayer:

“With all prayer and supplication, praying in every season in Spirit, and thereunto watching with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).

At the root of the word “prayer” is the idea of a *wish*; at the root of the word “supplication” is the idea of *fear*. One is the pouring out of the heart’s desire; the other is the expression of need. Praying, like preaching, should be “in season and out of season”. Paul could affirm, as before God, that he prayed “without ceasing”. During the time that Paul was traversing sea and land preaching the gospel, founding churches, working with his own hands, suffering hardship

for the truth, he "prayed without leaving off". The conventions of the faith are safeguards. It is good to kneel or to stand when we pray. It is good to close the eyes and fold the hands. It is good to turn aside, to withdraw into the quiet room to pray to Him that seeth in secret. But all these may be dispensed with. Paul could pray as he walked, as he talked, as he worked. He could pray without closing the watchful eye, or folding the labouring hand. Let us not confound the true prayer with mysticism. To kneel for a long time in silence may be the highest form of worship, or it may but numb the sensibilities and lay the unguarded spirit open to invasion. Watching is added to prayer:

"What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:37).

Pray, says the Apostle, for all saints, "and for me". What modesty and true humility in these words — "and for me". The one who thus asks for prayer is the Apostle to whom the dispensation of the Mystery has been entrusted. Instead of causing pride, the contemplation of the grace thus manifested makes him exclaim, "Unto me, less than the least of all saints, is this grace given". So in this passage, his very request lays bare his fears and conscious weakness.

Paul's prayer is for "utterance", "boldness", the ability and the courage to speak freely as he "ought". Here is a man of like infirmity with ourselves. He knew what it was to feel tongue-tied, to minister with "fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor.2:3). He knew what it was to be set at nought (2 Cor. 10:10), to have indifferent health (Gal.4:14), and with the "open door" to find the "many adversaries" (1 Cor.16:9). Did he never have moments of doubt when with aching limbs and tired brain he toiled at some lowly occupation for the bare necessities of life? Did no one ever whisper that he might have served the Lord better by staying in influence and affluence at Tarsus? Did he not sorely need the assurance: "Be not afraid, but speak"? (Acts 18:9). And is not his fear indicated in the added words: "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee"? (Acts 18:10).

Unless we have made a complete mistake in our understanding of Paul's temperament, we believe he had the scholar's shrinking from the physical blow, a super-sensitive-ness to criticism, a consciousness that to many he would

always appear a presumptuous boaster. Yet he turned not back. This man, who shrank from the tumult of Corinth, was ready to face the mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:30) and the enraged Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 21:40). He could write:

“That with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” (Phil.1:20).

He could speak of himself as a drink offering poured out upon the sacrifice and service of faith (Phil.2:17). He not only suffered as a Christian, but as a malefactor (2 Tim.2:9). And he entered into fellowship with the Lord’s sufferings when He was “numbered with the transgressors” (Luke 22:37). And so he says “and for me”.

What Paul desired above all else was that he should make known the “mystery of Christ” as he ought. For this he was an ambassador in chains. The passionate champion of liberty (Gal.2) rejoices in the brand marks of the Lord Jesus!

High doctrine and homeliness are strikingly combined in this concluding passage. Closely connected with the ministry of Paul and prayer for its faithful discharge is the reference to “my affairs and how I do”. We are too apt to limit “ministry” to speaking and writing; to the platform and the desk. Paul’s private affairs were an essential part of his ministry. The loss of all things, the labour with his hands, the endurance in face of all misunderstanding and inward misgivings, were all part of the ministry. And in order that the Ephesian saints might pray intelligently, he sent Tychicus to give them full information. In his last thoughts, however, he characteristically turns from himself: “And that he might comfort your hearts”.

From one point of view, Paul’s “affairs”, “the Mystery”, and “comfort” to the heart of the believer do not seem to have much in common, yet they are linked, not only in Ephesians 6 but in Colossians 2:

“For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you ... that their hearts may be comforted ... the full knowledge of the mystery of God — Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col.2:1-3).

And so, through doctrine and practice unmatched throughout the whole range of inspired Scripture, we come to the benediction:

“Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen” (Eph.6:23,24).

The word translated “sincerity” is *aptharsia*, “incorruptibility”. We may never be able to decide whether it is our love that is incorruptible or the Lord’s grace; commentators and critics differ. Love is stronger than death. Grace is beyond the touch of corruption. Let us love with all sincerity, because of that grace which is beyond the power of death. We have come to the last word of the epistle — incorruptibility.

As we contemplate the unfolding of such marvellous love, the outcome must surely be nothing less than the desire expressed in the epistle to the Philippians:

“I follow after, if that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:12).

While, therefore, we pass on in our studies to the Philippian epistle, we are not actually leaving Ephesians, for Philippians is but the fruit of the Ephesian epistle. What an epistle it is! What a revelation it contains! We have surveyed it, and our task is done. The reader’s task has begun. It is for him to search and see whether these things are so, to prove all things, to hold fast that which is good, to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, to seek answers of grace to the prayers of Ephesians 1 and 3, and ever to remember that with such a revelation of grace the epistle does not only *end* with a benediction, but *begins* with one:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us”.

The Epistle to the Philippians
The structure of the Book as a whole
(*Introversion*)

- A 1:1,2 EPISTOLARY. Salutation. Bishops and Deacons
- B 1:3-26 FELLOWSHIP in Gospel from First Day
- C 1:27–2:5 CONVERSATION here. Stand fast. Mind of Christ.
Now
- D 2:6-11 The Sevenfold Humiliation of Christ. EXAMPLE
- E 2:12-17 EXHORTATION to Work Out
- F 2:17-30 EXAMPLE of Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus
- E 3:1-3 EXHORTATION to Beware
- D 3:4-19 The Sevenfold Loss of Paul. EXAMPLE
- C 3:20–4:10 CONVERSATION there. Stand fast. Body of Glory.
Then
- B 4:11-20 FELLOWSHIP in Beginning of Gospel
- A 4:21-23 EPISTOLARY. Salutation. Cæsar's Household

CHAPTER 19

PHILIPPIANS

Introductory

The epistle as a whole

To those who seek for notes on chronology, authorship and topography, we commend the writings of Conybeare and Howson, Alford's notes, Lewin's *Life of Paul*, and the *Pauline Studies* of Sir William Ramsay. Ours is a different task in limited space.

The interrelation of the four prison epistles has already been discussed in chapter 1, and their structure should be consulted before reading further. In the epistle to the Philippians we pass from a position which is ours by "gift" and "grace" — unassailable, unalterable, which can be neither won nor lost — to a position of responsibility, of working out, of achieving, connected with that which *can* be won or lost. Some of the differences between the two epistles may be profitably considered. As the more clearly we perceive the distinct purpose of each epistle, the better shall we be able to interpret its details.

Some differences between Ephesians and Philippians

(1) *Fulness* — Fulness marks the teaching of both Ephesians and Colossians. We read of the fulness of the seasons (Eph.1:10), the fulness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph.1:23), the prayer that we might be filled with all the fulness of God (Eph.3:19), and the goal, the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ (Eph.4:13).

In contrast with this, we have in Philippians no reference to fulness, but instead, a considerable part of its doctrine

concerned with the Lord's *kenōsis*, or self-emptying (translated in Phil.2:7, "no reputation").

(2) *Boldness* — There is great insistence in Ephesians on the believer's complete acceptance in the Beloved and his full liberty of access unto the Father: "In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him" (Eph. 3:12).

Fear and trembling is the attitude of the believer in Philippians 2:12, for in this epistle the main teaching is not so much the believer's position by grace, but his own outworking of the salvation that is his in Christ.

(3) *The Ascension* — The general trend of the epistle to the Ephesians is, in the language of Colossians 3, to set the mind on things above where Christ is. While the Lord's descent to earth so that He might fill all things is mentioned, it is as the ascended One that the Lord is presented in Ephesians. Philippians asserts that the Lord was originally in the form of God and on an equality with God, and moreover tells us that He has been highly exalted, but the great teaching of the epistle radiates from the fact that He *humbled* Himself to the death of the cross (Phil.2:8).

(4) *Remember* — The believer in Ephesians is urged to remember that he once was an alien, being hopeless, Christless, godless (Eph.2:12).

Forget — In the race set before the Philippians the exact opposite is enjoined; they are to "forget the things that are behind", lest these things should hold them back.

(5) *The hope of His calling* — Attached to the vocation wherewith we have been called is a "hope"; this characterizes Ephesians.

The prize of the high calling — Attached to the calling is also a "prize" and this characterizes the epistle to the Philippians. We deal later with the translation of the passage concerned in Philippians, this being but an introductory note.

If the reader will review chapter 1, where we seek to show the distinctive teaching of each epistle, he will find that these

notes point in the same direction. When we deal with Philippians, position is exchanged for responsibility, and we enter a sphere where winning and counting loss, prize and gain are prominent.

A review of the epistle as a whole

Let us turn to the structure of the epistle as a whole, given on page 180. It will be observed that in the salutation “bishops and deacons” are included. Very complete instructions are found in 1 Timothy 3 governing the appointment of men to these offices, and their presence here so early in the history of the church of the Mystery teaches us that the assembly was not allowed to become disorderly “that grace might abound”, and that while there existed on earth a local representative gathering, that gathering necessitated some kind of oversight. By the time we read the companion epistle, 2 Timothy, ruin is evident instead of rule, and things become more strongly individual.

Something of the character of the teaching of the epistle to the Philippians is brought to light in members B 1:3-26, and B 4:11-20: “Fellowship in the gospel from the first day, and in the beginning”. In perfect harmony with the main theme of the epistle, we have the gospel presented as something to live and strive for. The gospel itself is neither preached nor explained: faith in it is never mentioned, but is taken for granted.

We set out below every reference to the “gospel” in Philippians, so that this may be clearly seen.

“Gospel” in Philippians

A 1:5	Fellowship from the first day	
B ₁ 1:7	DEFENCE. “Ye partakers”	} DEFENSIVE
C 1:12	Knowledge of Paul’s unselfishness	
B ₁ 1:17	DEFENCE. “I am set”	
D 1:27	Conversation (Citizenship) worthy of gospel	
B ₂ 1:27	STRIVING together	} OFFENSIVE
C 2:21	Knowledge of Timothy’s unselfishness	
B ₂ 4:3	STRIVING together	
A 4:15	Fellowship in beginning of gospel	

Taking another step nearer to the centre, under members *C* 1:27–2:5, and *C* 3:20–4:10, prominence is given to “conversation”, “manner of life” or, as the word may be translated, “citizenship”. In Ephesians the believer is made a fellow-citizen (Eph.2:19); in Philippians he is exhorted to behave as a citizen should.

It will be seen, moreover, that “the mind of Christ” here and now is balanced by “His body of glory” in the future, the one having a definite relation to the other. Then comes the great feature of the epistle — *D* 2:6-11, and *D* 3:4-19. The examples of Christ and of Paul, both in their respective loss and gain, are brought to bear upon the believer as he presses toward the mark for the prize. He is exhorted “to work out” his own salvation (*E* 2:12-17), and “to beware” of those who would rob him of his crown (*E* 3:1-3). The examples of Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus which supplement the doctrine so vividly (*F* 2:17-30) show the unselfish spirit that must be manifested by all who engage in this holy striving.

With this survey, and the place that Philippians occupies well in mind, we can now consider some of the more outstanding features of this epistle, with a measure of hope that its true objective shall be made plain.

Phil.1:3-26 (B page 180). Fellowship in gospel

- B A₁ 3-5 Thanksgiving. Fellowship and defence of gospel
 a 3,4 I thank. With joy
 b 5 Fellowship (*koinōnia*)
- B₁ 6-8 Confidence
 pepoitha
 (v.6)
 c 6 I am confident
 d 6 The day of Jesus Christ
 c 7 It is meet
 b 7 Partakers (*sugkoinōneō*)
 a 8 I long. In sympathy
- A₂ 9-11 Prayer. Furtherance of gospel
 e 9 This I pray
 f h 9 That (*hina*) love abound
 i 10 Unto (*eis*) proof
 h 10 That (*hina*) sincere
 i 10 Unto (*eis*) day of Christ
- B₂ 12-18 Confidence
 pepoitha
 (v.14)
 g 11 Filled with fruits. To Glory
 of God
 f j 12 Furtherance of gospel
 k 13 Bonds manifested
 l 14 Confidence of brethren
 k 16 Afflictions to bonds
 j 17 Defence of gospel
 e 18 In this I rejoice
- A₃ 19-21 Prayer. Furtherance of faith
 m 19 I know
 n 19 Deliverance
 o 21 To live is Christ. To die is
 gain
 p 22 To live in flesh. Fruit of
 labour
- B₃ 22-26 Confidence
 pepoitha
 (v.25)
 m 22 I do not make known
 n 23 Depart
 o 23 Be with Christ. Far better
 p 24-26 To remain in flesh for
 you.

CHAPTER 20

PHILIPPIANS

Fellowship in the gospel (B Phil. 1:3-26)

The epistle opens very differently from that to the Ephesians, which opens as follows:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us ... before the overthrow of the world” (Eph.1:3).

In Philippians the opening words are:

“I thank my God ... for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil.1:3-5).

With this thought of active co-operation with the gospel the epistle opens and closes. It is an indication of the trend of the teaching before us; not so much what is ours in Christ, but what we are doing with it. Not so much a look backward — “before the overthrow of the world”, or upward — to the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places”, or forward — “that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us”, but a survey of present activities in view of “the day of Jesus Christ”. There is no trusting to self, however, but confidence that He Who hath begun the good work would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. While “fear and trembling” must ever accompany our endeavours to “work out our own salvation”, it is not incompatible with a settled confidence in the Lord, or with a peace that passeth all understanding.

So we discover the opening theme of the epistle to be threefold:

- (1) Fellowship and defence of the gospel.
- (2) Furtherance of the gospel.
- (3) Furtherance of faith.

Each of these three phases is marked with either thanksgiving or prayer, and in each case with "confidence":

"Being confident, that He which hath begun ... will finish" (Phil. 1:6).

"Waxing confident by my bonds" (Phil.1:14).

"Having this confidence, I know that I shall abide" (Phil.1:25).

As before stated, we must not attempt a complete commentary on these passages, but must select the most obvious features, leaving the rest for the student's own meditation, with whatever assistance the structure of the passage may afford. Accordingly we turn to the prayer of Phil.1:9-11, as it bears the same relation to the theme of Philippians as the prayer of Ephesians 1:15-19 bears to the Ephesian epistle. The Ephesian prayer was for knowledge: knowledge of the hope, of the glory, of the power. The Philippian prayer goes beyond knowledge, to its use: perception, discrimination, with a view to the scrutiny of the day of Christ. It speaks of "fruit", while Ephesians speaks of the "root". The Ephesian prayer is concerned with what we are in Christ and what Christ is to us; the Philippian prayer uses the characteristic expression: "fruits of righteousness through Jesus Christ".

In the second prayer of Ephesians 3 the Apostle prayed that the saints might get to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Here he prays that the believer himself may have so learned the love of Christ that his "love may abound yet more and more". In Ephesians the Apostle prayed that the saints might be "filled up to all the fulness of God". Here he prays so that they, "being filled with fruits of righteousness", shall work out their own salvation, manifesting by these fruits the root of Ephesians 3. His desire was that he might have fruit that should *abound to their account* (Phil.4:17).

The object of Paul's prayer for the Philippians is twofold:

- (1) In order that their love may abound (Phil.1:9).
- (2) In order that they may be sincere and without offence (Phil.1:10).

This is entirely in line with the peculiar aspect of the epistle — the working out of the salvation, the attaining of

the prize, the production of fruit that might abound to their account. This abounding love was to flow along a definite channel (*en* – in) to a definite goal (*eis* – unto). And this I pray:

The object (*hina*) – That your love may abound yet more and more.

The channel (*en*) – In knowledge and in all discernment.

The goal (*eis*) – Unto the approving of things that are excellent.

The translation “judgment” in verse 9 is misleading. *Aisthēsis* is derived from *aisthanomai*, “to perceive” (Luke 9:45), and is related to *aisthētērion*, “the senses” (organs of perception) (Heb.5:14).

Here we have one of the many parallels* afforded by a comparison of Hebrews with Philippians. Hebrews 5 tells us that those who are “perfect” (of full age) have their “senses exercised”, which is the very substance of the teaching of Philippians. The babe in Christ has “senses”, but they who would go on unto perfection (see Phil.3) must have their senses “exercised”. So the Apostle prayed for abounding love in knowledge and all discernment or perception.

The perception desired is in order that the believer may “approve things that are excellent”, and that he may “try the things that differ”. Here is a close parallel with 2 Timothy in its exhortation to divide the Word of truth rightly. The parallel is not exhausted with this one thought, however. The word “approve” occurs in both passages. *Dokimazō* means to test or to try metals:

“The trial (*dokimion*) of your faith, being much more precious than gold” (1 Pet.1:7).

“Prove (*dokimazō*) all things, hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

The English word “differ” comes from the Greek *diapherō* through the Latin. *Dia* indicates separation, *pherō* means to carry. The literal meaning may be seen in Mark 11:16. When things differ it is usual to find that they differ, among other

*A comparison between Hebrews and Philippians is given at the end of this section.

respects, in quality, and if there is a difference in quality, one will be "more excellent" than the other. Hence we find the word translated "better": "Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt.6:26).

In Philippians 3 we shall see the Apostle putting this discernment into practice. He there so approves of that which is "excellent" that all things else become by comparison so much dross. This power to discriminate has a twofold object, relating to ourselves, and to our fellow-members:

"That ye may be sincere and without offence with a view to (*eis*) the day of Christ" (Phil.1:10).

Eilikrinēs, "sincere", means literally, "tested by sunlight", and is connected with a conversation that becometh the gospel of Christ (Phil.1:27). *Aproskopos*, "without offence" (Acts 24:16; 1 Cor.10:32), indicates an "occasion of stumbling" (Rotherham), and is derived from *proskoptō*, "to dash against" (Matt.4:6), as against "a stone of stumbling". Philippians is the outworking of the third aspect of walk given in Ephesians 5 — to "walk circumspectly", accurately, and with care, regarding not only the results of our walk in the day of Christ, but also its influence on the walk and witness of others. "Let us walk by the same rule" (Phil.3:16). If we want to see a sad illustration of a walk that is neither sincere nor without offence, we have but to read Philippians 3:18,19.

Just as Peter desired in his converts that their knowledge should be neither barren nor unfruitful, so Paul desires fruit that may abound in the Philippians:

"Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil.1:11).

He makes much of example in this epistle, as may be seen in chapters 2 and 3. Example is prominent in the verses following the prayer. The Apostle's own attitude of heart, under circumstances of great trial, is a kind of Amen to the prayer breathed for others.

It will surely influence our understanding of the statement, "To die is gain", to read verses 12-18. A superficial reading may seem to indicate that Paul was thinking of his own gain — a closer reading will show that his one thought was the

“furtherance of the gospel” and “the furtherance of faith”. So long as Christ was magnified, it was immaterial whether it should be by his living or by his death. There could hardly be a more bitter trial than the realisation that some believers were preaching Christ, actually hoping by so doing to add affliction to the Apostle’s bonds, but he meets it triumphantly:

“What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil.1:18).

It is rarely that we rise to this height. We are too much concerned with the attacks, the criticisms, the unfairness, perhaps, of opponents to rise above it all and say, in any case, quite apart from my own concern in the matter, these opponents of mine are preaching Christ, even though of envy and strife, or with dispensational associations that I cannot follow, and in that fact I will rejoice. Yet such must be the spirit of any who would “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”.

We now approach a section of the epistle that demands great care in its exposition, and patient examination of the words used so that we do not miss the Spirit’s teaching:

“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die gain” (Phil.1:19-21).

The “salvation” here is not, of course, salvation from sin, but deliverance from prison. The Apostle, however, makes it clear that he would not pray for “deliverance” for its own sake; in fact in the structure his “departure” is the corresponding member. The one concern of his was the glory of Christ and the blessing of His people; whether that should be accomplished by continuance in this life, or by dying and departing, did not greatly trouble him. There is a *chiasm* (a figure of speech indicating a cross over) in verse 21, which we indicate as follows:

“For to me to live is Christ’s (gain) (see footnote on page 197)
And to die is (Christ’s) gain”

In no case is Paul thinking of his own private gain, but of the furtherance of the gospel, the furtherance and joy of faith — and that whether by life or by death. The statement that “Christ shall be magnified in my body” has a bearing upon “the body of humiliation” (vile body) of Philippians 3:21, which we shall observe in its place.

“But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith, that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again” (Phil.1:22-26).

As the passage stands, it seems that Paul was in some sort of perplexity, not knowing what to choose — “What I shall choose I wot not”. The word translated “I wot” is *gnorizō*, and is used by Paul eleven times in the prison epistles. Let us examine the other ten occurrences before we go further.

“Gnorizō” in the Prison Epistles

“Let your requests *be made known* unto God” (Phil.4:6).

“*Having made known* unto us the mystery of His will” (Eph.1:9).

“By revelation He *made known* unto me the mystery” (Eph.3:3).

“Was not *made known* unto the sons of men” (Eph.3:5).

“Unto principalities ... *might be known* (made known R.V.) by the church” (Eph.3:10).

“That I may open my mouth boldly *to make known* the mystery” (Eph.6:19).

“Tychicus ... shall *make known* to you all things” (Eph.6:21).

“To whom God would *make known* what is the riches” (Col.1:27).

“All my state shall Tychicus *declare* unto you” (Col.4:7).

“They shall *make known* unto you all things” (Col.4:9).

These are eleven out of twenty-four occurrences. We give a summary of the A.V. usage of the word: 16 times “to make known”; four times “declare”; once each “do to wit”, “certify”, “give to understand” and “wot”. The normal meaning of *gnorizō* is “to make known”. The idea that Paul did not know what to choose is inaccurate; he knew, but he *would not tell*. The sequel shows that, while his own personal desire

was in one direction, he had chosen against his wishes for the benefit of others. True modesty, not perplexity, is the cause of his reticence to make known his choice.

What does Paul mean by being “in a strait”? Was he “pressed out” of the two possibilities, those of living or dying, by a third – the second coming of Christ, to which the word “depart” is sometimes made to refer? There is only one thing to do – to make sure of the meaning of the words employed. “I am in a strait” is a translation of *sunechō*, a word occurring twelve times. Let us see its usage:

- “The love of Christ *constraineth us*” (2 Cor.5:14).
- “*Keep thee in* on every side” (Luke 19:43).
- “Paul was *pressed* in spirit” (Acts 18:5).
- “Cried out ... and *stopped* their ears” (Acts 7:57).
- “The multitude *throng* Thee” (Luke 8:45).
- “The men that *held* Jesus” (Luke 22:63).
- “How am I *straitened* till it be accomplished” (Luke 12:50).
- “*To be taken with*” (sickness or fever) (Matt.4:24; Luke 4:38; 8:37).
- “*To lie sick* of a fever” (Acts 28:8).

The word does not mean to press out, but rather to hold in. Following the verb *sunechō* is the preposition “out”, and some have been led astray as to the meaning of the preposition by the ambiguity of the English word “press”. While *ek* primarily denotes *out*, the word needs care. Here are some examples in which “out” loses all sense of direction – “out of” – and is correctly translated “with”:

- “They bought *with* them the potter’s field” (Matt.27:7).
- “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with* all thine heart” (Mark 12:30).
- “Wearied *with* His journey” (John 4:6).
- “Drunk *with* wine ... *with* the blood of the saints” (Rev.17:2-6).

Again, *ek* is correctly translated “by” fifty times, e.g.:

- “The tree is known *by* his fruit” (Matt.12:33).
- “*By* the fire ... which issued *out of* their mouths” (Rev.9:18). (Here *ek* is rightly translated “by” and “out of” in the one verse).

Revelation 8:13 renders *ek*, "by reason of"; we could not very well translate it: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth *out of* the other voices". In Philippians 1:23, also, "by reason of" is the best rendering:

"For I am held in constraint by reason of the two (here follow 'the two'), (1) having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better, but (2) to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you".

Something very far better for himself is weighed over against something necessary "for you", and, with the thoughts of verses 12-20 in mind, we know what was the choice. "Departing" is balanced by "remaining", and "with Christ" is answered by "with you".

We must now examine the word "depart", which is the translation of *analuō*. We have two important factors to consider: (1) the usage of the word, and (2) the etymology. If the reader will turn to the structure of the four prison epistles set out on page 13, he will see that the words of Philippians 1:23, "having a desire to depart", are echoed in 2 Timothy 4:6, where we have the substantive form *analysis* — "the time for my departure is at hand". It is beyond argument that in 2 Timothy 4 the Apostle refers to his approaching death, and this settles for us the parallel passage in Philippians 1.

Dr. E.W.Bullinger's *Critical Lexicon and Concordance* reads:

"ANALUŌ — To loosen again, set free; *then* to loosen, dissolve or resolve, as matter into its elements (hence Eng. analysis); *then*, to unfasten as *the fastening of a ship, and thus prepare for departure (and with the force of ana, back) to return*".

Schrevelius' Lexicon defines the word thus:

"ANALUŌ — To unloose, free, release, relax, untie, undo: dissolve, destroy; abolish; solve, explain, analyse; weigh anchor, depart, die; return from a feast".

There is no doubt that the word *analuō* means exactly the same as does our English word *analyse*, to break up a thing into its elements, and so return. The fact that the English word "return" has a double meaning, has misled some into

speaking here of the Second Coming of Christ, but how can the Second Coming of the Lord be His “analysis”? At this point Luke 12:36 is brought forward, for a hasty reading of this passage has given colour to the idea that *analuō* can refer to the return of Christ. What we must notice is that there are two statements, not one, in this verse:

“When He will return from the wedding;
That when He cometh and knocketh” (Luke 12:36).

Rotherham has the somewhat strange rendering: “He may *break up* out of the marriage feast”. This is exactly the same idiomatic use of the word that is with us today, as every schoolboy knows when he “breaks up” for the holidays.

“I am ‘in a fix’ by reason of the two, namely,

- (1) Having a strong desire to the return (dissolution), and to be with Christ, for it were very far better, but
- (2) The abiding in the flesh is more needful for you, and having this confidence, I perceive that I shall abide and continue beside you all for your progress and joy of faith” (Phil.1:23-25).

The pressure under which the Apostle laboured, the strong hope of resurrection that was within him, the knowledge that not until he was clothed upon with that body of glory could he be “with Christ”, is found in some measure repeated in 2 Corinthians 4 and 5:

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair ... always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body ... For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved (*kataluō*, see *analuō*, Phil.1:23), we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house from heaven. If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 4:8 — 5:4).

Three items in this wonderful passage call for comment. (1) “That mortality might be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 5:4). Seeing that Paul had previously written to these same Corinthians, it is obvious that in this passage we have a

reference to the prior revelation of 1 Corinthians 15:51-54:

“Behold, I shew you a mystery ... this mortal must put on immortality ... then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory”.

There is no idea in 2 Corinthians 5 of attaining to the hope of the believer apart from resurrection. Mortality will only be swallowed up of life when death is swallowed up in victory. The Apostle does not say in 2 Corinthians 5:8: “To be absent from the body *is to be* present with the Lord”, but:

“We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord”.

That this does not mean to be present with the Lord without a body the context shows:

“Clothed upon ... Not for that we would be unclothed ... We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things by means of the body, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:2-10).

(2) The second item in 2 Corinthians 5 to be noted is the reference to groaning:

“For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ... for we that are in this tabernacle do groan” (2 Cor. 5:2-4).

Our thoughts go immediately to Romans 8:22,23:

“The whole creation groaneth ... even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body”.

Once more, nothing but a literal and physical resurrection will satisfy the statement here.

(3) The word “dissolve” in 2 Corinthians 5:1 is parallel with the word “depart” in Philippians 1:23, which, as we have seen, may be rendered, “to resolve into its constituent parts”.

Paul's desire to depart and to be with Christ was the longing of his soul. The passage by no means conveys the idea that he contemplated any other way of being with Christ than by a literal and physical resurrection. When the present writer had finished a three months' course of lectures in Canada, he told the friends there that he would "desire to depart from Canada, and to be present with his wife and family in England", but no one assumed that there was to be no interval of waiting, travelling by train and ship, customs delays and many days and nights alone, before that desire could possibly be fulfilled. So with the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 5 and Philippians 1.

While this is true, we also believe that each company of the redeemed has its own appropriate resurrection — "Every man in his own order". There is a "first resurrection" in Revelation 20 that takes place a thousand years before the "rest of the dead" are raised. Ephesians 1:12 speaks of the whole church of the Mystery as being in a state of "prior-hope", and we are yet to read in Philippians 3 of an "out-resurrection" which may anticipate by any length of time the hope of the church as a whole. All this is true, but what must never be relinquished is that whatever the calling and whenever it is realised, the hope of resurrection is literal and physical. Resurrection without a body is unscriptural and savours of Theosophy.

"But shun profane and vain babblings ... who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

Footnote for Page 191: For a fuller and somewhat modified interpretation of the words "to die is gain" the reader is directed to the notes on these words in the book entitled *The Prize of the High Calling* written twenty years later.

Phil.1:27 – 2:5 and 3:20 – 4:10 (C and C, page 180)

Conversation. Stand fast.

- C | C 1:27 Conversation, worthy of gospel (*politeuō*)*
D 27 Stand fast (*stekō*)*
E 27 With one spirit and one soul
F 27 Striving together (*sunathleō*)†
G 28 Not terrified by adversaries
H 29,30 Conflict seen in me and hear to be in me
I 2:1-3 Esteem others better than selves
J 4 Looking on things of others
- C | C 3:20,21 Conversation in heaven (*politeuma*)*
D 4:1 Stand fast (*stekō*)*
E 2 Same mind
F 3 Strivers together (*sunathleō*)†
G 4-7 Not anxious. Garrisoned
I 8 If any virtue, reckon these things
H 9 Things learned, received, heard, and seen in me
J 10 Your care of me

* Only occurrences in this epistle.

† Only occurrences in the N.T.

CHAPTER 21

PHILIPPIANS

Conversation. Stand fast (C C Phil.1:27 – 2:5 and 3:20 – 4:10)

It is important to remember that the desire of Paul to depart and to be with Christ occurs in a section dominated by the thought of suffering anything for the furtherance of the gospel. And we also observe that the second reference to this departure in 2 Timothy 4 has a similar context:

“Preach the word ... they shall turn away their ears from the truth ... endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist ... for I am now ready to be offered, and the time for my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight ... henceforth there is laid up for me a crown” (2 Tim. 4:2-8).

The “hope” is not so much in view as the “prize” and the “crown”.

Coming to the sections now before us, the theme takes a new development. Citizenship with its consequent privileges and responsibilities comes into view, with special stress upon “striving together”. The reader should at this point consult the structure of these sections given on page 198. Both sections open with “conversation” and proceed to elaborate that manner of life which “becometh the gospel” and is consistent with such a heavenly destiny.

The words translated “conversation” in 1:27 and 3:20 are *politeuō* and *politeuma*, and involve the figure of citizenship. *Polis* is “city”, whether earthly (Rom.16:23), or heavenly (Heb.12:22). *Politēs* is a “citizen”, as Saul of Tarsus, “a citizen of no mean city” (Acts 21:39). *Sumpolitēs* is “fellow-citizen”, as in Ephesians 2:19. *Politeia* is translated “commonwealth” in Ephesians 2:12, a citizenship from which

the Gentiles were excluded. *Anastrophē* (Eph.4:22); *anastrephō* (Eph.2:3), and *tropos* (Heb.13:5) are also translated "conversation", and we must therefore distinguish between these words and *politeuō*. Let us translate Philippians 1:27, "Live as citizens", and Philippians 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven". We shall then see that the "conversation" enjoined is in view of "that city" just as surely as the "conversation" of Hebrews 13, 1 Peter 1:15 and 2 Peter 3:11 has in view the heavenly Jerusalem, and the fact that those addressed were a royal priesthood and an holy nation.

In harmony with this strong insistence upon citizenship is the statement of Acts 16:12, that Philippi was a colony. In the words of Sir William Ramsay:

"It was made, so to say, a piece of the Imperial city, a detached fragment of Rome itself, separated from Rome in space, but peopled by Romans, i.e., *coloni*, who were of equal standing and privileges in the eye of the law with the citizens of Rome".

Just as the Philippians, though not actually in the Imperial city of Rome, were nevertheless Romans, with their distinctive rights and privileges, so the Philippian saints were citizens of the highest heavens, though not actually there. The call to these citizens of glory to "stand fast" is linked with the defence of faith and freedom:

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor.16:13).

"Stand fast therefore to the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal.5:1).

The pair of statements in Philippians is as follows:

"That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil.1:27).

"Therefore my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved ... be of the same mind in the Lord. I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me (who were strivers together with me) in the gospel" (Phil.4:1-3).

The Apostle was able by grace to place together his own example and the truth he taught — "My doctrine, manner of life" (2 Tim. 3:10).

The structure (page 198) shows a parallel between the words of Philippians 1:29,30 and those of 4:9:

“For unto you it has been graciously granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now *hear to be in me*” (Phil.1:29,30).

“Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and *seen in me*, do; and the God of peace shall be with you” (Phil.4:9).

This second passage is part of a larger one that revolves around the thought of “peace”. This may be seen if we set out the structure:

- A Nothing ... Everything. Prayer and thanksgiving.
- B And the peace of God shall keep.
- A Whatsoever ... Those things. Reckon and do.
- B And the God of peace shall be with you.

The spirit enjoined is a lowly one, that of “esteeming others better than ourselves”; this in contrast with “strife and vain glory” (Phil.2:3). “Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is near”. This leads on to peace (Phil.4:5-7).

The word “moderation” is translated “patient” (1 Tim. 3:3) and “gentle” (Tit.3:2; Jas.3:17; 1 Pet.2:18 and 2 Cor. 10:1). The Apostle beseeches the believer “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ”, and the “moderation” that should characterize the saint of God which is found in “the mind of Christ” (Phil. 2:5).

Philippians bears very much the same relation to the Mystery as does the Sermon on the Mount to the earthly kingdom. It is an exhortation to patience and endurance, in view of prize or reward, during the absence of the Lord or King. The parallel is evident in Philippians 4:6, “*Be careful for nothing*”, and Matthew 6:25-34, “*Take no thought for your life*” (both expressions being translations of the one word — *merimnaō*).

Be CAREFUL (OR ANXIOUS) FOR NOTHING.
Be PRAYERFUL FOR EVERYTHING.

This is the range of believing prayer. There is a difference,

however, as to the answers to prayer. In the Sermon on the Mount "all these things shall be added"; in Philippians there is no such promise, but we have instead:

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall be as a garrison to your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

Ephesians speaks of love that passeth knowledge; Philippians of a peace that passeth understanding. The contemplation of these wonders brings to mind the words, "What manner of persons ought we to be?" A rejoicing heart, a prayerful, thankful, spirit, a gentle attitude toward all, a consciousness of the nearness of the Lord, these things lead to the peace of God. And what can there be beyond this in our present life? We might perhaps be pardoned if we said, "Surely nothing". But there *is* something beyond. The God of peace is surely greater than the peace of God, and that is the sequel.

We pass now from prayer to practice:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true ... if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, RECKON these things" (Phil. 4:8).

The translation, "Think on these things" is not adequate. Romans 6:11 uses the identical word *logizesthe*, and *logizomai* is found in Philippians 3:13 where it is translated "count". We are not to condone sin, either in ourselves or in others, nor may we endorse error simply for the sake of peace or charity, but we must avoid the tendency to note faults and not virtues in others. Something of the kind of mind has already been manifested in Philippians 1:12-18. It is found fully in the mind of Christ, and is seen in that spirit that esteems others better than self. Once more the Apostle is able to point to his own example in very comprehensive terms:

"Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:9).

Philippians is full of example, and it was incumbent upon Paul that he should be able to say:

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example” (Phil. 3:17).

The sections that are to occupy our attention next, and which contain the weightier doctrines of this epistle, are both concerned with *example*. When the principal theme is the believer’s eternal security and inalienable position in Christ, the basis is *not* example, but grace and expiation. When the race and the prize are prominent, then we hear of examples, whether it be in 1 Corinthians 9:24 – 10:11, Hebrews 4:11, or Philippians. While, physically, we may be said to walk with our feet, we know that without the superintending brain the feet would be powerless; so spiritually, the exhortation to “walk” is accompanied by reference to the “mind” (Eph.4 and Philippians). Philippians 2:5 closes with the words:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

And this mind is immediately translated into deeds, deeds that leave their trail of glory from the right hand of God to the death of the cross – the greatest example of all, the example of Christ. Here the cross of Christ is not mentioned in connection with salvation, but, as in the parallel passage of Hebrews 12, it is connected with the prize and the reward, the race and the conflict. This we shall see more clearly in our next chapter.

Phil. 2:6-11 and 3: 4-19 (D and D page 180)
Examples of Christ and Paul

D	K ₁	2:6	Equality with God. Originally (<i>huparchōn</i>)	
	L ₁	2:7,8	r 7	He emptied Himself
	Sevenfold		s 7	A bond servant
	humiliation		t 7	Likeness as a man
			u 8	Fashioned as a man
			r 8	He humbled Himself
			s 8	Obedient unto death
			t 8	The death of the cross
	K ₂	2:9	Exaltation. The Name (<i>inherited, see Heb.1:4</i>)	
	L ₂	2:9-11	v 9	The Name above every name
	Sevenfold		w 10	Every knee shall bow
	exaltation		x 10	Things in heaven
			y 10	Things in earth
			x 10	Things under earth
			w 11	Every tongue confess
			v 11	Jesus Christ is Lord
D	K ₃	3:4	Confidence in flesh. Once	
	L ₃	3:5,6	a ₁ 5	Circumcised the eighth day
	Sevenfold		b 5	Stock of Israel
	ground of		a ₂ 5	Tribe of Benjamin
	confidence		c 5	Hebrew of the Hebrews
			a ₁ 5	Touching the law a Pharisee
			b 6	Concerning zeal, persecuting the church
			a ₂ 6	Touching righteousness of law, blameless
	K ₄	3:7,8	All things counted loss for Christ	
	L ₄	3:8-11	d 8	Excellency of knowledge of Christ
	Sevenfold		e 9	Found in Him, not righteousness of law
	ground of		f 10	That I may know Him
			g 10	Power of His resurrection
	gain		f 10	Fellowship of His sufferings
			e 10	Conformity unto His death
			d 11	The out (<i>ex</i>) resurrection
	K ₅	3:12-19	Perfection or perdition	

CHAPTER 22

PHILIPPIANS

The examples of Christ and of Paul (D D Phil.2:6-11 and 3:4-19).

Two great examples now come before us; the one ends in high exaltation, the other in the out-resurrection and prize of the high calling. An examination of the structure given on page 204 will show that a parallel is intended. The original high glory of Christ which He laid aside is balanced by the privileges of being a circumcised Hebrew of the Hebrews, the “form of a slave” and the “death of the cross” being balanced by the “refuse” and “conformity unto His death”.

The purpose of this volume does not permit an exhaustive treatment of any one doctrine, much less of a subject like the deity of Christ, but the doctrine is so vital that some attempt must be made to indicate the way. We will first put the reader in possession of the information necessary to arrive at the meaning of the word “form”:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Morphē</i> (form) | – “He was manifested in a different form”
(Mark 16:12),
“Form of God”; “Form of a servant”
(Phil. 2:6,7). |
| <i>Morphoō</i> (to form) | – “Until Christ be formed in you” (Gal.4:19). |
| <i>Morphosis</i> (form) | – “The form of knowledge” (Rom.2:20).
“A form of godliness” (2 Tim.3:5). |
| <i>Summorphōs</i>
(conform) | – “To be conformed to the image of His Son”
(Rom. 8:29).
“To be fashioned like unto His glorious
body” (Phil. 3:21). |
| <i>Summorphoō</i>
(make conformable) | – “Being made conformable unto His death”
(Phil. 3:10). |

Metamorphoō
(transform)

— “He was transfigured” (Matt.17:2; Mark 9:2).
“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your
mind” (Rom.12:2).

We are saved from the idea that Christ assumed different “forms” after His resurrection, by the inspired explanation of Mark 16:12 in Luke 24:16, for inspired explanations are final:

“Their eyes were holden so that they did not know (recognise) Him”.

Galatians 4:19 speaks of Christ being formed in the believer, which cannot refer to shape or external form. Romans 2:20 and 2 Timothy 3:5 indicate an outward form divested of power or reality, but only because of the unreality of the Jew or the Gentile. The “*form* of godliness” was a real exhibition of what was under the surface. Although in this case the whole thing was a sham, that idea does not inhere in the word “form”, for the “form” would only have been a sham had it failed to represent the emptiness of the Jew and Gentile in question. The resurrection-likeness of Romans 8:29 and Philippians 3:21 will be no mere outward form having nothing to correspond within. A glance at the structure on page 180 will show this:

C 1:27–2:5 The mind of Christ, now.

C 3:20–4:10 The body of His glory, then.

And we shall discover that this “mind”, the “out-resurrection”, the “prize” and the “body of glory” are inseparably connected. Philippians 3:10 is very clear: “Being made conformable unto His death”.

If the thought had no reference to heart and motive, then a criminal’s execution would meet the case. But the Apostle did not pray that he might be literally crucified; he prayed for a heart-conformity to all that the cross stands for in the purpose of God. A child of God may die peacefully in his bed, surrounded by loved ones and many comforts, yet he may have been made conformable unto the death of Christ. Nothing is so far from the truth here as the mere outward form; nothing so near as the internal reality.

As to the transfiguration, we have in Romans 12:2 a statement that once more shows the inward character of the word. Luke 9:29, instead of using the word “transfigure”, states that “the fashion of His countenance was altered”. This passage in Luke reminds us of a somewhat similar phrase in the book of Daniel, which in the LXX is translated by *morphē*, form:

“Then the king’s *countenance* was changed” (Dan.5:6,9,10).

“And my *countenance* changed in me” (Dan.7:28).

In all these passages, the LXX uses *morphē* to translate the Chaldee *ziv*, “countenance”. In Daniel 4:36 *ziv* is translated “brightness” in the A.V. and *morphē* in the LXX. Job 4:16 uses *morphē* as distinct from image, “I could not discern *the form* thereof; *an image* was before mine eyes.

“The form of God” in Philippians 2 is not a mere repetition of the thought of “the image of the invisible God” in Colossians 1. It indicates something different from what is merely visible, referring rather to something deeper and beneath the surface.

In what way did Christ take upon Him the form of a slave? It was not a question of appearance, for a slave after all is a man, and sometimes nobler than his master.

How then did Christ take the form of a slave? *When He was numbered with the transgressors and died upon the cross.* We have already said that the Philippians were Roman citizens, and therefore freemen. Now no Roman citizen could be crucified. Crucifixion was the death of a slave. On the throne of the Majesty on high, with every knee bowing before Him, He was in the form of God. On the cross of shame, with sinners mocking, He took upon Him the form of a slave.

When therefore the Lord is exalted on high, and when at last every knee shall bow to Him, it will be but a return to the glory that was His by right. But inasmuch as it was laid aside and received again after the humiliation and shame of the cross, it acquires an added lustre. Hebrews 12 speaks of it as “the joy set before Him”, and Hebrews 1 as “the inherited name”. Philippians 2 uses it as the basis of exhortation to all

who are pressing on for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

This wonderful revelation is introduced by the Apostle in Philippians 2 for the sake of its example: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus": The subsequent, "Wherefore ... work out your own salvation", is his application of the example to his readers. With this in mind we turn to the lesser example, that of Paul, together with its sequel, the prize of the high calling.

In the opening part of the second section, he sums up the privileges that he had relinquished and had belonged to him as an Israelite. They are set out in their sevenfold relationship in the structure (page 204) and are simple enough to be accepted without comment. Whatever these gains may have been, the Apostle tells us that he has counted all as loss for Christ, and over against the sevenfold ground of confidence he sets his sevenfold ground of gain, which reaches its climax in the out-resurrection.

It has been suggested that the out-resurrection is not to be taken literally, but as a deep experience, a life in harmony with His calling. This, however, hardly fits the Scriptural facts, for more than one reason. Verse 10 is a prayer for experimental knowledge and conformity in relation to the Lord's death and resurrection, and verse 11 is the goal to which the Apostle desires to attain. That the interpretation of the out-resurrection as an entirely *spiritual* experience is not the theme of verses 10 and 11 is evident on careful examination. If we accept this view we interpret the verses as follows:

I pray for a spiritual experimental knowledge (verse 10), in order that I may attain unto a spiritual experimental knowledge (verse 11).

There is evidently something wrong with such an idea. What, then, is this out-resurrection? If we can arrive at a Scriptural understanding of this expression we shall be well on the way to an understanding of the whole chapter. The received text of Philippians 3:11 reads: *eis tēn exanastasin*

*The subject is considered more in detail in a pamphlet *The Deity of Christ* (same author and publisher).

tōn nekrōn, whilst the revised text reads: *eis tēn exanastasin tēn ek tōn nekrōn*:

“Unto the out-resurrection, that one which is out from dead ones”.

In order that we may in measure appreciate the double “*ek*” of this teaching on resurrection, we must go back to the simpler forms and work through them, noting any peculiarities as we proceed.

Anastasis nekrōn

“I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question” (Acts 23:6).

Here the simple expression *anastasis nekrōn* expresses the hope of the Pharisee — “a resurrection of dead ones”. This was Martha’s hope:

“Thy brother shall rise again ... I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the LAST DAY” (John 11:23,24).

It was this doctrine that the Hebrews were urged to “leave” because a “better resurrection” was in view:

“Wherefore leaving ... let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of ... resurrection of the dead” (*anastasis nekrōn*) (Heb.6:1,2).

Ek nekrōn anastē

We now take a step forward, and consider the first introduction of the new term *ek*, “out of”. There is no need for us to attempt to prove that the disciples of the Lord believed *at least* as much as the Pharisee and Martha concerning the resurrection, yet, upon the Lord bidding them to tell no man what they had seen till the Son of man be risen from the dead, they manifest a sudden perplexity. The result of the Lord’s remark is that they questioned one another as to what the rising out from the dead should mean. The cause of this questioning is apparent when we consult the original. Into the accepted phrase, *anastasis nekrōn*, the Lord had introduced the preposition *ek* (Mark 9:9,10). We record the words of this passage, therefore, as a step in advance of the simpler doctrine:

“The rising out from dead ones” (*ek nekrōn anastē*).

This referred to the Lord's own resurrection, and it is most essential that we should see that the introduction of the word *ek*, while it speaks of the Lord's resurrection as a firstfruits, does not alter in any shape or form the simple, glorious, literality of that resurrection from the grave. The out-resurrection of Philippians 3 is not a "translation", and we must avoid any interpretation which, in effect, teaches that "the resurrection is past already".

It may be as well to include another passage from the Gospels, viz., Luke 16:31:

"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise out from dead ones" (*ek nekrōn anastē*).

A reasonable objection here would be, that this but touches one-half of the subject, the more important half, the conjunction of *ek* with *anastasis*, still applying only to Philippians 3:11. It may come as a surprise to some to find that this is not altogether true:

"Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead" (Acts 26: 22, 23).

Here we have the words *ex anastaseōs nekrōn*, which approach nearer than before to Philippians 3:11. It is also of great importance to observe that this peculiar expression is associated with "none other things than those which Moses and the Prophets did say should come". Turning to Romans 1:4 we read:

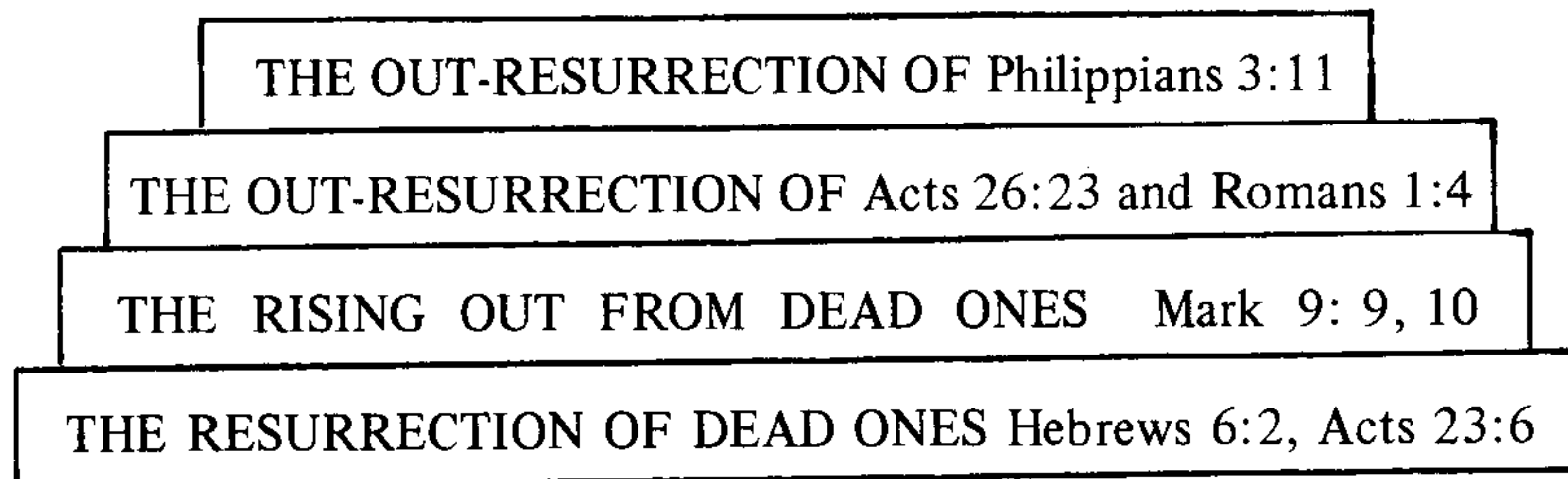
"Declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead" (*ex anastaseōs nekrōn*).

It is evident that the Lord's own resurrection is spoken of in Scripture with the *ek* sometimes before *nekrōn*, and sometimes before *anastaseōs*. In Luke 20:35 the words, *tēs anastaseōs tēs ek nekrōn* occur, giving one more approximation to Philippians 3:11. Moreover the passage supplies a context that should not be ignored:

“But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that* age and *that* resurrection *which* is out from dead ones, neither marry nor are given in marriage”.

The articles here particularize and point out, just as they do in Philippians 3:11, and we have indicated their influence by putting “*that ... that ... which*” in italics. The context supplies a further important note. It speaks of being “accounted worthy to obtain” this resurrection. This links it with the conception of Philippians 3:11, where the context speaks of, “if by any means I might attain”, and “the prize of the high calling”.

One further feature of great importance is the fact of the unchanging meaning of the words “dead ones” and “of the dead”. Christ’s own resurrection was out from persons literally, and not spiritually, dead. Moreover the resurrection spoken of in Luke 20 is from among those literally and physically dead. By what authority, then, can any set aside this canon of interpretation? And if Philippians 3:11 speaks of a special resurrection out from among literally and physically dead ones, the semi-gnostic interpretation of the passage vanishes. While, however, Philippians 3:11 is unique, it is not isolated, neither must it be so interpreted as to remove from under this top-stone the steps that assuredly lead up to it.



“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. 3:10).

Here the Apostle, already a believer, already a member of His Body, steps out into voluntary association with the suffering and death of his Lord. He cannot make his place in Christ more secure thereby, he cannot make the attainment of the

blessed hope more sure thereby; membership and hope alike are ours completely, fully and irrevocably in Christ. Those who go to Philippians 3 for their hope wrongly place that hope in an atmosphere of uncertainty, of pursuing, of perfecting, of attaining. By so doing they take the truth that belongs to the PRIZE, which may be won or lost, and attach it to the HOPE, which is unalterably ours.

This voluntary conformity to the death of Christ has an object in view:

“If by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection, that which is out from among the dead ones” (Phil.3:11).

This is somewhat parallel with the “better resurrection” of Hebrews 11:35.

The attainment of this special resurrection was ardently desired by Paul because it was the divinely appointed entry into the added prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The context of our subject must be a factor in its interpretation, and if we read the passage through, noting its outstanding features, we shall see that they all seem to point to one end:

“Gain ... loss ... That I may win Christ ...

“If by any means I might attain ...

“Not as though I had already attained ...

“I press toward the mark for the prize” (Phil.3:7-14).

These expressions retain their full weight if we will but understand that Paul has not the “hope” in view, but an added “prize”. In what way can we use the expressions cited above when dealing with the blessed hope that is assured to every member of the Body? Paul himself has used the word “prize” in a context that leaves us in no doubt of its meaning — 1 Corinthians 9:24 — 10:13. This passage should be read, its references and figures being carefully examined. To the Apostle the prize is connected with a race in which all may run, but in which all do not win the prize. It cannot, then, be a fit figure for the “hope” of our calling. Paul uses the words “prize” and “crown” interchangeably, as in the two corresponding epistles Philippians and 2 Timothy (see structure, page 13).

In the exhortation, “So run that ye may *obtain*”, we have the word that occurs three times in Philippians 3:12,13, where it is translated “apprehend”. Again, the words “strive for masteries” in 1 Corinthians 9:25 bear a close relation to those of 2 Timothy 2:5; in Corinthians the word is *agōnizomai*, connected with the “race” (Heb.12:1) and the “fight” (2 Tim.4:7). In Timothy it is *athleō*, the word that gives us our “athlete”. Again, we have the words “I therefore so run” and “so fight I”. Moreover there is the keeping under of the body and its being brought into subjection, closely parallel with the Apostle’s desire to be made conformable unto the death of Christ. Finally, there is the possibility of being “disapproved”, *adokimos* (“a castaway”, A.V.).

None of these words is fitting if the hope is in view; they are all appropriate to the thought of a contest, a race, a prize and a crown, and he would be unworthy of our confidence who, having faced this evidence of what a “prize” meant to the Apostle, should nevertheless stultify the whole teaching of Philippians 3 by speaking of it as the hope of the church. The opening verses of 1 Corinthians 10 but confirm our findings. Though all Israel came out of Egypt, *many* of them fell in the wilderness and failed to reach the land of Canaan. To sum up. Ephesians speaks of the HOPE of the CALLING, Philippians of the PRIZE of the CALLING, each expression perfectly expressing the distinctive theme of each epistle.

The prize of Philippians is called, “the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”. Those who speak of the “call on high” or the “upward calling” seldom complete the quotation. As the words “calling” and “high” have both received explanations different from our own, we must search and see, prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. The two words are *klēsis* and *anō*. The word *klēsis* is translated ten times “calling” and once “vocation” :

“The gifts and calling of God” (Rom.11:29).

“Ye see your calling” (1 Cor.1:26).

“Let every man abide in the same calling” (1 Cor.7:20).

“The hope of His calling” (Eph.1:18).

“Walk worthy of the vocation” (Eph.4:1).

“One hope of your calling” (Eph.4:4).

“The high calling of God” (Phil.3:14).

"Count you worthy of this calling" (2 Thess.1:11).

"Called with an holy calling" (2 Tim.1:9).

"Partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb.3:1).

"Make your calling and election sure" (2 Pet.1:10).

In every case, the word "calling" could be replaced by the word "vocation" without doing violence to the meaning of the passage. Moreover, the construction, "the calling of God", in Romans 11:29 and in Philippians 3:14 is the same. The Hebrews were partakers of a *heavenly* calling (Heb.3:1), whereas the Philippians belonged to a "high calling", to which was attached the possibility of a "prize". So far as *klēsis* is concerned, all the evidence favours the translation "vocation" as opposed to the idea of a future "summons".

Let us look at the word "high", *anō*. This word is an adverb, and as adverbs are associated in English grammar with verbs, the hasty reader may jump to the conclusion that *klēsis* must be a verb, and must therefore refer to a future summons on high. Let us now examine the occurrences of the other word *anō* which is translated "high":

"I am from above" (John 8:23).

"In heaven above" (Acts 2:19).

"Jerusalem which is above" (Gal.4:26).

"Things which are above ... things above" (Col.3:1,2).

"Jesus lifted up His eyes" (John 11:41).

"Root springing up" (Heb.12:15).

"They filled them up to the brim" (John 2:7).

"The high calling of God" (Phil.3:14).

There is a pitfall here into which some have fallen. *Anō* is an adverb: therefore, say they, the word it governs must be a verb. Hence "calling" in Philippians 3:14 must be a verb, and the phrase must be translated "a calling above", or "a calling on high", meaning a summons to the right hand of God. This we do not believe to be true. If this is untrue, then the whole aspect of the argument changes.

Let us notice Galatians 4:26:

Hē anō Hierousalēm – "Jerusalem which is above".

The construction is the same as that in Philippians 3:14: *Tēs anō klēseōs*. Using the argument adopted to prove “calling” in Philippians to be a verb, we arrive at an absurdity here, for *anō* governs “Jerusalem” just as surely as it governs “calling” in Philippians. Shall we say, therefore, that “Jerusalem” is a *verb*? A knowledge of the Greek derived from the use of a Concordance is a splendid acquisition, but a teacher has a grave responsibility, and to venture criticisms or to advocate new translations of God’s Holy Word is perilous work, which, if not rightly undertaken, may cause such a translator to be ashamed “in that day”. The fact is that *anō* is used several times with the article as a noun, denoting what is above. John 8:23, Galatians 4:26 and Colossians 3:1 are cases in point. It is once so used without the article in John 2:7.

Here we have five passages where *anō* is not used as an adverb, and as there are only nine passages altogether (including the one under discussion), *there are actually more examples of anō being used as a noun than as an adverb*. A mere array of passages, unanalysed, may convince the unwary, but they show that the one who thus uses this method is without the necessary qualifications for his high office. If the LXX be appealed to we find the following instances of similar usage: Joshua 15:19, 16:5; 2 Kings 18:17; 1 Chronicles 7:24; 2 Chronicles 8:5, 32:30; Isaiah 7:3 and 36:2.

The high calling of God is the vocation wherewith we have been called, or as 2 Timothy 1:9 has it, a holy calling. Attached to this high calling is a prize, as to every other calling in the Scriptures, a feature we have discussed already on pp.10-13. The out-resurrection is not itself the prize, but the special mark of those who are to receive the prize. An illustration of the difference between the special resurrection and the reward to which it leads is ready to our hand in Revelation 20:

“And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them ... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection” (Rev.20:4,5).

Here is a special resurrection, entered by those who had not loved their lives unto the death. The reign for a thousand years, however, must not be confused with the resurrection

itself. The resurrection is the door, the thousand years' reign the place into which it gives access. Supposing we were to see posted on the Town Hall a bill stating that on a certain date the Mayor would present the prizes won at the Grammar School. Supposing we should read that doors would be open at 7.30, and that a footnote read:

Will prize winners please be in the places reserved for them by 7.15.

Should we be mystified? Would it not be reasonable and self-explanatory? The illustration may be crude, but it is sufficient to indicate the purpose of the special out-resurrection. There is nothing said in Scripture as to when this special resurrection will take place. Whether it is simultaneous with the hope of the church, but separated by reason of its association with the added prize, whether it takes place a little or a long time before, whether it be collective or individual, cannot be proved from Scripture, and where Scripture is silent it ill becomes us to advance theories, however attractive. Most if not all such prove the utter inability of the human mind to go one step alone. This chapter is already a long one, but as we are at the very heart of the epistle we must patiently continue our study.

Having renounced all gains and advantages that he had as a Hebrew, the Apostle expresses a twofold desire:

- (1) "That I may be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of law, but that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith" (Phil.3:9).
- (2) "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection, that which is out from dead ones" (Phil.3:10,11).

Here we have two distinct chapters in Christian experience. The first is salvation and comprehends the whole doctrine of the epistle to the Romans. It is found "in Christ", it repudiates righteousness by "law", and embraces that righteousness which is of God through faith of Jesus Christ. If the Apostle had stayed here, he would then have been as advanced as many a child of God today. He would have been saved, forgiven, justified and accepted, and certain of being a participator in the resurrection of the dead.

“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim.2:11).

There is, however, something more. Not that salvation can be made more secure, or more complete, but, as Peter says, an *abundant* entrance awaits those who, having faith, add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and so are neither barren nor unfruitful in their knowledge of the Saviour. The Apostle therefore changes his expression. Instead of saying, “That I may be found in Him”, he now says, “That I may know Him”. Instead of seeking salvation by grace, he now desires a knowledge of the power of His resurrection. Instead of setting aside a righteousness by law, he seeks an experimental fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and in the power of that resurrection to dare to go all the way and be made conformable unto His death. In salvation we begin with His death; in experimental appreciation we must begin with His life, for without that how could we dare to associate ourselves with His sufferings, or seek conformity unto His death? All this is preparatory to one thing:

“If by any means I might attain unto the out-resurrection” (Phil. 3:11).

“If by any means” is not the language of salvation and certainty. It is the language of the runner with a prize in view that may be won or may be lost. In Romans 1:10 we read:

“Making request if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey”.

In Acts 27:12,13 we find the seamen departing from Fair Havens deceived by the soft-blowing south wind. The majority of the men advised departure, “if by any means they might attain to Phenice”. But the venture ended in disaster and wreck.

If we introduce the blessed hope of the church here, we are not rightly dividing the Word of truth. If we keep the true significance of the prize, then every word has its value. If the reader will turn to the structure of this passage on page 204, he will see that 3:12-19 is placed under the simple heading — “Perfection or perdition”. As this heading supplies the key to the passage, we must give it careful attention. We must first justify the use of these words, as the second of them is absent from the A.V.

"Not as though I had already obtained (the prize), either were already perfect ... as many as be perfect be thus minded" (Phil.3:12,15).

Here we have the idea of perfection, and used evidently in two degrees of fulness. In one sense the Apostle would not be perfect until he stood in resurrection glory with His Lord. In a lower sense, only those who are perfect, as contrasted with those who are babes and immature, can even start upon this race. The opposite word, "perdition", comes before us in a context where warning predominates:

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is PERDITION, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things). For our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil.3: 17-20).

The very fact that Paul and his example is before us is proof of itself that salvation is not in view. We are not saved by example, neither by example shall we attain to the blessed hope, but by grace. The Apostle with his eye on the prize and the race, and with the example of Israel in the wilderness in mind (1 Cor.10 and Heb.3:4), utters a word of warning. There are some whose example is destructive. Instead of leading others to desire conformity to the death of Christ, they constitute themselves the very enemies of that cross by their carnal living. Their end, instead of perfection, will be perdition. What does this mean? And why depart from the A.V. word "destruction"? If the reader will look at the close of this section dealing with Philippians, he will find set out the close parallel that exists between Philippians and Hebrews. There he will find the parallel with the enemies of the cross, there he will find the parallel with those whose God is their belly, there he will find those whose citizenship is not of this world, etc. In a central position are placed the two words "perfection" or "perdition":

"Therefore, leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb.6:1).

This is similar to the teaching of Philippians 3 which passes

on from being found in Him, the beginning of all our hopes, to knowing Him and having voluntary fellowship with Him. The “leaving, let us go on” is the same teaching as “forgetting ... and reaching forth ... I press”.

“We are not of them who draw back unto perdition” (Heb.10:39).

The word “perdition” here is the same in the original as the word “destruction” of Philippians 3:19, viz., *apōleia*.

A brief account must now be given as to the meaning of these two words. The fact that Christ Himself could be made perfect (Heb.5:9) is sufficient to prevent us from thinking that perfection involves improvement. Its meaning is discovered by two methods. We consider its etymology and its usage. The stem of the word translated “perfect” is *tele*, and has become familiar to us all in such words as:

TELEPHONE = speaking at a distance.

TELEGRAM = writing at a distance.

TELESCOPE = seeing at a distance.

Its usage places it in contrast with a beginning:

“Leave the word of the beginning ... go on to perfection” (the end or goal) (Heb.6:1).

“Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect (finished, ended, reach your goal), by the flesh?” (Gal.3:3).

Its usage moreover places it in contrast with immaturity or babyhood (see Heb.5:12-14, where “full age” is the word “perfect”; also 1 Cor.2:1-6, 3:1,2; Eph.4:13,14).

Its usage indicates completeness or the attaining of a goal:

“I have finished the work” (John 17:4).

“I have finished my course” (2 Tim.4:7).

“It is finished” (John 19:30).

We can see now how it could be written that Christ was “perfected” (Heb.5). He was sustained through the agony of the garden and through the night of suffering, that He might die the death of the cross, the object for which He had been born.

Perdition is a word that at first seems impossible of application to a child of God. An occurrence of the word where it is used in a non-doctrinal sense illuminates its meaning:

“To what purpose is this *waste*?” (Matt.26:8).

Those Israelites who, though redeemed from Egypt, failed to go on to the end with Caleb and Joshua, ended in waste; if the Apostle had failed in his course, and had become a “castaway” or “disqualified”, he would have ended in waste. If a believer’s life-work fails to stand the test of fire, he shall be saved, but he shall suffer loss. So, says the Apostle, I warn you of those who, like the mixed multitude, will do you harm in your pursuit of the race. Keep well in your mind those who, like Caleb and Joshua, wholly follow the Lord; otherwise, although your salvation will not be imperilled, your crown will be lost. We now complete the quotation from 2 Timothy 2:11, partly quoted on page 216:

“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (*this tallies with Phil.3:9*).

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him” (*this tallies with Phil.3:10-16*).

“If we deny Him, He also will deny us” (*this tallies with Phil. 3:18,19*).

“If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself” (*this brings us back to Phil.3:9 again*).

We now take up the closing verses of Philippians 3, viz. 20 and 21. These are often quoted apart from their context as one of the many allusions to the hope of the church. This, however, is not accurate. Verse 20 begins with the word “For”, showing that it is logically connected with the argument we have traced in this chapter.

“Brethren ... have us for an example	{	For ... mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven”.
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Here we have the negative and the positive conclusions of the whole matter. We can for the moment pursue the positive by itself, and we have an unbroken series of links right back to the out-resurrection, the prize, and the conformity unto

the death of Christ which is the special condition for attaining unto this glory. Verse 21 reads in the A.V. :

“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body”.

Without altering a word here, one thing is evident. The “out-resurrection” cannot be dissociated from “this body”. To speak of “this body” as something done with, laid aside and forgotten, and to speak of the “out-resurrection” as though it were an immediate passage at death into glory. renders this reference to the body meaningless. In fact it teaches that the resurrection is past already. If it is entered immediately at death, there is no meaning in Philippians 3:20 or 21, for who can wait for the Saviour if already with Him, and who will need the changing of his body if he has already been in glory for years? The A.V., however, is not as clear as it might be here, and a more literal rendering will bring fuller truth to light. To avoid any appearance of bias we will give the translations of J.N.D. and of Rotherham (the latter adopted largely by the R.V.) :

“For our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens, from which also we await the Lord Jesus Christ (as) Saviour, Who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory” (J.N.D.’s version).

“For our citizenship in the heavens has its rise; wherefore a Saviour also do we ardently await, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure our humbled body into conformity with His glorified body” (Rotherham’s version).

First of all, the reader will see that both of these translators felt that the verb “to be” was insufficient in the translation of the opening sentences. One says our commonwealth “has its existence”, the other, our citizenship “has its rise”. The same word is used here as of the Lord in Philippians 2:6, “Who, *subsisting* in the form of God”. This citizenship of heaven is our original possession. For the time being we have become alienated and wanderers because of sin. Redemption, however, has broken down all barriers, and we are now awaiting our glorious home-going. We have already been exhorted to live in harmony with such a citizenship and such a salvation (Phil.1:27).

In both versions quoted above, as in the R.V., the "vile body" is replaced by the "body of our humiliation". What this means the Apostle tells us. We have in Philippians 3:21 *tapeinōsis* ("humiliation") and in chapter 2 and 4 *tapeinoō* ("to be abased").

"I know both how to be abased (*tapeinoō*), and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil. 4:12).

"To be abased" is "to be humbled"; Paul had indeed a "body of humiliation" and in it he bore "the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal.6:17). These "marks" or "stigmata" refer to the branding of a slave, and usually indicated that the slave had been a runaway, the punishment for desertion being crucifixion. In classical Greek *stigmatias* means "a rascal". Paul suffered "as a malefactor"; he suffered bonds and imprisonment; he had a body of humiliation. In Philippians 2 we meet the same word again in connection with the Lord Himself.

"He took upon Him the form of a slave ... He humbled Himself ... even unto the death of the cross" (Phil.2:7,8).

Here is the answer to Paul's prayer, that he might have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ and be made conformable unto His death, even the death of the cross — severe contrast to those whose God was their belly, whose mind was on earthly things, and who were consequently the enemies of that cross. And this brings us to the one other occurrence in Philippians:

"Lowliness of mind" (*Tapeinophrosunē*).

Mere humiliation of body is not in view; before humiliation of the body can count, there must be humiliation of mind. In the structure (C and C page 180) we have:

"The mind of Christ, here and now".

"The body of glory, there and then".

This brings us back once more to Philippians 3:21:

"He emptied Himself, and took the form (*morphē*) of a slave" (Phil. 2:7).

“Being made conformable (*summorphoumai*) unto His death” (Phil. 3:10).

“Who shall change this body of humiliation (that had been made conformable unto His death) into conformity (*summorphōs*) with His body of glory” (Phil. 3:21).

While glory undreamed of awaits the whole church, yet even one star differs from another star in glory. So those who attain to the out-resurrection and to the prize have a special conformity both in the likeness of His death, and in the likeness of His glory.

We have occupied as much space as we can spare on this subject. We trust no reader will rest content with these few signposts, but will diligently seek fuller light upon all points, testing all that we have said as to the race, the prize, the word *anō*, and the word “calling”, bringing all to the touchstone of the Word, and not omitting to ponder the most evident parallel between the two epistles, Hebrews and Philippians. May we be found among the followers of the Apostle’s example, so that we may also find ourselves following in the steps of His Lord. Better the brand-marks as the Lord’s slave, than the honours of a world that knows Him not. Better to be humbled now that we may be exalted when exaltation will not lead to pride, but will be unto the praise and glory of God.

Phil.2:17-30 (F page 180). Three Examples

F	M ₁	2:17,18 Paul's example	h 17	Paul's service (<i>leitourgeia</i>) in terms of sacrifice
			i 18	He calls for rejoicing (This spirit is expanded in M ₂ and M ₃)
	M ₂	2:19-24 Timothy's example	j 19	I hope in the Lord Jesus
			k a 19	To send Timothy shortly
			b 19	Things concerning (<i>peri</i>) you
			l c ₁ 20	None of like soul
			c ₂ 21	All seek their own
			c ₃ 22	As son with father
			c ₄ 22	So he served with me
			j 24	I hope in the Lord
			k b 23	Things concerning (<i>peri</i>) me
			a 24	I myself will come shortly
	M ₃	2:25-30 Epaphroditus' example	l 25	I sent Epaphroditus: Paul's esteem
			m d 25	Minister (<i>leitourgon</i>)
			e 25	My need
			f 27	Nigh unto death
			l 28	I sent him therefore: his reputation
			m f 30	Nigh unto death
			e 30	Your deficiency
			d 30	Service (<i>leitourgeia</i>)

Phil.4:11-20 (B page 180). Fellowship in beginning of gospel

B	N	4:11-13	Paul's sufferings for the gospel
	O n d	11	Not speak of want (<i>husterēsis</i>)
	e	11	I have learned as a disciple
	o	11	Independence
	p	12	Abound (<i>periseuō en panti kai en pasi</i>)
	n e	12	I have learned as an initiate
	d	12	To suffer need (<i>hustereō</i>)
	o	13	Strong
N		4:14-20	Philippians' fellowship in the gospel
	O n	14,15	Fellowship in affliction (<i>kalos</i>)
	o	16,17	You send to my need (<i>chreia</i>)
	p	18	Full and abound (<i>periseuō panta</i>)
	n	18	Fellowship. Epaphroditus (<i>euōdias</i>)
	o	19	My God shall supply all your need (<i>chreia</i>)

CHAPTER 23

PHILIPPIANS

Fellowship in the beginning of the gospel (*B* Phil.4:11-20)

We leave the section occupying 2:17-30 which presents us with the three examples of Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus, and take up the conclusion of the epistle. Most readers, with the assistance of the structure (F) given on page 224, will be able to appreciate the special characteristics of these three examples and the way in which they illuminate the nature of that “mind of Christ” which must precede “a body like unto His body of glory”. We take up the concluding verses because of the special value of certain words therein and their bearing upon the great theme of the epistle:

“I have learned as a disciple” (Phil.4:11).

“I have learned as an initiate” (Phil.4:12).

The first word, “to learn”, is *manthanō*, and means to learn as does a disciple, *mathētēs*. This is discipleship, something more than book learning:

“Take My yoke upon you, and learn (*manthanō*) of Me” (Matt. 11:29).

Paul had “learned” in the school of fellowship; he had taken up his cross and followed the Lord.

In Ephesians we have:

“But ye have not so learned (*manthanō*) Christ” (Eph.4:20).

This is followed by practice as well as doctrine — putting off and putting on:

“Those things which ye have both learned (*manthanō*) ... and seen in me, do” (Phil.4:9).

In this school it is example that counts; hence such an abundance of example in this short epistle.

To learn as an initiate (*mueō*) refers to initiation into the mysteries. The mystery of Christ and of His gospel relates not only to His future glory, but to His suffering and death, and a full initiation into these sacred mysteries will not fail to include the latter as well as the former. This we have found was Paul's desire in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know ... sufferings ... death".

As a disciple Paul had learned, in whatsoever state, to be *independent*. The word translated "content" is *autarkēs*, from *autos* = himself, and *arkeō* = to suffice. This is a blessed state of mind. Outside circumstances may rise and fall; sometimes Paul would be levelled to the ground, sometimes exalted to the skies, but the levelling did not cause him to murmur or to fear; the exaltation did not make him proud or unspiritual. He had so learned Christ that in good report or evil report, in sickness or in health, in success or failure, he could say, "None of these things move me". A blessed echo of the Lord's own attitude:

"At that time (when failure was drawing near) Jesus answered and said ... even so, Father ... *Take my yoke* and learn of Me" (Matt. 11:25-30).

That the Apostle had something of this in mind seems probable from his words earlier in the chapter:

"I entreat thee also true *yokefellow*" (Phil.4:3).

Paul's independent spirit, however, was gracious. He did not brusquely turn aside the fellowship of the Lord's people, although twice over he assured them that he was not seeking a gift:

"Not that I speak in respect of want" (Phil.4:11).

"Not because I desire a gift" (Phil.4:17).

What he did desire was fruit that should abound to their account. When Paul did receive a gift, his very acceptance enhanced and glorified it. From the degradation of prison with its inevitable privations he could write:

“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God” (Phil.4:18).

The mean person is often niggardly in his thanks. He gauges the gifts of others by his own puny standards. He suspects motives and is not wholehearted in his thanks. Paul knew what it was to spend and be spent, to offer himself upon the sacrifice and service of the faith for others (Phil.2:17), and in measure he reaped as he had sown (2 Cor.9:6).

The structure (*B*) throws into prominence the emphasis upon “abounding” (see page 224), and also the correspondence between the believers supplying the Apostle’s needs and God supplying all their needs.

Even the salutation of this epistle is in keeping with its theme of triumphant suffering:

“All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s household” (Phil.4:22).

The saints of Cæsar’s household would most likely all be slaves, glorying in the blessed revelation of Philippians 2 that He Who was infinitely higher than all the Emperors of this earth stooped to the lowest position of a slave, actually taking a towel and washing His disciples’ feet, and at last dying the horrible death that haunted the dreams of many a poor slave. So it is that in the salutation of all the saints to the freemen of Philippi, chief place is given to the salutation of Nero’s slaves, yet Christ’s free-men, fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the heavenly holiest of all at the right hand of God.

How many of such lowly followers of Christ will there be among those who attain the prize? How many of those of us who have enjoyed so many advantages, denied to them, will be numbered among those who will be disapproved? May the Lord use the study of these epistles to stimulate our earnestness, to enable us to estimate things at their true value, and at length with full heart and without reserve to be able to count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

We conclude this study of Philippians with a list of parallels between Hebrews and Philippians. The importance of this cannot be overrated; an acknowledgment of it is due to the Lord Who has not left us without guidance, and when once its lessons have been learned the student is proof against a mass of theory that would otherwise carry him away. Since this list was prepared, further parallels have come to light. We have refrained from lengthening it, for we can never hope to fathom the depths of the Word, and the reader may be stirred up to discover further and fuller parallels for himself. May the Lord own and bless the work.

Parallels

Hebrews	Philippians
Things accompanying salvation ... 6:9	Work out salvation 2:12
Heavenly city ... 11:10,12:22	Citizenship in heaven ... 3:20
Reproach ... 11:26,13:13	Fellowship of sufferings ... 3:10
Reward ... 10:35,11:26	Prize ... 3:14
The race set before us ... 12:1	I press toward the mark ... 3:14
Leaving...let us go on ... 6:1,2	Forgetting things behind ... 3:13
Obtain a better resurrection (condition attached) ... 11:35	Attain unto an out-resurrection (condition attached) ... 3:11
Power of His resurrection 13:20	Power of His resurrection... 3:10
Work in ... His will ... 13:21	Work in ... His will ... 2:13
Christ the Image ... 1:3	Christ the Form ... 2:6
Angels worship Him ... 1:6	Every knee should bow ... 2:10
Thou Lord, in the beginning 1:10	Jesus Christ is Lord ... 2:11
A little lower than angels 2:9	No reputation ... He humbled Himself ... 2:7,8
Cross endured for the joy set before Him (used as example) ... 12:1,2	Cross suffered...wherefore exalted. Let this mind be in you ... 2:5-9
Crucify to themselves afresh ... 6:6	Enemies of the cross of Christ ... 3:18

Perfection or Perdition (Heb.6:1, 10:39; Phil.3:12,19).

Hebrews	Philippians
Fight of afflictions (<i>athlēsis</i>) 10:32	Strive together (<i>sunathleō</i>) 1:27,4:3
Discernment ... 5:14	Discernment ... differ 1:9,10
Look diligently lest...Esau... 12:15	Mark them that walk ... 3:17
For one morsel of meat sold his birthright ... 12:16	Whose god is their belly ... 3:19
That generation—tempted God in the wilderness 3:7-10	Perverse generation ... do without murmurings 2:14,15
Be content with such as ye have ... 13:5	Whatsoever state ... content ... 4:11
Communicate ... 13:16	Communicate ... 4:14,15
With such sacrifices God is well pleased ... 13:16	Sacrifice ... sweet smell, well-pleasing ... 4:18
Fruit of righteousness ... 12:11	Fruits of righteousness ... 1:11
Compassion in bonds ... 10:34	Partaker in bonds ... 1:7
Whose faith follow (<i>mimeomai</i>) ... 13:7	Be followers together of me (<i>summimētēs</i>) ... 3:17
Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods 10:34	Let your moderation be known unto all men ... 4:5
Ye have in heaven an enduring substance (<i>huparchonta</i>) 10:34	Our citizenship is (<i>huparchō</i>) in heaven ... 3:20
Salutation from Italy ... 13:24	Salutation from Cæsar's household ... 4:22
Paul's sign manual ... 13:25	Paul's sign manual ... 4:23

The Epistle to the Colossians
The structure of the Book as a whole
(Introversion and Alternation)

A	1:1,2	Epistolary and Salutation
B	1:3-8	Faithful Ministry of Epaphras
C	D	a 1:9-12 Prayer and Spiritual Walk
		b 1:13-23 Christ before All Things
	E	1:23-27 Mystery Manifested by God
	F	1:28-2:1 Preaching to present Perfect
	G	2:2,3 Hid – Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge
<hr/>		
	H	2:4-23 BEWARE
	G	3:1-4 Hid – Your Life with Christ
C	D	b 3:5-15 Christ is All and In All
	a	3:16-4:1 The Word and Spiritual Walk
	E	4:2-11 Mystery Manifested by Paul
	F	4:12-16 Prayer that they Stand Perfect
B	4:17	Fulfil Ministry – Archippus
A	4:18	Epistolary and Salutation

CHAPTER 24

COLOSSIANS

The epistle as a whole

It is impossible to study Ephesians and to consider parallel passages without soon realising that Colossians is a companion epistle. While Colossians presents the same truth as Ephesians, the order and emphasis differ. The truth is compressed into a smaller compass, leaving room for the distinctive subject introduced in chapter 2 under the heading BEWARE.

Turning to the structure of the epistle as a whole, given on page 232, we notice that this is the great central feature — H 2:4-23; whereas in Ephesians the central subject is the prayer of Ephesians 3:14-21. The two passages, however, have some things in common: they both deal with that which passes knowledge, and they both deal with the fulness of God and the believer's relation thereto. This we must examine more in detail later.

On each side of the central member of the structure are the two things that are "hid".

G Col. 2:2, 3	HID — Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.
G Col. 3:1-4	HID — Your Life with Christ.

These are intimately related to that Mystery which was hidden in God from the ages, and is now made manifest through the prison ministry of Paul.

The second passage (Col.3:1-4) we shall find is a partial answer to the prayer of Ephesians 1: "What is the hope of His calling", even as Colossians 1:12,13 is a partial answer to that which immediately follows in Ephesians 1: "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints".

Ephesians 1 takes us back to the time before the overthrow of the world; Colossians 1 to the beginning of creation with Christ the Image and Firstborn. Ephesians 2 deals with the reconciliation of the two companies that now form the church — “that He might reconcile the both to God in one body”; Colossians deals with the reconciliation of that church with its heavenly sphere and associates. The prayer of Ephesians 1:15-19 finds a parallel in Colossians 1:9-12, though in the Colossians passage the spiritual walk is more in view than knowledge of doctrine. Again, in Colossians we have Paul’s most emphatic and unambiguous claim to have received the dispensation of the Mystery complete from God Himself. Finally, there is a distinctive thought in Colossians 1:28 and 4:12-16 where preaching and prayer are focused upon “presenting every man perfect”.

We shall not be able to deal with Colossians as fully as we have dealt with Ephesians. We desire to give as full a consideration as possible to the passage peculiar to the epistle — Colossians 2:4-23. We feel we cannot, however, pass by without comment the wondrous teaching of the rest of the epistle, even if the comments be slight and fragmentary. Any feature that has already been dealt with in the epistle to the Ephesians we shall omit, giving only a reference to that epistle and to any note or comment to be found in the earlier pages of the book.

Col.1:9-12 and 3:16—4:1 (D a and D a, page 230)

Prayer, also the Word, and Spiritual Walk

D	a	1:9-12	A	1:9	Prayer for all wisdom
			B	1:9	Spiritual understanding
			C	1:10	Every good work
			D	1:12	Giving thanks unto the Father
			E	1:10	All pleasing
			F	1:12	Meet for the inheritance

Beware — Col. 2:4-23

D	a	3:16—4:1	A	3:16	Word of Christ for all wisdom
			B	3:16	Spiritual songs
			C	3:17	Word or deed
			D	3:17	Giving thanks to the Father
			E	3:20	Well pleasing
			F	3:24	Reward of the inheritance

First of all it will be observed that the sections are grouped around the central warning of Colossians 2:4-23, which is related to these balancing themes. The first pair of subjects deals with prayer, the Word, and spiritual walk. The prayer is for all wisdom:

“That ye might be filled with a knowledge of His will in all wisdom” (Col.1:9).

It finds its answer in Colossians 3:16:

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom”.

This throws light upon the relation between prayer, the Scriptures, and human ministry. God has given us the whole of truth, complete and sufficient in itself, yet, even so, He has arranged its teaching in such a way that we can never be independent of Himself, the Author. He has given us in simple language the great basis of our salvation, but He has reserved full light upon some things until we feel our need and go to Him in prayer and ask for them. Truth that pertains to those things that come after salvation must be learned in the sanctuary. The printed page of the Word must be illumined from on high or it may remain but so many letters.

The reader with the structure before him will be able to read each section together with its counterpart. “Spiritual understanding” finds expression in “spiritual songs”:

“I will sing with the Spirit, I will sing with the understanding also” (1 Cor.14:15).

It is not fitting that one who rejoices in the knowledge of the three spheres of blessing should spoil it by singing: “We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion”. And it is not right that those who have seen the distinction between the Body and the Bride, should deny this distinction by singing hymns that are only appropriate to a bridal company.

The walk that is worthy (Col.1:10) and unto all pleasing, is developed in Colossians 3:18–4:1, and we discover that the spirituality of chapter 1 is not expressed in meetings, services and spiritual songs, but in the home and business life of the children of God.

An important distinction must be observed in the closing members of the structure:

F	Col. 1:12	Meet for the inheritance.
F	Col. 3:24	Reward of the inheritance.

Here we have very clearly set before us the two principles that we have already discussed under the heading — “The Hope and the Prize”. In the first passage is our hope, absolutely certain because resting upon the grace of God and the finished work of Christ:

“Giving thanks unto the Father, Who hath made us meet (or sufficient) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints (or of the heavenly holiest of all) in the light” (Col. 1:12).

It would be impossible to introduce here the idea of a reward or the possibility of winning or losing. The balancing passage, however, is very different in this respect:

“Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh: not with eye-service as men pleasers: but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons” (Col.3:22-25).

Here is service and reward. Just as in Ephesians we have “the hope of His calling”, and in Philippians the added “prize pertaining to the high calling”, so in Colossians 1 we have the “inheritance” and in Colossians 3 the “reward pertaining to the inheritance”. There is no need to elaborate this further, for the passages themselves speak with no uncertain sound.

Before passing on to the next section, it may be a help to the reader who wishes to pursue these studies to have before him the structure of the prayer in Colossians 1:9-12. It is divided into three parts: the first part tells us the object, “in order that” (*hina*); the second part reveals a series of “means” (*en*) and “ends” (*eis*); and the third part shows a fitting accompaniment (*meta*). These can be easily seen as follows:

The Prayer (Col. 1: 9-12)

A 9	OBJECT (<i>hina</i>)	That ye may be filled as to the knowledge of His will	
		a ₁ 9	Means (<i>en</i>). <i>In</i> all wisdom and spiritual understanding
B 9-11	MEANS (<i>en</i>) and END (<i>eis</i>)	b ₁ 10	End (<i>eis</i>). <i>Unto</i> all pleasing. Walk.
		a ₂ 10	Means (<i>en</i>). <i>In</i> every good work being fruitful
		b ₂ 10	End (<i>eis</i>). <i>Unto</i> the knowledge of God increasing
		a ₃ 11	Means (<i>en</i>). <i>In</i> all might being strengthened
		b ₃ 11	End (<i>eis</i>). <i>Unto</i> all patience and longsuffering
A 12	THE ACCOMPANIMENT (<i>meta</i>)	With joy giving thanks for meetness for inheritance.	

To complete the analysis, so far as mere comparisons may be said to furnish completion, we will conclude by setting out the relation between the prayers of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

The four prayers

A Eph.1:15-23	Faith and love heard of.		
	Power and might. Spirit of wisdom. Hope. Inheritance in the saints. Principality and power. Far above all. Christ the Head and the Fulness.		
B Eph.3:14-21	Love of Christ exceeding knowledge. Comprehend what is breadth, etc. Filled unto all the fulness of God. Unto the generations of the age of the ages.		
B Phil.1:9-11	Love of saints abounding in knowledge. Prove the things that differ. Filled as to fruits of righteousness. Unto the day of Christ.		
A Col.1:9-19	Faith and love heard of. Power and might, wisdom and hope. Inheritance of the saints. Authority of darkness. Translated. Christ the Head and the Fulness.		

We now approach the next pair of passages, which deal with the headship and fulness of Christ, and the reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth. Ephesians does not so much look back to the past; it rather presents Christ as the perfect Man at the end. Colossians takes the other view, and looking back to the beginning, sees Christ as the Image of the invisible God and the Firstborn of all creation. The reconciling of things in heaven and earth is in Ephesians anticipated in this present dispensation where Christ is Head over all things "to the church" — a blessed anticipation of the end (Eph.1:10,22). In Colossians the reconciling of things in heaven and earth is more definitely stated, and is again anticipated now in the church, as will be seen by reading Colossians 3:10-12 and by consulting the following structure:

Col.1:13-23 and 3:5-15 (D b and D b page 230)

Christ before all things, and Christ is all and in all

D b 1:13-23	G 1:15,16	The Creator. The Image
	H 1:20	Reconciliation of heaven and earth
	I 1:17,18	Christ pre-eminent. All in Him
	J 1:20	Peace and forgiveness of sins
	K 1:22	Holy, blameless, unreprouable
BEWARE — Col. 2:4-23		
D b 3:5-15	G 3:10	Created after Image
	H 3:11	Reconciliation of Jew and Greek
	I 3:11	Christ is all and in all
	J 3:13,15	Peace. Forgive quarrel
	K 3:9,12	Put off, put on, holy and beloved.

What Christ is to be in the day that is coming, He is now in the more limited sphere of the Mystery. The church is the fulness of Christ, and in Him the whole fulness dwells. That fulness we have already seen (pages 60-63) is God's great goal wherein the rent and schism made in Genesis 1:2 shall be completely restored and "all things made new".

We will take each pair of passages, and endeavour to discover their teaching when viewed together:

G	Col. 1:15,16	The Creator. The Image.
G	Col. 3:10	Created after the Image.

There is an intentional parallel here between these two verses and with Genesis 1:26, where God said:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion” (Gen. 1:26).

In the new creation of which the church forms a part, there is an evident return to the principle of Genesis 1:26, and something more than a suggestion that the purpose of God, ostensibly begun in Adam, will in reality be carried out by Christ, the second Man and the last Adam. This title of Christ is His in resurrection Headship, not of the church only, but of all who died in Adam and who shall live in Christ. The parallel title in Colossians is “the Firstborn of the dead”, placing the Lord in the same pre-eminent position in the new creation as He held in the old – “the Firstborn of every creature”.

This title must not be misunderstood. It does not mean that Christ was the first of all created beings; the explanation that follows forbids it – “for” by Him were all things created. It cannot mean, that, before this, He had no existence, for this reasoning would lead to an impossible conclusion if applied to the parallel title – “the Firstborn from the dead”. The title is one of dignity – “that in all things He might have pre-eminence”.

Speaking of the resurrection, Psalm 2:7 records: “Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee”. This cannot possibly mean that Christ was not the Son of God before His resurrection, or that He had no existence prior to resurrection. Revelation 1:5 brings the two thoughts together, and partly illustrates Colossians 1:15,16:

“The *First begotten* of the dead, and the *Prince* of the kings of the earth”.

The nation of Israel is called the “Firstborn” in virtue of its exalted position. The Septuagint illustrates the usage of *prōtotokos* in Exodus 4:22; Psalm 89:27 and Jeremiah 31:9 where the word bears the meaning “superior”, “greater”, “most loved”, “exalted”.

The fact that Christ is the Creator of all things is stated many times, but there are three passages dealing with this

subject that should be considered together:

John 1	Colossians 1	Hebrews 1
The Word	The Image	The express Image
No one ever saw God	The invisible God	The Substance
All things made by Him	By Him all things created	By Him ages, heaven and earth made
—	He is before all things	Angels worship Him
His fulness	All fulness	—
—	By Him all things consist	All things upheld
The Word was God	—	Thy throne, O God
The only begotten Son	Firstborn	Firstborn

Before we can go much further it will be necessary to examine several passages, in order that the expression “all things” used in Colossians 1:16 shall be rightly understood. In the epistles this expression occurs over sixty times, but it is not always a translation of the same words in the original. Forty times the article is omitted; “all things”, *panta*; twenty times the article is included; “*the* all things”, *ta panta*. We must spend some time investigating the usage of *ta panta* lest we jump to hasty conclusions of a “universalist” character, not in keeping with the teaching of Scripture. The first occurrences of the two forms of expression in the epistles are in Romans 8:28 and 32:

“We know that all things (*panta*) work together for good to them that love God” (Rom.8:28).

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him graciously give us the all things?” (*ta panta*) (Rom.8:32).

The presence of the article here can hardly be merely that of the “second mention” for, in the first place, the earlier reference is too far away, and in the second place, the second reference is in a new section introduced by the words, “What shall we then say?” (verse 31). All things that are made to work together for good must include evil, for all good things of necessity would work for our good. “All things” without the article is a wider term than “*the* all things”. “The all things” of verse 32 cannot include Satan and evil agencies,

for these all things are graciously given unto us with Christ. Here then we find reason to believe that *ta panta* is not to be understood universally without discrimination, but universally of its class only.

The more restricted expression *ta panta*, “the all things”, is used in Romans 11:36, where it sums up the dispensational dealings of God:

“For of Him (*ek*, the originating cause) and through Him (*dia*, the efficient and ministerial cause) and unto Him (*eis*, the final goal) are the all things” (*ta panta*).

If the expression “all things” were used without the article here, then the Lord would be the originating and ministerial cause of evil as well as of good; but actually the more restricted term is used.

Upon examining 1 Corinthians 15:25-27, Ephesians 1:22, and Hebrews 2:8, we find a series of parallel passages in which *panta*, “all things” — the wide term, and *ta panta*, “the all things” — the more restricted term, are used. A careful examination shows in each case that where the words “under His feet” are used, the expression is *panta*, but when the Lord’s Headship is asserted, without the words “under His feet”, then *ta panta* is used, indicating the special company in view. Now 1 Corinthians 15:25 declares that “under His feet” is the place for the enemy. No member of the Body can be said to be subjected “under His feet”, though all are in subjection to Him as Head.

There is a close connection between 1 Corinthians 15:24 and Ephesians 1:21-23:

“Rule, authority and power” (1 Cor.15:24).

“Principality, power and might” (Eph.1:21).

These expressions are exactly the same in the original, where we find *archē*, *exousia* and *dunamis*. Now in 1 Corinthians 15:24 it is declared that these are to be “put down”; but this is too tame a translation, for in verse 26 the same word, *katargeō*, is used and translated “destroyed”:

“The last enemy that shall be *destroyed* is death” (1 Cor.15:26).

These principalities and powers, therefore, are to be destroyed, and so are "under His feet". When this is done, then the all things (*ta panta*) are dealt with (1 Cor.15:27,28; Heb. 2:8-10, and Eph.1:22). At the close of Ephesians 1:23 "the all things" are associated with "the fulness"; and this brings to light the truth intended in all the passages quoted from Romans 11, 1 Corinthians 15, or Hebrews 2, viz., that *ta panta* refers to that glorious company in heaven and earth who were created, redeemed and reconciled, in order that the great schism occasioned in Genesis 1:2 should be completely remedied and God once more be all in all.

There is a strange expression in Ephesians 4:15 that is illuminated by this usage of the word. The A.V. reads:

"May grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ".

There is no word for "in" in the original of this passage; and whether the word be actually there or mentally supplied, the dative case must be used, as in Ephesians 1:23. The words here are *ta panta*. The growth is "for" or "with a view to" Him in His capacity as the Head. This is not the only passage where Christ as Head of the church is designated as *ta panta*, for Colossians 3:11 uses the expression also:

"The all things and in all things (is) Christ".

Again, Ephesians 3 shows that a special company is in view in close association with the "purpose of the ages":

"The dispensation of the Mystery, which hath been hidden from the ages in that God Who (*en tō Theō tō*) the all things (*ta panta*) created through Jesus Christ ... according to the purpose of the ages which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph.3:9-11).

Returning to Colossians 1:16-19 we read:

"For by Him were created *ta panta* (the all things) ... *ta panta* through Him and unto Him ... He is before *panton*, and by Him *ta panta* consist ... in Him should all the fulness dwell".

It is this company that is reconciled:

"By Him to reconcile *ta panta* unto Himself" (Col.1:20).

This reconciliation was completed at the cross; it is not Scriptural to speak of it as the future goal of the ages. Reconciliation as taught by Paul, where it deals with the nations, or with the church of the Mystery, is *dispensational*; where it refers back to Adam and original sin it is *doctrinal*. Salvation and justification are “much more” than reconciliation (Rom.5:1-11), and have nothing whatever to do with those whose names are not in the book of life and who are cast into the lake of fire, the second death.

We now return to Colossians 1:13-23 with the thought that there is no sudden departure from the subject of the Mystery, which is the theme of the epistle. To set out the parallels that exist between Ephesians and Colossians would necessitate printing practically the whole of the two epistles. We indicate just enough to serve our immediate purpose, and assure the reader that by this restriction we are robbed of a great deal of fuller confirmation.

Ephesians	Colossians
“And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church which is His body” (1:22,23).	“And He is the Head of the body, the church” (1:18). “The Head of all principality and authority” (2:10).
“The fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (1:23).	“In Him should all fulness dwell” (1:19).
“The prince of the authority of the air” (2:2).	“Who hath delivered us from the authority of darkness” (1:13).
“With a view to a dispensation of the fulness of the seasons, to gather together under one Head <i>ta panta</i> in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth even in Him: in Whom also we have obtained an inheritance” (1:10,11).	“By Him having made peace by the blood of His cross, to reconcile <i>ta panta</i> unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled” (1:20,21).

In order that the reader may be stimulated to read the parallels between these epistles, we give references only, as space will not permit fuller quotation:

Ephesians	Colossians
1:15,16	1:3,4
1:17; 4:1	1:9,10
1:18	1:27 and 12
1:21	1:16 -18
1:22,23	1:18; 2:10
1:23	1:19
3:19	2:9,10
2:1,5	2:13
2:2	1:13
1:10,11	1:20,21
2:14 -16	2:14,15
1:19,20	2:12
4:2,3,7,9,10	1:24 -26 and 16
4:1	1:10
4:8	2:15
4:16	2:19
4:3	3:14
5:18,19	3:16
4:20 -32	3:8-15
5:22 – 6:9	3:18 – 4:1

Arising out of this close parallel comes the conviction that Colossians is dealing with *the same theme* as Ephesians, and that any interpretation of Colossians 1:16-21 that goes outside the subject of the Mystery is but wresting the Scriptures out of their context at the demand of a false doctrine. To regard Colossians 1:16-21 as teaching a reconciliation that involves deliverance from the lake of fire, and the reconciliation of Satan, the false prophet, and the fallen angels is manifestly wrong.

The structure of this section will be a help to us, and we therefore set it out as follows:

Colossians 1:13 - 23

[The Structure set out independently of the balancing member (3:10-12)]

- A 13 Translated – *methistēmi*
- B 14 Redemption and forgiveness of sins
- C 15-17 – D 15 Image. Firstborn
 - E a 16 Creation. *Ta panta*. By Him. Through Him. For Him. Heaven and earth
 - b 17 Pre-eminence
- C 18-20 – D 18 Head. Beginning. Firstborn
 - E b 18 Pre-eminence
 - a 19,20 Reconciliation. *Ta panta*. By Him. Through Him. For Him. Earth and heaven.
- B 21,22 Reconciliation and presentation
- A 23 Not moved away – *metakineō*

Creation and reconciliation here are coextensive. If “the all things” of verse 16 are universal, then “the all things” of verse 20 are universal also. Further, if the creation in view includes Satan and man, it must include more. It must include the whole range of creation, all animals and creeping things, even the fish of the sea, for these are categorically mentioned in Psalm 8, which is in view in Hebrews 2:8. God is the Creator of all things universally. Who that has seen a fly under a microscope but has marvelled at the Creator’s power? If the doctrine of Universalism is true and is taught here, then we dare not limit the ultimate reconciliation to the human species. All creation suffered in the fall of Adam, all creation groans, waiting, and the members of the insect world at least, to go no lower in the scale, must all be reconciled. The very stating of the case proves its foolishness. But it may be objected that only those who were enemies are in view. If this be so, then there is no absolute universality in the expression “all things”; and if one limitation is permissible, there may be others, and we are at the beginning again, demanding a Scriptural interpretation of the expression, *ta panta*.

Let us not lose the blessedness of the parallel between Colossians 1:17,18 and Colossians 3:11 (see structure; page 236). The pre-eminence of Christ among all, and the fact that

in Him all things consist, find its counterpart in the church "where Christ is all and in all". What God will be when 1 Corinthians 15:28 is fulfilled, Christ is now in the church. What Christ will be one day in heaven and earth, He is now to the church (Eph. 1:22).

The blessedness of reconciliation enjoyed by those who were once alienated by wicked works, must surely affect their attitude to others. This we find in Colossians 3:13:

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye".

Finally we have the wondrous position of Colossians 1:22, and its corresponding *practice* and *experience* in Colossians 3:12:

"In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight".

"Put off the old man with his deeds ... ye have put on the new man ... put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering".

The language of Colossians 1:22 is almost too wonderful for anything but astonished praise. To those who know something of their own heart's depravity, who have come to see that in their flesh dwelleth no good thing, and have long ceased to think of the possibility of righteousness or goodness, as of themselves, except in a relative manner, the thought of being presented holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight seems almost an impossibility. There is but one ground for such a presentation:

"In the body of His flesh through death".

Our own inherent unholiness and unworthiness can only be cancelled there and by that means. Peace can only be by the blood of His cross. Reconciliation can only be in the body of His flesh through death; any other way would compromise the very righteousness of God. We have often heard a preacher or teacher discourse upon our redemption, our justification, and our acceptance, but few seem to have seen that our *presentation* is a part also of the wondrous purchase of the blood of Christ:

“That He might present it to Himself a church in glory, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph.5:27).

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

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24).

To get the true atmosphere of this glorious presentation we must go back to the O.T., and learn how priest and people, and the sons of God presented themselves before God. Enough for the moment to realise the fact — we are accepted in the Beloved. He has made us meet for the very presence of God — “faultless”, “unblameable”, “holy”. Such terms are so far beyond all that can possibly belong to us of ourselves, that there is nothing left for us but to bow in adoration before Him whose love has so fully met our case. The practical side of this perfect standing is found, as we have seen, in Colossians 3:9-12, where the old man with his deeds is put off and the new man is put on. With this blessed presentation the section ends. This is the end of the purpose of which creation was the commencement, and reconciliation the turning point. By His power and His wisdom “the all things” were created; by His redeeming love, even unto death “the all things” were redeemed and reconciled, and by His risen glory, the power whereby He is able to subdue “the all things” unto Himself; those thus created, redeemed and reconciled, shall one day be presented, made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. Such are the grace and glory that underlie the purpose of the ages, focused in intense brightness upon the church of the Mystery, composed for the most part of the far-off and the vile, the hopeless and the alien.

Arising out of the presentation with which the former section closed is “the presentation” of Colossians 1:28,29:

“Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, agonizing according to His working, which worketh in me in power”.

At first sight this seems a strange statement. If the believer

is assured that he is accepted, made meet, and one day to be presented holy and blameless, how can Paul talk of “presenting” the same believers “perfect”, and warning, teaching and agonizing to that end?

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always agonizing for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col.4:12).

The following structure of Colossians 1:23–2:1 and 4:2-13, which we have entitled “The Mystery and the perfect”, shows that Epaphras shared with Paul this holy anxiety:

Col.1:23–2:1 and 4:2-13 (E & F and *E & F*, page 230)

The mystery and The perfect

E 1:23-27	|	L 1:25	The Word filled up
		M 1:26	The mystery manifested
		N 1:24	Afflictions for body's sake
		O 1:25	Paul's ministry and dispensation of God
F 1:28–2:1	|	P 1:28	Present perfect
		Q 2:1	Agonising for Laodicea

Beware – Col.2:4-23

E 4:2-11	|	L 4:3	A door for the Word
		M 4:4	Make mystery manifest
		N 4:3	Bonds for the mystery
		O 4:11	Paul's fellow-workers to the kingdom of God
F 4:12,13	|	P 4:12	Stand perfect
		Q 4:13	Agonising for Laodicea

The key to the difficulty is of course found in the word twice used – “perfect”, which we have already seen indicates the reaching of an end. Neither the Apostle nor Epaphras had any thought of improving upon the finished work of Christ; their concern was, that those who had been made meet and holy and unblameable in Christ, should rise and walk in the power of this position, and experimentally lay hold on that for which they had been laid hold of by Christ

Jesus. Consequently Paul sounds the warning note, and after referring briefly to the full treasury of wisdom and knowledge to be found in Christ in relation to the Mystery of God, and to the beguiling and enticing words of man, he writes the central section of the epistle headed BEWARE (Col.2:4-23). This is the distinctive note of the epistle, and goes beyond the teaching of Ephesians. A false conception of holiness is exposed and the ground of approximation to our high calling is revealed. This study we must reserve for the next chapter.

Col. 2:4-23 (H page 230). BEWARE

H	R	a	4-8	Plausible speech. Philosophy (<i>sophos</i>)
		b	8	Traditions of men
		c	8	Rudiments of world
			CORRECTIVE	8 Not after Christ
				9,10 Ye are filled full in Him
		S	d	11,12 Body of the flesh. The energy of God
			e	11 Made without hands
			f	11 In Whom. Circumcised and baptised
			CORRECTIVE	10 Head of all principality and power
				12 Dead and buried with Christ
		T	g	14 Handwriting of ordinances. Blotted out
			h	14 Nailed to cross. Taken out of the way
			h	15 Principalities spoiled. Triumph in the cross
			g	16 Observances. Let no man judge you
			CORRECTIVE	17 These are shadows
				17 The body is of Christ
		S	d	18 Mind of the flesh. Increase of God
			e	18 Voluntary in humility. Vainly puffed up
			f	18,19 Out of Whom. Religion of angels
			CORRECTIVE	19 Hold Christ the Head
				20 Ye died with Christ
		R	c	20-22 Rudiments of world
			b	22 Teaching of men
		a	23	Wordy show of wisdom (<i>sophos</i>)
			CORRECTIVE	23 Not in any honour
				23 Filling the flesh

CHAPTER 25

COLOSSIANS

BEWARE (H Col. 2:4-23)

We now reach the focal point of the epistle, the section dealing with the vain and empty travesties of the truths of sanctification and completeness in Christ. It is in strong contrast with the central feature of Ephesians, which is the prayer of chapter 3:14-21 of that epistle. There we have the climax, "that ye might be filled up to all the fulness of God", but here, although the fulness is again demonstrated, the last words describe a state which is a mere "filling of the flesh". In the one, the believer seeks to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; in the other we read of those who rashly intrude into mysteries that work their undoing. In the one, there is such living contact with the Lord, that the first clause of the prayer expresses the desire that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; in the other there is described what is but a mock humility, a senile asceticism, a worshipping of angels, a failure to hold the Head.

Referring to the structure given on page 230, we note that the argument flows out of one section and into another, these flanking sections being both marked by the word "hid". They are, moreover, positive in character, while the false teaching of Colossians 2:4-23 is largely negative, "Touch not", etc.

A Positive Col.2:2,3. HID. Mystery.

B Negative Col.2:4-23. BEWARE. False wisdom and sanctity.

A Positive Col.3:1-4. HID. Manifestation.

We will leave Colossians 3:1-4 until we reach it in due course, after having gone through the warning and seen the

false teaching that is exposed in the central section, but it will be necessary to look at Colossians 2:2,3, inasmuch as verse 4 opens with the words: "And this I say". Verse 4, in fact, is the coupling between the two sections, "this I say" referring back to the revelation of the fulness of Christ, and "lest any man beguile you" referring onward to the vain teaching exposed in the subsequent verses:

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the full knowledge of the mystery of God — Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:2,3).

From the Godward side great stress is laid, in the subsequent sections, upon death, burial and circumcision, and, judging from the aspect of the false teaching mentioned, equal stress is laid upon observances, fasts, neglect of the body and so forth, so that it is both strange and refreshing to find that the opening words of the Apostle have in view the "hearts' comfort" of the saints. While he has sounded a warning note in Colossians 1:28, and is to sound it louder in Colossians 2:4-23, before he goes further, he nevertheless speaks of "comfort of heart", "unity in love" and "full assurance of understanding". These are positive in character, whereas "touch not, taste not, handle not" are mere negatives and lead nowhere. "Comfort of hearts" is found again in Ephesians 6:22 and 2 Thessalonians 2:17, while both "warning" and "comforting" are in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Like the Greek *parakaleō*, the word "comfort" is a stronger word than our modern usage implies. Its etymology suggests strengthening — *com* = together with, and *fort* = strong.

"Being knit together in love" is a condition repeated in verse 19, and there it is seen to be of vital importance if there is to be experienced "the increase of God". As in the physical body, so in the spiritual, dislocation leads to disease, impoverishment, abnormality, and sometimes death. The Apostle's great safeguard against these evils is living contact with Christ. Are the saints being misled by those who probe into those things which they have not seen? (Col.2:18), he directs them to Christ, Who is Himself the Mystery of God (R.V.), and in Whom are hid wisdom, knowledge and life itself. Are the saints being side-tracked by empty speculation, Paul draws

them to the contemplation of Christ, in Whom they are “filled to the full” (Col.2:8-10). Are they being bothered by suggestions that ceremonial observances are factors in their salvation and progress, he turns them away from shadows to the substance — Christ (Col.2:17).

We shall better appreciate the conclusion — Col.3:1-4 — when we have been through the intervening passage and considered something of its teaching. Let us turn to the structure, page 248, and consider it carefully, for we must spare no pains to arrive at truth so vital to our perfecting, and before another step is taken let us note exactly what is involved.

If we have learned the lesson enshrined in the word “perfect”, we shall know that our position in Christ, and our standing and meetness are not in view. These, blessed be God, are outside of our responsibility. These are ours in grace alone and can neither be gained nor lost. If the evil agencies that attack the truth can have no hope of robbing one child of God of either his life or his position in Christ, they nevertheless know that it is written: “let no man take your crown”, and so Colossians 2:18 says:

“Let no man beguile you of your REWARD”.

The inheritance is beyond our spoiling (Col.1:12); meetness for it is assured. But the *reward* of the inheritance is *not* assured; it is contingent upon faithful service, and in the effort to attain it we may be beguiled.

It will be seen upon examining the structure that the beginning and end of this section deal with false wisdom, “philosophy”, “a show of wisdom” (*sophos*), the “traditions of men” and the “rudiments of the world”. The next pair of members in the structure — S and S — deal with the flesh and religious observances. The central member — T — concerns the blotting out of ordinances and observances, which are nailed to the cross. Each section is followed by a corrective, which generally points away from type and shadow to Christ and His fulness.

It may not have been noticed that these correctives are interrelated as well as the larger members of the structure. This is important enough to warrant separate treatment:

The Correctives (Col. 2)

R	8-10	Not after Christ. Filled full in Him
S	10-12	Dead and buried. Christ the Head
T	17	Shadows in contrast with body
S	19,20	Christ the Head. Ye died with Christ
R	23	Not any honour. Filling the flesh

We are now ready to go a little further and to examine more closely each of these five divisions with their corresponding correctives.

The first item of warning with its corrective (Col. 2:4-10)

“This I say, in order that no one may be reasoning you aside with plausible speech —

(For though indeed I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order and the solid firmness of your Christward faith. As therefore ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving).

Beware lest any one shall be making a prey of you, through vain deceitful philosophy, according to the tradition of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ: for in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are filled full in Him” (Col.2:4-10).

It will be seen that the Apostle includes in his first warning a parenthetical note of commendation. The introduction of the word “order” here seems unusual in such a context, and challenges attention. God is not the Author of confusion (1 Cor.14:33); and all things should be done “decently and in order” in the church, whether that church be Pentecostal (1 Cor.14:40) or the church of the Mystery.

The word “order”, *taxis*, implies submission to divine appointments; we have the order of priesthood (Heb.5:6), the relation of husband and wife (*hupotassō*, Eph.5:21,22), and the ranks in resurrection (*tagma*, 1 Cor.15:23). “Order” is strengthening; confusion, self-seeking and self-appointing open the door to evil.

Notice the participles, “having been rooted”, “being built

up”, and “being established”; and further, that the building up is “in Him”, and the establishing “in the faith”. These and many other features the reader must pursue for himself.

The opening words, “This I say”, refer back to the statement that in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. To turn to the empty philosophy of men is to forsake the fountain of living water for empty cisterns that must fail and disappoint.

The words, “That no one may be reasoning you aside”, are very forceful. A loose hold upon the fulness of Christ will lay one open to this method of deception, just as an unbalanced view of truth will permit of a person “reasoning himself aside” into disobedience (James 1:22). Faith is never unreasonable, but it deals with matters that are sometimes outside the realm of reasoning, as Hebrews 11:3 indicates. It is our wisdom to believe what God has said, and not to attempt to reason out the whole plan of the ages. Such a course would cease to be a belief in revelation, and become a philosophy — and all such philosophy is vain. Man by his wisdom knows not God; neither by his wisdom can he discover the truth. The arguments put forward may be very “plausible” or “persuasive” (*pithanologia*, from *peithō*, to persuade), but they are a substitute for revelation, and are therefore from beneath. We sometimes hear it plausibly argued that, if God is love, He cannot do this or that. But we forget that it is impossible thus to reason until we know as fully as God Himself just what love is and what it involves. The love of God could not forgive sin apart from sacrifice, although no reasoning of ours, before the revelation, would have led to that conclusion. Let us avoid these reasonings as we would poison.

“Beware lest any one shall be making a prey (*sulagōgeō*) of you” (Col.2:8).

The word *sulagōgeō* is derived from *sulaō*, which means to strip the vanquished of their armour, and has a bearing upon Colossians 2:15. *Sulaō* occurs also in 2 Corinthians 11:8.

False teaching is directed to one end — to captivate the child of God; as surely as the truth makes free, so error entertained in the mind genders to bondage. The human instrument

through whom the error is introduced may be a most lovable child of God, but he is notwithstanding, in this regard an instrument of the father of lies, who seeks to make a prey of the Christian. The hook that catches the fish must first be baited, and the nearer the bait to the genuine food of the fish the more likely is it to be successful. Satan baits his hook to suit his intended prey; he has coarse appeals to the flesh for those who are "carnal" like the Corinthians, but for those who have already been initiated into the truth of the Mystery, something far more "spiritual" is needed. And so the hook is sometimes baited with a specious doctrine of the ages, showing an apparently vast comprehension of the divine purpose, going far beyond anything written in the Scriptures. This has beguiled many who fail to distinguish between God's revelation, and a "vain, deceitful philosophy". We must recognise here the figure of speech termed "hendiadys" (two for one). We are not to think of two things, philosophy, and vain deceit; but we are to beware of *a vain deceitful philosophy*. However uncharitable it may appear, we believe this applies to all philosophy, ancient and modern, for all philosophies start with the assumption that man by his wisdom and by his searching can find out God, His Being and His ways, whereas it is the office of the Scriptures alone, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and in close association with the precious blood of Christ, to make these things known. God has revealed all that He deems it wise to make known. Let us abide by His decision of love, and treat as a bait of the evil one that "plausible speech" and "show of wisdom" that would take us beyond the confines of revelation. While we pursue these phantoms we neglect the mine of wealth hidden in Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

This vain and deceitful philosophy is supported by two things — the traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world. Tradition is mentioned in the N.T. thirteen times, an ominous number in Scripture. Matthew 15:2,3 and 6, and Mark 7:3,5,8,9 and 13 supply a full comment. It will help us to observe that in both passages the subject of tradition is introduced by that of ceremonial cleansing; and in Colossians 2, as we shall see, it is a merely superficial and arbitrary sanctity that is the snare spread.

"Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matt.15:2).

“And when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market place, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables” (Mark 7:2-4).

To enter into the traditions of the elders as set out in the Talmud and Rabbinical writings is outside the scope of this book and unnecessary. But perhaps one quotation may show the falsity, yet the strong hold, of these traditions. The Gemarists have this saying:

“Whosoever hath his dwelling in the land of Israel, and eats his common meals in cleanness, and speaks the holy tongue, and says over his phylacteries morning and evening — that man may be confident that he shall obtain the life of the world to come” (see *Lightfoot's Works*).

There is no argument in Mark 7 in favour of unclean habits; the argument turns rather upon a ritualistic use of “washings” and “baptisms”. The word “defiled” in Mark 7:2 is *koinos* or “common” and is used several times in the Acts:

“All that believed ... had all things *common*” (Acts 2:44).

“I have never eaten anything that is *common*” (Acts 10:14).

“What God hath cleansed call not thou *common*” (Acts 10:15).

The word “wash” twice used in Mark 7:4, is really the word “baptize”, and so is linked with Colossians 2:12. Such scrupulous and fastidious “washing” was not an evidence of the true sanctity of the heart; it was rather a cloak to hide unregeneracy:

“Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you, hypocrites” (Mark 7:6).

“Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7).

This last passage we must keep in mind when we turn to the closing members of Colossians 2, which the structure shows to be an exegesis of the opening section. We will, however, notice the last member of the infamous trio of deceit — “the rudiments of the world”.

The word “rudiments” or “elements” is a translation of *stoicheion*, meaning a first step; it was used by the Greek philosophers in their attempts to explain the basis of the universe. Rudiments or elements are not appropriate to the full-grown man — they belong to childhood. This is seen in Hebrews 5:12:

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles (the elements) of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat ... strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age” (perfect) (Heb.5:12,14).

Seeing that the Apostle’s desire in Colossians is “to present every man *perfect*”, we can understand how he would view the intrusion of “elements”. In Galatians 4 he speaks of “the elements of the world” as “weak and beggarly elements” which lead back to bondage. And inasmuch as they treat the Christian as a slave instead of a free man in Christ, they are comparable to the elements of the law. All obligation to these elements of the world was cancelled once for all by the redemption of Christ (Gal.4:5), and so in Colossians 2:20 we read that the believer has died with Christ from the rudiments of the world. There is one unanswerable verdict against these three things — they are “not after Christ”.

The wisdom of this vain deceitful philosophy is “the wisdom of words”, which is in contrast with the cross of Christ (1 Cor.1:17). It is “the wisdom of this world”, which is foolishness with God (1 Cor.3:19). It is “fleshly wisdom”, which is contrasted with the grace of God (2 Cor.1:12). It is the wisdom from “beneath” as opposed to that which is from “above” (James 3:15-17). Let us not exchange the solid basis of revelation for tradition, and the doctrine of Christ for the elements of the world,

“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him” (Col.2:9,10).

We have already dealt with the word “fulness” (see pages 60-63) and shown its intimate connection with the divine purpose of the ages, leading on to the glorious consummation when God shall be “all in all”. Colossians 3:11 shows that what will be true of God in that day, is true of Christ now in

relation to the church of the Mystery, where “Christ is all in all”. That in Christ “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead” is another presentation of the truth already expressed in Colossians 2:2,3: “the mystery of God — Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”. This fulness dwells in Christ “bodily”, a word which is partially explained in verse 17:

“Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ”.

Philosophy, tradition, the rudiments of the world, meats, drinks, feasts and fasts, prohibitions — as, “Touch not, taste not, handle not” — are all shadows; some of them vain, deceitful and misleading, some of them given by God Himself during the dispensation of the law now past, but all, good and bad alike, of no further account to those who find their completeness in the Son of God. The words, “complete in Him”, carry forward the idea of the word “fulness”, and are used in direct contrast with the word “vain” or “empty”.

We learn from the end of the chapter that a false asceticism involving a “neglecting of the body” had been foisted upon the church in place of the real thing which the Apostle now proceeds to teach.

The second item of warning with its corrective (Col.2:11, 12). — Instead of instructing us to neglect the body, Paul teaches us that in Christ it has been put off and that the believer has been buried and is now risen with Him. The whole matter is a question of death, burial and resurrection, not a question of avoiding, observing or enduring. In order to enforce his point he refers to two types or shadows that find their reality or substance in Christ — circumcision and baptism. We cannot go too intimately into the rite of circumcision, but if the reader will weigh over the following sequence, the repudiation of the flesh in the realm of the promise of God will be clearly seen:

- (1) God promises to Abraham a seed (Gen.15:4), and Abraham believes the promise.
- (2) Time passes, Sarah his wife remains barren, and a suggestion is made to help out the divine promise by the flesh (Gen. 16:1-3).
- (3) The result is that Ishmael is born, and Genesis 16 closes with the record of this fact.

- (4) The next chapter introduces the word "perfect": "Walk before Me and be thou perfect" (Gen.17:1) — a passage which we may link with Colossians 1:28. The promise of a seed is repeated, this time accompanied by the strange rite of circumcision.

The sequence is as follows:

- A Promise of a seed. JUSTIFICATION.
- B The flesh intervenes and spoils.
- A Promise of a seed repeated. PERFECTION.
- B The flesh cut off and set aside.

Abraham can be *justified* without circumcision, but not *perfected*. The principle is vividly brought out by the Apostle in Philippians 3, where, before speaking of the perfection to which he pressed, he refers to those like-minded as: "The circumcision, which have no confidence in the flesh". The desire expressed in Colossians 1:28 that the Apostle might present every man perfect, is *subsequent* to the thought of our complete acceptance in Christ and is *followed* by the thought of our circumcision in Him:

- (1) "In the body of His flesh through death to present you holy" (Col.1:22).
- (2) "That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col.1:28).
- (3) "In Whom ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col.2:11).

The fact that circumcision was performed on "the eighth day" shows that it must not be limited to the cross of Christ, but has also to do with His resurrection. The revised text omits the words "of the sins" from Colossians 2:11, and reads: "In the putting off of the body of the flesh". This is in accord with the idea of circumcision. Sins are dealt with in another way; in the circumcision creature failure is met, with the resulting "no confidence in the flesh".

Baptism set forth not only ceremonial cleansing, but death, burial, and resurrection (Rom.6:1-4). For the church of the Mystery there is but one baptism, the baptism of the Spirit (Eph.4:4-6), which unites us with Christ in all His wondrous

work of love and grace. If it be urged from Colossians 2:12 that literal baptism is incumbent upon the church of the one Body, why not go back further and urge literal circumcision from verse 11? *All* shadows, without exception, have been set aside in this dispensation. The Apostle meets the attempt to produce holiness by ascetic measures by the complete repudiation of the flesh in the offering of Christ, and by the fact that, as Colossians 3:1 asserts, the believer has entered into a new life. Holiness is not a negation; it is positive. Sanctity is not deadness, but a living response.

We now come to the centre from which all radiates:

The third item of warning with its corrective (Col.2:14-17).

“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of a new moon, or of the sabbath days. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ”.

Two very strong expressions are used in this passage — “blotting out” and “nailing”. Both suggest the cancelling of a bond or the settlement of a debt. The handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, must refer to something more than the ceremonial law. In Ephesians 2:15 the law of commandments contained in ordinances prove to be a middle wall of partition that divided the Jewish from the Gentile believers. In Colossians 2 these ordinances go deeper, being intimately connected with the “forgiveness of all trespasses”. The word is *cheriograph* — handwritten ordinances — and refers to the covenant of Sinai, which was “written by the finger of God”.

In Ephesians, the ordinances refer to the ritual precepts of the law of Moses, which erected a barrier between one believer and another. Here, in Colossians, they refer to the moral precepts of the law of Moses, which are “taken out of the midst”, *ek tou mesou*, indicating something that erected a barrier between the believer and God Himself. Galatians, which has to meet a somewhat similar attack upon the grace

of God in salvation, points to the tree where Christ became a curse, and where redemption from the curse was accomplished. There, too, Paul raises a similar question:

“Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal.3:3).

He sets aside in the strongest terms the weak and beggarly elements of legal acceptance, and declares that Christ shall profit nothing those who are being circumcised. Nothing less than a new creation is sufficient, either in Galatians (6:15), or in Colossians (3:10).

The words, “which were contrary to us”, suggest a covert or unsuspected hostility, referring possibly to the fact taught by Romans 2 that the law of Moses, being based upon moral law, is but the law which, even though imperfectly, all men acknowledge. To entertain it at all, in any of its parts, is to entertain that which speaks of condemnation. The law of Moses, *in toto*, has been cancelled for the believer. This may at first sight appear to open the door to license, self-indulgence and all manner of evil, but, whatever it may appear to imply the statement is true. When the Apostle had to meet a similar objection in Romans 6:1, he did not timidly shrink back and compromise; he immediately met the case with the one fact that in Christ the believer has died to the law. No believer will break any part of the moral law, *because* he is joined to Christ. He stands on ground higher than that of the law. He who produces the fruits of the Spirit learns that “against such there is no law” (Gal.5:23). A new principle is introduced: “If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit” (Gal.5:25). The only law that now rests upon the believer is “the law of Christ” (Gal.6:2).

It is necessary when considering the two references to “ordinances” in Ephesians 2 and Colossians 2 to realise that in Ephesians we have the ceremonial law erecting a middle wall between believers, whereas in Colossians 2 we have the law as a covenant and therefore cancelled at the cross.

Colossians 2:15 presents a difficulty. There is a division of opinion among commentators as to the true interpretation, for *apekdusamenos*, translated, “having spoiled”, is strictly speaking the middle voice of the verb, and means literally

“to divest oneself of clothing”. Wordsworth, Ellicott, Alford and others translate the passage literally, Wordsworth’s interpretation being that Christ “divested Himself of His flesh” and so put off that wherein the powers of darkness might have exerted influence over Him. He divested Himself as (with reverence be it said) Joseph, the type of Christ, extricated himself from the grasp of Potiphar’s wife. Alford adheres to the literal translation of the middle voice, but explains the thought as the divesting of Himself of the principalities and powers, who during the dispensation of law were in some measure mediators and ministers. Others consider the passage to mean that Christ tore Himself away from the assaults of evil spirits which would otherwise have invested Him as a robe.

We must, however, recognise the fact that this translation does not find universal favour. The R.V. translates the passage:

“And having put off from Himself” — with the marginal alternative: “Having put off from Himself His body, He made a show of the principalities, etc.”.

This seems to approach nearer to the true meaning of the Apostle than any other rendering. In Colossians 2:11 it has already been written:

“In *putting off* the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ”.

This is followed in Colossians 3:9 by the statement:

“Seeing that ye have *put off* the old man with his deeds”.

On both sides of the passage under consideration, therefore, the same verb, in its two voices, is used, not of spoiling enemies, but of divesting oneself.

We may now attempt to state the lesson that this passage seems to teach. The old man, the body of the flesh, is the ground of contact with the spiritual forces that would keep the believer in bondage; these evil powers even going so far as to countenance a false system of sanctity, so long as it involves a recognition of the flesh: a forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. The only true

deliverance and triumph is by death and resurrection, the true spiritual circumcision, which follows in the steps of the Lord's triumph. His death on the cross was the circumcision, where He too divested Himself of that body in which He bore the sins of His people. In resurrection He made a show of these principalities and powers, openly triumphing over them by the cross, "thus making the gibbet of the slave His *feretrum** on which to carry the spoils of His triumphs as an Eternal Conqueror".

The word "to make a show of" is used in the N.T. only as an "example" of the punishment of crime (cf. Jude 7). The Romans exposed their captives together with the spoil of the conquered foe to public view in their triumphal procession — a practice to which this passage appears to be an allusion.

All this being true, the believer is free. Legal obligations are part of a covenant that is blotted out and cancelled; Christ is Head of principality and power, and of the church, and has triumphed over the rulers of the darkness of this world who held it in the grip of bondage. And so the Apostle proceeds to indicate the folly of allowing anyone to rule the believer in the matter of mere observances, mere shadows, when he belongs to a dispensation in which Christ is all, where the substance or body is Christ.

The fourth item of warning with its corrective

(Col.2:18-20).

"Let no man therefore beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath (not) seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Wherefore if ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not, taste not, handle not; which all are to perish in the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col.2:18-23).

*This word has two meanings: (1) a bier or coffin; (2) The carrier on which the victor's spoils of battle were placed.

The word translated, "beguile of reward", is *katabrabeuetō*. It is a compound of *kata*, "against" and *brabeuō*, "to act as umpire, and so to assign the prize". The latter word, *brabeuō*, occurs in Colossians 3:15; the A.V. renders it "rule" and the R.V. margin, "arbitrate".

"The prize" (Phil.3:14) is intimately connected with "the perfect" in Philippians 3 and with "buffeting the body" in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. Both of these features belong to the subject of Colossians 2, so that we shall do well to keep before the mind that while no member of the one Body can be robbed of his membership, or of his calling, or of his hope, or of his inheritance, there is a "prize" belonging to that calling, and there is a "reward" pertaining to that inheritance which may be forfeited under the influence of the evil doctrines exposed in Colossians 2.

"*In a voluntary humility*" — Practically every clause in these verses has received several differing translations from eminent teachers both ancient and modern. We have not felt it to be necessary to load our pages with these translations, but we give our own considered judgment after a due and respectful consideration of the claims of other renderings. We take it that *thelōn* here refers to the worshipper and not to the one who judges the race. It is associated with the "will-worship" of verse 23, Ephesians 2:2,3 revealing that under the influence of the prince of the power of the air we once did "the wills of the flesh and the mind".

The question of worship lies at the root of all apostacy. It begins in the holy mountain of God (Ezek.28). It reappears in Genesis 4. It is evident in the temptation in the wilderness (Matt.4), and it will again be prominent at the end (2 Thess. 2 and Rev.13). Worship is the beginning of the Ten Commandments; and the whole covenant was broken by the worship of the golden calf. The word translated "godliness" so many times in 1 Timothy is literally "*well-worship*", which we may perhaps be pardoned for setting in contrast with the counterfeit "*will-worship*" of Colossians 2. A self-devised system of worship is intimately connected with tradition, as Mark 7:6-8 clearly shows:

"Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you, hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do" (Mark 7:6-8).

Closely connected with this high-handed treatment of the Word of God is a false and wretched "humility". In the days of this epistle it found its expression in the "worshipping of angels" and "not holding the Head". Like Uriah Heep, these deluded souls were "so 'umble" that, in spite of the direct teaching of Scripture, they would not venture to approach Christ Himself, but devised a tortuous system of mediators, much as has been done for the poor Romanist who approaches *via* the saints and the virgin. How sad! It was Mary who needed the favour of God to be shown to her. It was she who was "highly favoured" of God, and her "blessedness" is said to be a blessedness "*among women*" (Luke 1:28,30). Again, when the "wise men" saw "the young child with Mary his mother" they "fell down and worshipped Him", not her (Matt.2:11).

It has been pointed out that in the N.T. *threskeia*, "worship", is never construed with a genitive to denote the *object* of worship, e.g., "the worship of angels", but indicates the subject or *person worshipping*. In Acts 26:5 it is translated "religion", referring to the tenets of the Pharisees, and again it is so translated in James 1:26,27. The true import of the passage in Colossians 2 may be better understood if it is regarded as teaching that these misled believers, with their ascetic practices, their neglect of the body, their intrusion into the unseen, felt that they had attained a higher spiritual plane, and were worshippers together with the angels — a curious blend of spiritual pride and false humility that defies pure exegesis.

The word "intruding", *embateuō*, is used by Josephus when he refers to Mount Sinai, saying: "The shepherds durst not *intrude* upon it" (Ant.ii. 12. 1). True humility bows before the sacred reservations of God in His communications to man, and says:

“Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters or things too high for me” (Psalm 131:1).

False humility, however, is never satisfied, and, under a cloak, rashly intrudes an unholy foot into the hidden things of the Lord. The R.V. omits the word “not” here. It is still a debatable point. J.N.Darby in a footnote to his translation says, “The sense is not affected really. If *me* (not) be left out, the passage speaks of what the visionaries allege: if in, it is the Apostle’s own denial of their having really seen the angelic choirs”. The essential truth for us is that all such visionary teaching must be rejected, for, whether the vision has been actually seen, or whether it exists only in a perturbed imagination, these things are not of God.

“Vainly puffed up by his own fleshly mind” is the divine comment upon that which seemed so humble, angelic, and rarified. In God’s eyes it is leavened.

The great corrective for this awful teaching is the holding of Christ the Head; the recognition, in the mutual inter-relationship of every member of His Body, of the divinely appointed means whereby alone is ensured the “increase of God”. All else, though built upon the one foundation, will nevertheless not be “God’s building” or “God’s husbandry”, and, though the question of their salvation remain untouched, the builders of such material will be robbed of their reward, “will be saved so as by fire” (1 Cor.3:14,15).

“*Wherefore if ye died with Christ*” – How refreshing to get back to the great basis – “ye died with Christ”. That being so, the Apostle says, how can you allow men to dictate to you as to these elements of the world?

The fifth item of warning with its corrective (Col.2:20-23).

The words “Touch not, taste not, handle not” are not to be taken as a divine revelation; rather are they the false dogmas from which the believer has been delivered. “Touch not” is explained by 1 Corinthians 7, “taste not” has special reference to “meats”, and “handle not” to the various ways in which defilement could be contracted under the Levitical law. “To the pure all things are pure”, and the forbidding to

marry and the command to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, is a part of the doctrine of demons, who would foist upon the believer a false sanctity, to his undoing.

It will be observed that the false conception of holiness here referred to by the Apostle is negative in character, touch *not*, taste *not*, handle *not*, marry *not*, eat *not*. True holiness, on the contrary, is essentially positive. Negation is impotent; positive truth and holiness are powerful. The modern way of teaching this disastrous doctrine, if put down in black and white, may bring home the lesson more forcefully. Have we not met those whose "sanctification" seems to consist in what they do *not*?

"I do *not* drink, I *never* smoke. I have *never* set my foot in a Cinema. I do *not* ... *not* ... *never* ..." etc.

All this is futile.

"Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal.6:15).

"But meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better; neither if we eat not are we the worse" (1 Cor. 8:8).

As 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 goes on to show, this does not open the door to license. What we do learn is that sanctification in its reality is infinitely a greater thing than the false teaching alluded to in Colossians 2 would make it to be. The things there spoken of are after the commandments and doctrines of men, and have, merely, a "show of wisdom", which words take us back to the opening of this section as shown in the structure of Colossians 2:4-23 given on page 248. This system of teaching, against which Paul so strongly warns his reader, is "will-worship", a term to be read with verse 18, "being a voluntary in humility", for it goes on to say here: "in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in any honour".

Honour, *timē*, is used in 1 Corinthians 12:23,24 of the due respect one must have for the body, as also in 1 Thessalonians 4:4. This neglect of the body, instead of honouring it, is not of God. The believer's body is described in 1 Corinthians 6:19 as the temple of the Holy Ghost, and in conformity with this

truth the Apostle in Romans 12:1 urges the child of God to present his body a living sacrifice. Accordingly also in Philipians 1:20 the Apostle declares that Christ shall be magnified in his body, and while this may involve privation, suffering, and death itself, yet his attitude of heart is not the outcome of a self-imposed and exaggerated asceticism.

Paul knew what it was both to be abased and to abound, to be full and to be hungry, but his sanctification did not depend upon either condition. The only outcome of this irritating and negative doctrine which Paul combated was "the satisfying of the flesh". The word "satisfying" is *plēsmonē*, and so comes in strong contrast with *plēroō* of verse 10, as the structure shows. The word occurs in the LXX of Exodus 16:3 and 8, where Israel looking back to Egypt said they did "eat bread to the full"; a terrible fulness indeed!

Such is the end of all fleshly attempts at sanctification; they cannot succeed. Colossians 3:1-5 reveals the only true way of holiness, which we must consider presently. Meantime the passage before us has necessitated so many halts and explanations that some readers may not be able to "see the wood for the trees". We therefore conclude this chapter with a paraphrase which permits of the suggested translations and connections being incorporated in unbroken narrative form:

This I say, that Christ Himself is the Mystery of God, and therefore you need no visionary intruding into the secret things of God. Full assurance comes from the recognition of the fulness of Christ, and, moreover, in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. If this be true, you can be proof against the enticing words of those who would otherwise beguile you. Beware lest any man carry you off, as plunder, by vain deceitful philosophy, which is according to the traditions of men, and the rudiments of the world, but which is not according to Christ. You hear from these philosophers much about attaining unto the *pleroma* by means of ascetic practices, but I tell you that in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and this is vitally connected with the purpose of the ages, and the church of the one Body. Out of His fulness we all may draw, and ye are already complete, or filled to the full, in Him, Who, in His capacity as the incorporation of the fulness, is not only Head over all

things to the church, but is Head also of all principality and power.

Coming now to the matter in hand, all this ill-treatment of the body is valueless. Something more terrible than anything that we can ever accomplish was required to annul the body of the flesh, the old man — nothing less, indeed, than the cross of Christ and His triumphant resurrection is effective.

Once more it is of supreme importance to recognise that doctrine which, for lack of a better term, we call “positional”. Its sign is the expression “in Christ”. Let us notice the many references in these few verses:

- (1) “IN WHOM” all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
- (2) “IN CHRIST” the steadfastness of your faith.
- (3) “IN HIM” Walk, even as you have received Him as Lord.
- (4) “IN HIM” having been rooted, and being built up.
- (5) “IN HIM” dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.
- (6) “IN HIM” ye are also filled to the full.
- (7) “IN WHOM” also ye are circumcised.

Here we have seven items, each one presenting a different facet of the one truth. The preposition now changes, and instead of the expression *en*, “in”, we have *sun* “with” Christ, which sets forth our position as one of identification with Christ, our Head. Let us therefore proceed to enumerate these:

- (1) “WITH HIM” buried in baptism.
- (2) “WITH HIM” risen through faith of the operation of God.
- (3) “WITH HIM” made alive, having been forgiven.
- (4) “WITH HIM” ye died from the rudiments of the world.
- (5) “WITH HIM” if ye then be risen seek ... set.
- (6) “WITH CHRIST” your life is hid in God.
- (7) “WITH HIM” you shall be made manifest in glory.

Here, then, is another series of seven. When such fulness is ours already, what room is there for the specious doctrines condemned in Colossians 2?

Following this identification comes a sevenfold approximation, as follows:

- (1) "Mortify your members".
- (2) "Ye also put off all these".
- (3) "Lie not one to another".
- (4) "Ye have put off the old man".
- (5) "Ye have put on the new man".
- (6) "Put on ... bowels of mercies".
- (7) "Above all put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness".

The Apostle's desire was to present these believers "perfect", and here at length he speaks of the bond of perfectness. In this last set of seven we have the true doctrine unto which the deluded will-worshippers never attained. We return to the passage and, with these features in mind, continue our paraphrase:

In Whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, the practical and experimental side of which is developed in 3:5-14. Christ has put off the body of the flesh; you now, in the strength of your new position in Him, put off the old man with his deeds. Buried with Him in His baptism of suffering and death on the cross, wherein also ye have been raised with Him through faith in the working of God Who raised Him from the dead. And you being dead to your trespasses and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses: having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, and contrary to us, removing it from the midst, nailing it as a cancelled bond to His cross. Here the true circumcision took place, where He, and we in Him, put off the body, and then and there He made a public show of principalities and powers, leading them in triumph by that very cross which, at first, seemed the symbol of all that was weak and futile.

If this is your assured position "in Christ" and "with Christ", surely you will not allow any man to judge you over such things as meat or drink, feasts or sabbaths, for

these are but shadows of good things to come; you have the substance already in Christ. Now all this impinges upon the question of your perfecting. No man can rob you of your membership in the Body of Christ, but he may so distract you that you will fail in the race and so be cheated of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let the peace of God be the umpire in your hearts, and not the fantastic speculations of these visionaries who, in self-willed defiance of truth, pretend to humility and angel worship, intrude into secret things veiled by God from our eyes, and all the time are failing in the one thing that matters, failing to hold the Head. Seeing you are all members of His Body, your only means of growth is by vital contact with the Head and with one another, for just as the body is ministered to by joints and ligaments, nerves and arteries, drawing all, finally, from the Head that controls every function in the body, so is it with the mystical Body of Christ. Introspection is harmful and is destructive of all true progress in grace.

It is not a matter of argument, however; it is not a matter of philosophy, tradition, or the elements of the world; it resolves itself into the simple issue. Did you die with Christ from the rudiments of the world? If so, being dead to these things, why are you submitting yourselves to ordinances such as touch not, taste not, handle not, things which, as they are used, pass away? These things are merely the commands and doctrines of men. The whole thing is the form without the power: a show of wisdom, but really self-imposed systems of worship that cannot prove acceptable. The Father must be worshipped in Spirit and in truth by the true circumcision, who have no confidence in the flesh.

All this harsh treatment of the body and enforced humility is vain. It does not render the honour that the body of the redeemed should have, and, by the fact that it attempts that which Christ alone can accomplish, really ministers to the satisfying of the flesh, in spite of all protestation to the contrary (end of paraphrase).

Outside the realm of death and life in and with Christ, all is vanity, and to this positive presentation of the truth we now proceed, as we take up the opening section of Colossians 3.

CHAPTER 26

COLOSSIANS

Hid – Your life with Christ. (*G Col.3:1-4*, page 230)

While we have seen the Apostle taking a most decided stand against the false asceticism that neglected the body yet satisfied the flesh, we must remember that there is a true buffeting of the body and keeping it in subjection, as 1 Corinthians 9:27 makes very plain, and that, too, in connection with running for the prize. We approach this Scriptural mortifying of the body by the path laid down in Colossians 3:1-4, and that is by union with Christ in His death, resurrection and coming glory.

Let us not forget that Paul in Colossians 2 is “warning every man ... that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”, and that Colossians 3:1-4 will be his inspired conclusion of the matter. What is the first note struck? Mortification? No, it is union with Christ in His resurrection. Look back for a moment to Philippians 3. There we have the true circumcision and the setting aside of all privileges as nothing worth in the light of the excellency of Christ, the substance. There, too, in order to be made conformable unto that death of the cross, whereby alone can the members be truly mortified, he reaches out for a fuller realisation of “His resurrection”.

- (1) That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection.
- (2) And the fellowship of His sufferings.
- ~ (3) Being made conformable unto His death.

Here it will be observed that the Apostle realises that he dare not step back into “conformity unto His death” without the assurance of the “power of His resurrection” – to do so would be suicidal. In contrast with this desire is placed the example of those “who mind earthly things”, which he so

feelingly uses to warn the Philippians. The same features are found in Colossians 3:1-4. First the resurrection fellowship, then the mind on things above, and finally the glory yet to be manifested (even as Phil.3 closes with likeness to the body of His glory), and then, and not till then, do we read: "Mortify your members":

"If then ye were raised up together with Christ, seek ... set ... mortify" (Col.3:1-5).

The word here translated "affection" is properly "mind", the same word, in verbal form, being used in Philippians 3:19 — "who *mind* earthly things". It is the "mind" that was in Christ Jesus (Phil.2:5) without which it is impossible to press on to perfection. Romans 8:6 differentiates between the "mind" of the flesh and the "mind" of the Spirit, and Philippians 3 and Colossians 3 reveal their diverging tendencies — the one towards things on the earth, the other towards that place where Christ is, at the right hand of God. The argument of Colossians 3:1,2 is that our strength is found in entering experimentally into that identification which is already an accomplished fact.

THE ACCOMPLISHED FACT — "Ye were raised with Christ".

THE EXPERIMENTAL APPROPRIATION — "Seek ... set ... "

To expect to produce the fruit of the Spirit by flogging or neglecting the body is vain. Fruit necessitates life, and "your life is hid with Christ in God"; it is not here, and can neither be influenced by the elements of the world, nor disciplined by carnal ordinances.

Furthermore, future glory has a great bearing upon present walk. If our glory is in our shame, and we mind earthly things, our walk will be different from what it would be did we mind the things above, and "live ... looking for that blessed hope". Incidentally Colossians 3:4 supplies a partial answer to the prayer of Ephesians 1:18 — "What is the hope of His calling". Each calling has its corresponding hope. The earthly calling will not be entered until "His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives". The heavenly calling will not be entered until the better resurrection of Hebrews 11, and the hope of the members of the church of the one Body will be realised when they are manifested with Christ in glory. As the

hope is not an earthly one, so this manifestation does not take place on the earth. The hope is not so much His coming as our going, although our going will not take place until He is manifested in glory, an event which marks the first stage of the Second Coming.

An illustration may help to distinguish the several phases of the Lord's coming and the hopes belonging to the various callings of the redeemed. At the coronation of the King thousands of his loyal subjects lined the route and stood for hours awaiting his triumphal progress. Others, either by residence or by purchase, possessed seats in windows, or stands. But there was yet a third group who neither lined the route, nor needed a seat or a stand. They were the peers of the realm who, by right of their rank, had access into the Abbey itself and were present at the actual coronation.

When the seventh angel sounds, the *mystery* of God is finished. Thenceforth all is *manifestation*. When the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and Christ rises from his seat in glory to be invested with universal sovereignty, the church of the one Body will be manifested with Him in glory. He then descends from heaven with a shout and the hope of the Thessalonian calling is realised.

At this point it may be well to deal a little more carefully with the differing phases of hope, although the reference in Colossians 3:4 to the hope of the church is brought in by the way. One great difference between the hope of other callings and the hope of the church of the one Body is in the matter of detailed description. Starting with the lower plane, that dealing with the earthly kingdom, we read in Matthew 24 quite a series of "signs" that herald that phase of the coming of the Lord:

- (1) The rising of nation against nation.
- (2) Famines.
- (3) Pestilences.
- (4) Earthquakes.
- (5) Fulfilment of Daniel 9:27.
- (6) The great tribulation.
- (7) Disturbances of the sun, moon and stars.
- (8) The appearing of the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

In relation to the second sphere, we have in 1 Thessalonians 4:

- (1) The Lord Himself.
- (2) The descent from heaven.
- (3) The shout.
- (4) The voice of the archangel.
- (5) The trump of God.
- (6) The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ.
- (7) The rapture of both dead and living saints.
- (8) Their being forever with the Lord.
- (9) All this not taking place until the prophetic signs mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2 occur.

In relation to the third sphere, however, it is clear that the church of the one Body can have no signs to herald its hope. Signs relate to prophecy, and the prophecy of times and seasons does not enter into this calling. There is nothing that must of necessity be fulfilled before the hope of this church is realised, and this but harmonizes with the dispensation to which we belong.

Another circumstance which will weigh with all who believe the verbal inspiration of Scripture is the manner in which the word *parousia*, translated "coming" in most places, is distributed. The following list of occurrences, together with their contexts, will put the word before us in its Scriptural setting.

(1) *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Matt. 24:3, 27, 30, 37 and 39) — The contexts of these references deal with:

- (a) The end of the age.
- (b) The coming likened to lightning.
- (c) The great tribulation.
- (d) The days of Noah, and
- (e) The Flood.

(2) *Paul's Epistles* (1 Cor.15:23; 1 Thess.2:19, 3:13, 4:15, 5:23; 2 Thess.2:1,8). The contents deal with:

- (a) The end, when God shall be all in all.
- (b) The crown of rejoicing.
- (c) The coming with His holy ones.
- (d) The voice of the archangel and the trump of God.
- (e) The preservation of spirit, soul and body.
- (f) The day of the Lord, and
- (g) The destruction of the wicked one who sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

(3) *The Epistles of the Circumcision* (James 5:7; 2 Peter 1:16, 3:4,12; 1 John 2:28). James writes his epistle to the twelve tribes; Peter addresses his to the dispersion of Israel, and, in his closing reference to the subject not only admits that the *parousia* of the Lord may be deferred, but states that the explanation of God's purpose during the interval belongs to the witness of "our beloved brother Paul". We do not intend a fuller examination of these references, but ask the reader to observe one feature only. The *parousia* is limited to:

- (a) The Gospel of the kingdom.
- (b) The earlier Epistles of Paul, all written before Israel were set aside. And, until set aside, "the hope of Israel" remained before all as the one hope (Acts 28:20).
- (c) The Epistles to the circumcision.

The *parousia* is never mentioned* in the epistles of the Mystery, and without further reasoning we accept this limitation as of divine intent. Instead of the word *parousia* we have a word that means *to be made manifest*:

"When Christ Who is our life shall *be made manifest*, then shall ye also *be made manifest* with Him in GLORY" (Col.3:4).

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the *manifesting* of the GLORY of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

*Philippians 1:26: "My coming to you again", of course has no connection with our subject.

If we will but pause and reflect upon the facts that all the blessings of the church of the one Body are spiritual; that the riches of the glory of the inheritance is not taught, but must be sought in prayer, as God gives a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; and that we pass as it were into the realm of the fourth dimension when we deal with our spiritual inheritance, we shall realise that these cannot be expressed in terms of our present experience.

The reference to "the fourth dimension" may need explanation. The first sphere, the earthly, is comprehended in terms of two dimensions, *length* and *breadth*. This is superficial measurement.

"Walk through the land, in the *length* of it and in the *breadth* of it" (Gen.13:17).

The second sphere, the heavenly, is comprehended in terms of three dimensions, *length*, *breadth*, and *height*. This is cubic or solid measurement.

"And the city lieth foursquare ... the *length* and the *breadth* and the *height* of it are equal" (Rev.21:16).

The third sphere, the superheavenly, is comprehended in terms of four dimensions, *breadth*, *length*, *depth* and *height*. We have nothing within the scope of our experience to which we can liken this.

"To comprehend with all saints what is the *breadth* and *length* and *depth* and *height*, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph.3:18,19).

If we call a line of any given length, X, say 3, we may represent a square of 3 inch sides by X^2 or $3 \times 3 = 9$, for in such a square there are 9 square inches. We may continue and represent a cube, each of whose sides is formed of such a square, by the symbol X^3 or $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$, for there are 27 cubes of one inch in such a cube. There is nothing to stop us putting down on paper, X^4 $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 3$, or 81, but there we should have to stop, for we have no idea what it can represent. So it is with our blessed hope. God can describe in geographical and architectural terms the inheritance of the first and second callings X^2 and X^3 , but the third sphere belongs to a world removed beyond our present limitations,

and therefore indescribable to us now. Accordingly the four dimensions are stated and left, and the love of Christ is put before us. So, then, the hope of our calling is unexplained, except that Christ is our hope, and that as we know Him we shall perceive as much as can be perceived in this life. Is our inheritance the less glorious because it is infinitely beyond the imagery of pearls and gold? Surely not. What matter if we are taunted by men who cannot appreciate this; we can but pray for their enlightenment. Enough, however, or this parenthetical note will grow too cumbersome.

The three great facts, we have *died* with Christ, we have been *raised* with Christ, we shall one day be *manifested* with Christ, constitute a threefold cord not easily broken. On the ground of the established fact of this threefold union with the mighty Conqueror of sin and death we can, without harmful results, speak of mortifying our members on the earth.

The verb, *nekroō*, here translated “mortify”, occurs three times in Scripture, in Romans 4:19; Colossians 3:5, and Hebrews 11:12. The first and last of these passages refer to Abraham and the birth of Isaac. In both the verb is passive:

“And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now having become dead (*nenekrōmenon*), being about an hundred years old, neither the deadness (*nekrōsis*) of Sarah’s womb” (Rom.4:19).

“Therefore sprang there even of one, as to these things having become dead (*nenekrōmenon*), so many as the stars of the sky in multitude” (Heb.11:12).

The word in Colossians 3:5 is *nekrōsate*, the imperative. We are here exhorted to put into practical effect what Christ did for us on the cross. There, He put off the body of the flesh for us (Col.2:11); here, we apply that death to the members of that body of the flesh. There, the old man was crucified that the body of sin might be rendered inoperative (Rom.6:6); here, we are to “reckon” ourselves dead indeed unto sin (Rom.6:11), and put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:9).

The awful things enumerated in Colossians 3:5 reveal the depths of depravity that lurk in the flesh. The last word is

covetousness, *pleonexia*. The idea of the word is that of "having more", and as this is inimical to faith and trust in God it is incipient idolatry. Our fulness is in Christ; to seek to "have more", outside of Him, is to supplant Him and to erect an idol in His place.

We are tempted to go on, so much cries out for exposition, but we must refrain. In this volume we have not attempted more than a relative exposition of Colossians, looking upon it as a supplement to Ephesians. The most important feature of our present study is the central warning, and if that has been made to speak its message, we must rest content. There remains to be considered the parallel epistle to the Philippians, namely 2 Timothy. So, as we close the epistle to the Colossians, we come to the last reference to the Mystery. Here and in Ephesians the dispensation of the Mystery receives its full exposition. We cannot do better than conclude the study with the words of Colossians 3:10,11:

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created Him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free:

BUT CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL".

The Second Epistle to Timothy

The structure of the Epistle as a whole

(Introversion)

- A 1:1-7 SALUTATION and REMEMBRANCE. Lois, Eunice
- B 1:8-18 Paul and his message Forsaken
The Lord his Keeper
Phygellus and Hermogenes – “Turned away”
Onesiphorus – “The Lord give Mercy”
Paul the Herald to the Gentiles (*kerux*, verse 11)
- C 2:1-13 Teach Things Heard of Me (*exclusive*)
Suffering and Reigning
The Good Soldier (*kalos*, verse 3)
The Crown
Suffer Evil (*kakopatheō*, verses 3 and 9)
- D 2:14-26 Hymenæus and Philetus err concerning Truth –
“Shun”
They will increase unto more Ungodliness
Repentance to Knowledge of Truth
Approved (*dokimos*, verse 15)
- D 3:1-9 Jannes and Jambres resist Truth – “Turn away”
They shall Proceed no Further
Never come to Knowledge of Truth
Disapproved (*adokimos*, verse 8)
- C 3:10–4:8 Followed my Teaching (*exclusive*)
Suffering and Reigning
The Good Fight (*kalos*, verse 7)
The Crown
Suffer Evil (*kakopatheō*, verse 5)
- B 4:9-18 Paul and his message Forsaken
The Lord his Keeper
Demas – “Hath Forsaken me”
Alexander – “The Lord Recompense”
Paul Heralding to the Gentiles (*kerugma*, verse 17)
- A 4:19-22 SALUTATION. Eubulus. Pudens. Linus. Claudia.
BENEDICTION

CHAPTER 27

2 TIMOTHY

The epistle as a whole

To speak of any period on earth since the fall of Adam as being “ideal” would be untrue; it is only relatively that one period may be said to have been a little nearer the truth than another. When, however, we survey the prison epistles, we realise that Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians belong to a period when some organized expression of the truth was possible, and, further, that of these epistles 2 Timothy stands alone, marked off as the epistle for days of departure and of individual faithfulness. We have seen that Philippians and 2 Timothy are complementary, but we must now recognise that, though both testify to the same aspect of truth, experimentally, they belong to two different phases. Philippians was written while the truth of the Mystery was still in process of being made known and being received, whereas 2 Timothy was written when apostacy had set in and Paul and his message had been forsaken. Philippians in its opening verse shows the existence of some order in the church as is witnessed by the presence of bishops and deacons. Again, writing in his first epistle to Timothy, and also in that to Titus, the Apostle gives very clear instructions regarding these same orders of ministry. But by the time 2 Timothy is written, rule has degenerated into ruin, collective testimony has largely failed, and, consequently, the appeal throughout is to the individual.

In the epistle to the Philippians strong emphasis is laid upon the collective effort of the saints. The Apostle himself thanks God for their fellowship in the gospel, and tells them that in his bonds and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel they were all partakers of his grace (Phil.1:6,7). The Philippians were exhorted to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (1:27).

Prisoner though Paul was, he rejoiced in Epaphroditus not only as a brother, but also as a *fellow-worker*, and *fellow-soldier*. At that time, when urging the Philippians to follow his example, the Apostle could use the words "become *fellow-imitators of me*" (3:17). This emphasis upon fellowship in Philippians is so pronounced and in 2 Timothy so conspicuous by its absence that we set out the occurrences.

Compounds of "sun" in Philippians

<i>Sugkoinōnēsas</i>	...	...	"To have fellowship" (4:14).
<i>Sugkoinōnos</i>	...	...	"Fellow-partakers" (1:7).
<i>Sugchairo</i>	...	...	"To rejoice together" (2:17,18).
<i>Sunzugos</i>	...	...	"Yoke-fellow" (4:3).
<i>Sunergos</i>	...	...	"Fellow-worker" (2:25).
<i>Sullambanō</i>	...	...	"Assist together" (4:3).
<i>Summimētas</i>	...	...	"Fellow-imitators" (3:17).
<i>Summorphos</i>	...	...	"Conformity" (3:21).
<i>Summorphizomai</i>	...	...	"To be conformed" (3:10).
<i>Sumpsuchos</i>	...	...	"Equal soul" (2:2).
<i>Sunstratiōtēs</i>	...	...	"Fellow-soldier" (2:25).

Here we have fellowship in suffering, in labour, in joy, and in spirit: here the Apostle and the Philippians could together press along the pathway toward the prize of the high calling. But when we come to 2 Timothy all this is changed. In that epistle the only parallels with the above list of compounds of *sun* are the following:

Compounds of "sun" in 2 Timothy

<i>Suzaō</i>	...	...	"To live together" (2:11).
<i>Sumbazileuō</i>	...	...	"To reign together" (2:12).
<i>Sunapothneskō</i>	...	...	"To die together" (2:11).
<i>Sugkakopatheō</i>	...	...	"Endure with" (1:8, 2:3 — some Editions and R.V.).

There is still one other word, but alas it is used with a negative:

<i>Sumparaginomai</i>	"To stand with" (4:16).
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A glance at the list of words taken from Philippians will show that they are mostly concerned with the active fellowship of believers. But the list of words taken from 2 Timothy includes only one word that indicates the fellowship of believer with believer; the others speak of fellowship with the Lord in His death, life, and future glory. It is, of course, true that this blessed “together with” remains unaltered by the change of times and seasons. We are not alone, the Lord will stand by us as He did by Paul, but we shall never experience the fellowship that was enjoyed when Philippians was first penned. Blessed be the Lord, He remains.

“At my first defence *no man* stood with me, but all men forsook me” (2 Tim.4:16). This statement but adds to the sense of extreme isolation that marks this last prison epistle, and it is this epistle to Timothy that suits the period in which we live. Churches there are by the thousand, but, in spite of all that the votaries of each particular assembly may bring forward, the true church, so far as any organized fellowship is concerned, has vanished from the earth.

With these rather sad and solemn reflections, let us take a survey of the epistle as a whole. This is facilitated by the complete structural correspondence of the epistle, which is indicated in bare outline on page 280.

The story of the epistle is simple. Paul and his message were, at the time of writing, forsaken, and yet that message was the particular one of which he was the herald to the Gentiles. This is brought out in the opening and closing members B 1:8-18, and B 4:9-18.

PAUL AND HIS MESSAGE FORSAKEN

“This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me” (2 Tim.1:15).

“Demas hath forsaken me ... only Luke is with me ... At my first defence no man stood with me, but all forsook me” (2 Tim. 4:10,11,16).

THE LORD HIS KEEPER

“Nevertheless, I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which has been committed against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me ... and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim.4:17,18).

PAUL THE HERALD TO THE GENTILES

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher (*kerux*, a herald), and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles" (2 Tim.1:11).

"That by me the preaching (*kerugma*, the heralding) might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Tim.4:17).

Naturally this forsaking both of the Apostle and his message made the trial of faithful ministry greater than ever. Accordingly the next section deals with the subject of the ministry at stake, and the compensation for any suffering endured for the truth. These are set out in the structure under the letters C 2:1-13, and C 3:10 – 4:8.

So crucial is this matter that we must study it step by step.

(1) The ministry at stake, that which was given by exclusive revelation to Paul, in the first instance, is the revelation of the Mystery of which Paul, as the prisoner of the Lord, was the steward:

"The things that thou hast heard *of me* among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim.2:2).

"Thou hast fully followed my doctrine ... knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim.3:10 and 14).

(2) To continue in this ministry meant suffering, but not only would God sustain right through, but He had clearly associated together "suffering and reigning" – in other words "a crown" is laid up for those who endure. The good soldier is engaged in a good fight, yet he may have to suffer as an evildoer.

"Endure hardness" (2 Tim.2:3).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim.2:12).

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim.3:12).

"Endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim.4:5).

"I am ready to be offered" (2 Tim.4:6).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown" (2 Tim.4:8).

“Thou therefore endure hardness as a good (*kalos*) soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim.2:3).

“I have fought a good (*kalos*) fight” (2 Tim.4:7).

“Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds” (2 Tim.2:9).

“But watch thou in all things, suffer trouble, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim.4:5).

(3) After all, these exhortations focus attention not so much upon *what* we suffer, as *why* we suffer, and bring into prominence the truth, together with those who either accept or reject it, who stand approved or disapproved before the Lord. The situation thus disclosed forms the ground of a strong appeal for clean-cut separation from all teachers of evil doctrine.

“But *shun* profane and vain babblings” (2 Tim.2:16).

“*Depart* from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).

“*Purge* self from these” (2 Tim.2:21).

“Foolish and unlearned questions *avoid*” (2 Tim.2:23).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such *turn away*” (2 Tim.3:5).

“Rightly divide the Word of *truth*” (2 Tim.2:15).

“Concerning the *truth* have erred” (2 Tim.2:18).

“If God peradventure will give them repentance to the knowledge of the *truth*” (2 Tim.2:25).

“Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the *truth* ... these resist the *truth*” (2 Tim.3:7,8).

“Study to shew thyself *approved* (*dokimos*) unto God” (2 Tim.2:15).

“Men of corrupt mind, *reprobate* (*adokimos*) concerning the *faith*” (2 Tim.3:8).

With this outline of the epistle in heart and mind, let us begin the examination of its several parts, remembering not only that it is a part of all Scripture which is given by inspiration of God, but that it is the farewell letter of this lonely servant of Christ, whose stand for the truth we but faintly appreciate and vaguely follow, but who nevertheless must be beloved of all those who, through his ministry, have been enlightened “as to what is the dispensation of the Mystery” (Eph.3:9 R.V.).

2 Tim.1:1-7 (A page 280). Salutation and remembrance

A	A ₁	1:1,2	SALUTATION	a	1	Paul an apostle
				b	1	Will of God. Promise of life
				a	2	Timothy, beloved son
				b	2	Grace, mercy and peace
	A ₂	1:3-7	REMEMBRANCE	c	3	My forefathers
				d	3	Pure conscience
				e	3	Remembrance
					4	Remembrance
					5	Remembrance
				d	5	Unfeigned faith
				c	6	Thy grandmother and mother
				e	6,7	Remembrance

2 Tim.1:8-18 (B page 280). Paul and his message forsaken

B	B ₁	1:8-12	TIMOTHY – Not ashamed of Testimony <i>of Prisoner</i>
			SUBJECT – The Gospel
			TIME PERIOD – Before Age-times
		f ¹ 8	The prisoner. Jointly suffer evil
		g ¹ 8	The gospel
		h ¹ 9	Before age-times. Grace given
		h ¹ 10	Now manifested. Life illuminated
		g ¹ 10	The gospel
		f ¹ 11,12	The preacher. I suffer these things
	B ₂	1:12-14	PAUL – Not ashamed of Suffering <i>as Prisoner</i>
			SUBJECT – The Good Deposit
			TIME PERIOD – That Day
		f ² 12	He is able to guard
		g ² 12	The deposit
		h ² 13	Have a form of sound words heard of me
		f ² 14	Do thou guard
		g ² 14	The good deposit
	B ₃	1:15-18	ONESIPHORUS – Not ashamed of Chain <i>of Prisoner</i>
			SUBJECT – Service
			TIME PERIOD – That Day
		f ³ 15	Thou knowest
		g ³ 15	In Asia. All turned away from me
		h ³ 16	The Lord give mercy
		g ³ 17	In Rome. He sought and found me
		h ³ 18	The Lord grant mercy
		g ⁴ 18	In Ephesus. He ministered unto me
		f ³ 18	Thou knowest very well

CHAPTER 28

2 TIMOTHY

Salutation and remembrance (A 2 Tim. 1:1-7)

Paul and his message forsaken (B 2 Tim. 1:8-18)

This second epistle opens with a reference to the apostleship of Paul, in very much the same way that his other epistles open, but one is struck with the remark that follows:

“According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus”
(2 Tim. 1:1).

The first epistle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ as “our Hope”, and Titus seems to link both introductions with the words:

“In *hope* of *aionian* life, which God that cannot lie *promised* before *aionian* times” (Tit.1:2).

As a reference to 2 Timothy 1:9 will show, this is intimately connected with the doctrine of 2 Timothy, the words “before the world began” in both places being the same. It seems probable that as the ministry of the Apostle drew to its close, the blessed hope, with its gift of life and immortality, assumed, in his apprehension, richer and fuller proportions, for, apart from life, membership of the Body, heavenly places, spiritual blessings, and heavenly citizenship are empty words, their enjoyment depending upon possession of that life promised by God (the look back to before *aionian* times) and life hoped for (the look forward, the hope of *aionian* life).

What does Paul mean when he says that he thanks God Whom he serves from his forefathers with a pure conscience? Was there not the biggest divergence imaginable between his service as a Pharisee and his service as the Apostle of the Mystery? In Acts 24:14 the Apostle had said:

"But this I confess unto thee, that *after the way which they call heresy so worship* I the God of my fathers".

In presence of this confession it seems necessary to give the word *apo*, "from", its sense of "away from", as we do when translating Hebrews 12:2, "looking away unto Jesus", meaning "looking away from all this great cloud of witnesses (faithful though they may have been) to the one great Perfecter of faith, Christ Himself". Why should Paul bring the question of his departure from the faith of his fathers into this introduction? It evidently had some bearing upon Timothy and his line of conduct, and a reference to the structure given on page 286 will help us to understand its introduction here. It will be seen under the sub-heading "Remembrance" that the reference to Paul's "forefathers" is balanced by the allusion to Timothy's "grandmother and mother"; and the fact that his "conscience" was "pure", by the conviction that their faith was "unfeigned". Now Timothy's ancestors, Lois and Eunice, were Christians, but Paul's were Israelites. In Paul's case his conversion wrenched him away from the faith of his fathers, but in Timothy's case no such departure could be made without apostacy from the faith. Dean Farrar translates the close of verse 5: "Yes, and I feel confident that in thee it dwells also", and makes this note:

"1:1-5 *pepeismai de* — To make the *de* imply 'notwithstanding appearances', as Alford does, is too strong; but the adversative force of *de*, though unnoticed by most commentators, and missed in many versions, does seem to imply that passing shade of hesitation about the fervour of the faith of Timothy — at any rate, as manifested in vigorous action — which I have tried to indicate in the 'Yes, and I feel confident'".

Hence the Apostle immediately proceeds to speak not only of faith, but gift, and urges Timothy to "stir" up that gift. The word "stir up" is borrowed from the idea of re-kindling or reviving a fire, *anazōpureō*. *Ana* means "again", *zō*, from *zaō*, "to live", *pureō* from *pur* means "a fire". The LXX uses this word in Genesis 45:27: "the spirit of Jacob their father *revived*". Further, Paul follows this exhortation with a reason,

"For God hath not given us the spirit of shrinking fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim.1:7).

Paul knew what it was to experience “fear and trembling”, and to pray for “boldness” and “utterance”, but that is very different from “shrinking fear” or “cowardice”. Timothy was still a young man, and because the work upon which he was about to enter was inseparable from afflictions (2 Tim.4:5), he needed encouragement. To this end the Apostle reminds him of his own early trials (2 Tim.3:10), and points out that persecution is but the result of godly living (2 Tim.3:12). He further declares that not only was such endurance pleasing to the Lord (2 Tim.2:3,4), but that He rewarded it with nothing less than a crown (2 Tim.2:12; 4:7,8). Lastly, but by no means least, Timothy is assured that throughout life’s trials, however many or severe, the Lord could be relied upon “to stand by” (2 Tim.1:12; 4:17,18). The reason for the repeated use of the word “unashamed”, which divides up the next section, and comes so prominently into the exhortation of 2 Timothy 2:15, can now be better appreciated.

Turning to the structure on page 286, under B 1:8-18, we find this section is subdivided into three parts, each one being marked by the words “not ashamed”.

- B₁ TIMOTHY — *Not ashamed* of testimony of prisoner.
- B₂ PAUL — *Not ashamed* of suffering as prisoner.
- B₃ ONESIPHORUS — *Not ashamed* of chain of prisoner.

In Timothy’s case “the gospel” is stressed, in Paul’s case “the good deposit”, and in the case of Onesiphorus it is his “service” that comes specially under notice, service rendered when all in Asia had “turned away” from the Apostle. Time periods also enter into the matter. The salvation and calling of the gospel is associated with a purpose that goes back “before age times”. Paul’s faithful stewardship of the good deposit looks forward to “that day” when also Onesiphorus will find mercy of the Lord in relation to his service to the Apostle. In each of these sections there are items of importance to which we must now give heed.

The first Section (1:8-12) – Timothy not ashamed

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Tim.1:8).

The “testimony” of the Lord is *marturion*, which gives us the English word “martyr”. Timothy was not engaged in a genteel profession, but in a calling associated with blood, suffering, prison and death. To much the same end is the reference in 1 Timothy 6:13,14:

“I give thee charge in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

It was not without cause that the Apostle picked out that special moment in our Lord's witness. Timothy, like most of us, needed all the encouragement possible to stand fast. If the Lord's testimony be closely akin to martyrdom, His servant is not only spoken of as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher, but as a prisoner, “His prisoner”. “The Lord's testimony” and “the Lord's prisoner” go together. They who “turned away” from Paul, the messenger, in chapter 1 paved the way for those who turn away their ears from his message in chapter 4. These have ever been the tactics of the enemy. First undermine the authority of the messenger; it will then not be long before his message will cease to have a hearing. When Paul was converted and commissioned, “suffering” for Christ's sake was definitely included as a part of his ministry (Acts 9:16). Whoever else might leave him, suffering was his faithful attendant throughout his career, and when, by reason of his coming removal from the scene, he calls upon Timothy to enter more fully into the ministry, he is obliged to couple with the work of an evangelist, enduring afflictions. So here in this verse, Paul does not call upon Timothy to preach or teach, but “to suffer together with the gospel” and its minister. If he drew back from that, nothing else that he could do would avail anything. But specially at his disposal in all this trial was “the power of God”, a power associated in the immediate context with “life and immortality”, as also in the more remote contexts of Romans 1:4,16; Ephesians 1:19, and Philippians 3:10. Why need he or we fear the

power of death, when we know Him Who holds the power of life?

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before age times” (2 Tim.1:9).

Here is an echo of Ephesians 2:8-10, blended with the teaching of Ephesians 1:3,4. There is no word here that means either “world” or “to begin”. The original reads *pro chronōn aiōniōn*, “before times of ages”. This is additional information to that given in Ephesians 1:4, “before the overthrow of the world”, and takes us back to the same starting-point, somewhere between Genesis 1:1 and 2. The life and incorruptibility here brought to light through Him who destroyed death when He rose again from the dead, constitutes a large part of that gospel of which Paul was made a herald, and for which he suffered.

Thus the first of these three sections. We feel almost ashamed to pass by such doctrine with so slight notice, but what can we do? We can only hope that enough has been said to implant a desire in the heart of the reader that shall result in a study more worthy of the subject.

The second Section (1:12-14) – Paul not ashamed

The Apostle who exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed was one who could fearlessly associate his “doctrine with his manner of life, purpose”, etc. (2 Tim.3:10), and it is therefore quite in keeping with such consistency to find him illustrating his own teaching:

“Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit unto that day” (2 Tim.1:12).

A reference to the structure B B₂ 1:12-14 page 286 will show that the A.V. rendering is misleading. The words, “which I have committed unto Him” are, to say the least, loose translation. There is no word in the text for “I” and no words for “unto Him”. Again, “have committed” is verbal, whereas these words purport to translate a noun,

namely, "a deposit". The margin of the R.V. reads: "*that which He hath committed unto me, Greek, my deposit*".

What is this deposit? It will be seen from the structure that the expressions, "He is able to guard the deposit" and "Do thou guard the deposit", come on either side of the expression, "Have a form of sound words which thou hast heard of me". Possibly an examination of this central clause will illuminate the others. Seeing that the Apostle in this same epistle has so strongly condemned a mere "form of godliness", we may be quite certain that something very different is in view here.

The word translated "form" in verse 13 is *hupotupōsis*. This is the name of a figure of rhetoric, which means "a word picture" or an "outline". It was the title of a treatise on philosophy, and its usage shows that it means "the first sketch before the finished picture". The word is used once more in 1 Timothy 1:16, where Paul's conversion is held out as a "pattern", that in him as a "first one" the Lord might "show" or "exhibit", all long-suffering "with a view to a preliminary sketch adumbrating the completed picture of those about to believe upon Him unto *aionion* life". In other words, Paul's conversion, commission, and doctrine, are the Lord's appointed pattern for all believers today.

In dealing with these realities the Apostle guards against mere formalism, or parrot-like repetition, by placing in juxtaposition the "form of sound words" and the personal qualification, "in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus". For example, in days gone by the concordance may have been neglected by some, to the believer's loss. Today, on the other hand, it has in some quarters become a mere mechanical means of translation which practically dispenses with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But the exhortation of the Apostle safeguards the truth from thus becoming a lifeless copy. This "form of sound words" which Timothy had heard of Paul was "the deposit" of which Paul himself speaks in verse 12, and to which he refers in verse 14. We meet with it again in 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, the deposit guard", and immediately following this comes the exposure of the opposite of "healthy doctrine", "avoiding profane and vain babblings and the antithesis of a falsely-named knowledge",

gnōsis (the word which was soon to be adopted by the Gnostic heresy, against which Paul warns his readers in Colossians and in the pastoral epistles).

A further reference to this “deposit” is found in 2 Timothy 2:2:

“The things which thou didst hear from me through many witnesses, these things commit (verbal form of the word ‘deposit’) thou to faithful men, such as shall be able to teach others also”.

“The good deposit” is now in documentary form. It is, in fact, the teaching of the four prison epistles, and this present volume is an attempt to lay before the reader that “form of sound words” which constituted the ground and hope, the doctrine and practice, and also the dispensational position in the purpose of the ages, of the church of the one Body. We add to the testimony of these epistles at our peril, we omit any of its teaching to our loss. We are warned that suffering may accompany our efforts, but we are comforted with the selfsame assurance that sustained the Apostle throughout his strenuous witness. It is a good fight, whether we be good or indifferent fighters.

Again, when we realise how much depends upon the teaching of this section, we are reluctant to pass on, but perforce we must, and, consequently, a few words regarding the last section must close this chapter.

The third Section (1:15-18) – Onesiphorus not ashamed

Passing from the great ministries of such servants of God as Paul and Timothy, the third section brings before us the lowly, yet lovely, ministry of Onesiphorus. Who was Onesiphorus? Nothing is recorded of his place of birth, his parentage, his conversion, his gifts or his failings. But, like the woman who anointed the Saviour’s feet, he will be remembered wherever the truth of the good deposit is proclaimed, and that for the service rendered to the Apostle in his distress. As Timothy had been left at Ephesus (1 Tim.1:3), it is assumed that Onesiphorus was an Ephesian, for in this letter salutations are sent to his household, which suggest that they were resident at Ephesus. It matters little, the point to

remark is that he stands out in happy contrast with "all in Asia" who had forsaken Paul. In contrast with such as Phygellus, Hermogenes and Demas, this man of faith not only refused to desert the Apostle in his hour of trial, but, being in Rome, sought him out "very diligently", and found him. Full credit is given to his persistence, for Paul recognised that, had he so chosen, he could have excused his failure by the difficulty of making a successful search. Of Onesiphorus is left the record of the fact that will be remembered with mercy "in that day", for it is written, "He oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain".

The word "refreshed" is eloquent alike of the nature of Paul's needs, and the service of Onesiphorus. *Anapsuchō* is from *ana*, "again", and *psuchos*, "cold", and in another form this word comes in Peter's address recorded in Acts 3: 19, "the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord". The action of Onesiphorus would be like a breath of heaven entering the foul air of a prison: and lifted the spirit of the Apostle up to the higher ground of his blessed hope, far above the touch of Roman Emperors or the taint of Roman cells.

The reference to the earlier ministry of Paul at Ephesus, the leaving behind of Trophimus at Miletus (the sea port of Ephesus), and the mention of Alexander the coppersmith, all combine to show that when Paul was apprehended, he was first taken to Ephesus. From Miletus he would sail to Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, where he parted with Erastus, who had been chamberlain of that city. Thence, the journey would be continued across to the western port, and so, on to Rome. Ignatius, the martyr, was taken from Antioch in Syria by way of Ephesus to Rome, and writing to the Ephesians he said:

"Ye are the thoroughfare (*parados*) of those that are slain for God's sake, the fellow-initiates of Paul, the holy, the martyr, the blessed, in whose steps may it be my lot to be found" (Ep. ad. Ephes. 12).

Onesiphorus had come out into the open at Ephesus also, for the Apostle remarks:

"In how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well" (2 Tim. 1:18).

Among those commended in Hebrews 10, who suffered for the faith, are some who, had they so chosen, might apparently have escaped, but instead they became

“companions of them that were so used (reproaches, gazing-stocks, etc.). For ye had compassion of me in my bonds” (Heb. 10:33,34).

We may not all be called as was Paul, or even as Timothy, but we can emulate the example of Onesiphorus and let our conduct be as a refreshing breeze in the fever of this age. This brother’s name means “a profit-bringer”, and in his case was not, as so many prove to be, a misnomer.

In the light of this threefold witness to the danger of being ashamed of the good deposit, and the necessity of faithful, unflinching loyalty, we are prepared to go further into the teaching of the epistle. Though we are able to deal with the greatest accuracy with the letter of the text, if we have not the spirit that is inculcated here we shall not understand its message. May the Lord therefore strengthen the waverer, stand by the strong, and encourage the simple ministering servants in this day when the good deposit is neglected and despised, its glories denied, and its heralds held to be of no account.

2 Tim.2:1-13 (C page 280). Paul's doctrine.
 Its connection with suffering and reigning

C	C ₁	2:1-7	Suffer evil (<i>kakopatheō</i>)	i ¹ 1,2 j ¹	Things heard of me k ¹ 3 The SOLDIER l ¹ 4 No entanglement k ² 5 The ATHLETE l ² 5 Contend lawfully k ³ 6 The HUSBANDMAN l ³ 6,7 Labour before fruit
			THE CROWN		
	C ₂	2:8,9	I suffer evil (<i>kakopatheō</i>)	i ² 8 j ² 9	My gospel Suffering unto bonds
			Jesus Christ raised from the dead ... my gospel.		
	C ₃	2:9,10	I endure (<i>hupomenō</i>)	i ³ 9 j ³ 10	The Word of God Endurance for the elect
			Salvation with aionian glory.		
	C ₄	2:11-13	If we endure (<i>hupomenō</i>)	i ⁴ 11 j ⁴ 13 k ⁴ 11 l ⁴ 12 l ⁴ 12 k ⁴ 13	The faithful Word The faithful Lord If we died ... live If we endure...reign If we deny...deny us If we faithless ... He faithful
			THE REIGN		

CHAPTER 29

2 TIMOTHY

Suffering and reigning (C 2 Tim.2:1-13)

We have already seen that shame and suffering appear to be the inevitable accompaniment of faithful ministry of the Mystery, but the section upon which we are now entering will deal with an aspect of this characteristic which is for our encouragement, namely, the close relationship that has been established between present endurance and the future crown. Let us not lose sight of the fact that this epistle, being in correspondence with Philippians, where also perfecting and the prize are in view, is but developing the truth of the association which exists between perfecting, suffering and reward, a subject also taught with great clearness in Hebrews, an epistle which, as has already been demonstrated, is also closely parallel with Philippians (see pages 228,229).

Let us now refer to the structure of C 2 Tim.2:1-13 (page 296). The following simplified analysis of the structure will throw into prominence the place given in the epistle to suffering and reigning:

Suffer evil (*kakopatheō*) – 2:3 The crown (2:5).

Suffer evil (*kakopatheō*) – 2:9 The resurrection (2:8).

I endure (*hupomenō*) – 2:10 Aionian glory (2:10).

We endure (*hupomenō*) – 2:12 Reigning (2:12).

The Apostle illustrates his point by allusion to the conditions governing the life of the soldier, the athlete and the farmer. He draws also upon his own example, and concludes with a clear, doctrinal presentation of the case he seeks to make. The opening verse –

“Thou therefore my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim.2:1).

forms both the conclusion of the previous section, and the opening of the present one. Instead of a spirit of cowardice and of being ashamed, we have an exhortation to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This grace is sufficient for all His people, and His strength is made perfect in their weakness. A close examination of the structure will show that in each of the four departments lettered "i" there is a reference to the Word.

i ¹	2:2	Things heard of me
i ²	2:8	My gospel
i ³	2:9	The Word of God
i ⁴	2:11	The faithful Word

It is clear, therefore, that the endurance and the suffering spoken of in this passage arise from adherence to the Word of God, and to that particular portion of the truth known as "my gospel", or "the things heard of me"; in other words "the good deposit", the truth of the Mystery.

Calling upon Timothy to endure hardness, Paul, as already mentioned, enforces his teaching by the use of three figures:

- (1) THE SOLDIER — He avoids the entanglements of this life, and necessarily, by reason of his calling, misses many of its pleasures and comforts.
- (2) THE ATHLETE — He has to exercise self-discipline, and above all things, to keep to the rules.
- (3) THE FARMER — He has to exercise great patience after having spent time and labour upon the ground.

The word translated "life" in verse 4 is *bios*, and means, not life itself, but *livelihood*, or the means of living:

"All that she had, even all her *living*" (Mark 12:44).

"The pleasures of this *life* ... no ... perfection" (Luke 8:14).

"This world's *goods*" (1 John 3:17).

Grotius has shown that the legionary soldiers among the Romans were not allowed to engage in agriculture, merchandise, mechanical employment, or, indeed, any business which might divert them from their profession. This does not mean that a minister of the gospel should not engage in business;

he may have to do so for the truth's sake, as did Paul, on occasion. The lesson is deeper than that; it is enshrined in one of the passages cited under the word *bios*, namely, Luke 8:14, where it is shown that the affairs of this life may, only too sadly, prevent the bringing of fruit unto *perfection*, and that is our theme.

It is possible that the Apostle did not refer to the Roman soldiery at all, but to the law given in Deuteronomy 20:5-7, for there is nothing specially military in the one feature picked out. Not fighting but endurance of evil is what is spoken of – a feature of the soldier's life that is not exclusive to that profession.

With the thought of endurance and willing suffering of privation in mind, Paul turns from the soldier to the athlete. The word for "strive" here is *athleō*. This word is used with the preposition *sun*, "together", in Philippians. Here, however, the striving is carried out single-handed and alone, thus characteristically marking the great difference observable between the days of the church's inception and our own. The word that links the ministry of the *evangelist* with the service of the *soldier* and the endurance of the *athlete* is *kakopatheō*, which means to endure or suffer evil. It should be remarked that something more than mere running or wrestling is required of the contestant in the games. He must practice self-discipline (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), and he must keep the rules (run lawfully), otherwise he will be a "castaway", i.e. disqualified, disapproved, *adokimos* (1 Corinthians 9:27; 2 Timothy 2:15; and 3:8).

There is diversity of opinion as to the intention of the Apostle in verse 6, that is as to whether he means that the husbandman must labour before he can partake of the fruit, or whether the sense is that he has a prior claim to that of the idler. Perhaps the rendering

"The *toiling* husbandman has the first claim to a share of the harvest"

best expresses his meaning.

Now all this arises out of having relationship, ministerially, with "the things heard of me", and makes clear the fact that,

if the crown is to be won, if the harvest is to be enjoyed, if the leader is to be well-pleased, the minister of the good deposit will need certain qualifications of the nature of those possessed by the successful soldier, the athlete and the farmer.

Until now the Apostle has been exhorting Timothy to endure, and, in keeping with his practice, he now turns to his own example and says, "I endure for the gospel's sake, even unto bonds".

The R.V. omits the word "that" from verse 8; Paul is not so much urging Timothy to remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, but says, rather,

"Remember (or keep well in mind) Jesus Christ raised from the dead, Who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, *but declared to be the Son of God with power, according to my gospel*",

which gospel proclaims Him King, not merely as the occupant of David's throne, but as the seated Victor at the *right hand of God*. Keep well in mind this special phase of the mystery of Christ, for added glory attaches to loyalty in this connection. Suffering *here* is compensated by reigning with Him *there*. Paul suffered directly because of this gospel; "*wherein I suffer evil, as a malefactor, even unto bonds*". The time was now past when the Christian faith was tolerated as one of many sects in the Roman world. To profess this faith anywhere within the limits of that great Empire had now become a criminal offence. To this Peter refers when he says: "If any man suffer as *a Christian*" (1 Pet.4:16). It was this ban that struck terror into the hearts of "all in Asia", adversely influenced Demas (but at the same time peculiarly enhanced the loving service of Onesiphorus), and made Paul deeply solicitous for the resolution of his beloved son Timothy. As to ourselves, let us not judge those who were falterers; rather let us seek grace to be faithful ourselves.

It is typical of Paul, who from his prison calls upon free-men outside to rejoice, that he should take up the reference to his bonds and say, "but the Word of God is not bound!" The grace of God is irrepressible. There is an elasticity in the spirit of the believer that no load can completely crush:

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed; but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor.4:8,9).

How much do the Gentiles owe to Paul? What do we not owe to that faithful stand recorded in Galatians 2? What did not the church receive by reason of those sufferings for Christ that he filled up, as recorded in Colossians 1:24? This does not mean that Paul would not be the first to repudiate the smallest share in the work of redemption:

“Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor.1:13).

“Who then is Paul, but a minister by whom ye believed?” (1 Cor. 3:5).

It is perfectly clear that Paul’s sufferings were of a ministerial nature, but though that be so the value of faithful ministry to the church is inestimable. So it was that the Apostle could say:

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, in order that they may obtain *that* salvation which is in Christ Jesus with *aionian* glory” (2 Tim.2:10).

The words *sōterias* ... *tēs*, seem to necessitate the translation, “salvation, *that one* with *aionian* glory”, and is comparable with the “so great salvation” and the “salvation unto the uttermost” of the epistle to the Hebrews. While every believer is assured of salvation, not every believer is assured of “*that* salvation with *aionian* glory”, and it is the mission of the closing division of this section to endeavour to make this plain.

“Faithful is the word, for if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him, if we patiently endure, we shall also reign with Him, if we deny Him, He also will deny us; if we are faithless, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself” (2 Tim.2:11-13).

Two distinct lines of doctrine meet here. The reader who is at all uncertain about the differences set forth, would do well to read chapter one of this book, where an attempt has been made to put the matter in the light and language of Scripture. First there is the question of life, then the question of reigning. Living with Christ does not depend upon the faithfulness of the saint, but upon the one great basic fact

that when Christ died on the cross, the believer was reckoned to have died with Him too. This is the testimony of the central teaching of the epistle to the Romans, and likewise is the basic doctrine upon which the new dispensational teaching of Ephesians is built. It is true that even though a believer should prove faithless, his subsequent failures cannot alter the initial fact of his death with Christ. It is very different, however, when we come to the question of reigning with Him, winning a crown, obtaining a prize, or receiving a reward. These things are in addition to life, and are connected with it as expressed in faithful witness.

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2:12). The translation "If we *suffer*" is misleading. *Hupomenō* literally means "to remain under" and gives us *hupomonē*, "patience". Patient endurance, with special reference to the truth of the Mystery, is specially in view. This is seen in the statement made by Paul himself in 2 Timothy 4:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth ... a crown" (2 Tim.4:7,8).

His fight, his course, his keeping, were all to do with the Word entrusted to him.

In the Gospels the word "deny" is used interchangeably with the word meaning "to be ashamed of":

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and My words ... of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

"But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father, which is in heaven" (Matt.10:33).

This links the passages in 2 Timothy 1— "Be not ashamed", "I am not ashamed", and "He was not ashamed" — with this matter of enduring or of denying the Lord, and, furthermore, connects the closing division of this section with the opening one of the next, where, in verse 15, the words "not ashamed" recur.

To make certain that none shall misread either our comment or the Scriptures themselves, let us recast the passages so that each pair of statements is read together:

As to LIFE – “If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him, if we are unfaithful, He abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself”.

As to REIGNING – “If we endure, we shall also reign with Him, if we deny, He also will deny us”.

Reigning and the crown are to this epistle what the prize is to Philippians and the reward is to Hebrews. In Philippians and Hebrews these expressions are connected with perfection and the things that accompany salvation.

How may we know that we are running the race acceptably? How may we know that we are approved? What guidance have we, apart from the example of the Apostle? A glance at the structure of the whole epistle on page 280 will show that the two central sections, which now await us, are written concerning those who are “approved” and those who are “disapproved”. We shall therefore occupy no time in prematurely discussing this question, but proceed at once to the section that completes chapter 2.

2 Tim.2:14-26 (D page 280). The approved
concerning the truth

D	D m	14	Strive not about words	}	The WORKMAN and the TRUTH
		n 15	Study to show self approved		
		o 15	That he may be unashamed		
	E	16	Exhortation. Shun. Increase ungodliness	}	ERROR and TRUTH
	F p	17,18	Teachers and doctrine. A canker		
		q 19	God's foundation. Sure		
		q 19	God's foundation. Seal		
		p 20,21	Teachers and doctrine. Great house and vessels		
	E	22,23	Exhortation. Flee. Avoid. Gender strifes		
	D m	24	Servant of Lord must not strive	}	The SERVANT and the TRUTH
		n 25	Repentance		
		o 26	That he may be delivered		

CHAPTER 30

2 TIMOTHY

Approved concerning the truth (D 2 Tim.2:14-26)

We have already seen that the “form of sound words” must be held “in faith and love”; in a similar way this section warns us against mere “word-battles” in place of true witness.

The first epistle to Timothy affords a parallel to the first four verses of the section we are considering:

“O Timothy, keep that deposit, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the antithesis of a falsely-named knowledge, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Tim.6:20,21).

“Strive not about words to no profit ... shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness ... concerning the truth they have erred ... and overthrown the faith of some” (2 Tim.2:14-18).

A reference to the structure of the section D 2:14-26 on page 304 will show that everything revolves around “The truth”. First, we have “The workman and the truth” (14,15); secondly, “Error and truth” (16-23); thirdly, “The servant and the truth” (24,26). In the first case, the workman by *rightly* dividing the Word of truth is unashamed; in the second, by *wrongly* dividing the Word and teaching a future event as one that has passed (“the resurrection is past already”), faith is overthrown; and in the third, by acknowledging the truth, the snare of the devil is broken and the ensnared believer set free. In chapter 1 the Apostle used three examples to enforce his teaching concerning being unashamed. In chapter 2:3-6 he uses three more examples to enforce his teaching concerning the crown and endurance. And now in 2:14-26 he uses yet three more illustrations — the workman, the foundation, and the great house and its vessels.

The point first brought before us is the matter of approval (*dokimos*), which, as we have seen, has relation to the question of winning the race. According to 2 Timothy 2:5 the athlete can be disqualified by not striving "lawfully", or, as we say, by not keeping the rules. How may we know these rules? The answer is that we may know them by rightly dividing the Word of truth. A member of the Body of Christ who attempted to run his race according to the rules of the *earthly kingdom*, would be disqualified. Each calling has its own code, and must be kept distinct from others.

What are we to understand by the words "rightly divide"? The word used by the Apostle is *orthotomeō*, which had an established meaning, well known to all readers of the Greek O.T. It occurs in Proverbs 3:

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall *rightly divide* thy paths" (Prov. 3:6, LXX version).

The runner who takes a wrong turning, however zealous he may be, will fail to secure the prize. The path must be kept; the Word of truth must be divided aright or the workman will be ashamed.

The principle of 2 Timothy 2:15 lies at the root of all our ministry, and to demonstrate its far-reaching effects would require nothing less than a resumé of twenty years' witness. The right division of the Word distinguishes between the two ministries of Paul. It distinguishes between the church of Pentecost and the church of the Mystery. It distinguishes between the Bride and the Body. The principle ramifies through doctrine and practice, prophecy and hope. It sees different spheres of glory; it perceives differing ages and dispensations. This is no place to attempt the unfolding of so vast a principle; we can but point out a few of the more obvious features.

It appears evident from verses 15 and 18 that if we fail rightly to divide the Word of truth, we shall err concerning the truth. The error of Hymenæus and Philetus was so deadly that the Apostle likened it to a gangrene, yet it was simply the placing of a future event in the past, an illustration of the disastrous consequences of wrong division.

Philippians 3 speaks of an “out-resurrection”; 2 Timothy, which balances Philippians, warns against any teaching that would use the Philippians passage to undermine the necessity of a literal future resurrection. The teaching of Philippians 3 places together the “out-resurrection” and the “prize”; so that we can see why the Apostle follows the teaching concerning the crown and reigning with the way of approval and the way of error. Hymenæus and Philetus may yet *live with Christ*, but if they persisted in their error, the *crown* will have been lost.

The lesson is next enforced by the figure of the sure foundation with its two seals. If we have in mind Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 3, we shall be saved a great deal of confusion. The foundation once laid corresponds with the fact that the believer, once having died with Christ, shall most certainly live with Him. This agrees with the seal:

“The Lord knoweth them that are His” (2 Tim.2:19).

“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim.2:11).

Upon this foundation, according to 1 Corinthians 3, the believer builds, the building representing his service. If it stands the test – in other words, if he is “approved” – he shall receive a reward; if not, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. This agrees with the other side of the seal:

“Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim.2:19).

“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Tim.2:12).

The figure of the foundation which cannot be overthrown is suggested by the statement in verse 18: “And overthrow the faith of some”. It is essential to differentiate between what can be overthrown and what cannot, the superstructure and the foundation. Only the superstructure can be touched – the believer’s service and its reward; salvation by grace and our dying and living with Christ remain unchanged and unalterable.

The simile of a foundation suggests the next figure, that of a house. Instead of viewing the different possible types of building from mansion to hovel as in 1 Corinthians 3

(gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble), the Apostle here looks within the house to find similar distinctions. In a great house will be found vessels of gold and silver, and vessels of wood and earthenware. The parallel with 1 Corinthians 3 is maintained. Some of the vessels are unto honour, and some to dishonour. The words *timē*, "honour", and *atimia*, "dishonour", correspond closely with the terms *dokimos*, "approved" and *adokimos*, "disapproved".

"If then any man shall have purged himself from among these, he shall be a vessel for honour, hallowed, useful for the master, prepared for every good work" (2 Tim.2:21).

It is almost impossible to separate the teacher from his doctrine. Those who forsook Paul, forsook his teaching also. And here, instead of attempting to decide whether the vessels represent doctrines or teachers, we leave the reader with the solemn issues as his own responsibility before the Lord. The believer who would attain unto perfection, who would gain the prize, who would attain the crown, who would be a vessel unto honour, who would be approved unto God, must observe most definitely one thing — he must "shun" and "avoid" those who are of the contrary way.

"Mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example" (Phil. 3:17).

Insistence upon the same thing, with the same "perfecting" in view, is found in 2 Corinthians 6 and 7:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ... Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing ... Let us cleanse ourselves ... perfecting holiness".

In things that are fundamental, belonging to salvation, and our dying and living with Him, we can do nothing for ourselves. But in connection with the things that accompany salvation — the perfecting, the reigning, the building and the serving — we are enjoined to "cleanse ourselves", to "purge ourselves", and to "judge ourselves".

It will be seen from the structure (E and *E*, page 304), that on either side of the figure of the foundation of the house are the injunctions to shun, to flee, and to avoid. If we are

wise we shall obey. If we are not, we shall talk of charity and fellowship, of not being harsh, and sitting in judgment as the Pharisee. He who runs the race lays aside every weight and the easily-entangling sin (Heb.12:1); not only sin which is his own, but also the entangling weight, which is external.

The need for avoiding vain babblings and profitless word-battles is taken up with emphasis in the closing division of this section. Striving accomplishes nothing. The servant of the Lord must not strive; he must be gentle to all, apt to teach, and patient under evil and wrong. If he has to correct those who oppose themselves, he will do it with meekness, not with pride or severity. He will do it in the hope that God may use the message to bring about a change of mind, so that the opponents may come to a full knowledge of the truth, and awake out of the drunken sleep into which they have been ensnared by the devil.

Whether we should understand the words “at his will” to refer to the devil or to God is a moot point. Commentators are nearly evenly divided. *The Companion Bible* takes the view that the words refer to the will of God. While we desire the truth at all points, the interpretation of this clause does not affect the main argument, and leaves untouched all that has been said as to the right division of the Word of truth, and its component verses.

It is a lesson we can never learn too well, to remember the spirit that we are of, to refrain from striving and hard words, and to exercise meekness and patient endurance under evil, even when dealing with those that oppose themselves.

While the instructions given in 2 Timothy were of peculiar force to Timothy himself, and have also remained true through the ages, they are of particular value to us who live at the close of the dispensation, when the apostacy has widened, when the doctrines of demons have become evident, and the last remaining bulwarks of society are going down, preparatory to the time of the end. This view is confirmed when we find that the section corresponding to D 2:14-26 leaves the days of Timothy and speaks of the closing days of the dispensation. This section we now approach, and to it we must devote a separate chapter.

2 Tim.3:1-9 (D, page 280). The disapproved
concerning the faith

D	G 1,2		MEN (<i>anthropoi</i>) of the last days	
	H	CHARACTERISTICS OF LAST DAYS – Misplaced Love	r ¹	2 Love of self (<i>philautoi</i>)
				Love of money (<i>philarguroi</i>)
			s	3 Haters of good (<i>aphilagathoi</i>)
			r ¹	4 Love of pleasure (<i>philēdonoi</i>)
	more than			
			Love of God (<i>philotheoi</i>)	
	I 5		Form without power	
	J 5		From these turn away	
	G 6		WOMEN (<i>gunaikaria</i>) of the last days	
	H	CHARACTERISTICS OF LAST DAYS – Inordinate Desires	r ²	6 Led captive
s 6 Laden with sins				
r ²			6 Led away by lusts	
I 7			Ever learning, never able to come to knowledge of truth. Disapproved	
J 9		They shall proceed no further		

CHAPTER 31

2 TIMOTHY

Disapproved concerning the faith (*D* 2 Tim.3:1-9)

The two central members of the epistle are occupied with the theme of approval and disapproval. The right division of the Word of truth is the first great pre-requisite for the approval of the Lord, but the matter is not limited to the study and the student, as the alternative clearly shows. It involves, as well as the doctrine, the manner of life.

In both epistles to Timothy the Apostle speaks of the apostacy of the last days:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim.4:1).

“This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come” (2 Tim.3:1).

The connection between these two passages is seen more clearly when we know that the word “perilous” is linked with demon possession, for its only other occurrence is in Matthew 8:28:

“There met Him two possessed with demons, coming out of the tombs, *exceeding fierce* (perilous), so that no man might pass by that way”.

The Apostle, by the use of this word, together with the reference to “seducing spirits and doctrines of demons”, gives a warning concerning the nature of the attack in the closing days. We must remember, however, that though the seducers be “spirits”, and the doctrines be of “demons”, the channels through which this deceit shall flow will be men and women like ourselves. In 2 Timothy 3:13 we read of these seducers

again, but in this passage they are evil men. The structure of 2 Timothy 3:1-9 (page 310) indicates that the apostacy is largely associated with the sins of men and women, although we must not forget that the word for men, *anthropos*, embraces mankind as a whole, both men and women.

We have already read of error concerning "the truth" and of an overthrowing of "the faith". We now have brought before us, as a characteristic of the last days, the misplacing of love. This appears under the member H (verses 2-4) of the structure. Lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and haters of the good, this is the terrible indictment of the last days. It is an awful list; yet we must face it, and so be forearmed against the danger that threatens us on every hand. We give the R.V. of verses 2-4:

"For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Tim.3:2-4).

Two passages come to mind immediately; one a contrast, the other a comparison. The first is the wonderful contrast of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, where the character of true love is portrayed:

"Love suffereth long, and is kind, love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own, is not provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things".

The second is the parallel of Romans 1:28-32, where many of the words used in 2 Timothy 3 recur. This indicates the terrible truth that the mystery of iniquity, which Romans 1 traces back to Babel, moves in a circle, the closing days of this dispensation being in character Babylonian, a fact fully endorsed by the Book of the Revelation, where Babylon is again dominant. We do not advocate novel reading among children of God, but anyone who has read the sequel to Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* will find in it an illuminating commentary upon the unnatural, boastful, vacuous and godless conditions enumerated in 2 Timothy 3.

Strangely enough, in spite of all the ungodliness and self-seeking of today, there is a continual parade of religion in some form. Series of articles are constantly appearing in the press on such topics as “What do we believe?”, “The religion of the modern”, “Is Spiritualism true?” and the like. These poor deceived pleasure-lovers have a “form” of godliness, but they have denied its “power”. The Apostle adds the words, “From such turn away”; which shows that already in Timothy’s own day these characteristics of the end were becoming apparent. For us these words are as much a part of inspired Scripture as those of Ephesians 1:3, and must be obeyed. We too must “turn away” from all such vessels to dishonour.

Paul speaks of “silly women” who are led captive, and are “laden with sins”. Who are these? Jerome went so far as to assert that all heresies begin with women. While this is too sweeping a generalisation, it is nevertheless a fact not to be lightly set aside, that the serpent with his plan of deception approached the woman and not the man. One of the characteristics of these closing days is the feminist movement, which not only proposes to rectify the glaring inconsistencies of the past, but presses on to a “freedom” that becomes “licence”. True women of God will never overstep the bounds clearly defined in the Word of God, but we may expect from the words of 2 Timothy 3 that the apostacy will be materially hastened by the captivation of a certain type of woman, whose goal will as surely be that of the “woman Jezebel” and the “scarlet woman” as the goal of the apostacy in general will be “the man of sin, the son of perdition”. We are not told exactly the character of these “silly women”, but we are told to avoid them at all costs, and that is enough. If we are taught by the Word we shall recognise them should they ever be encountered.

One of the characteristics of the apostacy is a form of godliness without its power. And so these dupes and spreaders of the evil are

“ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7).

The main structure (page 280) places these words in contrast with those of 2 Timothy 2:25:

"If God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth".

In the one case the Apostle enjoins Timothy to instruct in meekness those that oppose themselves; in the other, he enjoins, "From such turn away". Discrimination is evidently needful between the two classes involved.

The introduction of Jannes and Jambres shows something of the satanic depth of the opposition of the last days. We do not learn from the O.T. the names of the magicians who withstood Moses, but they are given here by Paul, and are found also in Rabbinical writings and in the writings of Pliny. They are types of those who oppose the truth. From the account of their opposition in Exodus we learn that they were miracle-workers.

"When Pharaoh shall speak with you saying, Shew a miracle for you, then shalt thou say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent" (Exod.7:9).

We know that Aaron did this, and that the sorcerers and magicians of Egypt "did in like manner with their enchantments", but that "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods". The two succeeding acts, the turning of the river into blood, and the covering of the land with frogs, were both parodied by the enchanters. But in the next miracle they were impotent, and said unto Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God".

The use of this expression helps us to understand the condition of heart indicated in 2 Timothy 3 for in Luke 11 the Lord says:

"If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be judged. But if I with the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Luke 11:19,20).

Referring to the parallel passages in Matthew 12:25-30 we discover that this statement is directly associated with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven either in this age, or in that which is to come. Those who adopted this attitude were a "generation of vipers".

With all the opposition of the last days, there may,

nevertheless, be the “form” of godliness, but it will be empty. There may even be the working of miracles, but they will be false (2 Thess.2:11). Those who resist the truth, we learn from 2 Timothy 3:8, are “disapproved concerning the faith”, and their followers can never come to a “knowledge of the truth”. And the bane of all is that “love” is fatally misplaced.

What a black picture of the days now closing in upon us. It is good to read the words that reassure us of the sovereignty of the Lord:

“But they shall proceed no further” (2 Tim.3:9).

There are limits beyond which iniquity cannot pass. We may still trust and not be afraid. Iniquity may rob the Apostle of his liberty, and of the fellowship of the saints; it may scatter the church and lay it in the dust; it may impose upon those who, not having a love of the truth, shall believe the lie, but it cannot rob Paul, or the humblest follower, of the “Nevertheless” of 2 Timothy 1:12, or the “Notwithstanding” of 2 Timothy 4:17. Though all forsake us, yet the Lord remains. Though men may give to the sacred deposit and those who hold it the worst names, yet we know Whom we have believed, and can rest assured that He will guard that sacred trust until the day of His appearing.

We do not purpose spending further time over this solemn section of the epistle. It is written for our learning, and we shall do well to keep it before us, using it as a lamp that shines in a dark place until the day dawns. We leave, therefore, this description of error, to consider the next section which opens up the great basis of our faith and witness, coupled with example and encouragement drawn from the Apostle’s own wonderful career. It is a comfort to know that the grace that enabled Paul is the self-same grace that enables us. May we take heart, stand fast, run with patience, and “live ... looking for that blessed hope, the appearing of the glory”, which is so evidently before the Apostle in the closing chapter of the epistle.

2 Tim.3:10–4:8 (C, page 280). Paul's doctrine
Its connection with suffering and reigning

C	K	PAUL'S DOCTRINE AND MINISTRY – The Beginning (Acts 13 and 14)
	t	3:10 My doctrine, etc.
	u	11 Paul's first ministry and suffering
	v	12 Yea, and all that will live godly
	L	SCRIPTURE FOR DOCTRINE. For Child and Man of God. For Salvation and Service
	w	13 Deceiving and being deceived
	x	14,15 The child
	y	15 Holy Scriptures
	z	15 Wise unto salvation
	y	16 Scripture
	z	16 Profitable for doctrine, etc.
	x ¹	17 The man of God
	w ¹	17 Furnished to all good works
	L	PREACH THE WORD ... WITH DOCTRINE. In and Out of Season in view of Season of Apostacy
	w ²	4:2 In and out of season (<i>eukairōs</i> , <i>akairōs</i>)
	x ²	2 Preach the Word
	x ²	2 Longsuffering and doctrine
	w ²	3 The coming season (<i>kairos</i>)
	K	PAUL'S DOCTRINE AND MINISTRY – The End. "I Have Finished"
	t	3 Sound doctrine not endured
	u	6,7 Paul's last ministry and suffering
	v	8 Unto all them also that love His appearing

CHAPTER 32

2 TIMOTHY

**Paul's doctrine. Its connection with suffering and reigning
(C 2 Tim.3:10 – 4:8)**

We now approach the closing sections of the second epistle to Timothy, and consequently the closing sections of Paul's ministry.

It is interesting to compare the latter part of this epistle with Acts 20:18-38, which records the Apostle's words on the occasion of a previous crisis in his ministry.

In Acts 20 Paul first recalls his past ministry, drawing attention to his sufferings and faithful stewardship. He faces the new ministry that he knew involved bonds and imprisonment, desiring above all else that he might finish his course, and the ministry that he had received. He warns the church that grievous wolves will arise, not sparing the flock, men speaking perverse things; and he commends them all to God and to the Word of His grace. We find practically all these features repeated in the closing chapters of 2 Timothy. Again the Apostle refers to the past – 2 Timothy 3:10,11; again he warns of false teachers – 2 Timothy 4:3,4; and again the Word of God is prominent. The wish expressed in Acts 20 we find fulfilled in 2 Timothy 4: "I have finished my course". The Ephesians knew that they would see Paul's face no more; and Timothy knew that his mighty witness was drawing to a close.

Turning to the structure of 2 Timothy 3:10 – 4:8, page 316, we note that Paul goes back to the beginning of his ministry, when, in Acts 13, he was separated by the Holy Spirit, and where he founded the Galatian church.* The

*For proof that Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, etc. (Acts 13:14), were in Galatia, see *The Apostle of the Reconciliation*.

central sections of the passage deal with the Scriptures. The closing section reverts to Paul's ministry, this time its end.

Surely those who have any understanding of the Apostle's ministry will see in this brief passage an epitome of his life's work. Doctrine and manner of life in harmony, sufferings beyond computation for the truth's sake, and, centrally, the inspired Word, the one and only source and authority for his message to saint and sinner.

Turning from the revelation given in 2 Timothy 3:1-9 of the apostacy of the last days, Paul draws the attention of Timothy to his early ministry. Timothy's native city was Lystra (Acts 16:1,2), so that the Apostle is speaking to one who had been associated with him during most of his life's work. What a test of faithful consistency to be able to call the attention of such a person to one's "doctrine and manner of life". This Paul does, without fear of challenge, and all by the grace of God (1 Cor.15:10).

"But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured; but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Tim.3:10,11).

The margin of the A.V. reads, instead of "Thou hast fully known", "Thou hast been a diligent follower of". The word *parakolouthēō* occurs four times in the N.T., and it will help our understanding of it if we notice the references:

"These signs *shall follow* them that believe" (Mark 16:17).

"*Having had perfect understanding* of all things" (Luke 1:3).

"The good doctrine whereunto *thou hast attained*" (1 Tim.4:6).

"*Thou hast fully known* my doctrine" (2 Tim.3:10).

The Greek language is rich in words expressing various phases of knowledge and learning, and it is fitting that the presence of the verb "to follow" in this compound should be expressed in the translation. In both epistles Timothy is said to have "closely followed" the doctrine of the Apostle. If we look at the context of each reference, we see that both are in immediate sequence to a revelation of the apostacy of the last days. Mere intellectual assent is not enough if the

tide is to be stemmed; the doctrine must be “followed”. “Take heed to *thyself*, and unto the *doctrine*; *continue* in them”, is the Apostle’s charge in 1 Timothy 4:16. And what he enjoined upon Timothy he himself practised:

“Thou hast fully followed my doctrine, manner of life (2 Tim. 3:10).

There is no greater refutation of the idea that salvation by grace produces a careless life than the recorded life-story of Paul himself. While preaching a salvation that was “not of works”, he nevertheless urged that all thus saved should “manifest good works”. Indeed the four prison epistles are expositions of these two principles. Ephesians and Colossians emphasizing grace without works, Philippians and 2 Timothy emphasizing the works that flow from grace. The word “doctrine”, *didaskalia*, used in a good sense, does not occur in any of the prison epistles except 2 Timothy, Ephesians 4:14 and Colossians 2:22 being the only other references. While the Apostle was ministering the truth and writing his epistles, the doctrine was in process of formation, so that Timothy is not told to have a “form of sound words” until Paul’s ministry is about to close.

The references to “doctrine” in 1 Timothy show that something more is meant than a mere creed or “form of words”. The first reference (1 Tim.1:10) places evil conduct in contrast with “sound doctrine”. Again, in 1 Timothy 6:1 slaves under the yoke are to order their conduct so “that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed”. The last reference in the first epistle stresses the same close affinity between doctrine and practice:

“If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ...” (1 Tim.6:3).

The word for “sound” or “wholesome” which occurs in 1 Timothy 1:10, 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13 and 4:3 is used elsewhere by Luke, the physician, with reference to physical health (Luke 5:31, 7:10, 15:27), and by John in speaking of the health of Gaius (3 John 2). The doctrine of the Apostle was sound, wholesome, healthy, and the spiritual Body of

Christ was thereby nourished and strengthened. Wholesome doctrine would produce wholesome practice, and it was this that Paul impressed upon the man who was so soon to be left with the responsibility of "all the churches".

The Apostle uses a peculiar word for "manner of life" — *agōge*, from *agō*, "to lead", or "carry". The student of modern languages will immediately recognise the equivalent in French, German, Dutch, and other languages: "How goes it with you?" "How do you carry yourself?" Closely allied with *agōge* is *agōn*, variously translated "conflict", "contention", "fight" and "race". It occurs in 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight", and in Hebrews 12:1: "The race set before us". *Agō* is a component of the Lord's title in Hebrews 12:2 — *Archegos*, "Author" or "Chief Leader". The Apostle appears to have chosen this word, "manner of life", because of its affinity with "the fight" and "the race", and with the thought of the Chief Leader and Perfecter of faith. Suffering for the truth is not only part of the context here, but it is the very atmosphere of the whole epistle.

We must exercise patience as we weigh over this list of words. All Scripture is profitable, and we may add that Paul, facing approaching death, and feeling so much concern for the after-witness of his beloved son Timothy, would not waste words or indulge in platitudes. We can well believe that every word is full of meaning. The two we have now considered preach a sermon to us all, and we do not doubt that those that remain will prove as useful and as necessary.

Accordingly we note the Apostle's "purpose". In four passages *prothesis*, "purpose", is used in the phrase, "the shew-bread", literally, "the bread of setting before" — for the word means something placed before one, usually a plan or purpose. It is used for the purpose of God in Romans 8:28, Ephesians 1:11, 3:11, and 2 Timothy 1:9. God has a purpose, and so had Paul. It is most evident that from the moment of his commission Paul had something before him. It was before him when, simply desiring that he might finish his course and complete his ministry, he faced prison and bonds with the words, "None of these things move me". It is manifest in Philippians 3, when, forgetting the things behind, he reaches forth to the things before. It sustained him to the last, until he could say without qualification, "I have finished my

course". If hope is an anchor, purpose is a lode-stone, keeping us steady and fixed in our resolves. In the last analysis we should discover Paul's purpose to be his heartfelt endorsement of God's purpose, "that good and perfect and acceptable will of God" (Rom.12:1,2). To be without a purpose is to drift, and drifting wins no crown and sometimes means shipwreck.

Next to purpose the Apostle places “faith”. A full consideration of faith is a big subject, but it may suffice for our present purpose if we exhibit the use of the word in 2 Timothy only:

“Faith” (*pistis*) in 2 Timothy

- A 1:5 Unfeigned. From a child
B 1:13 Hold fast ... in faith and love
C a 2:18 Those who err concerning the truth,
overthrow the faith of some
b 2:22 Follow righteousness, faith, love, etc.
a 3:8 Those who resist the truth are disapproved
concerning the faith
b 3:10 Thou hast followed ... my faith ... love, etc.
A 3:15 In Christ Jesus. From a child
B 4:7 I have kept the faith

Here we have faith unto salvation, and the faith of the mature servant of Christ. Notice how vitally associated are faith and truth, so that those who err concerning the truth, or resist it, overthrow the faith, or are disqualified concerning it. This association is important. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God". Faith must have truth to rest upon; it is valueless without it.

Another grace mentioned is that of “long-suffering”. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5:22), and one of the evidences of an approved ministry (2 Cor.6:6). No member of the one Body can walk worthy of his vocation without it (Eph.4:2), and it is the goal of the Apostle’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-11. When the new man is put on, and the bond of perfectness, then will longsuffering also be put on (Col.3:12) for the bond of perfectness is love (Col.3:14), and love suffereth long and is kind (1 Cor.13:4). Of all the features of grace displayed at Paul’s conversion, he singles

out, in 1 Timothy 1:16, long-suffering. It was meet, therefore, that he who had himself been shown such long-suffering, and who was about to exhort Timothy to exercise it in his ministry (2 Tim.4:2), should be able to draw attention to it in his own life.

How many have spoiled their ministry by a hasty temper, lack of forbearance, or a display of anger. He who had fought a good fight, and who had allowed nothing to turn him from his course, could, by grace, combine resolution with tenderness. Perhaps he loved much, for he had been forgiven much; but we are all really in the same case, as we should realise if only we saw ourselves as the Lord sees us. May long-suffering not be absent from our spiritual character.

It is evident that the Apostle had the fight of faith in mind when he enumerated these things to Timothy. A reference to 1 Timothy 6:11,12 makes the connection certain:

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith”.

In 2 Timothy the subject of love is divided into two sections:

“Love” in 2 Timothy

A ₁	MINISTRY	Stir up the gift (1:6)
		Hold fast the form (1:13)
A ₂	FOLLOWING	Flee ... follow (2:22)
		Thou hast fully followed (3:10)

If faith is great, love is greater, for a faith that can remove mountains is worth nothing without love (1 Cor.13). The Apostle has emphasized the importance of love in the warning of 2 Timothy 3:2 and 4, where the word is not *agapaō*, but a compound of *phileō*. We read that Demas forsook Paul because he “loved” this present age. And we learn that a crown will be awarded to all that “love” the Lord’s appearing (2 Tim.4:8,10).

Finally, the Apostle speaks of his patience, a grace often thought little of among the Lord’s people. Without patience, the perfecting of the believer cannot advance (James 1:3,4;

Luke 8:14,15). Patience is the reflex of hope (1 Thess.1:3). It is necessary for those who would inherit the promises and run the race (Heb.10:36, 12:1). And it must be added to faith by those who would receive the abundant entrance into the kingdom (2 Pet.1:6). It was among the foremost of Paul’s credentials (see 2 Cor.6:4 and 12:12).

We have in 2 Timothy 3:10 seven manifestations of godliness. How were they requited? With honours and marks of esteem among the saints of God, but in general, by stripes, stonings, anxieties and betrayals:

“Persecutions, afflictions, which came upon me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim.3:11,12).

While the sufferings of the Apostle may have been exceptionally intense, they were not otherwise exceptional, for they are to be the lot of all who would follow in his steps.

We now come to the central subject, the Word of God. Before we proceed to examine Paul’s teaching on this subject, we would ask the reader to consider very carefully a further fact of great importance.

We find that no epistle insists so strongly upon the right division of Scripture, the distinctive character of the good deposit, and the exclusive nature of the teaching to be passed on, as 2 Timothy. Yet no epistle is so emphatic upon the inspiration and profitableness of *all* Scripture. It is a false charge, made by those who know not what they say, to assert that we, who seek to obey 2 Timothy 2:15, have jettisoned the whole Bible, with the exception of about four epistles. This epistle emphatically repudiates such an accusation. No one understanding the teaching of the Mystery or the opening words of Ephesians 1 could proceed a step forward if the opening verses of Genesis 1 were ignored. A rightly divided Word of truth still remains whole and complete, the Word of the living God that abideth for ever.

We come, therefore, to the next section to learn what the Apostle has to teach concerning the Scriptures. It will be seen by consulting the structure given on page 316 that there

is no time from the moment of conversion until the final act of ministry in which the believer can be independent of the Scriptures. They are necessary "from a child", and for the "man of God"; they are necessary both "unto salvation" and "unto good works". And the whole subject is placed in vivid contrast with those evil men and seducers who, while deceiving others, are themselves being deceived.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that 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" (2 Tim.3:14,15).

The word "but" is a disjunctive, and suggests a contrast. What is the contrast? It is between the "progress" of the evil workers, and the "abiding" of the true. *Prokoptō*, translated "wax" here, means "to progress", and has already been used in contrast with the true attitude towards the Word:

"Rightly dividing the Word of truth ... shun profane and vain babblings, for *they will increase* unto more ungodliness" (2 Tim. 2:15,16).

We must not, however, make the mistake of assuming that there is no progress except in evil, or that "abiding" and "progressing" do not go together. One has but to remember John 15, where "abiding in the Vine" is *the* essential for all growth, or, to come nearer to our theme, to read the instructions to Timothy in the first epistle, where "profiting" (progressing, *prokopē*), and "continuing" (abiding, *epimenō*) appear together (1 Tim.4:15,16).

Once again the Apostle refers Timothy to himself as the human source of his enlightenment — "knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim.3:14; see also 2 Tim.1:13, 2:2, and Eph.3:7). Though Paul thus draws attention to himself, it is not in any personal sense, but rather as one of the divinely appointed channels through which the Scriptures of truth have come to men.

The Scriptures that made Timothy as a child wise unto salvation are God's means of providing for all his ministry as the man of God:

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

The word translated “Scripture” here is *graphē*, from which many English words are derived – e.g., photography, geography, lithography, all involving the idea of writing. The phrase, “It is written”, that occurs so often in the Gospels is *gegrapti*, and always refers to the Scriptures. Primarily, of course, 2 Timothy 3:16 must refer to the Scriptures known to us as the Old Testament; and there are many references in both Old and New Testaments to the writing of books, and the writing of the law, the prophets and the psalms. Our faith does not rest upon pious feelings, the deliberations of councils, the creeds of churches, or the tradition of men, but upon the *written* testimony of inspired Scripture. While we may not know *how* God inspired the various writers of Scripture, we are assured that He did so inspire them as to eliminate all human error and to give us all His truth.

The words, “given by inspiration of God”, are a translation of one word in the original – *Theopneustos*. This is a compound of *Theos*, “God”, and the singular perfect passive of *pneō*, “to breathe”. The latter word also gives us *pneuma*, usually translated “spirit”. The close association of *pneuma* with breath is evident in our own language, e.g. pneumatic, pneumonia, inspire, respire, transpire. The importance of what we have seen will be manifest if we now re-read 2 Timothy 3:16:

“All Scripture that is WRITTEN is given by inspiration of God, i.e. GOD-BREATHED”.

If what was *written* was what God *breathed*, no room is left for the intrusion of imagination, reasoning, ignorance or wisdom on the part of the writer. However intelligently the writers of Holy Scripture may have co-operated with the Holy Spirit, or however baffled and mystified they may have been by the Scripture they were inspired to write, what they *wrote* was what God *said*, and that, so far as we are concerned, is all we need to know concerning the inspiration of Scripture. This being the case, there can be no doubt of its profitableness either positively for doctrine, or negatively for correction:

"That the man of God may be perfect (*artios*), thoroughly furnished (*exartizō*) unto all good works".

The Apostle makes a double use of *artios* here, first unmodified, and then as part of a compound, so that there is no doubt concerning the completeness of the equipment. Dr. E. W. Bullinger, in his *Lexicon and Concordance*, defines *artios*:

"Complete in all parts and proportions, with special reference to the adaptation of the parts, and special aptitude for any given uses".

While we would not undervalue in the man of God a liberal education and a knowledge of the arts and sciences, there is, usually, no need to stress their importance; what we must do is to emphasize the supreme value of the Scriptures in the perfect equipment of the minister of the Word. The Scriptures supply not only the material, but also the fitness to use it. They supply an intimate knowledge of mankind obtainable by no other means; they give balance to the character and, if trusted utterly, will never "make ashamed". One who is taught in the Word is "thoroughly equipped".

We now approach the second division of the central sections (see structure, page 316), and note the stress placed upon preaching and teaching. Debating and striving are not commended; they accomplish nothing, and are to be avoided:

"I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Tim.4:1-3).

Three times the Apostle uses the word "charge" in writing to Timothy. We give below the two remaining occurrences:

"I *charge* thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Tim.5:21).

"*Charging* them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2:14).

Another very solemn charge is found in 1 Timothy 6:13, though a different word is here used:

"I give thee *charge* in the sight of God, Who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, Who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ... King of kings" (1 Tim.6:13-15).

There can be no doubt that Paul viewed with deep concern the passing on of the authority and ministry to Timothy, and he uses the most solemn words in charging him to faithfulness. It will be seen from the passages considered that the "appearing and the kingdom" occur both in 1 Timothy 6:13-16 and in 2 Timothy 4:1. Further allusion is made to them, both in 2 Timothy 4:8, where the crown is in view, and in 2 Timothy 4:17,18, where the subject is strengthening and deliverance in connection with the preaching to the Gentiles.

"*Preach the Word*" — Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist, and it might be supposed that the word here for "preach" would be *euaggelizō*. Such, however, is not the case. The word here is *kērussō*, meaning to make a proclamation, as a herald. The "preaching" in 2 Timothy 4:17 is *kērugma*, and the "preacher" in 2 Timothy 1:11, *kērux*, both words having to do with the work of a herald. There is a note of challenge and of triumph in a proclamation, and the Apostle no doubt intended Timothy to remember that, while as an evangelist he preached the gospel, yet the growing antagonism to the truth, and the heading up of the mystery of iniquity demanded also the setting forth of the sovereign rights of Him Who is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

This proclaiming of the Word is to be "instant in season, out of season". It is a grace to be coveted, to be able to speak "a word in season", but we must be on our guard lest we allow the ungodly to put us off until *their* "convenient season" may come. We must be seasonable, but also unseasonable; there must be no compromise. The reason for this insistence is evident as we read on, for the apostacy is in process of development, and drastic measures may be called for.

The words "in season, out of season", are further impressed by the occurrence of the same word, *kairos*, "season", in the following verse: "For the *season* will come". In 1 Timothy 4:1 these times are called "the latter seasons", when departure from the faith shall be brought about by seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. While spiritism is necessarily in view here, it behoves us to remember that this is not all. Spiritism is self-proclaimed; we know what it is. 2 Timothy 4 reveals the more subtle features of the apostacy. There is a greater need to watch the pulpit than the clairvoyant's chair; and doctrines of demons will be enunciated by those teachers appointed by congregations having itching ears.

The word *kairos*, "season", suggests the harvest. The time is rapidly approaching when the mystery of iniquity will reach the surface, and the tares be distinguishable from the wheat, and it is in view of these solemn issues that the Apostle charges his son Timothy.

"The good contest I have contested, the course I have finished, the faith I have kept, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim.4:3-8).

If we compare the first and eighth verses of this chapter, in both of which the "Judge" and the "appearing" occur, we shall see that Paul is exhorting Timothy to persevere, with his own example before him, that he too may finish his course. When we also note that "finish", *teleō*, is cognate with the word "perfect", we see more clearly that Philippians, with its exhortation to strive together for the faith of the gospel, and its perfecting and prize, in view of the day of Jesus Christ, aims at the same mark as does this epistle to Timothy. It is encouraging, too, in this day of small things, to note that the crown will be awarded, by the righteous Judge, to all those who have loved His appearing. This phrase, however, is a comprehensive one. It precludes love of self, love of pleasure, and love of this present age, and embraces the faith and hope that centre upon the Lord's appearing. It simplifies the issue for us. however, and gives fresh heart to those growing weary in the contest.

The words that describe the teachers and the taught in the closing days are extremely solemn.

Of old, Israel were threatened with the scab and with the itch (Deut.28:27), but upon the apostates of this age descends something far worse – they have “itching ears”. The expression, “To heap unto themselves teachers”, is suggestive, the word “to heap” being *episōreuō*, from *epi*, “upon”, and *sōros*, “a sepulchral mound”. Instead of seeking “the truth”, they are turned unto fables or “myths”; and so we find that the commentaries produced today are full of the idea that the bulk of the O.T. is mythological. These teachers, by many revered and honoured, when exposed by the Word of God, are seen to be but channels for seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, deceiving and being deceived. The circle is almost complete. In chapter 1 men began to turn away from Paul; in chapter 4 they are being turned away from the truth. Soon men will believe the lie (2 Thess.2:11) because they received not the love of the truth.

There is no need to stress the close parallel between 2 Timothy 4:6 and Philippians 1:23 and 2:17. When writing to the Philippians the Apostle had expressed his desire to “depart and to be with Christ”, but he had remained with them for their furtherance and joy of faith. He had written the words:

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all” (Phil.2:17).

And now he is about to be “offered” – “the fitting season (*kairos*) for my departure is at hand”. If human hatred and satanic craft could have shortened the life and witness of the apostle Paul, he would have died early in his career, but though he could write, “I die daily”, the Lord preserved him until his work was complete. There is justification for the proverb, “A man is immortal till his work is done”. Paul “finished” his course. To live on, after that, would be undesirable; he loved the hope of the Lord’s appearing, and this was all his desire.

We are only too conscious of how inadequate has been our survey of Paul’s ministry, and the Scriptures he loved and preached. May both reader and writer heed the exhortation

of this servant of God, and in our little measure "make full proof of our ministry". Paul is gone, but his writings and example remain. As a valiant fighter for the faith, he awaits his reward. May it be ours to keep the faith as he did, and, as he did, to finish our course, knowing most assuredly that the Lord Who stood by him will stand by us, and that the Lord Who delivered and strengthened him will deliver and strengthen us, so that "the preaching may be fully known".

**2 Tim.4:9-22 (*B* and *A* page 280). Paul and his message
forsaken. Salutation**

<i>B</i>	|	<i>M</i>	9	Do thy diligence to come shortly
	|	<i>N</i>	10-12	Demas hath forsaken me ... Thessalonica Crescens to Galatia Titus to Dalmatia Luke only is with me Mark, bring him with thee Tychicus sent to Ephesus The cloke, the books, the parchments
	|	<i>O</i>	4-18	Opposition and deliverance
	|		<i>a</i> 14	Alexander did much evil
	|		<i>b</i> 15	Alexander stood against our words
	|		<i>c</i> 16	No man stood with me
	|		<i>b</i> 17	The Lord stood beside me ... preaching
	|		<i>a</i> 18	The Lord will deliver me from all evil
	|	<i>N</i>	19,20	Prisca and Aquila Onesiphorus Erastus abode at Corinth Trophimus left at Miletum
	|	<i>M</i>	21	Do thy diligence to come before winter

CHAPTER 33

2 TIMOTHY

Paul and his message forsaken. Salutation (B and A 2 Tim.4:9-21)

Apart from the opening and closing salutations of the epistle, with this section its teaching ends. The epistle opens with the forsaking of the Apostle, and with the same theme the epistle closes. The Scriptures have made it plain that the truth is unpopular, and that anyone who allies himself, by the grace of God, with the despised Word of God as revealed through Paul the prisoner, will be despised too. Yet this same epistle speaks of reigning, of a crown, of *aionian* glory. If it speaks of base betrayal by human friends, it speaks also of One Who has said, "I will never forsake thee". If it reveals a serious hindering process at work, tending to silence Paul's witness, it reveals, too, the fact that the Lord upheld His servant until the message he had received was fully made known. In spite of appearances the epistle is an epistle of triumph — a prisoner of the Lord rejoicing that the Word of God is not bound.

Turning to the structure given on page 332, we notice the insistent desire of Paul, the lonely and aged, for the coming of Timothy: "Do thy diligence to come shortly"; "Do thy diligence to come before winter". In the first chapter he had written to Timothy, "greatly desiring" to see him. He was mindful of Timothy's tears, he called to remembrance his upbringing, he realised the natural timidity of the younger man. At that moment Paul was faced with the shock of desertion and betrayal. He longed for his son Timothy. If he did not come before winter, travel would be rendered impossible until the spring, and the Apostle knew only too well that it would then be too late.

The first name in the list that follows is that of Demas. Writing to Philemon earlier, Paul had included Demas, with Mark and Luke, among his "fellow-labourers" (Philem.23,24) during the period of his imprisonment (verse 23). In the epistle to the Colossians (4:7-14), Demas is again mentioned in the salutation to the church. The Apostle refers there to Tychicus, a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow-servant; to Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother; to Aristarchus, a fellow-prisoner; to Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, whom the Colossians were to receive; to Jesus, called Justus, one of several fellow-workers; to Epaphras, a fervent labourer; and to Luke, the beloved physician. Of Demas alone nothing is said.

Paul would not have been so lacking in Christian courtesy as to have put Demas in so bad a light unless some very real reason necessitated it. It seems evident that, to the eye of Paul, Demas was already manifesting that love of this present age which led later to his deserting the Apostle in his hour of trial. He therefore says nothing of Demas, hoping, perhaps, that the Lord would grant him repentance. Mark had returned, who once had drawn back in fear; Demas, too, might be reclaimed. But it was not to be:

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present age, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia; only Luke is with me" (2 Tim.4:10,11).

Why the grouping together of Crescens, Titus and Demas, with no word to differentiate between them? If Crescens had gone to Galatia in loving service to the Lord, would Paul have left his name, without explanation, in the same category as deserting Demas? And if Titus were still faithful, and following the Lord's will in leaving the Apostle for Dalmatia why is there no word to make the difference between Demas and Titus clear? How pointed the words: "Only Luke is with me".

Luke, the beloved physician, appears with the Apostle early in his missionary journeys. We only know of his presence by the change in the form of the narrative in the Acts:

"And *they*, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas ... immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia" (Acts 16:8-10).

He does not join Paul until he is about to leave Asia to cross over into Europe and, in the fullest sense of the word, to evangelize the Gentiles. Luke has a special place in connection with the Apostle and his ministry to the Gentiles. His gospel traces the genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3:38) and introduces the Gentile at every turn. He was a divine gift to the Apostle of the Gentiles both for the spiritual side of his ministry in the gospel, supplying Paul with inspired information about the earthly life of the Son of God, and for its physical side, as the beloved physician. In the midst of the darkness fast settling down upon the witness, we have this beautiful picture of the loving-kindness of the Lord in retaining the services of faithful Luke from the beginning of Paul's European witness till its close.

The Apostle instructs Timothy to "take up" Mark on his way, and to bring him with him, for, he says, "he is useful to me in the ministry". Here is one useful to Paul who once, as a younger man, turned back and left him. It is good to have this to set off against the forsaking of Demas; Paul's heart, too, must have been cheered by the contrast.

"But Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus" (2 Tim.4:12).

The "but" indicates a contrast with those mentioned earlier, who had departed, apparently of their own accord, to Thessalonica, Galatia and Dalmatia. Timothy would have no qualms in leaving Ephesus when he knew that Tychicus had been sent to take charge, for Tychicus is spoken of most highly in Colossians, and was sent with the epistle to that church during the Apostle's earlier imprisonment.

"The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments" (2 Tim.4:13).

Some readings favour the idea that, instead of a cloke Paul intended a case or a bag for books. This reading has little support, and, as Bengel remarks, rather conflicts with the fact that the books are mentioned separately and afterwards. It is unlikely that the Apostle would have asked for the bag, and then for the books which it was supposed to carry.

The Greek word *phelonē* is the Latin *poenula*, and was a long thick cloak, especially designed for winter, "such as travellers wore to defend themselves with from the cold or bad weather" (Bishop Bull). There is a parallel to this request in the history of the closing days of William Tyndale, who, writing from the damp prison of Vilvorde in the winter that preceded his martyrdom, asked, "for the Lord Jesus' sake", for a warmer cap, something to patch his leggings, a woollen shirt, and above all his Hebrew Bible, Grammar and Dictionary.

Neither Tyndale nor Paul indulged in heroics; they possessed too much of the real thing. There was no incongruity in Paul's mind in speaking in the same breath of a crown of righteousness and a cloke, of enduring a martyr's death and of the desire, while life was spared, to ward off the evils of chill and damp. The nearer we approach to the highest spirituality, the more shall we be able to blend the sublime with the commonplace, and be able to include eating and drinking among those things which are done to the glory of God, as well as the highest and most devoted acts of service. The fact that this cloak and the books were left behind with Carpus at Troas, coupled with the statement that some little time before this the Apostle had been at Miletum (2 Tim.4: 20), makes it probable that he was apprehended then and sent to Rome for trial by a well-worn route.

When Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, was arrested in Syria and sent to Rome, he said:

"I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast honoured me by Thy love, in binding me in iron chains with Thy apostle Paul".

His route was through Ephesus to Smyrna, Troas, Neapolis and Philippi, through Macedonia to Epidammus, and thence by sea to Puteoli. He desired to go by land from Puteoli, and so follow the footsteps of Paul. This desire was not granted, but it shows us that the route taken by the Apostle was well known, and can be followed to this day.

It is highly probable that, thus apprehended, Paul had left his cloak, books, and parchments in the safe keeping of Carpus, and now, in prison, desired to receive them once more. What these books and parchments may have been, we

do not know, and it is idle to speculate. There is one thing of which we can be certain, in the light of Paul's own testimony, and that is that they included parts either of the O.T. or of his own autographs of the epistles.

Timothy is warned in verse 14 against Alexander the coppersmith, who, like Demetrius the silversmith, may possibly have had a grudge against the Apostle, and had done considerable damage to his cause at Rome.

Paul, in the companion epistle to the Philippians, had expressed his desire to know the Lord and the fellowship of His sufferings. Of Christ it is recorded that "He was numbered with the transgressors", and that when He was arrested in the garden "all forsook Him and fled". The Apostle here enters into these closing phases of fellowship with Christ. He was in bonds as "an evil-doer", and at his first answer, or defence, no man stood with him, but all forsook him. That Paul both entered into the spirit of his Lord and conformed to the external likeness of His sufferings, is manifest in his next recorded words:

"I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim.4:16).

These words recall the prayer of the Lord from the cross:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

But, though the Christian may follow, to some extent, in the footsteps of his Lord, there are limits beyond which no child of God is called to pass. There were sufferings endured by Christ that can be shared by none. He cried "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" whereas Paul could gladly say:

"Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me" (*endunamaō*) (2 Tim.4:17).

The word here, *endunamaō*, "to put strength into", is used only of or by Paul. The chapter that records his collapse on the road to Damascus, his blindness, and weakness, records also the incoming of a new strength:

"But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ" (Acts 9:22).

The seven occurrences of this word in the epistles are: Romans 4:20; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13; 1 Timothy 1:12; 2 Timothy 2:1, 4:17; Hebrews 11:34.

Many times in his writings the Apostle refers to the risen Christ as the source of all his power. As we have already seen, he did not ask to share Christ's sufferings without also asking that he might know the power of His resurrection. No other power would have been able to stand the strain of his strenuous service, and we are assured that the same power that enabled Paul is sufficient for all the needs of all the children of God until the last witness has been given and the last suffering endured. The spirit that enabled him, though suffering in bonds, to rejoice that Christ was preached, even though in envy and strife (Phil.1:14-18); the spirit that enabled him, though suffering even unto bonds, to rejoice that the Word of God was not bound (2 Tim.2:9); that same spirit now enables him to rejoice in the Lord's presence and deliverance not for his own sake or for his own ease, but "that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Tim.4:17).

He had been chosen to bear the name of the Lord to the Gentiles; for this he lived, and for this he died.

His last words before the salutation are a doxology:

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom; to Whom be glory unto the age of the ages, Amen" (2 Tim.4:18).

Salutations are sent to Priscilla and Aquila, names that recall blessed memories of whole-hearted fellowship in service and suffering, of which the Apostle had previously written in Romans:

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus; who have for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom.16:3).

The household of Onesiphorus, already mentioned in

2 Timothy 1:16 is included in the greeting of Paul, for he, too, had hazarded at least his liberty in seeking out the Apostle in Rome.

“Erastus remained at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick” (2 Tim.4:20).

The same chapter in Romans that mentions with such approval Priscilla and Aquila, mentions also Erastus:

“Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you” (Rom.16:23).

The use in 2 Timothy 4:20 of the word “abide” or “remain”, *menō*, as in 1 Timothy 1:3, suggests that Erastus remained at Corinth at the request of the Apostle. The absence of Trophimus is accounted for by sickness.

In both Philippians and 2 Timothy we have references to sickness. Epaphroditus had been sick unto death (Phil.2: 25-27), and Trophimus was too sick to leave Miletum; yet in neither case is there any attempt to restore them miraculously. To mention another instance in Paul’s epistles, we have Timothy’s “often infirmities” (1 Tim.5:23). There can be no question here as to the faith either of Paul or of those sick. These statements must have been included in these epistles with definite purpose, the record of the sickness of these servants of God being as much inspired and as profitable as the record of the miracles in the Gospels or the Acts. The absence of evidential miraculous gifts after Acts 28 is one of the many features that characterize the dispensation of the Mystery. The power was still resident in the Lord, but it was no longer His will that miracles should continue. While Israel held a position as a nation miracles abounded, but when, in Acts 28, Israel was set aside, miracles ceased.

“Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren” (2 Tim.4:21).

A great deal has been written for and against the suggestion of Archdeacon Williams, who endeavoured to prove that Pudens and Claudia are the persons of the same name in *Martial*, Claudia being the daughter of a British Chief named Cogidinus (some say, Caractacus), who married a Roman, named Pudens, and afterwards returned to Britain. It is an

attractive theory — there is something pleasing in the thought that the apostle Paul had personal contact with a British Princess — but we are afraid that it remains nothing more than an inconclusive hypothesis. Claudia was among the commonest of names, and we have only mentioned the matter here, so that the reader may know that the case has been investigated, even to the more recently unearthed inscription found at Colchester.

“The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen” (2 Tim.4:22).

This concludes the prison ministry of the Apostle to the Gentiles. It ends on a note of triumph. Such an ending is not often witnessed. We quote from Dean Farrar:

“The characteristic of waning life is disenchantment, a sense of inexorable weariness, a sense of inevitable disappointment. We trace it in Elijah and John the Baptist; we trace it in Marcus Aurelius; we trace it in Francis of Assisi; we trace it in Roger Bacon; we trace it in Luther. All is vain. We have lived, humanly speaking, to little or no purpose.

‘We are not better than our fathers’.

‘Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?’

‘I shall die, and people will say, We are glad to get rid of this schoolmaster’.

‘My order is more than I can manage’.

‘Men are not worth the trouble I have taken for them’.

‘We must take men as we find them, and cannot change their nature’.

To some such effect have all these great men, and many others, spoken. They have been utterly disillusioned; they have been inclined rather to check the zeal, curb the enthusiasm, to darken with the shadows of experience the radiant hopes of their younger followers” (Dean Farrar in his *Life and Work of St. Paul*).

What was it that enabled Paul to depart triumphantly from this vale of tears? Let him answer for himself:

“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which has been committed against that day” (2 Tim.1:12).

“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil.1:20,21).

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.8:38,39).

We can do no good by lingering after the close of this great epistle. Paul is gone. Whether he ever received his cloak or his beloved parchments is unrevealed. Timothy, who succeeded him, he too has run his course; and we do not know how faithfully he followed the Apostle's example. Centuries have rolled by, and the very presence of a deposit of truth vitally associated with the prison ministry of Paul seemed to have been well-nigh forgotten. Of late years, however, the Lord has stirred up some of his children to reassert the teaching contained in these epistles. No one man has any right to claim the discovery. We have all entered into the labours of others, and the sower and the reaper shall in due time rejoice together. We are under no illusions regarding this ministry. It will not attract numbers. But, if it is owned of God in enlightening those who seek the truth, in strengthening those who already know their calling, or in supplying material for others to use in further elucidation of this wonderful subject, surely our joy is complete, and every effort more than rewarded.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the overthrow of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph.1:3-6).

CHAPTER 34

CONCLUSION

We have now surveyed the teaching contained in the four prison epistles, the good deposit of truth, in which is revealed the dispensation of the Mystery. We have been taken back before the overthrow of the world, and on into the ages to come. We have looked above the earth and the heavens to God's right hand, far above all principality and power, and have, by faith, apprehended the fact that our calling, our inheritance, and hope are there. We have seen the middle wall of partition abolished, and a new creation come into being, in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, but Christ is all and in all. We have rejoiced in the revelation of Christ, the Head, and the church, His Body. We have rejoiced not only in the grace that has saved us, called us, and will ever keep us, but also in the grace that permits us to have some measure of fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, and reveals not only our blessed hope of living with Him, but also the added prize of reigning with Him. We have been solemnly warned of the methods of the evil one who would beguile us of our reward, using vain deceitful philosophy, the traditions of men, the rudiments of the world, and negative commands instead of the positive teaching of our being raised and seated with Christ, and living in the power of that new and exalted position. We have been privileged to witness the stand of the Apostle as all in Asia left him. We have heard his burning words of encouragement and entreaty. We have stood upon sacred ground as he faced with unclouded brow the certainty of execution. We have heard the character of the last days described, and the exhortation to "Preach the Word".

If we are numbered among those who may be accounted "faithful men able to teach others also", let us not grow weary in the fight. The Lord Who stood by Paul will stand by us. The grace that enabled Paul to pursue his course will

enable us. And we may say, with Paul, "Nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed". If men reject or revile our testimony, we know that they treated the greater testimony of Paul in the same way.

While we hold fast to the fact that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and therefore profitable, it is also incumbent upon us, as workmen who would be approved unto God, that we should rightly divide that same Word of truth.

If we are not all able to preach and teach, these epistles speak of many other acts of devoted service that are necessary to make up a complete ministry. We would here recognise the background labours of those who, both in this Volume, the monthly issues of *The Berean Expositor*, and in our other publications, share with us in this work of faith and labour of love, in the many incidentals of typewriting, proof correcting, revising, indexing, etc., unrequited here in this life, but surely known unto the Lord we serve.

It has been a privilege beyond our estimation to have been entrusted for more than twenty years with such a ministry. There can be no call for pride as we review the many evidences of human failure, and we are constrained to emulate the Apostle when, in the midst of revelation, he interposes with the words: "Unto me, less than the least of all saints, is this grace given".

We would, in conclusion, follow him in that personal request made with such humility at the close of the epistle to the Ephesians, where, having enjoined prayer for all saints, he adds, "And for me". The witness for which we stand has many adversaries. Possibly we deserve some by our foolishness or by our manner. For this we seek forgiveness. We believe, however, that we have roused the opposition of some by the truth we teach; for this we thank God and take courage. While strenuously avoiding any approach to a sect or mission, remembering the ruin of 2 Timothy, and the great house with its many vessels, we believe that we are justified in calling upon all of like precious faith, who endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, and seek to hold fast the form of sound words received from Paul, to have fellowship with us in the ministry of the printed and the spoken Word.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2: 13,14).

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