

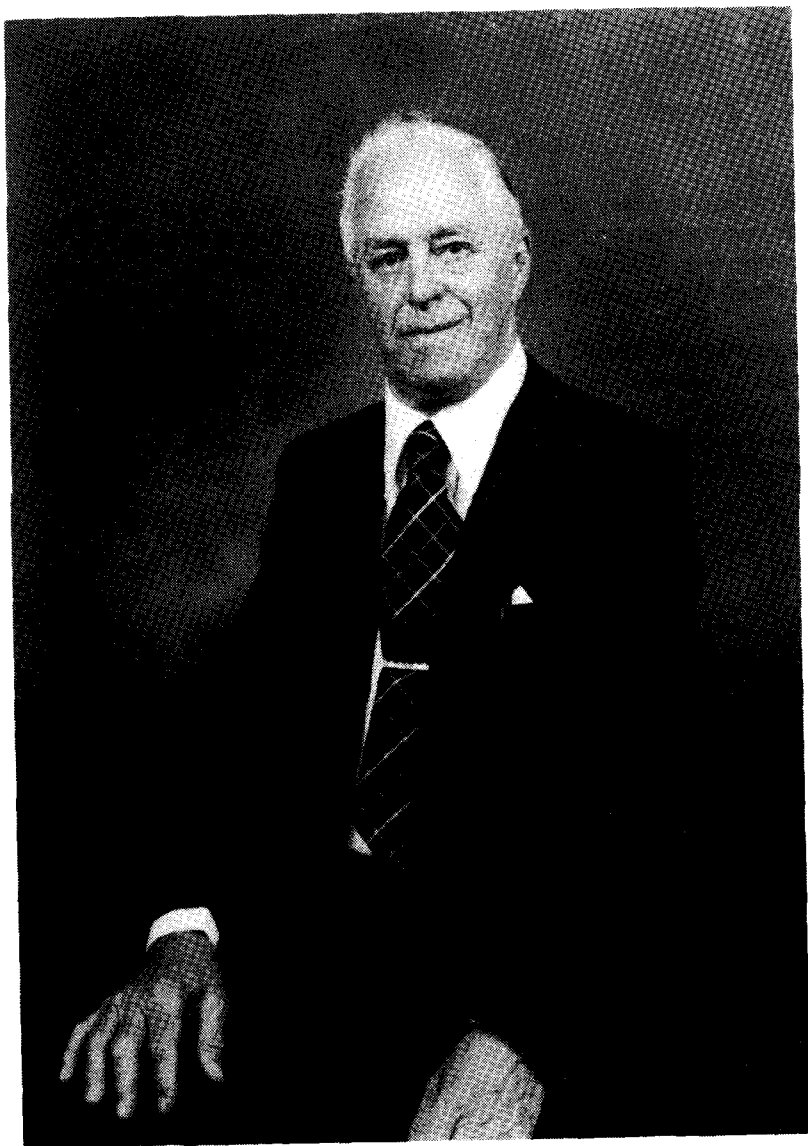
**THE
COLLECTED
WRITINGS
OF
J.B. HEWITT**

Volume 1

NOVEMBER 1995
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J.B. HEWITT

Publishers Note

It was Don Roberts of Cardiff who requested we make available the writings of J.B. Hewitt. He also obtained the MSS from various sources and this came to us in different forms: magazine articles, booklets, typewritten notes, and notes transcribed from tapes. Some of this has been difficult to transfer into print.

There is much of interest and profit in Mr. Hewitt's written ministry and we believe that many readers, old and new, with different tastes will all enjoy and value at least some of the variety which includes expository, devotional, prophetic and practical articles with outlines and alliteration.

Although much editing has been done the publishers are aware that the work is still imperfect.

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The assistance offered by so many has been beyond my expectations.

Don Roberts

A brief account of the life and work of J.B. Hewitt

J.B. Hewitt was converted as a boy in 1920, during a tent campaign in Bothwell Haugh, Lanarkshire, Scotland, and was one of 45 received into fellowship in Asher Hall, Bothwell, on September 23rd, 1920.

As a young man he was determined to spend 2 hours each day with his Bible. This turned out to be 4 hours each day! He began to minister the Word when he was 18 years old, and took his first conference when he was 21 years old.

He spent many happy years in Bothwell, Port Seton, Warrington, and latterly at Chesterfield. During the war years he lived at Warrington.

His ministry spread to many parts of the country, always leaving notes for the saints to take home. Many of these he freely sent to believers in many parts of the country, producing deep and lasting friendships. Many of those notes are contained in this work. During the 1950's he produced a series of books entitled 'Enjoy Your Bible'.

He wrote for such magazines as *Precious Seed*, *Assembly Testimony*, *Believers' Magazine* and *Counsel*. And still the articles appear in such magazines. He had the pen of a ready writer. *Precious Seed* published two books: *Outline Studies in the Pentateuch*, and *Outline Studies in the Minor Prophets*, both are included in this work.

A True Supporter

He had a genuine concern for the small meeting. He was unconcerned about the size of the Assembly he visited and was always willing to offer what help he could either in the gospel or ministry.

At Langwith we also had the pleasure of him 'dropping in' on the Lord's day morning (Annie's health permitting) in order to encourage the saints and particularly if he knew numbers were depleted by saints who were ill or on holiday. His ability in worship was a true mark of his appreciation of his Lord.

In Visitation

We can think of numerous occasions when the visit of Joe could not have been better timed if he had known all the circumstances that existed. During times of serious illness, bereavement, or Assembly difficulties he would visit, always unexpectedly but with the exquisite timing that could only have been 'of the Lord'. His wise counsel and quiet sympathy were always a tonic!

One occasion may illustrate the point. After having seen my father taken into hospital by ambulance as a consequence of a serious heart complaint my mother and I sat down to tea feeling anxious and low in spirit. We hadn't really started our meal when the door bell rang—it was Joe and Annie. Their first question was "Where is father?" They drove us to the hospital for our first visit. We later realised that one of Joe's particular concerns was my father's feet—Joe being a chiropodist sought later to tend to that need!

As an Encouragement

He was always concerned to encourage and support young men in their study of the Scriptures. He was generous in distributing his written ministry, in the loan of his books as well as in giving books to those he thought would profit from their use. He would also recommend young men to Assemblies he visited in order to encourage the use of what gift the Lord had given.

Generous

He was always aware of need among the saints and always sought to support genuinely needy saints. Gifts would always be discreetly given, usually discovered after he had left!

His ministry took him to Canada and the U.S.A., and all found his ministry to be edifying, encouraging, and homiletical. He always defended the Scriptural principles on which the assemblies meet. He was straightforward, but kind, and always exhibited the Spirit of Christ.

Mr Jim Scott of Mansfield writes: "He asked my wife and I for supper in 1982, when I had been preaching at Chesterfield, and as I was leaving he said: 'Jim, I have a request to make to you—will you bury me'. This was typical of his abruptness. I visited him before he died, and as he lay all wired up in hospital, he said: 'Jim, I am so tired'. I read to him Psalm 23, intending to leave him with a few thoughts, but he took over and expounded the Psalm. So I gave my thoughts in the hall at the funeral service. He sent me full instructions about his funeral. 'Make the service triumphant, and not doleful', he said. 'I enjoyed Christ for 61 years: Hymns 193, 369 and 396 from Golden Bells'.

Thus on September 10th 1987 at 7.30 p.m. he was called home. The particularly large funeral, attended by saints from many parts of this country, was from Littlemoor Gospel Hall, Chesterfield, with interment at Brimington Cemetery. The funeral service was taken by Mr Jim Scott of Mansfield, and Mr John Bellis of Shrewsbury.

He being dead, yet speaketh.

Outline Studies in the Pentateuch

INTRODUCTION

Fittingly, and from most ancient times, the first five books of the Bible have been grouped together and have been known by the term "Pentateuch", a word meaning "five books". The Jewish rabbis called the Pentateuch the "five-fifths of the law". They are the five chambers of law and justice, a vestibule in which to rest and meditate on the Sovereignty, Holiness, Power and Wisdom of God.

These books record the introduction of the divine religion into the world and are given to us for at least three special purposes; historical information, doctrinal instruction, and spiritual illumination. There are evidences of supernatural control and design in the arrangement of the books. Each book gives one phase of God's plan, and together they constitute a real unity and are organic in structure. They are the basis on which the whole fabric of revelation rests, and a knowledge of the authority and importance of their teaching will help us to withstand the assaults that infidels and modernists have made against these books. With Paul we recognize its divine origin and authority. Much of his teaching conformed to what he found written in the Old Testament. In his preaching he often drew from these Scriptures; see Acts 13:16-43; 17:1-4; 24:14; 26:22,23; 28:23.

Authority We must ascribe the bulk of them to Moses. He was at least the editor if not the author of these books, the latter chapters of Deuteronomy being added by another penman, Joshua. Exodus 17:8-14 refers to Moses as a writer and recorder, and in Exodus 24:4,7 he writes the terms of the covenant and reads them from a book to the people. In Deuteronomy, there are more references to the writing of the law by Moses, 31:9-12,24-26; 28:58-61. There are sixteen chapters in Exodus and in Numbers, and twenty in Leviticus that begin with "And the Lord spake unto Moses", or some similar expression. There is a continuous chain of testimony throughout the Old Testament to the Mosaic authorship of the books of the Pentateuch.

He had the necessary qualification. He lived in fellowship with God, he was well acquainted with the traditions of the people of his times, he was a trusted servant of God, and had received a wide education, Deut. 34:1,5; Josh. 1:2,7; Acts 7:22,38. More than 240 passages from the Pentateuch are quoted in the New Testament. The testimony of the Lord Jesus is final, e.g.,

Matt. 8:4; 19:8; Mark 7:10; 12:26; John 5:46; 7:19; Luke 20:37; 24:44. Our Lord refers to Moses and the law, and many times He mentions events recorded in the Pentateuch confirming their historicity.

Unity The unity of character, design and style pervading these books shows they are not a series of separate and unconnected fragments. To the Jews these books were the standard of their faith, the rule of their obedience and the record of their whole civil and religious polity.

Organic Unity This is evident in the structure of the Pentateuch. The symmetry of its literary structure is a characteristic of the Bible and is evident in these books also.

Spiritual Unity There is not only consecutive history covering the first two thousand four hundred years of human history but a spiritual unity setting forth the experience of the soul in fellowship with God.

Genesis—Ruin through the sin and folly of man.

Exodus—Redemption by blood and power.

Leviticus—Realized communion by atonement.

Numbers—Reliable direction during pilgrimage.

Deuteronomy—Renewed instruction with the land in view.

In these books, on the divine side, we have a progressive five-fold revelation of God in His relationship with His people.

Genesis—Sovereignty of God—in creation and election.

Exodus—Salvation of God—His power in redemption and deliverance.

Leviticus—Holiness of God—its reality and safeguards.

Numbers—Forbearance of God—caring and chastening.

Deuteronomy—Faithfulness of God—the incentive to obedience.

Moreover, we note the pathways traced in the five books:

In Genesis—the way DOWN through sin and rebellion.

In Exodus—the way OUT through sacrifice and salvation.

In Leviticus—the way IN through sanctification.

In Numbers—the way THROUGH calls for separation.

In Deuteronomy—the way HOME which brings satisfaction.

History The Pentateuch is like the trunk of a tree from which other books spring like branches. From the history of creation and then of the patriarchs, we have the history of the Jewish nation, beginning with Abraham. The promises which God made to him were the foundation stones

on which the psalmists rested and the prophets built. The history recorded in the Pentateuch stretches from the creation to the death of Moses, a period of over 2,400 years, excluding the creation.

The whole of God's redemptive purposes for mankind find their origin in the first five books of the Bible.

Genealogy Read Luke's genealogy of our Lord; he traces the Lord's lineage beyond Abraham to Adam. The vital factor to recognize is that the Genesis account of man's creation and the New Testament doctrine of man's redemption are bound up with each other, Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:45. The Jews attached great importance to genealogy; see Josh. 7:16-18; 1 Chron. chs. 1-9; Ezra 8:1-14.

Typology These books are pictorial and we see types of things, persons, offices, events and ceremonies. Some *typical things* found here are the coats of skins, Gen. 3:21; Abel's lamb, 4:4; Noah's ark, 6:14; the smitten rock, Exod. 17:5,6; the tabernacle and its furniture, chs. 25-31; the manna, Num. 11; the brazen serpent, 21:9. *Typical persons* include Adam, Joseph, Moses and Aaron, Moses and Joshua. The *offices* of prophet and priest each yearning for their fulfilment in Christ are here falteringly held by Moses and Aaron. Two outstanding *events* with typical significance are the Exodus, Exod. 12, and the war with Amalek, Exod. 17. *Ceremonies* rich in typical meaning are the offerings, Lev. chs. 1-7; the day of atonement, ch. 16, and the feasts, ch. 23. Many others can be found.

Prophecy In relation to our Lord Jesus Christ we find that He was to be the Seed of the woman, Gen. 3:15; of the family of Shem, 9:26; of the seed of Abraham, 12:3; of the line of Isaac, 17:19, through Jacob, 28:4,14; of the tribe of Judah, 49:10; Shiloh, 49:10; the Shepherd and Stone, 49:24; the Star out of Jacob, Num. 24:17; and the Sceptre out of Israel, Num. 24:17. Find the New Testament fulfilment of these prophecies.

Summary *Genesis* is a book of beginnings. *Primeval history*, chs. 1 to 11:9. The creation, the collapse, the condemnation, the corruption and the confusion of man. *Patriarchal History*, 11:10 to 50:26. Abraham, called and cheered, the man of action, 11:10 to 25:10. Isaac, patient and peaceloving, the man of contemplation, 25:11 to 28:5. Jacob, cunning, crafty and contented, the man of concentration, 28:10 to 50:13. Joseph, the son, slave, sufferer and sovereign, the man of consecration, 30:22 to 50:26.

Exodus is a book of deliverance and departure. The persecution of the people, ch. 1. The preparation of the deliverer, chs. 2-4; the plan of redemption, chs. 5-12. The protection of, and provision for, the people, chs. 13-18. The provision of the covenant, with its teaching, tabernacle, and

testings, chs. 19-34. The construction, completion and the consecration of the tabernacle, chs. 35-40.

Leviticus a book of instructions for the regulation of the Lord's worship, a manual for the priests and Levites. The laws of the offerings stressing *propitiation*, chs. 1-7. The laws of the priesthood, chs. 8-10, the thought of *mediation*. The laws of purity, chs. 11-22; ceremonial laws, chs. 11-25; moral laws, chs. 18-22, speak of *separation*. The laws of the festivals and final instructions, giving occasion of approach to God, chs. 23-27. The lesson is *consecration*.

Numbers is thus named because of the two numberings of the people recorded in the book. *Directions*, chs. 1-10; the disposition of the camp, chs. 1-4, purification, chs. 5-6, devotion, chs. 7 to 9:14, and direction of the camp, chs. 9:15 to 10:36. *Disobedience*, chs. 11-14. *Discipline*, chs. 15-19. *Dealings* of Jehovah, chs. 20-25. *Fresh directions* of Jehovah, chs. 26-33; a new census, new laws and new experiences. *Division* of the land, chs. 33:50 to 36:13. The lessons are trust in, travel with, and be true to God.

Deuteronomy, the second law. *Retrospection*, chs. 1-4, the faithfulness of God. *Résumé of the laws of God*, chs. 5-25, obedience to the Word of God. *Responsibility*, chs. 26-30, exhortations, expectations and establishment. *Revelation of divine love*, chs. 31-34; the charges, 31; the song, 32; the blessing, 33; and the burial of Moses, 34. This book covers the past, the present and the future.

Genesis

This book has known more criticism, and suffered more opposition and abuse, than any other book of the Bible. Satan uses all his forces to discredit and to destroy this book. The reason is that it records his fall and his final doom. This book is a divine revelation of the purpose of God in relation to man and to Abraham and his family. It gives us a record of the beginning of things, the story of creation, but it was not written as a scientific treatise. It deals with facts not myths; it forms the basis of all revelation. It is necessary to account for the moral condition of man, and his subsequent need of redemption by Christ. All the inspired writings take their rise in its narrative, and without this book they would be unintelligible to us.

Importance This book is a history, a narrative which is authentic and most instructive to us. Its importance may be considered from three standpoints.

1. *Historical* It informs us of the creation of the world, the entrance of man, his development into a family, tribe, a nation. The book is full of references to generations—of heaven and earth, chs. 2-4; of Adam, chs. 5-6; of Noah, chs. 6-9; of the sons of Noah, chs. 10-11; of Shem, ch. 11; of Terah, ch. 11; of Ishmael, ch. 25; of Isaac, chs. 25-35; of Esau, ch. 36; and of Jacob, ch. 37:2 to 50:26. These are the historical divisions of the book. The theme of the book is man and the family; it deals with descendants not ancestry.

2. *Doctrinal* Genesis is the foundation of Biblical revelation, and a key to all that follows in the history of redemption. Man was made for fellowship with God, and was made in the likeness and image of God. It teaches the divine origin of the soul, that life is a probation, and communion with God is a reality. The moral part of man has ever been infinitely above the animal. He is subject to Satanic influence, is responsible to God, and the violation of the law of God brings sorrow and woe. Redemption is portrayed in the coats of skin. "Grace" is first mentioned in chapter 6, "believed", "righteousness", "counted" are first mentioned in chapter 15. Here we are taught the universal depravity of the race and the over-ruling providence of God in the preservation of the "seed".

3. *Moral* It introduces the Sabbath as a day of rest, the principles of life, home, work, duty, love, and the sanctity of marriage. These principles are contained not in cold precept, but are invested with all the force and reality of actual life.

Inspiration That Moses was the author of the first five books has been held by the Jews since before the Christian era. The Lord revealed the past to Moses as He revealed the future to John. Being a book of "generations", it contains many family documents. Such existing materials may have been used by the author. "The last four books of the Pentateuch contain an implicit claim to be from the pen of Moses; and no-one has yet maintained that Genesis does not form a unity with the other four books. Commentators of every school agree that the same authorship may be traced in Genesis as in the other four. Hence, if Moses is accepted as the author of the legal sections he may safely be accepted as the author of Genesis". The events of Genesis occurred; they were observed by God, and communicated to Moses.

Instruction "This book contains the foundation truths of THEOLOGY, the science of God; COSMOLOGY, the science of universe; ANTHROPOLOGY, the science of man; SOCIOLOGY, the science of society; HARMARTIOLOGY, the science of sin; ETHNOLOGY, the science of races; SOTERIOLOGY, the science of salvation". In Genesis, most things begin, but few things end. The record includes references to the beginning of man, of family life, of marriage, of reproduction, of sin, of death, of national life. What can equal the majesty of the opening two verses, as they present ideas beyond the conception of the human mind? God, the Cause, the Explanation and the Goal of all things. God in His Being, Eternity, Omnipotence and Infinite Wisdom. The re-creation is full of spiritual teaching; the work of the Spirit, light produced, approved, diffused; life, vegetation, the heavenly bodies, the creation of man, and rest. The penalty of disobedience in chapter 3 involves the loss of peace, v. 15, rest, vv. 17,18, immortality, vv. 19,22, and fellowship with God. Each of these is restored in Christ. The book abounds with subject matter for our instruction.

Interest The biographies of chapters 12-50 are most thrilling and informative. The book records the story of man, not of creation in general. The three important men are Adam, Noah and Abraham. Each has an event, a promise, and a sign, telling of sin, judgment and redemption. Much of the book is taken up with the establishment of covenant relationship between God and man, and especially between God and Israel. Noah's is a covenant of everlasting mercy and protection. Abraham's is a covenant of election and promise. The life of Abraham covers over thirteen chapters, indicating something of its importance. Study his private, public and prophetic history.

Dr. Scroggie sums up Jacob's life thus: "The Supplanter at Beer-sheba, ch. 25-28; The Servant at Haran, chs. 29-31; the Saint at Hebron, chs. 32-45; The Seer in Egypt, chs. 46-50".

The four periods of Joseph's life and the analogies with the life of the Lord Jesus are many. Consider the Pre-eminent Son, ch. 37; the Prosperous

Servant, ch. 39; the Patient Sufferer, chs. 40 to 41:36; and the Powerful Sovereign, chs. 41:37 to 50:21.

Illustrations While Adam is the only man described in the Scriptures as a type of Christ, this book abounds with many illustrations of New Testament truth. Ponder Eve as a picture of the Church, Gen. 2 and Eph. 5:30-32; Cain and Abel illustrating the carnal versus the spiritual; Enoch foreshadowing the translation of the Church and Noah in the ark the salvation of Israel through the tribulation; Hagar and Sarah indicate distinctions between law and grace; Ishmael and Isaac suggest the antagonism of flesh and spirit. In Genesis 22 and 24, Abraham pictures God the Father; Isaac, the Son of God; and the servant, the Spirit of God.

A Brief Summary of chapters 1-11 is as follows:

In the Creation—we see God’s matchless Ability.

In the Fall—we see God’s moral Authority.

In the Flood—we see God’s merciful Severity.

In Babel—we see God’s mighty Supremacy.

“Memorable Day”, ch. 1. The work of creation, 1:1; Prov. 8; John 1:1-3; Man in innocence. Chaos, v. 2 vain, formless, emptiness, darkness; Isa. 14:12-17; Job 14:4; Rom. 8:5-8; Man in sin.

Restoration First day, vv. 3-5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10. Man’s regeneration, John 8:12; 2 Cor. 4:4-6; Eph. 5:8.

Second day, vv. 6-8. Man’s separation, Gal. 1:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; John 7:43.

Third day, vv. 9-13. Man’s liberation, Eph. 2; 4:5; Col. 1:13-14; 3:1; John 11:43.

Fourth day, vv. 14-19. Man’s revelation, John 3:36; 2 Cor. 4:6; the sun, Mal. 4:2; moon, Matt. 5:14; stars, Phil. 2:15.

Fifth day, vv. 20-23. Man’s manifestation, John 15:1-8; Rom. 6:22; Phil. 3:12-14; 4:17; Gal. 5:22,23.

Sixth day, vv. 24-31. Man’s conformation, Rom. 8:29; Col. 3:10; 1 John 3:2.

Seventh day, 2:1-3. Man’s satisfaction, Psal. 17:15; Heb. 4:1-3.

“Grace Abounding”, ch. 3. The subtlety of the serpent, vv. 1-4; accusing, appealing, abusing. The seduction of the woman, vv. 3-7; interested, impressed, and influenced.

The sin of Adam, vv. 6,7; responsible, rebellious, ruinous.

The sentence of judgment, vv. 14-19; on the serpent, the woman and the ground.

The salvation of God, vv. 15-24; promised, pictured and provided. The sevenfold sentence was borne by the Saviour.

“*Enoch*”, ch.5 Exercised faith in God, Heb. 11:5.
 Name suggests instructed of God.
 Obeyed the revelation of God, Jude 14,15.
 Commended by God, Heb. 11:5-6.
 Happy fellowship with God, Gen. 5:22.

“*Noah*”, As a builder, 6:14-22; as believer, 6:8-10; a caretaker, 7:1-16; worshipper, 8:20-22; master, 9:1-2; backslider, 9:20-23.

“*Babel*”, ch. 11:1-9. (i) Human ambition: its motive, method, means, Psa. 2:1-3; Matt. 27:22. The mark of the beast, Rev. 13:16-19.

(ii) Divine inspection: careful, condemning, dispersing.

In the first ten chapters including the *original* creation, there may be millions of years embraced, but in the next forty chapters only a few centuries are dealt with. Here the emphasis is not on the material, but on the moral and spiritual. From the creation of Adam to the flood, over sixteen hundred years in duration are covered. The vast universe seems insignificant when we find that Abram’s history occupies almost fourteen chapters.

It is said that Abram lived mid-way between Adam and Christ, and this is important in the unfolding of the divine purposes.

The emphasis in this book is on divine election and selection. Seth takes the place of Abel; Cain is set aside and Seth is chosen. From Jared’s family, Enoch is chosen. From Lamech’s family the choice is Noah. From his three sons, Shem is chosen; Terah had three sons and Abram is chosen. Abraham had two sons and God’s choice was Isaac; of Isaac’s sons, Jacob is chosen. Jacob had twelve sons, and of these Judah is chosen for the continuation of the Messianic line.

Abram In Genesis chapter 10, the beginnings of many nations are recorded but redemption does not come through them. For this the narrative develops the line of the Hebrew family with Abram as the father and founder, 12:2; Gal. 3:29.

There are three main beginnings in this book: in Adam, the beginning of the human race; in Noah, a new beginning on the post-diluvian earth, and now in Abram, a new departure, the beginning of the chosen nation. Our attention is directed to one family and one man, Abram, who had the high privilege of being called “the friend of God”, Isa. 41:8; 2 Chron. 20:7; James 2:23. His father Terah, and his brothers Haran and Nahor, are of lesser significance. God makes choice of Abram in sovereign election. Thirty-nine chapters, more than three-quarters of this book, are devoted to the life of Abram and the first three generations of his descendants.

His life, like the course of a river, had many windings, but it seemed to

deepen and gather in strength as it went on. His descent from Shem shows him in the line of promise, Gen. 11:10-26. The words "after these things" divide his life into three parts:

- (i) The Call given and accepted, 11:27 to 14:24.
- (ii) The Covenant made and confirmed, chs. 15-21.
- (iii) The Challenge met and rewarded, 22 to 25:10.

The first tells of the Venture of faith; the second develops the Value of faith, and the third presents the Victory of faith. This chosen man had his name changed to Abraham, father of a multitude, 17:5. He consecrated his all to God, ch. 22. He lived 175 years, 25:7.

Isaac Typically Isaac represents "sonship", and he was "appointed heir" of all things, 24:36; 25:5. Although he lived longer than the other patriarchs, much less is recorded of him. Chapter 26 is the only chapter exclusively devoted to him. He was gentle, patient, affectionate, peace-loving and God-fearing. His life is undistinguished, lacking the venture of his father and the adventure of his son. "He was the ordinary son of a great father, and the ordinary father of a great son". His ordinary life was an "ordered" life, and in the truest sense the "ordained life". He lived 180 years, Gen. 35:28,29. In Abraham we see divine election, calling him out; in Isaac divine provision, in a supernatural birth; in Jacob divine preservation from enemies; and in Joseph divine directions guiding him through.

To Abraham God gave seven communications, to Jacob He gave five, but to Isaac He gave only two. The things he did once may be indicative of his character. He undertook the building of "an altar to God"; he is found "calling on the name of the Lord", 26:25, and praying, 25:21. The importance of his life is in his resemblance to the Lord Jesus. This is presented in his birth, then as the son of the covenant, the sacrifice and the type of Abraham's spiritual posterity, Gal. 4:21-31. He was a noble son, a faithful husband and a weak father.

Jacob He has a permanent place in history and religion, and gave to the chosen race its name "Israel". There is scarcely anything more striking in the whole of the Old Testament than the frequency of the title "the God of Jacob" in the Psalms and in Isaiah. His history is given in Genesis 25:26 to 50:13. This controversial figure attracts and fascinates us by his very weaknesses. He is so human like ourselves, yet the reality and determination that marked the man impress us with a desire to live in personal contact with God. His character is different from all the Bible heroes, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Peter, John, and Paul. In him there is mixed a self-seeking disposition with a gentle and genuine devotedness to his mother, his wife

and his sons. The transformation in his life was slow, and the old nature was never wiped out. There was a gradual victory of the higher over the lower in him, and ultimately "Israel" was clearly seen.

We cannot but admire his steadfastness of purpose amidst all difficulties, trials and opposition and his genuine appreciation of divine realities in the covenant of God with his father. His character was formed in the school of God. Sorrow both made and left its permanent mark upon him. The roughness of his nature was made smooth, and chastening yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

The grace of God, from the vision at Bethel to the closing days in Egypt, was the cause of his success. He claimed and depended on the promise of God and never forgot what He had promised, "I am with thee, . . . I will not leave thee". The "God of Jacob", Psa. 46:7, is a God of unchanging love, of unerring wisdom, of unfailing grace.

His life is associated with four places:

Beer-sheba, Gen. 25:19 to 28:10, a determined man.

Haran, Gen. 28:10 to 30:43, a deceitful man.

Hebron, Gen. 35-45, a disciplined man.

Egypt, Gen. 46 to 50:13, a devout man

The true peaks in his life were Bethel and Peniel; the former is his conversion, the latter his consecration. He lived a full life during his pilgrimage of 147 years.

Joseph was not one of "the" patriarchs and to him the covenant was not renewed, though he inherited it. About one quarter of Genesis is taken up with his history. Like Abraham, fourteen chapters are given to him. He is the link between Canaan and Egypt, between the family and the nation. He is one of the most beautiful Old Testament characters and typified Him who was to be *the Seed* of the woman, and the fulfilment of all Messianic prophecy. He is seen at home, 37:1-27, delightful days; in slavery, 37:28-36, dark days; as a servant, 39:1-19, dangerous days; in prison, 39:20 to 40:23, difficult days; in the court, 41:1-36, decisive days; as prime minister, 41:37 to 50:26, dynamic days. This wonderful book, which begins with the creative power of God demonstrated in creation, ends with a coffin in Egypt, Rom. 6:23.

Suggestive Studies The "altars" and the "looks" of Abraham. The similarities between Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary. The wells of Isaac, his likeness to the Lord Jesus. Divine appearances to Jacob, the places and the messages. Peniel and Calvary.

The "tears" of Joseph; his foreshadowing of the Messiah of Israel.

The prophetic picture of Israel as a nation in chapter 49.

Suggested Analysis of Genesis

PRIMEVAL HISTORY, chs. 1-11.

From the Creation to the Condemnation, 1:1 to 3:24. God's Will declared.

FIRST PERIOD. (a) The Creation of the cosmos, 1:1 to 2:3. The Creation of the universe, 1:1, telling us of the Being, the Power, the Sovereignty of God. The Re-creation of the planet, 1:2 to 2:3; Work days of God.

Note (b) Some Keypoints of the passage:

Forming the Waste, vv. 2a-13. Light announced, approved, appointed, vv. 3-5. Heaven and earth appointed, vv. 6-8. Land, sea, vegetable life appointed, vv. 9-13.

Furnishing the Empty, vv. 2a, 14-31. Luminaries appointed and approved, vv. 14-19. Life in the sea and air. vv. 20-23. The creation of life on the earth, vv. 24-31. The completion of God's work, 2:1-3.

The Function of Mankind, 1:26 to 2:17. His constitution, character, commission, 26,27. His cultivation of the earth, 1:28-30; 2:8-15. The constitution and companionship of the woman, 2:18-25.

The Fall of Man, 3:1-24. The Serpent—deceiving, v. 1; denying, v. 4; defying, vv. 1-5.

The Woman—listening, vv. 2-3; looking, v. 6; longing, v. 6; and losing, v. 7.

The Man—disobeyed, v. 6; discovered, v. 8; defeated, v. 24.

The Lord God—seeking, vv. 8,9; speaking, v. 9; separating, v. 15; sentencing, 14-19.

From Abel to the Apostasy, 4:1 to 8:14. God's Word defied.

SECOND PERIOD.

The Progress of Sin, 4:1 to 5:32. *Marked by anger.* Two sons at home, vv. 1-2; at worship, vv. 3-5; at variance, vv. 8; assessed by God, vv. 9-10. Cain's misery, vv. 11-15; indignation. Cain's posterity, 4:16-24; irreligion. Seth's posterity, 4:25 to 5:32; godliness.

The Pollution of Sin, 6:1 to 8:14. *Marked by Apostasy.*

The divine probation, 6:1-17; man's wickedness and vileness, vv. 2,11; violence, v. 11; the divine purpose, vv. 9-13; the divine plan, vv. 14-17; the divine provision, vv. 18-22; the divine pleasure, 7:1-9; the divine punishment, vv. 10-24; the divine preservation, 8:1-14.

From the Bond to Babel, 8:15 to 11:9. God's Way Discarded.

THIRD PERIOD. *The Participants in Sin. Marked by amalgamation.*

The Summary of Noah's Life, 8:15 to 11:9.

The new command, 8:15-17; revelation, 15-17; and response, 18-19.

The new communication, 8:21-22; divine acceptance and assurance.

The new commencement, 9:1-7; exhortation, 1-2; encouragement, 3; expectation, 7.

The new covenant, 8-17; its promise, 9,11,17; provision, 9,10,15; pledge, 12,13; power, 14,15.

The new calamity, 18-29; sins, 20,21; shame and sorrow, 22,23; servitude, 26.

The Spread of the Nations, ch. 10.

The family of Japheth, 2-5. Fourteen souls.

The family of Ham, 6-20. Thirty souls.

The family of Shem, 21-23. Twenty-six souls.

The Scheme of the Nations, 11:1-9.

Human pride and passion, 4a; and presumption, 4b.

Divine inspection, 5; decision, 7; dispersion, 8.

ABRAHAM—THE PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH, 11:10 to 25:18.

Faith Travelling and Trusting, chs. 12:14. *The Call of God*.

The revelation to faith, 12:1-3; the response, 4-9; relapse, 10-20. The restoration, 13:1-4; rectitude, 5-13; renunciation, 14-18. The resource, 14:13-16; and recognition of faith, 17-24.

Faith's Training and Tryst, chs. 15-18. *Communication from God*. Learning in the valley, 15:1-3; listening to God's voice, 4-9; living in victory and looking at the victim, 10-18.

The Collapse of Faith, ch. 16. The wayward path, 1-5; the wounded pride, 6-9; the word of promise, 10-12; the way of patience, 13-16.

The Covenant of God, ch. 17. The revelation of relationship, 1-8; the requirements, 9-14; the recognition, 15-18; the rejoicing, and reception, 19-27.

Communion with God, ch. 18. Its foundation, 1-8; its fellowship, 9-15; its favour, 16-21; its fervour, 22-33.

Faith Tested and Triumphant, chs. 19-22. *The Claims of God*.

Tested by relatives, ch. 19; by ruin and rebuke, ch. 20; by response from God, ch. 21; by sunshine, 1-8; and shadow, 9-21; tested by relationship, ch. 21:11-23; 22:1-3; 23:1-9.

Faith triumphant through intercession, 19:21; humiliation, 20:11-18; through separation, 21:11-13; consecration, 22:3-10; provision, 22:15-19; and through preparation, ch. 24.

ISAAC—THE PATIENCE OF FAITH, 21 to 28:9.

His Birth, ch. 21. According to promise, 1-7; followed by persecution, 9-11; Gal. 4:29; and expulsion of Hagar.

His Burden and Binding, ch. 22. The travail, 1-2; trial, 6-10; triumph, 11-14; and testimony, 15-19.

His Bereavement, ch. 23. The chapter is taken up rather with Abraham and

- his sorrowing love, 1-3; his securing of a burial place, 4-16; and his sure hope, 19; Heb. 11:14.
- His Bride*, ch. 24. The servant's great mission, 1-11; gracious manner, 11-22; glorious message, 34-48; grand ministry, 55-67.
- His Behaviour*, ch. 26. A covenant confirmed, 1-5; a character revealed, 6-11; a commendation given, 12; conflict met by patience, 17-22; and testimony maintained, 24-33.
- His Blessing*, ch. 27. Preparation, 1-4; plotting, 5-17; presentation, 18-26; promise, 27; pleading and petition, 30; and product, 35-46.

JACOB—THE PROGRESS OF FAITH, 25:19 to 50:13.

- The Deceiver*, 25:19 to 28:9. The birthright bartered and bought, 25:29-34; the blessing, 27:1 to 28:9; the blindness of Isaac, 1-5; the bungling of Rebekah, 27:6-17; the blessing of Jacob, 18-29; the bitterness of Esau, 30-46; the benediction of Jacob, 28:1-9.
- The Dreamer*, 28:10 to 31:55. The charge, 28:6,7; contract, 13-15; confession, 16-18; consecration, 20-22; Jacob's contract, 29:1-19; he is cheated, 20-30; his children, 29:31 to 30:24; the call of God, 31:1-3; the consultation, 4-16; conflict, 22-42; and covenant, 43-55.
- The Wrestler*, 32:1 to 35:13. Jacob fearing, 1-7; praying, 9-12; planning, 13-23; resisting, 24-25; clinging, 26; confessing, 27; and halting, 31; conciliating Esau, ch. 33; the crime and calamity, ch. 34; the call of God, 35; instruction, 1, preparation, 2-6, revelation, 9-13.
- The Blessor*, chs. 47-49. The loving blessing for Joseph's two sons, ch. 48; the last blessing on his own sons, ch. 49.

JOSEPH—THE POWER AND PROSPERITY OF FAITH, chs. 37-50.

- His loyalty at home, ch. 37; purity in slavery, ch. 39; his ability in prison, ch. 40; his humility at Pharaoh's court, ch. 41; his glory as prime minister in Egypt, chs. 42-44; his generosity to his brethren, ch. 45; his sympathy with his father, ch. 48. This saint of God was a favoured, faithful, fitted, friendly, famous, fruitful, fatherly man.

Genesis chapters 1 and 2

Neither history, nor science, nor mythology can give the answers, it *must* be revelation. Without indicating *when*, the beginning *was*, the expression indicating that that beginning *was*.

The most general forms into which the manifestations of the unknowable are divided are:

CHAPTER 1

- a. **Time** 'in the beginning'
- b. **Space** 'the heavens'
- c. **Matter** 'the earth'
- d. **Force** 'the Spirit of God'
- e. **Motion** 'the Spirit of God *moved*'

v.1. There are two words in the Hebrew used for creation:

- a. *bara* is used exclusively of the supernatural operations of God, in relation to matter, the commencement of life, and the creation of Man.
- b. *asah*, translated 'made', signifying to construct out of pre-existing matter.

CHAPTER 2

- a. **Benediction** vs.1 to 3
- b. **Preparation** vs.4 to 6
- c. **Formation** v.7
- d. **Habitation** vs.8 to 15
- e. **Association** vs.16 to 25

Genesis 3

This chapter is the pivot of the Bible, for if we take it away the rest of Scripture becomes meaningless. We have here the record of the most important, and far reaching event in the world's history—the entrance of sin.

The temptation	vs.1-7
The confrontation	vs.8-13
The condemnation	vs.14-18
The provision	v.21
The expulsion	vs.23,24

The subtlety of the serpent vs.1-5

The story of sin and sorrow begins with the serpent. This is a pictorial and symbolic reference to Satan himself (although not actually mentioned in the chapter) as other passages confirm, Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. Verse 15 is the key to the chapter, and this first great prophecy of the Bible is church history, as this chapter is a statement of fact. He attacked the woman, not the man (verse 1), designing her downfall. He ignored the covenant relationship, employing 'God', and *not* 'LORD God'. ('LORD', in capital letters is the English translation of the Hebrew Jehovah). He injected *doubt* into her mind: 'hath God said?' *Doubt* of the goodness of God, of the righteousness of God, and the holiness of God.

He *denied* sin would be punished. The death attached to *disobedience* was spiritual and physical. He *defied* God 'Ye shall not surely die'. Three downward steps: *doubt*, *denial* and *defiance*. God said one thing, and the Devil said another, and they believed the Devil.

The seduction of the woman vs.2-7.

The stages in her downfall are tragic.

1. *She listened to Satan*, and he will lose no opportunity of getting into our lives through our ears.
2. *She tampered with God's Word* (v.2), she perverted and misquoted the divine law.
3. *She loosened her hold upon God* Forgetting God's mercies and her relationship to Him, she said 'God', and *not* 'LORD God', she lost the consciousness of God, and put herself outside of His care.
4. *She looked at the fruit* (v.6). Others fell in this way, such as Lot, and David. She exposed herself to three poisoned darts of the enemy:

The lust of the flesh 'good for food'
 The lust of the eyes 'pleasant to the eyes'
 The pride of life 'to be desired to make one wise'

5. *She longed for the fruit.* Curiosity became a craving for that which was forbidden (v.6).
 6. *She laid hold of the fruit.* She is rapidly borne along to the fearful end.
 7. *She lost her life.* Her fellowship with God was cut off. She passed out of the higher into the lower kingdom, entering the house of Satan.
- The Devil's three lines of attack (vs.5 and 6) are still successful:
- a. Peter brought down by the *Devil*
 - b. Demas brought down by the *world*
 - c. David brought down by the *flesh*

The sad result vs.7 and 8

The immediate consequences were their eyes were opened, and they knew they were naked.

- a. *Discovery of their condition* They saw themselves. They became self conscious, when they should have been God conscious.
- b. *Destitution* They made themselves aprons, a vain attempt to cover their sinful selves.
- c. *Dread* They hid themselves. A strange new fear, not filial, but slavish. Sin brings the dread of God. The ultimate consequence is that the whole human race is involved.

The seeking of the sinner vs.8 to 13

'Where art thou?' This is a call of grace, for it is God who first seeks us. He missed them from the fold, loved them still, and sought their recovery. He spoke to them, breaking the awful silence (v.9). It was a searching and correcting question leading to the confession of his nakedness, his fear, and his attempt to hide from God. God searched out the wrong (v.11). They both tried to shift the blame, but neither were exempt from personal responsibility. The Lord God, turning to Satan, asks no question, but makes a pronouncement.

The sentence of the Judge vs.14 to 19

Three culprits appear before the tribunal: the serpent, the woman, and the man. The first to be questioned is sentenced because of his lust, and judgment was passed upon him (vs.14 and 15). There was no redemption or restoration for Satan. The woman is condemned to sorrow and subjection (v.16). The man will have sorrow, toil and death (vs.17 to 19).

Thus sin: **degrades**
defiles
debases, and ends in
death, and
doom.

The salvation of God vs.15 to 21

Two things indicate the grace of God in salvation:

- a. *The seed of the woman* v.15 As the sin of the woman plunged the world into sin and sorrow, so the seed of the woman will bring salvation. Here are two parties, two persons, two conflicts, and two consequences.
- b. *The skins* vs.21 God clothed the guilty pair. These may picture Christ's substitutionary death. God met their immediate need. All was of God; making and giving; and we are clothed with the righteousness of God.

The separation vs.22 to 24

Expulsion was deserved, yet pitiful. There was no possibility of a return to Paradise (Isa. 59:2). What a commentary on the awful effect of sin!

Genesis 17

Abraham

chs.12 and 14 *Public History* in relation to the world—The world *around* him.

chs.15 to 18 *Personal History* in relation to God.—God *above* him.

ch.19 on *Prophetic History* in relation to the coming and the cross of Christ.

Chapter 17

Here is the riches and the reality of the everlasting covenant that God made with Abraham, and through him, for the nation of Israel. There are seven sections:

1. **vs.1 and 2 The revelation of God**

His choice. Notice the *time, truth, teaching* of this revelation.

2. **v.3 The response to that revelation**

God talked with him. Abraham does not talk with God until v.18.

3. **vs.4 to 8 The rich resources of God as covenanted to Abraham**

An everlasting covenant by an everlasting God. He is the guarantor of everything He says.

4. **vs.9 to 13 Response and responsibility to the covenant**

Wherever we get the revelation of truth, God expects a response to that truth. Truth is not only *profitable*, it is *practicable*. There is too much Christianity in *books*, and not enough in *boots*. God wants to see it walking.

5. **vs.15 to 19 Rejoicing before God**

He laughed with himself. Rejoicing in what God *is*, more than what God *is doing*. He rejoices as he thinks what God has promised to him and Sarah.

6. **vs.20 to 22 Resorting to God for comfort**

Concerning the future of his son Ishmael.

7. **vs.23 to 27 The requirements of God**

The circumcision of Abraham and his family, Ishmael being 13 years of age.

1. **vs.1 and 2 The revelation of God.**

His choice. Note the *time*

When Abraham was 99 years of age, cp. 16:16, when Abraham was 86. Here is a 13 year gap. In ch.16 there is *folly* and *failure*, and God has nothing to say for 13 years, because of *disobedience* and *disaster*. Many lives have been wrecked because of *disobedience*, particularly in the unequal yoke, 2 Cor. 6.

We cannot play fast and loose with the truth. Abraham waited patiently, expecting something better than Ishmael.

Notice the **title**

I am the Almighty God, or El Shaddai. The nourishing God, the strength giving God, the all sufficient God. He became the Father God. God is always greater than His gifts.

Notice the **truth**

When does the reality come? It comes after the valley of humiliation in ch.15, the deep sleep, the great darkness. He emerges with open eyes, anointed lips and a clear vision, and he sees the light of God.

Has the Lord appeared to you recently? Has He made Himself real to you?

Notice the **thrill**

The thrill of Abraham's experience of God's revelation. It is not the creatorial God. It is the considerate God, the compassionate God, the sustaining God, and the nourishing God. God becomes a living reality to Abraham. I will sustain your heart. I will meet your need. I will travel at your side. I will bless you.

God becomes a living reality to Abraham. In the light of ch.16, this man tried: nature, sight, and the flesh, but they all failed. Abraham learnt the valuable lesson: nothing I can be, nothing I have, nothing I can do in the energy of the flesh, can I give to God. It all amounts to nothing. He learns this valuable lesson: if there is anything to come to me, if any blessing is to travel through me, it will only be in the light of God visiting me, and God helping me. He has learnt about the exceeding uselessness, sinfulness, and emptiness of the flesh, and the fulness, freshness, and greatness of the goodness of God.

So, the teaching is: "walk before me, and be thou perfect". Here is a new name, revelation, assurance, and message from Jehovah.

In v.2 he is reminded of this wonderful blessing, the covenant ratified. God says in the light of that, I have made the covenant. It is between us, and I will multiply thee exceedingly.

2. v.3 The response to that revelation

His recognition—in the form of humility, reverence and worship.

cp. Thomas in John 21, "My Lord, and my God". Abraham had nothing to say. Words failed him. Often when we worship, words fail us, in the light of our recognition of Him.

3. vs.4 to 8 The rich resources of God, as covenanted to Abraham

There are seven '*I will's*' here in connection with the covenant:

a. '*I will make my covenant*' v.2

b. '*I will multiply thee exceedingly*' v.2. Verse 4 makes it clear that it will be not only national, but universal.

c. 'I will make thee exceeding fruitful' v.6. There is divine *relationship, reliability, responsibility*. God expects the believer to be fruitful, cp. Gal.5.

d. 'I will make many nations of thee' v.6. cp. Romans 4 and our spiritual parentage.

e. 'I will establish my covenant' v.7.

f. 'I will give thee the land' v.8. Yet future (as then) and future (as now) looking on to the millennial kingdom.

g. 'I will be their God'. Not only a guide, but a guiding, helping Father, and He will be with them for all generations.

The Psalmist says, He will guide us with His eye. God has made a contract that will never be broken. The land has changed hands many times, but one day the promised land will be possessed completely.

4. vs.9 to 13 Response and responsibility to the covenant

v. 9 God expects a response to our position and our possessions. Paul in his epistles takes this line thus:

positional truth what I am in Christ.

practical truth what I am in the Lord.

Note the distinction. We are not to marry in Christ, but we are to marry in the Lord. We are reminded of the Lordship of Christ in Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. What I am in the heavenlies can never be *touched* or *tarnished*. So we should walk before Him as becometh saints, reflecting what I am, what I do, not what I say. Truth should *build* us up and *bind* us together, and enable us to *stand* and *strive* for the faith of the Gospel, and to spread the good tidings wherever we go. (cp. Acts 11, where they 'gossiped the Gospel', and scattered it like seed wherever they went. Remember there is good gossip, and there is bad gossip.

The response must be: *practical*—walk before Me.

progressive

physical—all males were circumcised.

cp. Matt. 3, where the natural relationship will not save. Although Abraham was their father, they still needed to repent cp. John 1:13. We must be born of God. That is why He says twice over, relative to those who are not Jews, if there is one born in thy house, or one bought with money, that individual can be circumcised. Here is the dual sense in which the Gentile is brought in. Notice what it says concerning that seed, that they can be blessed accordingly. The last clause of v.12 says: 'which is not of thy seed'. I take that to be the Gentile of Ephesians ch.2 without the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant, having no hope, and without the God of Israel. Then He shows the change that can be effected: 'But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. So here is the responsibility of this man. Romans 2:29 says: 'But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God'. It is an invisible thing, not

a visible thing. It is a circumcision of the heart. It is a spiritual experience. The flesh, human nature, everything associated with the ritual of law keeping will never bring us into the kingdom, and never bring you into the family of God. Ye must be born again, and Peter reminds us that it is by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God.

Notice when this was done v.12, 'he that is eight days old'. There may not be any significance here, but it may suggest a new beginning, a complete cycle being seven days in the week. The eighth day is the beginning of another week, and the thought here might be that newness of life is associated with the covenant that God made. So, I must be born again; I must be in the enjoyment of everlasting life to share in covenant blessing made by the Lord Jesus, when He sealed the new covenant with His precious blood on the cross. And the flesh has to be set aside, self righteousness, self confidence. Everything associated with the natural man has no standing in God's presence. "Not of works lest any man should boast." Notice the emphasis in v.13: 'it must needs be'. That would suggest what the Lord Jesus taught, unless we deny ourselves and take up the cross, and follow Him, we cannot be His disciples. I should say 'No' to the flesh. If these things are hindering me in divine things, I have to find the courage to say 'no', and go on with God. You will be misunderstood, and you will be misrepresented, but don't worry about that. If you are on good terms with God, that's the most important thing. 'Lord, suffer me to bury my father'. A legitimate thing. It is the legitimate things that we go wrong in. Some things that have a greater priority than they ought, legitimate and allowable in themselves, but if they are going to take the place of something spiritual, then we have got to be able to say, 'no', and take up the cross and follow the Lord Jesus, Matt. 16.

5. vs.15 to 19 Rejoicing before God

After all this has been said, God speaks to Abraham about Sarah. I will change her name, she will no longer be Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. It means not only princess, but queen. God conferred a dignity upon this woman that she never had before. And she acts from that day onwards queenly and with dignity in her bearing, and behaviour, and she is commended by God for it. As God conferred dignity upon us as His saints, whether we be brothers or sisters, He has made us a kingdom, and He has made us a priesthood. God gives us both in association with our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle writing to the Corinthians when they were misbehaving, says: you could have lived like kings, but you are acting like paupers, fighting and devouring one another; quarrelling over trivialities, even in the line of spiritual gifts, and have become a reproach rather than a recommendation to the gospel of Christ. This woman will be the mother of nations, kings and people shall come out of her. So she will have a new status, she will be a queen.

She is going to bring a new *society*, kings shall come out of this woman.

She is going to have new *strength*. At this late stage in her life, God will give her a son, and he will be called Isaac, which means 'laughter'.

6. vs.20 to 22 Resorting to God for comfort

He is concerned about Ishmael. He was Abraham's son in the legal sense. His heart went out towards this boy, will Ishmael be set aside for ever. Yet God in wondrous grace, and out of the generosity of His heart, made provision for him. The Ishmaelites were mighty, but they proved to be a thorn in the flesh to Abraham. Abraham's one fault in one day has plagued the world ever since. The Palestine problem will never be solved until the Lord returns. Think of the problems, think of the slaughter, think of the money wasted between the Arabs and the Jews, and all those associated with them, and all because this dear man of God slipped, and left a mark that could never be erased. He has left a family that will never die, who are enemies of God, and His Christ. They will not pass from this scene until God has judged the nations because of their antagonism to the nation of Israel. But the gracious revelation in v.20 is 'I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation'.

My covenant is not with him. Now read the connection and the contrast between these two in Galatians ch.4, Romans ch.9. God sets aside the natural man, with his works and ritualism, and He brings in the new man: this man Isaac. And the new man as seen in us today born after the Spirit, and associated with His Son. Now will this man obey what God has commanded?

7. vs.23 to 27 The requirements of God

The programme of God is linked with human experience. And that experience is obedience. Notice that his response was prompt 'in the selfsame day' (v.26) without hesitation, he did what God commanded, and he was blessed. I am often disappointed, when moving about the assemblies and speaking to young men, that some question baptism. They will question sisters wearing hats. Read 1 Corinthians 11, where the order is as in creation; the man was made first. There is the order of creation, and the order of common sense. But common sense is not so common. We should obey what God commands.

Abraham obeys, and the rigours of his obedience will be painful, and will be a costly business. Psalm 119 says: 'I made haste to obey Thy commandments'.

And finally in v.27, all the men of his house, born in the house, bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him. I like to think that every age was involved, Abraham, Ishmael, and all men. That's the *reach*

and the *range* of the grace of God, and the extent of our obedience to God's truth. God excludes none; young, middle aged, or senior citizens; they all need to obey; and Abraham was compensated accordingly.

What is the message of this difficult chapter?

There are four things that we can learn, four new views:

a. A new view of God's *character, will* and *requirements*.

Genesis 22

Abraham

Introduction

His five surrenders

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. His native land | ch.12 testing his obedience |
| 2. The plain of Jordan | ch.13 testing his motives |
| 3. The riches of Sodom | ch.13 testing his faith |
| 4. Ishmael | ch.17 testing his patience |
| 5. Isaac | ch.22 testing his love |

Each painful surrender was followed by increased spiritual awareness.

ch.22

The first mention of the word 'love'.

v.1 'after these things'. The main scene opens with the greatest and final test.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The <i>challenge</i> of faith | v.2 'take now thy son' |
| 2. The <i>courage</i> of faith | v.3 'went unto the place of which God had told him' |
| 3. The <i>calmness</i> of faith | v.3 'rose up early' |
| 4. The <i>confidence</i> of faith | v.5 'and come again to you' |
| 5. The <i>committing</i> of faith | v.6 'laid it upon his son' |
| 6. The <i>call</i> to faith | v.11 'Abraham, Abraham'. The double call was always a special term of endearment. |
| 7. The <i>compensation</i> of faith | vs.16 and 17 'I will bless thee'. |

Abraham—Friend of God

It is interesting to study Abraham's life of faith in Genesis, a man tested by God in the following way:

His Public History chapters 12 to 14—Faith Travelling and Trusting.

His Personal History chapters 15 to 21—Faith's Training and Tryst.

His Prophetic History chapters 22 to 25—Faith Tested and Triumphant.

There are fourteen chapters in Genesis devoted to his life and each stage ends with a Millennial picture.

Another Approach—After These Things.

The Call Given and Accepted—The Venture of Faith—Chapters 14 to 27.

The Covenant Made and Confirmed—The Value of Faith—Chapters 15 to 21.

The Challenge Met and Rewarded—The Victory of Faith—Chapters 22 to 25.

Genesis 22.

1. A Man Tested by God, vs.1-2

Life is a succession of tests, for character is only possible through discipline. This is the crowning event in his life. Previous tests were preparatory and secondary.

God tested his Obedience 12:1-4—leave his native land and kindred.

Motives 13:8—he gives up the Vale of Jordan.

Interests 14—the riches of Sodom.

Faith 15:2-4—will he believe God?

Patience 17-18—will he wait God's time?

Love 22—does he prefer God to Isaac?

The Challenge of Faith, v.1 'God did test Abraham'. Here is divine action and divine intention. God tests to bring out the good; the devil tempts to bring out the evil, James 1:12-15. Our spiritual life is refined in and by circumstances. God sits as a refiner and purifier of silver, Mal. 3:3. The test was meant to prove how much Abraham trusted God and believed His promise. Abraham's future was wrapped up in Isaac. Note the time: after 25 years of waiting, and after Isaac had brought much enjoyment and pleasure to his father.

The Command of God, v.2. In verse 1 Abraham is in communion with God, conversed with God and concentrated on what God would say to him. The command—‘Take now thy son’, v.2.—be thou thyself the priest, offer him up. The demand touched a tender spot in Abraham’s heart. To part with Isaac thus, must have been a fearful wrench. God wanted the best—He still does. God is still after the good in us; God wanted the dearest possession in his life, Rom. 12:1.

The command was shattering—whom thou lovest, Luke 14:26.

severe—offer him there, Heb. 9:14.

meant Surrender—carry out the sacrifice himself, Lev. 9:1-3; Matt. 26:39.

God gives the command and makes the choice of the mountain, Acts 2:23.

2. A Man True to God, vs.3-4

Abraham’s consecration is seen in the words ‘rose up early’. He did not falter, Rom. 12:1. His obedience was prompt and complete. He arose, saddled, and took Isaac. He was not asked to submit passively, but to take part actively in this sacrifice. All was contrary to the law of reason, but clear to faith.

His act was deliberate—he prepared the wood beforehand, Acts 2:23.

He was determined—young men left behind in case they hindered, v.5.

He had decided to obey God—an act of faith, Heb. 11:19.

There was no doubt or delay—no reluctance or hesitation, Ps. 119:60.

He believed God would look after everything.

The direction and discipline of faith, vs.3-4—He accepted and obeyed the word of the Lord, Gen. 12:4; Heb. 11:8.

He kept the secret to himself, what brave endurance. What God desired was not Isaac’s life, but Abraham’s loyalty. God tests to purify, to beautify and bring us to maturity.

3. A man Travelling for God, vs.5-6

1. His faith was strong ‘Abide ye here’. He was controlled by God; would have preferred to act alone.

2. His faith was sustained. He was going to worship, not slaughter.

3. His faith was sure. Isaac would come back with him. He had absolute confidence in God. Three days travelling time, and opportunity to thoroughly enter into what he was doing.

4. His faith was sublime. In the crisis he took the fire and the wood, unreserved surrender to God. Our devotion is expressed in doing what God tells us to do, loyalty to God in our present circumstances, John 14:15,23.

4. A man Trusting in God, vv.7-9

Co-operation and calmness, ‘both of them together’, 2 Cor. 5:19. The

silence is broken by the concern of Isaac, 'Where is the lamb'. Confidence in Isaac: Abraham could not find courage in his heart to disclose the secret, but felt God would give Isaac courage to accept His will.

Abraham trusted God for peace of mind on the way.
protection as he travelled.
provision of a lamb.
power to raise his son, Heb. 11:19.

He knew the sympathy of God on the way, Rom. 8:28.
He achieved strength from God in the crisis.
His faith is calm and God will provide, Gen. 3:21; John 1:29.
His faith is content to go on trusting: went together.
His faith is committed to surrender: bound Isaac.

The path to God is never the same as the path of God. We understand God, not His path. God understands all—so trust.

Isaac's Submission He submitted to be burdened, v.6. It was the cross of sacrifice, the symbol of death. What a picture of the only begotten Son of God, taking the burden of our sin in obedience to a loving Father, Rom. 8:32; Isa. 53:6-10.

He was Bound He himself was to be the burnt offering. Love and devotion were cords that bound the Son of God to the altar of Calvary, Psa. 40:8; John 10:17.

The Fire The holy testing character of God, Isa. 33:11; Heb. 12:29.

The Knife The Justice of God, 'Awake, O sword', Zech. 13:7. Who can tell the anguish of the heart of God when He gave His Son to the death of the cross. God spared Abraham's son, but not His own, Rom. 8:32; Heb. 9:14.

The Altar It was prepared by the father. In eternity God in His own heart and mind prepared the altar for Christ. He was the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. 1:20. The cords that bound Isaac to the altar are typical of the nails which bound Christ to the cross. Not the nails, but love bound the Saviour. It was the love of the Father to the Son, the love of the Son to the Father, and the love of both to man, sacrificial love to save.

5. A man Taught of God, vs.10-12

Complete consecration, v.10. Abraham would do anything for God. Like Job, he trusted God in this crisis, Job 13,15,16.

He learnt the reality of God's presence, v.11a.

He learnt to be sensitive to God's voice, 'Here am I'.

He learnt the urgency of divine intervention, v.12a.

He learnt the sweetness of divine commendation, v.12b.

He gave a demonstration of his faith in God, James 2:21.

His works were the evidence of the existence of the faith by which he was justified.

He was a worshipper of the true God and a believer in God.

He learnt how rich is the divine provision, v.13.

6. A man Triumphant for God, vs.13-14

a. *The alluring sight.* He lifted his eyes, and behold a ram, v.13; possibly the ram was there all the time but Abraham had not noticed it. We need to turn and look. Like Moses, Exod. 3:3; Mary, John 20:14; John, Rev. 1:12.

b. *The appropriate sacrifice.* He took the ram and offered it.

It was available, caught—Christ was caught up in the great redemptive purpose of God, Luke 12:50.

It was appropriated, he took the ram, caught by its horns. The Lord was bound to the cross by the strength of His love.

It was acceptable, a burnt offering in the stead of his son.

The Lord was offered in our stead, i.e. instead of us. We are brought into union with God by identification with the One who died in our stead.

c. *The assured satisfaction,* v.14. Jehovah-jireh—Jehovah will see or provide. Calvary is the place of divine provision, John 1:29; Rom. 8:3; Isa. 53:4. As God provided the ram for sacrifice in Isaac's place: so He provided the Lamb for the world, John 1:29 RV 'He shall be seen', or 'The Lord will see to it'. A testimony to the reality of God's presence and provision. The place became sanctified to Abraham and a very holy and blessed memory, Psa. 65:4. In the Mount where Satan aspired to be, Isa. 14:13, Christ is seen as Saviour, Mediator, Intercessor and Priest, 'Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious'.

Abraham triumphed over the fear of Death, Heb. 11:17-19.

Want, v.14; Isa. 50:7.

Defeat, Rom. 4:20-21.

Loneliness, vs.5:15.

7. His Testimony from God, vs.15-18

Here is the cheer and compensation of faith, v.15, 'angel called'.

The pledge of blessing, v.16, 'By myself have I sworn', Isa. 45:23.

The secret of blessing, 'Thou hast not withheld thy son', Heb. 6:13.

The range of blessing, 'Fourfold', as in Gen. 12:1-3.

Personal blessing, 'I will bless thee'.

Domestic blessing, 'Multiply thy seed'.

National blessing, 'Thy seed'.

Universal blessing, 'All nations blessed', Isa. 45:5.

Personal—Fulfilled in his justification, John 8:56. In his relationship. Devotion to God always brings blessing.

Multiply—Partial fulfilment in the increase of Israelites finally in the multitude of the redeemed, Exod. 1:7; Rev. 7:9.

Victory—In the gate of thine enemies. A new promise will finally be fulfilled when the enemies of the Lord are put under His feet, Psa. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25.

8. The tranquility of Abraham, v.19a

His return Abraham had proved that God was true and, having both accepted and fulfilled God's will, he was filled with joy and peace. Taking God at His word was the foundation of his peace, restfulness, strength and joy.

Would he return to tell Sarah of the wonderful provision of God on the mount, and the wonderful peace on the journey there? God provided His own sacrifice, v.8 and the mount received a new name Jehovah-jireh—the Lord will see to it. Abraham lived in close fellowship with God, his faith grew strong, his love grew deep. His hope grew high. It is still true for every saint dedicated to God on his 'Moriah'. His rest, v.19, at Beersheba meaning 'the well of the oath'. He had a source of living water. After Moriah, John 3:14, 'the living water', John 4:14; 7:38. We dwell where the Holy Spirit dwells, abiding in Christ, John 15:4, and are taught like Abraham, John 6:45. Blessed by God, 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:4.

9. The Tidings for Abraham, vs.20-24

He was told the good news of the line of promise, v.20; then of Rebekah who became Isaac's bride, ch.24. His obedience to God took its supreme climb, proving his supreme love, and entered on its supreme reward. The heavenly Isaac knew from eternity He would make the supreme sacrifice on Calvary, Phil. 2:5.

No anger intervened, and He has the supreme honour of being higher than the highest, Eph. 1:21-22; Phil. 2:9-11.

10. Faith

F—Faced with a severe test from God, vs.1-2.

A—Acquiesced with the demands of God, vs.3-4.

I—Implicit obedience to the call of God, vs.5-6.

T—Trusted in the provision and power of God, Heb. 11:17-19.

H—Honoured by the blessing of God, vs.15-18.

11. Ten pictures of Calvary

The indication of Calvary—take thy son, v.2; Rom. 8:3.

The preparation of Calvary—offer him there, v.2b.

The transaction of Calvary—burnt offering, v.2c; Eph. 5:2.

The revelation of Calvary—place afar off, v.4; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

The isolation of Calvary—Father and son only, v.5; Rom. 8:32.

The affliction of Calvary—fire, knife, v.6; Isa. 53:6.

The provision of Calvary—Himself a lamb, v.8; John 1:29.

The consecration of Calvary—laid, bound, John 19:17; Mark 15:1.

The substitution of Calvary—ram offered, Gal. 2:20.

The vindication of Calvary—blessings, multiply, vs.16-17; Isa. 52.

Exodus

The title “EXODUS” means a “way out” or “departure”, and was given because it records the way in which Jehovah brought Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. The theme of the book is *redemption*; the theme of Genesis is *election*. The people who are chosen in Genesis are now called, and the main part of the book records their “going out”. Here we have the beginnings of Israel’s national existence and incidents that immediately preceded their memorable migration. The covenant made with the Patriarchs is perpetuated with the nation, and the name of Jehovah is here unveiled. Here is the fulfilment of Genesis 46:3-4; 50:24, and the growth from the family to the nation is suggested in the opening words, “Now these are the names”.

Author Its authorship by Moses is distinctly asserted by himself, Exod. 24:3,4,7. He sang the hymn found in chapter 15, and according to 17:14. Moses wrote in a book the promise of Jehovah to destroy Amalek from the face of the earth. The book gives every evidence of having been written by an eye-witness of Israel’s journeys. The book is ascribed to Moses in Deuteronomy 31:9-11; Joshua 1:7; Nehemiah 9:14. Note in the early chapters the repetition of the phrase, “The Lord spake unto Moses”; it is used to open chapters 6,7,8,9,10,11,12. The book gives us both the observations of Moses and divine communications to Moses. He “tells” the words of the Lord; he “writes” them, and then “reads” them to the people.

Authority Its authenticity is confirmed by our Lord in Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37; John 5:46. God is represented as speaking as One who was known to the Patriarchs, 3:6. Note our Lord’s appeal in Mark 7:8-13 and the language of Acts 7:17-44. The word “exodus”, translated “decease”, is used of our Lord’s work accomplished at Jerusalem in Luke 9:31. By His death and resurrection, He was about to make a “way out” for believers from the bondage of sin. Paul refers to the covenant of Exodus in Galatians 3:17, and he shows the “passover” is a type of our redemption in Christ, 1 Cor. 5:7.

Aim This is to record the emancipation of the nation, their education in the wilderness, and their association with the tabernacle for worship. It opens with Israel crushed and crying as a helpless slave, and closes with Israel redeemed, related, enriched and free. Their deliverance was effected by the death of the Paschal Lamb and the power of God. We can trace the history of the carnal Christian in their experiences, 1 Cor. 10:1-6.

The book carries on the story of the preservation of that people out of whom Messiah was to come, Matt. 2:15. The chosen people in Egypt have become "a great nation", they have "multiplied" and become "mighty". "There is a gap between Genesis and Exodus of nearly 280 years, from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses", Rawlinson.

The dominant note of the book is deliverance or redemption. The *man* God used, Moses, is a type of Christ, for redemption centres in the Man Christ Jesus. Compare chapters 1-6 with Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:12-14. Note, too, the *miserable state* of the nation, chs. 1-2, 7-11; the *means of redemption*, both by blood, ch. 12, and by power, ch. 14; the *message of redemption* seen in the law, the *motive of redemption* being salvation, separation and service, chs. 13-24; and the *medium* by which it is enjoyed set forth in the tabernacle, chs. 25-40.

Appeal In this book we see God's hand in human history. God raised up Moses to be the leader of the nation, to bring them out of bondage into liberty. God revealed Himself to Moses as Jehovah, the Covenant God, assuring him that the *divine Presence* was his fitness, the *divine Name* was his message, and the *divine Power* was his capacity. What God had promised the Patriarchs, He will accomplish, and He will bring Israel out of Egypt into Canaan. The mighty hand of God is seen:

In providing for Israel, 1:5, and preserving them, 1:7-17;
 In preparing Moses as a deliverer, 2:2,11; 3:1-22;
 In punishing those who oppose His purposes, chs. 4-12;
 In protecting and providing for the nation, chs. 13-40.

Message The Sovereignty of God is revealed by Self-revelation:
 To Moses, His plans and purposes in redemption;
 To Pharaoh, His power in righteous judgment;
 To Israel, His salvation, with its privileges and responsibilities.

Suggested Analysis The contents may be considered as follows:
 Israel in Egypt, chs. 1-12, slavery, salvation;
 Israel in the wilderness, chs. 13-18, separated and supplied;
 Israel at Sinai, chs. 19-40, sanctified and serving.

SUBJUGATION, 1:1 to 11:10 THE NEED OF REDEMPTION

The Multiplied People, ch. 1, "Bondage".

Its cause, 1-10; its character, 11-16; its consequences, 17-22.

The Mighty Prophet, chs. 2-4, "Burdened".

Moses, his preservation, 2:1-10; rejection, 11-25; occupation, 3:1; his revelation from God, 3:4 to 4:26.

The Master Plan, 4:29 to 11:10, "Blight in Egypt".

The plan resisted, ch. 5; Pharaoh's defiance, 1-9; his demands, 10-23. The plan revealed, ch. 6; Jehovah's promise, 1-13; his people, 14-30. The plan rejected, 7:10 to 11:10; Pharaoh's determination brings disaster.

The nine plagues were directed against the Egyptian deities. The river god judged, 7:14-25; frog goddess judged, 8:1-15; earth god judged, 8:16-19; the sacred beetle, 8:20-32; the sacred bull, 9:1-7; the goddess Neit, 9:8-12; priestism judged, 9:13-35; atmosphere god, 10:1-20; the sun god, 10:21-29. Egypt's sovereign rebuked, magicians defeated, devotees disheartened and idols demolished.

EMANCIPATION, chs. 12-18. THE POWER OF REDEMPTION.

Sheltered, ch. 12. The spotless lamb, 1-6; sheltering blood, 7-12, 21-27; special memorial, 14-20; simple obedience, 24-28; and speedy departure, 29-42.

Sanctified, ch. 13. The new life, 1-16; the new leading, 17-22.

Salvation, ch. 14. Directions, 1-4; determination, 5-9; despair, 10-12; dependance, 13-14; deliverance, 15-22; destruction, 23-31.

Singing, ch. 15. The song of triumph, 1-21; season of trial, 22-25; supplies from God, 26-27.

Sustenance, ch. 16. The manna given by God, gathered in the morning, good food from heaven, Ps. 78:24,25.

Satisfied, ch. 17. Water from the rock, 1-7; war with Amalek, 8-13; worthy memorial, 14-16.

Seasonal Counsel, ch. 18. Acknowledge God's power, 1,9,10; appreciate His supremacy, 11; and His presence, 12; have associates in service, 19-26.

OBLIGATION, chs. 19-24. THE CLAIMS OF REDEMPTION.

Preparation for the Law, ch. 19. *Spiritual Life*.

Declaration of His purpose, 1-8; preparation of His people, 9-15; manifestation of His power, 16-20; communication to His people, 21-25;

Revelation of the Law, ch. 20. *Moral Life*.

Foundation, 1-2; obligation—Godward, 3-11; manward, 12-17; impression, 18-21; injunctions, 22-26;

Regulation of the Law, chs. 21-23. *Social Life*.

Masters and servants, 1-11; physical injuries, 12-36; property rights, 22:1-15; evil practices, 22:16 to 23:9; Sabbath and feasts, 10-19;

Recognition of the Law, ch. 24. *Religious Life*.

Association, 1-2; acceptance, 3-8; ascent of the mount, 9-18.

ASSOCIATION, chs. 25-40. THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION.

The Institution of the Tabernacle, chs. 25-27. Preparation, 25:1-7; plan, 25:8 to 27:21; purpose, 25:8,22.

The Ordination of the Priesthood, chs. 28-29. Calling, clothing, consecration.

The Provision of Workmen, ch. 31. Engaged, equipped, encouraged.

The Transgression of the People, chs. 32-34. Idolatry, 1-6; indignation, 7-10; intercession and restoration, ch. 34.

The Construction of the Tabernacle, chs. 35 to 39; 32. The programme of and provision for the work, chs. 35-36; participation in, and progress of, the work, chs. 37 to 39:32.

The Completion and the Consecration of the Tabernacle, 39:33 to 40:38.

For your Study Trace occurrences of the words, “brought forth, up and out”, over forty times.

Key words, “The Lord said”, eighty times; “I will”, over seventy times; “Thou shalt” and “shalt not”, two hundred times; and “as the Lord commanded”, over twenty times.

Find time to study the tabernacle and priesthood.

Exodus is of great value as a picture book of many New Testament truths. We shall notice some lessons from the section which we may entitle.

Israel in Egypt, chs. 1 to 12. **Enslaved and Emancipated.** The background of redemption opens with the sad picture of sin’s bondage and the people’s need of a deliverer. They were

Enslaved, chs. 1 to 11. The bondage of Israel in Egypt illustrates our spiritual condition before God rescued us from slavery. Peter refers to our vain manner of life from which we have been redeemed, 1 Pet. 1:18. Paul reminds the Romans that they were the slaves of sin, and that sin had dominion over them, Rom. 6:14,17.

The devil, like Pharaoh and Herod his instruments, is in determined opposition to the purpose of God. He attempts to destroy the promised seed, Exod. 1:16; cf. Matt. 2:15-16. He is called the “prince of this world”, John 12:31, the “god of this world”, 2 Cor. 4:4, and the “prince of the power of the air”, Eph. 2:2. Despite all the efforts of the arch-enemy, we read of Israel’s expansion, Exod. 1:7, although this leads to their persecution, 1:8-14. While the devil is bent on the destruction of the people of God, and “man proposes” to fulfil his malicious purpose, yet “God disposes”. It has ever been true if God be for us, who can be against us?

God promised a deliverer in Moses, who was fair to God, Acts 7:20 R.V. marg. Rejected by Israel, he turns to the Gentiles, Exod. 2:11-15; Acts 7:25-29; cf. Acts 18:5-6. So our Lord identified Himself with His brethren, Heb. 2:11,16-18; He had compassion on them because of their burdens, and hence came to save them, Matt. 9:35-36; Gal. 4:5. Moses, like the Lord Jesus, sat by a well, Exod. 2:15; John 4:6, and obtained a bride, Exod. 2:21;

Eph. 5:30-32. The angel of the Lord, Exod. 3:2, is the pre-incarnate Christ who brings the revelation of God, and there are lessons to be learned from this as suggested by Matthew 22:31-32. He came to deliver, to save, to redeem, and to enrich, 2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 2:14; Col. 1:12-14.

The "gospel" of Moses is full of promise and power; the seven "I wills" of Jehovah, Exod. 6:6-8, are assured of fulfilment for our God cannot lie, Titus 1:2. How much more blessedly liberating is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In chapters 7 to 11 we see the display of divine power against the deities of Egypt, and the devices of Pharaoh are also exposed, 8:25-28. Despite all, the judgment of God is sure, 9:18; 2 Pet. 3:10, severe and swift, Exod. 9:24-25; 2 Pet. 3:7,10. The divine comments on the history show that men fit themselves as vessels to destruction, Rom. 9:17,22. God does not desire the death of any; He is not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. 3:9. The final judgment upon the firstborn, Psa. 136:10, may remind us that the strength, pride and glory of man will yet be judged (this will reach its climax in the Beast and False Prophet, Rev. 19:19-21).

After the various judgments the people of Israel were

Emancipated, ch. 12. Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 invites us to see our deliverance through Christ our passover in the history recorded there. The blood of the spotless lamb, v. 5, was shed, v. 6, sprinkled, v. 7, and seen, v. 13. It marked the beginning of a new life, v. 2, a new liberty, 13:3, and a new fellowship, 12:14; Eph. 2:13; 1 John 1:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; Rom. 6:12-23.

There are many lessons too in the section which we might entitle

Israel in the Wilderness, chs. 13 to 18. **Experience and Encouragement.** We find the people now delivered from Egypt.

Sanctified, ch. 13. God claims the firstborn on the ground of redemption, "it is mine", v. 2. We are to yield ourselves and our bodies a living sacrifice to God, Rom. 6:13b; 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20. Israel was to learn through wilderness trials what a loving, powerful and faithful God Jehovah is. There was to be no leaven seen with them, v. 7, for the leaven represents false doctrine, Matt. 16:6,11,12, the old nature, and the malice and wickedness sometimes in evidence among the people of God, 1 Cor. 5:8.

God selected their route, vv. 17,18; He gave them a stimulus along the way, v. 19, and the shadow of the cloud, vv. 21,22; Psa. 121:6. So He leads us by His Word and by the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:14.

Saved, ch. 14. Pharaoh and his chariots may picture Satan and sin, the sea the wrath of God, and the pillar of cloud and fire the Holy Spirit. Crisis is met by consternation in the people, 14:10-12, but in it the consolation and the command from God is given, vv. 13-16. May we "go forward" v. 15, with

confidence in the divine power, vv. 18-19, conscious of His presence, and leave the conquest to God, vv. 21-25; Rom. 8:37-39.

Singing, ch. 15. Note the time, v. 1, its theme which is of God and is presented to God, who is strong, v. 2, holy, v. 11, and merciful, v. 13. Its testimony to the past and the present, vv. 3-10, is followed by the truths that are established through it, vv. 11-17. Triumph is followed by trials, v. 23, but these can be turned into blessings, v. 25.

Sustained, ch. 16. The manna reminds us of God's gift to us (see John 6), and was to be gathered fully, vv. 16-17, daily, v. 19, and early, v. 21. In John 6 the Lord Jesus makes plain that the manna is a type of Himself. Like Him, the manna was divine in its descent, indispensable, undeserved, freely given, suitable, sufficient and satisfying.

Satisfied and Successful, ch. 17. Paul states that "that Rock was Christ", 1 Cor. 10:4. In Him we have shelter, safety, strength and satisfaction. Water from the rock was followed by war with Amalek, vv. 8-13.

Finally, we may consider some lessons suggested by the section that we entitle

Israel at Sinai, chs. 19 to 40. **Educated and Enriched.** With respect to their education (see chapters 19-24) they first *recognize the will of God in the moral life*, chs. 19-20. There is first the preparation, ch. 19. In the declaration of God's purpose, vv. 1-8. He shows that He is seeking to meet with us and speak with us. Sanctification of the people, vv. 9-15, finds its counterpart in our being sanctified by His blood, Heb. 13:12; 10:10. The manifestation of His power, vv. 16-25, makes us tremble with reverence. Peter sums up our privileges in 1 Peter 2:9.

Following the preparation come the precepts, ch. 20. The ten commandments are the spiritual basis of the covenant emphasizing lessons on religion and morality. Our worship should be reverent, our love to others real.

In their education we see further the *application of God's will in our social life*, chs. 21-23. We learn something concerning its application to persons, 21:1-36, to property, 22:1-15, and to evil practices, 22:16-23:9. Then, concerning piety, we are to give liberally, walk humbly, obey fully, trust continually, and serve faithfully, 23:10-33. Notice in chapter 24 that we should read the book, vv. 3,4,7; we should rely on the blood, vv. 5,6,8, and reach the mount, vv. 12-18.

With respect to their being enriched, we note how they were to share in the divine service. They were told what they should bring, 25:1-7, and how they should build, 25:8 to 27:21. So it is with us. In the ordination of the

priesthood we find many parallels with our privileged position. We too are called, cleansed, clothed, anointed and consecrated in association with our High Priest. We function in the holy place, Heb. 10:20, and offer our gifts, Heb. 13:15. In chapters 30-31 the regulations for service introduce the fitness for, and freedom of, worship, whilst chapter 31 shows the men that God uses in His service and the rest that He gives.

How easily we fall from spiritual privilege to sinful perversion is shown in chapters 32 to 34. Compromise destroys truth, and Paul uses these facts to admonish us in 1 Corinthians 10. In days of failure we need men like Moses, a noble practitioner of prayer. Divine displeasure makes the punishment of sin inevitable. That day Israel lost the priesthood; it was given to Levi, Deut. 33:8. In chapter 33 we see God's concern for His own righteousness, and His glory is seen in His goodness, Psalms 84:11. In chapter 34 we see the God of gracious countenance yet of stern demand. Fellowship is dependent upon righteousness, Exodus 34:10-17, 29-35.

What a privilege and a delight it is to be engaged in God's service, chapters 35-40. Here Israel are seen at their best in giving, and bringing their substance to God in gratitude and praise. They gave so lavishly that Moses had to restrain them, 36:6. All that they brought was used in the building and service of the tabernacle which was ordained, designed, and occupied by God Himself. Concerning the tabernacle we may note

Its Construction, chapters 35-39. The materials required, 35:4:19, are willingly supplied, 35:20 to 36:7. The people and the rulers gave individually and collectively, and their hands were diligently employed for God. The cheerful giver, and the devoted servant still delight the heart of God. The vastness of the offering, metals and materials, is followed by the variety of the operations undertaken by men specially fitted by God for the task. The various parts are assembled, and the priestly garments are made.

Its Completion, 39:32 to 40:16. The work is finished and the tabernacle is erected. There was work for all, and in the advancement of God's cause, whatever our gift, however humble, it can be used for Him in His service, 1 Cor. 12-14; Eph. 4:7-13.

Its Consecration, 40:17-38. Note the expressions "he spread", "he took", "he brought", "he set", "he lighted the lamps". All was made according to the divine pattern, then filled with the divine glory. What lovely pictures of Christ as Priest, Mediator, Light, Life, Food, Saviour, and Sanctifier, are given to us here. Trace the close correspondence of order between the details given of the tabernacle with the development of Hebrews, and John's portrait of the Lord in his gospel. We rejoice in a finished work, and glory in a risen, exalted, and glorified Man in heaven. May we draw near through Him, and worship Him, John 9:38.

Exodus 12

A New Beginning

Verses 1 and 2. This month. The only nation with two new years: a sacred year and a civil year.

Israel begins its year with the *emancipation from Egypt*.

The believer begins with the *incarnation of Christ*.

The main points in the narrative:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Revelation from God | v.1 where they were |
| 2. Foundation of all | a new start needed |
| 3. Communication of the truth | v.3 'speak' |
| 4. Substitution for the house | v.3 'every man a lamb' |
| 5. Application of the blood | v.7 'and they shall take of the blood' |
| 6. Confirmation of God | v.13 'When I see the blood' |

The Meaning and Message of the Red Sea

For Israel there were two stages in redemption:

1) By blood, Exod. 12. God appears as JUDGE and they needed shelter from judgment. One means of salvation—a lamb slain; one means of safety—behind the blood.

2) By power, Exod. 14. God appears as a DELIVERER at the Red Sea; deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt. Ch.12 is the teaching of Romans ch.3, faith in the blood of Christ. Ch.14 is faith in God bringing deliverance, the teaching of Romans chs.4,5.

Exod. 12 Sheltered from judgment. All Divine claims met. Col. 1:14.

Exod. 13 Sanctified to God. Surrendering all to God. 1 Cor. 6:19-21; 2 Cor. 5:15.

Exod. 14 Salvation from Egypt, the world. Salvation enjoyed, Col. 1:13; Gal. 1:4.

Pharaoh is a type of Satan in his power. Heb. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4. Egypt is a type of the world, Isa. 31:1; 1 John 2:15-17. We need to be delivered from its evil, Gal. 1:4; John 17:14-15. The sea illustrates the wrath of God; the pillar of cloud and fire—the work of the Holy Spirit.

Exodus ch.14 tells of:

Difficulty 1-13; Deliverance 14-22; and Defeat 23-31 (for the Egyptians).

1. DIVINE DIRECTION, vs.1-12 Help in difficulty

We are not exempt from trouble but are assured of God's presence in trial, Isa. 43:1-2. The Lord communicates with His people through a Mediator (vs.1-2), then and now (1 Tim. 2:5).

The Preparation, vs.1-4

The Lord is in command of our journey through life. Psalms 73:28, even when we are entangled v.3. The sea was before them, Pharaoh's hosts behind them, and the mountains around them but God was for them, Rom. 8:31-32.

Their camping ground Pi-hahir-oth, meaning "mouth of the caverns" or "opening of liberty" may signify that liberty is near. Still on the borders of Egypt there is the subtilty of the world, 2 Tim. 4:10; the strength of the law, Gal. 5:1, and the strong power of Pharaoh, Eph. 6:11. Satan longs to see us "entangled in the land", Some saints love the comfort of Egypt rather than wilderness provision, but Christ can set us free from the world, Gal. 1:4.

Pharaoh is lured to his destruction, and brought to defeat, Heb. 2:14. Note God's threefold purpose in v.4.

The Pursuit, vs.5-9

Pharaoh's concern v.5. In his heart there is revenge, remorse and retaliation. Like Satan who pursues us, he brings up our past and beclouds our future. We see Pharaoh's champions, chariots and captains vs.6-7; but the might and wisdom of the world will be brought to nought, 1 Cor. 1:19-20. Satan still pursues the Church, Acts 12:1-2; Rev. 12:13-15.

We are not ignorant of his devices.

"Horses" typify the pride and ungodliness of the world.

How often the Devil overtakes us and desires us, Luke 22:21

We need deliverance from the law and the power of iniquity, Gal. 4:3-13.

The Perplexity, vs.10-12

Their foes vs.5-9 give rise to fear, vs.10-12; This is expressed in reflection, "no graves in Egypt"; regret, "wherefore hast thou?"; and remonstrance, "Let us alone". What if they had been left alone as in Mk. 5:17? They panic and cry out in consternation at the sight of the enemy. They had not learned to trust God and keep their eyes on the pillar ch.13:21-22. How often the Lord is the forgotten factor. True of Pharaoh, after all he had seen of the Lord's power, he still pursued Israel. They soon forgot all that God had done for them and became depressed. Like them we look at circumstances, and panic, Matt. 14:26; Mk. 6:50, and forget the promise of Rom. 8:31.

v.13. Advance was impracticable, escape appeared impossible, death appeared inevitable, but there was a God invisible.

Distress v.10 leads to doubt v.11, and fear makes us forget God, Isa. 51:12-13; and brings doubt, Matt. 14:31. How fickle they were, crying unto God, then reproaching Moses. Their disgrace "let us alone." They went back in heart to the old life in Egypt when things went wrong, 16:3; 17:3; Num. 14:2; 21:5. We should never leave the Lord out of our calculations.

2. DIVINE DELIVERANCE, vs.13-17 Hope in the Lord

They are about to be delivered from the dominion of Pharaoh and later introduced into the land.

The Promise, vs.13-14

Three things in the message from God:

a) *Fears Allayed* "fear not," the assurance of faith. Exercise simple faith in God and be courageous. Simply trusting God every day on the way. Faith's attitude, "stand still," here is the rest of faith. God requires us to put our whole trust in Him. Every movement of nature is a possible hindrance to our enjoyment of the experience of God's power. Our salvation is not of WORKS, "stand still", nor of WORDS, "hold your peace".

b) *Freedom Assured* “the salvation of the Lord”, “the Lord shall fight for you.” They needed two things in deliverance—from Satan’s power as represented in Pharaoh, from death and judgment, as seen in the Red Sea.

We may see the Lord’s salvation as we look at Calvary. His death secures everything for us. Romans chapters 3 to 5 tell of blessings based on redemption. The beauty of them—taking in Abraham before the law, and David apart from the law. The breadth of them in Rom. 5. Godward—peace, justification, access; selfward—justified.

The Lord has shown His salvation in the death, resurrection and glory of Christ and the work of the Spirit in our hearts and lives. The benefit of them—the five “much mores”—v.9 assurance, v.10 maintenance, v.15 beneficence, v.17 benevolence, v.20 transcendence.

c) *Foes Doomed* “see them no more.” The defeat of the Devil is as sure as Pharaoh’s end, Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:10. The worlding may flourish, Psalms 37:1, but one day they will be “gone for ever,” Psalms 37:10; Mal. 4:3; Rev. 20:10-14. Victory is sure, “the Lord shall fight for you.” Our Lord has waged war and won the battle, Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14. He is still our Defender, our safety lies in complete trust in Him.

The Preservation vs.15-18

After consolation comes command vs.15-16. There is *instruction as to movements*, v.15, “Go forward.” There are times when action is needed and not intercession. Believing prayer must be turned into action in spite of insurmountable barriers to progress.

We should go from “strength to strength,” Psalms 84:5, and from “glory to glory,” 2 Cor. 3:18.

Instruction as to method, v.16. “Lift up thy rod.” The rod was the sign of authority and power. By an act of judgment our redemption was effected, Rom. 8:3. God claims the sea and demonstrates His power over it, as did our Lord, Mk. 4:39; 6:48,49. “Divide it” a way was made through it. So Christ passed through death, rose again and ascended in glory to Heaven, Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 1:21; Phil. 2:9.

He became the way at Calvary and we died with Him, Rom. 6:8.

Intention vs.16-18. The movement of the waters made a dry way and a highway for the hosts of Israel bringing deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt.

The defeat of the enemy is assured, v.17; the hosts of Egypt pursue unaware that God’s purpose is being fulfilled.

They rushed to utter destruction, not one Egyptian was saved, not one Israelite lost.

3. DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY, vs.19-31 Horror yet honour

a) Intervention, vs.19-27

(1) Note *The protection God gave*, vs.19-20. This is seen in two ways; the

removal of the pillar and the division of the sea. "The angel of God", perhaps the pre-incarnate Christ, who often has this title in the O.T. God thus interposed between His blood-bought people and their pursuers. God undertakes the cause of the feeblest of them who are under the shelter of the blood. As the angel went before them to lead and guide so we have the Spirit and the Word of God for our guidance.

"He led them safely" *Psa.* 78:53. The angel moved behind in order to shield the Israelites, *Rom.* 8:31.

v.20. The pillar is both dark and light, confounding the foes and comforting the friends of God, showing both His goodness and His severity, *Rom.* 11:22. our enemies are utterly cut off from the light, *1 John* 5:18.

(2) *The passage through*, vs.21-22. They are by the sea delivered and defended. The very sea they dreaded, v.9, became a means of salvation. Instead of it being their enemy it had become their friend. The night of Calvary, *Matt.* 27:45, delivers us from the power of Satan and of death, *Heb.* 2:14-15,22. They are baptised in the cloud and in the sea, *1 Cor.* 10:2.

The former is the teaching of *Rom.* 5; the latter is *Rom.* 6. We died unto sin and we live unto God, *Rom.* 6:10,18,22.

(3) *The punishment*, vs.23-25. The enemy were destroyed IN the sea THROUGH which Israel was delivered, *Heb.* 11:29. The "morning watch" reminds us of the resurrection morning, *Matt.* 28:1,6. Christ has overcome the world and the prince of this world is judged, *John* 12:21; *Col.* 2:14. The "morning watch" of intervention, v.24; of instruction, *Hab.* 2:1; of intercession, *Isa.* 62:6; and of interest, *Mk.* 14:67.

(b) **The Issue**, vs.28-31

Direction, v.26. The waves of judgment will return again to drown and destroy the ungodly, *Rev.* 6:16; *Psa.* 112:10.

Defeat, v.27. The demonstration of God's power will overwhelm the wicked in a coming day, *2 Pet.* 3:9,10; *2 Thess.* 1:8,9. There will be no escape, *Heb.* 2:3.

Destruction, v.28. There can be no escape apart from Christ. He is the only way of safety, *2 Cor.* 1:10; *Rom.* 8:1. After the day of judgment there will remain not one of the enemies of God, *Psa.* 37:8,10; *Ezek.* 28:10.

Delight, v.29. What security Israel had that day. Ours is even greater, *John* 5:24; *Jude* 1.

Deliverance, v.30. Their salvation was Divine and permanent, *1 Cor.* 10:13; *Jonah* 2:9. We can be glad and rejoice, *Psa.* 9:13; 13:5; *Phil.* 3:1; 4:4.

Discovery, v.31. "They saw that great work". The work of Calvary is the foundation of all God's purposes of love and grace, *Psa.* 22:31; *1 Pet.* 1:20. This was a work wrought FOR them IN them. Holy fear should be the result, *1 Pet.* 1:17. There was faith in God and in His messenger.

Deliverance gave them something to sing about, *ch.15*; *Psa.* 40:1-3.

The Time, "then" v.1. The Theme v.3. The Testimony vs.2,6. The Truth of the song vs.13,16,17.

Christ in the Tabernacle

Exodus ch.40

Importance Two chapters are given to describe the creation of this beautiful world and no less than fifty chapters in our Bible to the construction, ritual and priesthood of the Tabernacle.

There are thirteen in Exodus, eighteen in Leviticus, thirteen in Numbers, two in Deuteronomy, four in Hebrews and references to it in Revelation. The Tabernacle has meaning, are “types” (1 Cor. 10:11); and a message, “the pattern of things in the heavens” (Heb. 9:23; Rev. 21:3).

Interpretation Typology is fascinating but not fanciful and we must let scripture be its own interpreter and our only guide. John’s Gospel and the Hebrew epistle expound Tabernacle types and offerings. Find the vessels of this holy dwelling in John 17.

(1) A type of the Lord Jesus (John 1:14 R.V.; Heb. 8:2,5; 8:6,9; 9:1-12,23). God meets us in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19); reveals Himself in Christ (John 14:7-9); speaks to us in Christ (John 5:39; 8:42-47; Heb. 1:2); and accepts us in Christ (Eph. 1:6,7).

(2) Of the church as God’s dwelling-place (Exod. 25:8; Matt. 18:20); and His house (1 Pet. 2:2-5,9), and His sanctuary (1 Cor. 3:11 R.V.; Col. 1:20-29).

(3) Of the Christian, our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19,20). From entering the gate the ministry and services of all the vessels illustrate Christian experience; meditate on this.

Instruction Exodus 40 v. 1 informs us that the Tabernacle was the subject of Divine revelation and is important as it illustrates the way of redemption in Christ (Rom. 3:25). A new year began when the Tabernacle was set up, a picture of the Gospel age which began with the Day of Pentecost. God begins with the **Ark of Testimony** in the Holy of Holies, the Lord Jesus our propitiation now in heaven at God’s right hand (1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 8:1). The Ark speaks of the centrality and supremacy of Christ. The Ark with its mercy-seat, was the throne of God and the symbol of His Presence (25:22). Its composition speaks of the twofold nature of our Lord, perfect humanity and Deity, the God-Man, risen and glorified (Heb. 2:9). Gold “within and without” the reality of His divine nature (John 1:1-2; 1:14; Phil. 2:6). The contents of the Ark, the obedience of Christ (Psa. 40:8). The manna, the sufficiency of Christ (John 6:51). Its anointing (20:25,26); the baptism and consecration of Christ; the mercy-seat, Christ our propitiation (Rom. 3:25).

The Table (v. 4; 22-23) “Bring in”—the acceptance of Christ (Col. 2:5);

“Set in order—the obedience of Christ (John 6:38); “the bread in order”—the abundance of Christ, God feasted on the fulness and freshness of Christ. Fellowship with God depends on redemption. All in order, priestly exercise must be according to Divine revelation (1 Cor. 14:33). The bread for the priests only, the privilege of communion.

“Crowns” (25:24,25). His glorious exaltation (Phil. 2:9; Heb. 2:9); and His twofold Headship, of Creation and of the Church (Col. 1:15,18); Many crowns (Rev. 19:12).

“Before the Lord” (40:23). His acceptability to God on earth and now in heaven. “Twelve loaves,” the unity of the nation of Israel (Lev. 24:6), also the Church as one body. “Six in a row”, may suggest Jew and Gentile all united in Christ (Eph. 2:15; Col. 3:11). The frankincense, the preciousness of Christ (1 Pet. 2:7) and His divine worthiness. The Lord Jesus is the sustainer of His people.

The Lampstand (v.4b; 24:25). The perfection, preciousness and reliability of Christ in the sanctuary for His saints. Study it for its position, composition, association, decoration, illumination and supervision and pray, “Lord, show me Thy glory”.

The Lampstand was the costliest and most beautiful of all the holy vessels. Its purpose was to give light in the holy place, for priestly service to God; its formation, “of beaten work, of pure gold” (25:31). The sufferings of the Cross (Heb. 5:8). “Gold”, the glory of His Sonship, deity and righteousness shone out in Him. “Made of one piece”, the living oneness and union of Christ and His people (John 14:20).

“Lighted the lamps” (40:25), the light of perception to worship and serve intelligently (1 John 1:7; Psa. 36:9).

“His shaft” (25:31) the pre-eminence of Christ (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:12,13; Heb. 1:9; 2:11). Six branches going out (37:20). Our union with Him and dependence upon Him for every grace and blessing (John 15:5; Eph. 4:13,16; 2 Pet. 1:4). The oil for the light, the fulness of the Spirit resting upon Christ (Matt. 3:16; Luke 4:14; John 3:34). The bowls, knops and flowers (25:31) tell of His life of purity, resurrection, power and productiveness (Num. 17:8) Pentecost is the outcome of Calvary (John 7:39).

The Brazen Altar (vs.6,29) The sufficiency of Christ for salvation (Acts 4:12; John 1:29). “Before the door” (vs.6,29; the accessibility and availability of Christ (Gen. 4:7; Rom. 10:8-11). Its materials, wood and copper; the “wood”, His imperishable sinless humanity; “copper”, strong, righteous and enduring character, mighty to save, His wonderful capacity to bear the judgment for us (Isa. 53:10; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).

“Horns” the symbol of power, they were at each corner and pointed in every direction, the sufficiency of His sacrificial work for the world (John 1:29). The strength and security of God’s salvation (John 10:18; Psa. 118:27). It was His love for sinners that bound the Saviour to the cross (Matt. 20:28). There is Divine power, Divine love and Divine security in

salvation (Eph. 2:4-8). Their union with the altar (27:2 R.V.). God's saving power is inseparably linked with Christ's atonement (Rom. 8:32,34). Chapter 40:29c Burnt Offering, Christ's entire dedication to the will of God (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 10:5-7); Meat Offering, the perfections of Christ the food of His people.

The Laver (v. 7; 30-2). The Brazen Altar, our justification, the Laver our sanctification (John 17:17-19; 1 Cor. 6:11; Psa. 26:6). the ministry of Christ to us through the Spirit and the Word of God (John 13:5).

No specifications as to size or shape are given of the Laver. The Word of God is unlimited in its power and application (Psa. 19:7-12; 119:9,16,24,25).

The laver was made of copper, looking glasses provided by the women who assembled at the door of the Tabernacle (38:8). It speaks of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus as expressed in His cross work. The self-judgment of the women teach us not to be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2). The Altar, Christ's work for me; the Laver, His work in me. Judicial righteousness—justification, is followed by personal righteousness—sanctification (Eph. 5:25,26). There is the initial cleansing (Tit. 3:5), and the continual cleansing (ch. 30:20,21; 40:30-32; John 13:10).

Chapter 40:31 the hands speaking of priestly work and feet suggesting their walk. We must be clean for altar work (v. 32; John 15:3). Without holiness we cannot see God (Lev. 19:2; Heb. 13:14; 10:21,22). A looking glass speaks of self-scrutiny (Jas. 1:23,25). Confession and cleansing should precede worship. We should not bring the Laver (confession) into the Tabernacle (Place of worship). The Laver was outside, there was no worship in the outer court.

The Court and the Gate (vs.8,32). The gate is Christ in presentation, inviting any to enter (John 10:9; Matt. 11:28) Christ the way into a new experience and relationship. (John 1:36-39; 4:29,40,41). But one gate, the way to God and forgiveness (1 Tim. 2:5). One way for all—rich or poor, good or bad (John 14:6).

A strongly-supported gate, it hung on four pillars. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is supported by four infallible pillars, each presenting a different aspect of Him, the only way to God. The needlework that went to make up the righteousness of Christ, wrought out in His obedience in life. There is the blue of royalty (John 19:2,37); the purple of power (Matt. 5:30,44); and the scarlet of cleansing (Matt. 8:2,3). Our Lord is the divine Son—blue; the divine Sovereign—purple; the divine Saviour—scarlet; and the divine Servant—white.

The Court "Linen" the holiness and righteousness of Christ (Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14; 1 John 3:5). This is Christ in manifestation (John 18:6; 19:6; Luke 5:8).

The curtain acted as a barrier, a white wall suggesting righteousness, barring the way to God. His righteousness shuts *out* the sinner (Isa. 59:2). To those inside, they were shut *in*, encompassed by Divine righteousness

(Rom. 4:6,7; Isa. 61:10; 1 Cor. 1:30). The brass sockets (27:10); represent sin judged (Num. 21:9). The believer stands on a righteous basis before God (2 Cor. 5:21). God's justice (the brass of divine judgment) and God's mercy (the silver of redemption) met at Calvary (Psa. 85:10).

For all the work there was anointing (40:9-15). The anointing oil is the Holy Spirit and like Aaron our Lord was clothed, anointed and sanctified (v. 13). He was clothed with human nature in the womb of the Virgin (Luke 1:35). This was essential to His Priesthood (Heb. 2:16). Anointed at His baptism (Matt. 3:16; Acts 10:38); and consecrated to priesthood (John 17:19).

"So Moses finished the work" (40:33). In all that work, there was a Pattern to work to (Heb. 8:5). Every detail was revealed to Moses under the guidance of the Spirit. A Presence to work for (v. 34), "the glory of the Lord". A Purpose to work out (Heb. 9:8). Every detail set forth the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the WAY:

The Way of Introduction	the Inviting Christ	the gate
The Way of Reconciliation	the Indispensable Christ	the brazen altar
The Way of Perfection	the Immaculate Christ	white curtains
The Way of Sanctification and Separation	the Inscrutable Christ	the laver
The Way of Illumination	the Illuminating Christ	the golden candlestick
The Way of Satisfaction	the Inexhaustible Christ	the table of shewbread
The Way of Intercession	the Interceding Christ	the altar of incense
The Way of Communion leading to glorification	the Indwelling Christ	the ark of the covenant
The Way of Direction	the Guiding Spirit	the cloud

ITS MESSAGE FOR TODAY From the wilderness without to the presence of God within the Holy of Holies there were seven steps: DECISION at the gate; ACCEPTANCE at the altar; CLEANSING at the laver; FELLOWSHIP at the table; TESTIMONY at the lampstand; INTERCESSION at the altar of incense, and WORSHIP within the veil.

Our experience at the Brazen Altar—pardoned by the blood of Christ. The Laver—purified by the Spirit and the Word of God. The Door—the

privilege of fellowship with God. The Coverings—the protection of Christ. The Lampstand—possessing the light of Christ in the sanctuary. The Table of Shewbread—partakers of Christ our food. The Golden Altar—our prayer and praise through Christ. The Inner Vail and the Ark—occupied with the Person and glory of Christ.

Máy our response be “Hallelujah, what a Saviour”.

“Abide with us”. “My Lord and my God”.

“The Tabernacle”

TYPIFIES CHRIST IN EVERY PART We see the:

Character of Christ	—Seen in the Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:17-22)
Humanity of Christ	in the Ark (Exodus 25:10-16)
Resurrection of Christ	in the Rod that budded (Hebrews 9:4)
Intercession of Christ	in the Golden Altar (Exodus 30:1-7)
Sufferings of Christ	in the Brazen Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)
Testimony of Christ	in the Golden Candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40)

Access to Tabernacle. Basis of Access—Shed blood, Hebrews 9:1-14. Shed—Hebrews 9:22. Sprinkled—Exodus 12:7. Sheltered—Exodus 12:23. **Forgiveness; Blessings of Access**—Communion with Him, John 15:5. Confidence in Him, 1 John 3:21—**Fellowship**—Beauty of Access. Only for us, Hebrews 10:19; opened to us, Hebrews 4:16; outcome of Suffering, Hebrews 10:20; **Family**—Eph. 2:19; 3:15.

Building of it. The Designer of the Building, Exodus 25:9; God Himself. **The Design of it**, Exodus 25:8; Glorious dwelling place. **The Directors of it**, Exodus 31:1-4; Guidance given to men. **Duration of it**, Wilderness only. Gracious provision of God.

Encamped around it—On East Side. Moses, Aaron and his sons, also we have Zebulun, Judah, Issachar, Numbers 2:1-9.

On West Side, Gershonites (Levites) Manasseh, Ephraim, Benjamin, Numbers 2:18-24.

On South Side, Kohathites (Levites) Simeon, Reuben, Gad, Numbers 2:10-17.

On North Side, Merarites (Levites) Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Numbers 2:25-34. In this we see:

1. Order of God—1 Corinthians 14:40
2. Obedience to God—Acts 4:19
3. Occupied with God—1 Chron. 4:23.

By this God-given arrangement we have:

1. SENTINELS to guard it—Numbers 1:53
2. LABOURERS to rear it—Numbers 1:51
3. CARRIERS to transport it—Numbers 4:1-49
4. SERVANTS to assist—Numbers 3:9
5. INSTRUCTORS to teach about it—2 Chron. 17:8-9.

Removing of it. When the Cloud moved they moved—Numbers 9:20-23

1. The Provision of God —An Unerring Guide, Nehemiah 9:18
2. The Purpose of God —An Unhindered Guidance, Numbers 9:20-23
3. The Path of God —An Unseen Path, Numbers 21:1-7
4. The Presence of God —An Unwavering Confidence, Hebrews 13:5
5. The Progress with God —A Universal Need, Exodus 13:18.

Needs of it. The oil for the lamp had to be continually supplied. The bread on the table was continually changed—Lev. 24:1-9;

The Oil Supplied—Fresh Power for the Christian—Eph. 5:18;

The Bread Changed—Feasting on the Person of Christ—John 6:33-40.

Appearance of it. It looked like a coffin. **To the public eye.**

White linen all round and upheld. It speaks of the **Righteousness of the Saints**, Rev. 19:8. Wooden Pillars with Silver and Brass—

Redemption of Saints, Exodus 31:15. Cloudy Pillar resting over the Holy of holies—**Reliable Guide of Saints.** Coverings on tabernacle—**Refuge of the Saint**, Psalms 31,20; **To the Privileged Eye.** Only the High Priest has the privilege of entering inside to see the beauty:

The Embroidered Curtain—Christ, the beloved of God, John 1:14;

The Golden Table—Christ, the Bread of God, John 6:33;

The Golden Lampstand—Christ, bruised by God, Isaiah 53:5;

The Golden Altar—Christ before God, Hebrews 9:24;

The Cherubim—The Justice and Judgment of God, Genesis 3:24;

The Veil—Jesus, the Way to God, Hebrews 10:20.

Coverings of it. There were four coverings, Exodus 26:1-24;

There were two EXTERNAL and two INTERNAL coverings,

Badger's skin—Christ, the Strange and Despised One.

Ram's skin—Christ, the Scorned and Devoted One.

Goat's hair covering—Christ, the Sent and Descended One.

Curtain of cunning work—Christ, the Supreme and Delighted One.

Light in it. In the Holy Place—Superficial Light, Exodus 25:37;

In the Holy of Holies—Supreme Light, Exodus 40:35;

The Candlestick shows Christian's constitution—and calling

Beaten—made by the suffering of the Son—to throw light on Christ

Oil always—maintained by the supply of the Spirit—to be a light for Christ.

The Glory Cloud in the Holy of Holies reminds us of the future when the Lamb shall be the light in the city—Revelation 21:23.

Excellency of Christ—more Excellent Sacrifice—Brazen Altar.

A more Excellent Satisfier and Sustainer—Golden Table.

A more Excellent Sanctuary—the Holy of Holies.

Leviticus

This is the central book of the Pentateuch, the book of sanctification, divinely enjoined and typically expressed. Its keywords are “atonement” (over forty times), and “holy” (over eighty times), and the key verses are 17:11 and 19:2. It *looks back* to redemption in Exodus and *looks forward* to pilgrimage in Numbers. Exodus tells me that I may live since Christ has died; in Leviticus I can approach for Christ is my Priest; in Numbers I should go on for Christ is my Leader.

Name The Hebrew title is taken from the opening words—“and he called”. “Leviticus” was the name given to this book by those who translated the Old Testament into Greek because it contained, as they said, the charges for the Levites. It has been called the “law of the priests”, and presents the law of approach, chs. 1-16, and the law of holiness, chs. 17-27, each being associated with sacrifice.

“Christ in His grace and work is the golden key to open every part. Leviticus is Calvary foreshown. Calvary is Leviticus unfolded. The one casts forward the morning ray. The other pours down the mid-day blaze” (William Law).

Writer The opening verses reveal that Moses had the subject matter of the book given to him. He is referred to fifty times. The book is part of the “book of the law”, and we are told over fifty times that “the law” was given by Moses. The testimony of the Lord and also the writer to the Hebrews, which is the divine commentary upon this book, are final. Here we have instruction concerning worship.

Authority It contains more of God’s direct utterance than any other part of the Bible of equal length, all introduced by the phrase “The Lord spake unto Moses saying”, which occurs thirty-six times. The basis of all its commands is “I am the Lord”, which is repeated forty-five times.

“It is fitting that Leviticus holds the central place among the five books of Moses, for, with its doctrine of mediation through a priest, absolution through a sacrifice, and reconciliation at the altar, it is the very heart of the Pentateuch and of the Gospel” (J. Sidlow Baxter).

Purpose Here are directions as to how a redeemed people may draw near to God in acceptable worship. Sacrifice and priesthood are necessary for the

maintenance of fellowship with God. The covenant with Israel established their relationship with God and this book shows that worship can be acceptable through blood shedding. The sacrifices were but types of that once for all offered sacrifice of Christ, Heb. 10:10,12. What is portrayed in Leviticus is perfected by Christ as unfolded in Hebrews.

Dr. A.T. Pierson speaks of the following purposes underlying the ceremonialism of this book:

- A sanitary purpose—guarding physical health.
- A salutary purpose—separating from surrounding nations.
- A typical purpose—in moral distinctions.
- A practical purpose—in diminishing carnal and sensual passions.
- A spiritual purpose—in antagonizing prevailing idolatry.
- A prophetic purpose—in forecasting the great atoning sacrifice.

Value The book is a revelation of the divine character, “be ye holy; for I am holy”, 11:44 R.V. The redeemed must be holy, for their Redeemer is holy. It is a treasure of symbolic and typical teaching. The space devoted to the “offerings” and the ritual surrounding them, clearly indicates the importance of the subject for us today. They say, “Get right with God”; the seven feasts say, “Keep right with God”.

Message The Holiness of God. The Holy God receiving His people, dwelling with them, blessing them, then warning them of judgments which will fall upon them through their departure. There are two main divisions; one is Godward telling of the way to God—by sacrifice, the foundation of fellowship, chs. 1-16; one is manward telling of the walk with God—by sanctification, the obligations of fellowship, chs. 17-27.

A Suggested Analysis

THE WAY OF APPROACH, 1:1 to 7:38. SACRIFICES OF THE PEOPLE.

Light on the Offerings, 1:1 to 6:7. Christ Presented.

- Ch. 1 *Burnt Offering.* Christ in consecration. His presentation to God, at the door; pre-eminence, “bullock”, Luke 9:51; peerless manhood, “male”, John 14:30; purity, “no blemish”, 1 Pet. 1:19; perfect surrender, “own will”, John 10:17-18.
- Ch. 2 *Meal Offering.* Christ’s character. Materials, vv. 1,6,12,13,14; manner, vv. 2,4,5,7; marks, vv. 1,2,3,8,11; message, vv. 2,8,9,12,14,16; moral, vv. 6,16, 1 Pet. 2:21-23.
- Ch. 3 *Peace Offering.* Christ in communion. Fellowship—its privilege, 7:16; experience, 3:2; anointing, 7:35; communion, 7:19-21; enjoyment, 7:29.

Ch. 4 *Sin Offering*. Christ the Sinbearer. Our Lord in presentation, 4:32; identification, 33; substitution, 35; restoration, 24,26,35; acceptance, 4,8,16,35; sanctification, 27,28; intercession, 15-17.

Ch. 5 *Trespass Offering*. Christ our Expiator. Condemnation, vv. 1,2,3; 6:1-2; provision, 7-11; substitution, 6; confession, 5; restoration, 6:1,2; compensation, 5:16.

The first three offerings present the Godward side of Calvary, while the sin and trespass offerings present the manward side.

Law of the Offerings, 6:8 to 7:38. *Practical and Spiritual Teaching*.

Burnt—live a consecrated life, Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:18.

Meal—have a commendable character, 1 Pet. 2:21-24.

Sin—confess your sin, 1 John 1:9; Jam. 5:16.

Trespass—correct and compensate for failure, Luke 19:8.

Peace—enjoy cloudless communion, Amos 3:3.

Drink—continued gladness of heart, Acts 2:46; Phil. 2:17.

THE WAY OF ACCESS, Chs. 8-10. SERVICE OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

Consecration, ch. 8. Calling, 1-5; cleansing, 6; clothing, 7-9,13; consecration, 10-30; appropriation, 31; separation, 33-35.

Ministration, ch. 9. Inaugurating the ministry, 1-22; preparation, 1-6; confirmation, 6; acceptance, 7-13; benediction, 14-22. Revelation of glory, 23-24.

Desecration, ch. 10. Violation of law, 1-7; preservation of principles, 8-15; restoration, 16-20.

THE WAY OF ACCEPTANCE, chs. 11-22. SEPARATION FROM ALL EVIL.

Laws of Purity. The Physical Man, chs. 11-15. *Selfward*.

Clean foods, ch. 11. Permission and prohibition 1-23; no contact with dead, 24-42; principle of holiness, 43-47.

Clean bodies, chs. 12 to 14:32. Childbirth; laws of purification, 12:2,4,5, of circumcision, 3, restoration, 7-8. Leprosy, ch. 13. Its character, confession, control. Its cleansing, 14:1-32.

Clean homes, 14:33-57.

Clean contacts, ch. 15. For men, 1-18; for women, 19-33.

Laws of Purity. The Spiritual Man, chs. 16-17. *Godward*.

Atonement, ch. 16. A day of humiliation, 4; representation, 5-11; propitiation, 12-15; imputation, 21,22; affliction, 29; relaxation, 29,30; pacification, 31-32.

Approach, ch. 17. Clean worship, the place, 2-9; prohibition, 10-16.

Laws of Purity. The Moral Man, chs. 18-20. *Manward*.

Family holiness, ch. 18. The basis, 2-4; barriers, 6-23; blight, 24-30.

Social holiness, chs. 19-20. Twenty commands and regulations, ch. 19.

Miscellaneous laws, ch. 20.

Priestly holiness, chs. 21-22. His family mourning, 1-6; marriage, 7-15.

His fellowship, 21:6 to 22:16; disqualification, 16-24; defilement, 22:1-16. His function, 22:17-33, sacrifices and service.

THE WAY OF ADORATION, chs. 23-24. SEASONS AND SUPPLIES.

Holy Seasons, ch. 23. Typical feasts telling of redemption, resurrection, reception of the Spirit, return of the Lord, reconciliation and rest.

Helpful Service, ch. 24. The privilege of believers, 1-9; punishment of blasphemer, 10-16.

THE WORD OF APPLICATION, chs. 25-27. SUBMISSION TO GOD.

Divine Recognition, ch. 25. The Sabbath year, 1-7; the year of jubilee, 8-55.

Divine Regulations, ch. 26. The path of obedience, 1-13; punishment of disobedience, 14-45.

Divine Requirements, ch. 27. Observation of vows as to persons, 2-8; animals, 9-13; houses, 14-15; lands, 16-24.

Suggestions for Closer Study. The offerings in chs. 1-7; the consecration of the priests in ch. 8; the day of atonement in ch. 16; Feasts of Jehovah in ch. 23; the year of jubilee in ch. 25.

Christ in the Offerings

Leviticus chapter one—The Life

His **consecration**—John's Gospel

His:

MEDIATION vs. 1-2

PRESENTATION v. 3

IDENTIFICATION v. 4

ACCEPTATION v. 5

DEVOTION v. 8

PERFECTION vs. 9-10

SATISFACTION vs. 13-17

Our:

ACCEPTANCE v. 5

APPRECIATION vs. 10, 14

Psalm 40

Leviticus chapter two—The Truth

His **character**—Four Gospels

Read chapter 6:14-23

MISSING FEATURES: Blood, Leaven, Atonement, Substitution

MATERIALS vs. 1, 6, 12, 13, 14

MANNER vs. 2, 4, 5, 7

MARKS vs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 10

MESSAGE vs. 2, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16

MORAL vs. 6, 16; 1 Peter 2:21-23

Psalm 16

Leviticus chapters three & seven

His **communion**—Luke's Gospel

PRIVILEGE 7:16; 1 Cor. 10:18

Peace—13 times Num. 7

Practice—Phil. 2:17

EXPERIENCE OF

Approach 3:2; 1 Pet. 2:3

Acceptance Psa. 54:6

ANOINTING 7:35

Capacity 1 Cor. 2:12-14

Communication 1 John 2:27
COMMUNION 7:19-21
 Need 1 John 1:6
 Nature 1 John 1:3
ENJOYMENT 7:29
 Feasting with God 7:28
 Feasting with Saints Num. 18:9-11
 Psalm 85

Leviticus chapters four & six—The Sin Bearer

The **curse** borne—Mark's Gospel

THE LORD IN:
PRESENTATION 4:32
 John 19:4; Mark 14:55,56
IDENTIFICATION 4:33
 Psa. 22:6; 69:5
SUBSTITUTION 4:24
 Mark 10:45; Gal. 2:20
REMISSION 4:7,18,34
 Matt. 26:25; Luke 22:20
RESTORATION 4:20,26,35
 Psa. 69:4; 1 John 1:7,9
ACCEPTATION 4:8,16,35
 Eph. 5:2; Col. 1:20
SANCTIFICATION 6:27-28
 Heb. 10:10; 1 Cor. 1:30
INTERCESSION 4:15,17
 Heb. 9:12,24
 Psalms 22 & 28

Leviticus chapter five—The Surety

Every **claim met**—Matthew's Gospel

TEACHING Rom. 4:25
 Isa. 53:10; 1 Tim. 2:6
RESTITUTION Num. 18:8-10
 Matt. 17:27; Luke 19:8
ESTIMATE 5:15
 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:6; Heb. 3:1-6
SINS 5:1-4; Psa. 51:4
 Matt. 5:37; Jas. 3:14-16
PORTION Priest 7:7
 People Num. 5:7; Matt. 5:23,24
ATONEMENT Num. 5:8
 Rom. 8:3; Gal. 1:4

STANDARD Lev. 22:21

John 17:4; 1 John. 3:5

SATISFACTION 5:10,16,18

Eph. 1:7; 1 John. 2:12

Psalm 69

Numbers

Here we have the story of Israel's journeyings, wanderings and murmurings, from Sinai to the borders of Canaan. Numbers resumes the narrative where Exodus leaves off. For some of the Lord's people today, the books of Leviticus and Numbers are unknown territory that appear barren and dry like the wilderness in which much of this story is set. These two books are worthy of consideration, for they have a message for us on *worship* and *walking* in the fear of God.

Name The book is called Numbers because in it the children of Israel are twice numbered, once at the beginning, "Take ye the sum", 1:2, and again at the end, "Take the sum", 26:2.

It is appropriately introduced with the Lord speaking to Moses "in the wilderness", 1:1, for it recounts the experiences of Israel in the desert. It is the story of the wilderness wanderings, and it should be noted that there are no dates given between the second and fortieth year of their history in the wilderness.

Writer From the statement in chapter 33:2, and the recurring phrase "And the Lord spake unto Moses", which occurs over forty times in the book, we can say that the *author* is God and the *writer* Moses. The person and character of Moses stand out in the narrative, but God is the supreme Ruler and Law-giver; the theocracy is being established. The book reveals that the writer was once acquainted with Egypt, and was an eye-witness of the things which he records. The book is part of the law of Moses; compare 35:30 with Heb. 10:28.

No person other than Moses has been named as the author with anything like certainty.

Authority Being part of what is called "The law" this book would be considered necessary to a full understanding of that law. It is authoritative as a revelation of the evil result of unbelief. The book is referred to over twenty times in the New Testament, and is used by the Holy Spirit as a warning to believers, Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:5-9; Heb. 3:17.

Importance This is the original "Pilgrim's Progress", detailing the journey of the chosen people from Sinai to the borders of Canaan. The spiritual significance of these events is emphasised in 1 Corinthians 10:1-12.

These happenings are resolved into types for our warning and learning, Rom. 15:4.

They may well foreshadow, and certainly illustrate, the failure of many Christians to possess the heavenly things in Christ. The many types of Christ found here are worthy of attention: The Nazarite, ch. 6; the Red Heifer, ch. 19; the Bread, cf. 11:7-9 with Exod. 16; the Brazen Serpent, ch. 21; the Star, cf. 24:17 with Rev. 22:16; and the cities of Refuge, ch. 35. This book provides many illustrations of Gospel truth.

Just as God spake then through Moses to the children of Israel, so He still has a message for us in this part of His revelation to man.

Relation This book is an indispensable contribution to the understanding of the Pentateuch, and the history of the journey of the Israelites from Sinai to Canaan. In GENESIS—the birth of the nation. In EXODUS—the deliverance from Egypt. In LEVITICUS—the laws of worship. In NUMBERS—the travelling to Canaan. In DEUTERONOMY—the preparations for entering the land.

There is a close connection between Leviticus and Numbers. In Leviticus the subject is our worship; in Numbers it is our walk and wandering. Leviticus is ceremonial, dealing with purity; Numbers is historical, and treats of pilgrimage. In Leviticus our privileges in the Sanctuary are emphasized; in Numbers our progress and responsibilities in the wilderness are illustrated. Study Hebrews chapters 3-4 and the book of Numbers for *duty*; study Leviticus and Hebrews for *doctrine*.

Message In brief, we have divine faithfulness and human failure. The book expounds several important aspects of the Being and activity of Jehovah, the God of Israel.

His Presence This is *illustrated* by the cloud given for guidance, 9:15-23; it is *declared* by the Lord, 35:34, and it is *evidenced* by His protection, 21:1-3,35; 22:12,13,24,35.

His Purpose As the Lord of history, His promises to the patriarchs would be fulfilled and Canaan would be entered. God wanted the people to go at once to Canaan, symbolizing the Christian life in its fulness of blessing.

His Provision The manifold character of this is seen in the sacrifices, priests, laws, in the pillar of cloud and fire, food, and protection from enemies.

His Holiness The sanctuary, the system of priests, the feasts and ritual observances, all stress His holiness but also His sovereignty.

His Longsuffering The Lord chastened Israel during the thirty-eight years, yet He did not leave them. It was the discipline and chastisement of love. Israel is revealed as being unfaithful, ungrateful, and unbelieving, especially in chapters 13-14. The history of the Church follows a similar

pattern to the history of Israel; in some ways God's will and goal remain unchanged. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

May we hear daily the lovely phrases of the "Aaronic benediction", Num. 6:24-26, and realize something of their warmth and wealth even for us.

Suggested Analysis Dr. W.H.G. Thomas sums up this book in three words: Organization, chs. 1-10; Disorganization, chs. 11-25; and Reorganization, chs. 26-36. A more detailed outline of contents is given below.

PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY, 1:1 to 10:10. AT SINAI.

Direction, 1:1 to 4:49. Concerning men of war, 1:1-54; record, regulations.

Movements, 2:1-34; disposition of the camp. Concerning ministry, 3:1 to 4:49; distinctive service of the Levites.

Legislation, 5:1 to 6:27. Law of defilement, separation, 5:1-4; restitution, 5:11-31. Law of dedication, consecration, 6:1-21. Benediction, 6:22-27.

Provision for Service, 7:1 to 9:14. Dedication of gifts, ch. 7. Consecration of the Levites, ch. 8. Celebration of the passover, 9:1-14.

Manifestation of Approval, 9:15 to 10:10. The vision of the cloud, 9:15-23.

The voice of the trumpets, 10:1-10.

PARTICIPATION ON THE JOURNEY, 10:11 to 14:45. SINAI TO KADESH.

Direction in the Path, 10:11-36. Cloud and ark; the Lord directing and sanctifying.

Discontent with the Provision, chs. 11-12. Complaint of the way, 11:1-3.

Contempt of their food, 11:4-35. Criticism of their leaders, ch. 12.

Disbelief of the Promises, chs. 13-14. Searching the land, ch. 13; reconnaissance, recommendation and report. Sinning against light, ch. 14; rejection, 1-4; remonstrance, 5-9; retribution, 26-37; presumption, 40-45.

INTERRUPTION OF THE JOURNEY, 15:1 to 19:22. THE DESERT WANDERINGS.

Legislation for the land, ch. 15. Rebellion of the princes, ch. 16.

Vindication of the priesthood, ch. 17. Regulations for the priests and

Levites, ch. 18. Provision for defilement, ch. 19.

RESUMPTION OF THE JOURNEY, chs. 20-36. KADESH TO PLAINS OF MOAB.

Dealings of Jehovah, chs. 20-21. In grace, giving water, 20:1-11; in government, judging, 20:12-29; in giving victories, ch. 21.

Directions of Jehovah, chs. 22-24. Balaam the mercenary prophet, ch. 22.

Balaam's seven parables, chs. 23-24.

Defiance of Jehovah, ch. 25. Problems within. Provocation and punishment.

Demands of Jehovah, chs. 26-31. The new generation, ch. 26. The distribution, 27:1-11. The new leader, 27:12-23. Regulations for the offerings, chs. 28-29.

Instruction for vows, ch. 30. Retribution on Midian, ch. 31.

Division of the Land, chs. 32-36. The selfish request of the two and a half tribes, ch. 32. Summary record of journeys, ch. 33. Directions for allotment of land, ch. 34. Dwelling places for Levites, 35:1-8. Cities of refuge, 35:9-34. Preservation of inheritances, ch. 36.

Lesson Dispossess your enemies, depend upon God, and dwell in the land.

For Meditation The order of the camp and assembly teaching in 1 Corinthians. The priestly benediction of chapter 6. Teaching of the red heifer, ch. 19; the brazen serpent, ch. 21; and the cities of refuge, ch. 35.

Key Words of the Book "The Lord spake" 78 times; "Unto the Lord", 49 times; "number" and "numbered", over 100 times; "journeyed", "departed", and "removed", 77 times.

Deuteronomy

The title Deuteronomy is derived from the Greek words “*Deuteros*”, meaning “second”, and “*Nomos*”, meaning “law”, thus making the book to be “the second law”. This could be misleading as the first law had neither failed nor did it need replacing by a second law. The book is actually a reiteration of the original law to the second generation. The key verse suggesting the name has been rendered “and he shall write out for himself this repetition of the law”, 17:18.

The Hebrew title for the book when translated is “these are the words”, this being derived from its opening words, see 1:1. The people of Israel are gathered together on the east of Jordan at the very borders of Canaan to hear Jehovah’s word through Moses.

Writer Ancient Hebrew tradition was unanimous in attributing the authorship of this book to Moses. It records his speeches to the new generation which needed moral preparation for its future possession of the land. In 1:5 Moses explained the law and subsequently wrote it in a book which was placed beside the ark of the covenant and delivered to the Levites for safe keeping, 31:9,22-26. This passage is of more than traditional value, and should not be ignored. See Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8:1.

The authorship of no other book in the Old Testament is so emphatically emphasized. Moses wrote this book at the command of God. Nearly forty times Moses’ name occurs, and in most instances as the authoritative author of the subject. He had ability for this work, Acts 7:22. Joshua or Eleazar may have written the account of Moses’ death.

Authority Satan has attacked this book through the “Higher Critics” with the object of weakening its authority.

This book is referred to about ninety times in the New Testament. Perhaps what our Lord loved so much and used so effectively Satan specially hates. It is the only book quoted by our Lord in the temptation in the wilderness. He took words from this book as a weapon to silence His great enemy; compare 8:3; 6:16; 6:13 with Matthew 4:4,7,10.

Value In spite of critical questions, this book has a moral and spiritual value for us today and lessons for every succeeding generation. There were no amendments so far as the *moral law* was concerned. There were adjustments to the *civil* and *ceremonial laws*, caused by changing conditions

as they entered the land. While social life is ever changing requiring adjusted laws, the moral life never changes. Sin is still sin, Eph. 2:1-3. God requires that we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. He still calls us to holiness, obedience, love and duty.

The new revelation of "love" in this last book of the Pentateuch will enable us to honour God in all things. Obedience to God is the only path of blessing, both today and for all time.

Purpose The book was written to recall the uniqueness of Israel's God, and the unique relation which Jehovah sustains to His ancient people. It is written to fit the new generation to enter into the land, which their fathers had failed to do through unbelief. The divine purpose is "possess" (70 times), "the land" (100 times) given "this day" (70 times). One thing is demanded, that is obedience, based upon a relation to Jehovah. By this means they will have true joy.

The book is an historical summary in the form of discourses or exhortations, showing the true meaning of the teaching contained in Exodus and Leviticus. It embraces the history and legislation of these books, and impresses upon the hearts of the people, the need of fidelity to the covenant, and securing its lasting duration.

Character This book was addressed to the people, as a whole, while Leviticus was particularly for the priests. Here the people are looking over their experiences and drawing lessons from them. It is a book of obedience, 6:3; everything depended on this, even life itself, victory over foes, happiness and prosperity. It is an inspired commentary on the law, and a supplement to it. There are positive assurances that God will be with His people and will fight for them. They must revere their God, 4:29; 5:10, and have no contact with the false gods worshipped by pagans, 6:14; 11:16.

It is a book of *remembrance*; they were once in bondage in Egypt, 5:15; they were rescued by divine power, 4:20. It looks back to redemption out of Egypt and discipline and punishment in the wilderness. It is also a book of *prospect*, looking to the future in Canaan and the prophetic forecast of Israel's future, chs. 32-33.

Message (1) *Divine faithfulness*. This is the bed-rock of divine revelation. God kept His promises. He cared for them, provided for them. They knew His goodness to them; for almost forty years, in spite of their waywardness, His protection and provision had been enjoyed. (2) *Human failure*. Numbers is the record of Israel's wanderings, while Deuteronomy emphasizes their responsibility. They were unfaithful and disobedient, and God administered judgment accordingly. Obedience to the law of God was essential to their peace and prosperity. Chapter 6:3 is the key to the book. Obedience is based on relationship, and its standard is His Word. His commandments are the

rule of life, “observe to do”. The fear of God should produce obedience, and such obedience would be beneficial, “it would be well with thee”. Obedience would promote health, national prosperity and welfare. As with Israel, His Word is our guide too. We are to keep it carefully and constantly, 6:17-19, and to remember His redemptive power and purposes, 6:21-23. Have His record in your heart, 6:6; teach it, 6:7-8; do not forget the Lord, 6:12; keep thyself pure, 6:14; and always obey, 6:18.

Suggested Analysis.

THE HISTORICAL REVIEW, chs. 1-4. THE BACKWARD LOOK.

Introduction, 1:1-5, place, time and date.

The Journey Reviewed, 1:6-46. Reminders, 5-12; responsibility, 13-25; rebellion, 26-33; results, 34-36.

The Journey Resumed, chs. 2-4. Israel content, 2:1-3; charged, 4-23; conquering, 24-3:17; contemplating, 3:18-22; cheered, 3:24-29. Israel charged, ch. 4. Instructions, 1-24; incentives, 25-31; inducements, 32-38; interests, 39-49.

THE HELPFUL REMINDERS, chs. 5-11. THE INWARD LOOK.

About the Law, chs. 5-6. The decalogue repeated, 5:1-21; doubtful response, 22-33. Divine requirements, ch. 6. Learning His will, 1-3; loving His word, 4-9; live by obedience, 5-25.

About the Lord, chs. 7-8. His exalted standard, 7:1-5; electing love, 6-11; encouraging promises, 12-26. Chapter 8, exhortations and warnings. Be grateful, 1-6; be hopeful, 7-10; be careful, 11-20.

About the Land, chs. 9-11. Chapter 9: the great day, 1-3; grave departure, 4-16; great intercession, 17-20, 25-29; grievous rebellions, 22-24; goodness revealed, 10:1-11; God to be revered, 12-22, and obeyed, 11:1-8; good days ahead, 9-25; the great alternative, 26-32.

THE HERITAGE IS RICH, chs. 12-26. THE FORWARD LOOK.

Laws for Religious Life, chs. 12-16. (a) Purity in worship, chs. 12-14.

Chapter 12: the divine choice, 1-11; daily communion, 12-15; cautions, 16-25; counsel, 26-32. Chapter 13: false prophets, 1-5; foolish passions, 6-11; final punishment, 12-18. Chapter 14: food laws, 1-21; financial laws, 22-29. (b) Piety in worship, chs. 15-16. The year of release, 15:1-14; things to remember, 15:15-23; redemption and rejoicing, 16:1-17.

Laws for Political Life, chs. 16:18-20:19. The administration of justice.

The function of the judge, 16:18 to 20:19. No perversion, no partiality, no bribery, 16:19; no idolatry, 17:1-7. The priest, 17:8-13, the highest court of appeal. The function of the king, 17:14-20. His character, 14-17; conduct, 18-20. The priests and Levites, ch. 18: to be supported,

1-8; abominations to be rejected, 9-14; true and false prophets, 15-22. Chapter 19, protection in the land: refuge provided, 19:1-10; righteousness demanded, 14-20. Rules for warfare, ch. 20; promises, 1-4; provision, 5-11; principles, 12-20.

Laws for Personal and Social Life, chs. 21-26. Chapter 21: the restraint of lawlessness, 1-9; regard for women, 10-17; the rebellious son, 18:21. Chapter 22: rules for charity and purity. Chapter 23: rights of citizenship, 1-8; regulations against impurity, 9-14; civil rights, 19-25. Chapter 24: sanctity of marriage, 1-5; sacredness of human life, 6-9; special regard for the poor, 10-22. Chapter 25: rules of justice, mercy and purity. Chapter 26: reaching the land. Remember thy God, 1-9; recognize His claims, 10-15; resolve to keep His Word, 16-19.

THE HIGHWAY OF RESPONSIBILITY, chs. 27 to 31:13. THE INSPIRING LOOK.

Instructions for the Land, ch. 27. The law inscribed, 1-10; the law implied, 9-26.

Involvement in the Land, chs. 28 to 31:10. The experience of blessing, 28:1-14; emphasis on curses, 28:15-68. Exposition of the covenant, ch. 29. Its cautions, 1-29; its challenge, 30:1-10; its choice, 11-20; its commands, 31:1-13.

THE HERO'S FINAL REVELATION, chs. 31-34. THE GODWARD LOOK.

Counselling, ch. 31. Charges to Joshua and the Levites.

Singing, ch. 32. Of Israel's election, 6-14; rebellion, 15-19; rejection, 20-21; retribution, 22-35; restoration, 36-44. Closing exhortation, 45-52.

Blessing, ch. 33. The tribes individually, 1-25; then inclusively.

Passing, ch. 34. The vision he was given, 1-4; the valley of burial, 6-8; his value to the nation, 10-12.

Suggestions for Closer Study. The key passages of the book are worthy of study; see especially chapters 6:4-5; 7:6-13; 10:12-13; 11:26-28; 26:16-19 and 32:46-47. Its keywords are the expressions "The Lord thy God" and "The Lord your God", over 200 times; "The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee", 24 times; the commands to "do", 50 times, to "remember", and "forget not", over 20 times; to "fear the Lord", 14 times; and to "love the Lord", 10 times.

Glimpses of Christ

The whole purpose of revealed truth is to tell out the manifold glory of the character and work of one majestic Person, Jesus Christ our Lord. God has chosen Him as the centre of all His purposes, Eph. 1:9-10, and He is the grand theme of the Old Testament, John 5:39,46; Luke 24:25-27,44-45. We shall look briefly at one suggestive picture or type of this blessed One in each of the books of the Pentateuch.

ISAAC, THE BELOVED SON: GENESIS

His Birth As with the Lord Jesus, Isaac's birth was predicted long before he was born, Gen. 12:7; 15:4; 17:15-16; 21:2 with Isa. 7:14; 9:6. The seed is clearly a reference to Christ as Galatians 3:15 states, and verse 29 extends it to all who belong to Christ. These will one day be a great multitude, Rev. 5:9. His name was specified before his birth, cf. Gen. 17:19; Matt. 1:21. Isaac was supernaturally begotten, Gen. 18:12-14; Rom. 4:19, the only seed of the covenant, Gen. 22:2, and heir to the promises, 15:4. The Lord is the seed, Gal. 3:16, the Son, John 3:16; Heb. 1:5, and the Heir, Heb. 1:2. Human fatherhood and sonship are faint shadows of the essential divine relationships which exist in the Godhead. Christ is God's only Son, absolute and unique, who is in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18. Isaac was loved of his father, Gen. 22:2; how much more true was this of our Lord, John 10:17; Col. 1:13 R.V.

His Binding, Gen. 22:1-14, especially verse 9. Surely this pictures the devotion to God the Father of His only Son for the redemption of the world. The one who was opposed by Ishmael, the son of the flesh, Gal. 4:28-29, is loved by his father, and all things are committed to him, Gen. 24:26. This is true of the heavenly Isaac, John 1:12; 5:20; 10:17; Matt. 28:18. We are the gift from the Father to the Son, John 6:37,39; 17:9,12,24. The fellowship of the Son and the Father in connection with sacrifice was in perfect accord, 2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 9:14; John 19:17. Obedience and self-surrender marked Isaac and in greater measure our beloved Lord, Gen. 22:9; Psa. 40; John 10:17-18; Rom. 8:32.

Isaac carrying the wood reminds us of John 19:17 and 1 Peter 2:24. God providing the Lamb, Gen. 22:8, takes us in thought to God giving His own Son, the Lamb of God, 1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 1:29; Rev. 13:8. Isaac was meek and unresisting as he was bound to the altar. How like our Lord who was obedient unto death, who was bound by His love for us, Gal. 2:20, and gladly

accepted and fulfilled the counsel of God, Acts 2:23. He was smitten by Jehovah, Isa. 53:4-5, and cut off, Psa. 22:1; Matt. 27:46; Gal. 3:13. Yet He delighted the heart of God, Eph. 5:2. The ram might suggest Christ as caught up in God's redemptive purpose, and bearing our guilt to meet the demands of God's law, Luke 12:50; Matt. 20:28.

His Blessing, Gen. 22:15-19. Christ in death and resurrection is the divine basis of blessing. God confirms all by His promise and oath, Heb. 6:13-18. Abraham's devotion, expressed in complete surrender of what was so dear to him, is a faint reflection of the extent to which God Himself would go for our blessing, Gen. 22:16; Rom. 8:32. There was personal blessing, his justification and relationship with God, Gen. 15:6; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23. There was national and universal blessing even bringing in the Gentiles, Rev. 7:9; Psa. 22:27. Even all His enemies were to be put under His feet, Psa. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25-26; Acts 3:26; with Gal. 3:16.

His Bride, Gen. 24. Rebekah is mentioned in Genesis 22:23 after the typical death and resurrection, Heb. 11:17-19; Eph. 5:22-32. Sarah, like Israel subsequently, was removed by death, and God has today turned to the Gentiles seeking by the Holy Spirit the bride of Christ, altogether suited to Him, a chaste virgin, Eph. 5:27; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2. Our Isaac is the Heir, and He is become great, 24:35, and has been given glory, Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:21; Eph. 1:20-22; Zech. 6:13.

Rebekah's acceptance of the gifts illustrates our response to the Spirit's work in our souls, Gen. 24:46-47, 53. We are redeemed, and are partakers of the divine nature, 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 5:15; 2 Pet. 1:4, and are robed as Israel is yet to be, Isa. 52:1; 61:10. Soon we shall meet the Bridegroom. John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:16-17, and enjoy to the full His love, John 13:1; Eph. 5:25.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT: EXODUS

What the ark was to the Israelite, the Lord Jesus ought to be to us, an ever present, all sufficient, and divine reality, Matt. 28:16-20.

Its Construction The pattern was shown to Moses on the mount, Heb. 8:5. God alone knew and could reveal its details, Exod. 25:9-11, and this reminds us of Him in whom all fulness dwells, Col. 2:9; known and revealed by the Father, Matt. 11:27; begotten of the Father and brought into the world, Heb. 1:5.

1. *Materials*, Exod. 25:10-11. The incorruptible wood speaks of the perfect humanity of our Lord, His pure and holy mind, affections, will, and body, Luke 2:35. Pure gold reminds us of His deity, John 1:14; Heb. 2:14. Our Lord Jesus has two natures as distinct as wood and gold, yet

mysteriously united in one blessed Person. The pure gold speaks of Him as God's fellow, His divine being, John 10:30. The crown of gold suggests His glory, dignity and kingship, Rev. 19:12. While the wood gave form to the ark, the appearance was all of gold. Our Lord's humanity was the form in which He appeared to tell God out; He is the image of the invisible God. He became a man, and will be eternally "the man Christ Jesus", 1 Tim. 2:5.

2. *Measurements.* It was rectangular, $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits, not square. It was typical and material, not the substance and the reality. It was the same breadth and height, suggesting perhaps the perfect equality of His manifestation of all that God is. Every attribute was consistently exhibited in His manhood; justice and love, holiness and grace, wisdom and power. The measurements may remind us of Ephesians 3:18.

Its Character The various names given to it tell out the character of Christ. It was known as:

1. *The Ark of the Testimony*, Exod. 25:22. It was so called because the law which it contained was a testimony of God's holiness, 20:2-17. Christ was the perfect manifestation of God to us, John 1:18; Heb. 1:3. The mercy seat points to His sacrificial work; the cherubim may suggest the presence of the Spirit giving testimony to the holiness of the Father and the Son.

2. *The Ark of the Covenant*, Num. 10:33. The testimony of the law was the basis of the covenant which God made with them, and which they accepted, Exod. 24:8. As the ark went before them to seek out a resting place for them, so Christ our Forerunner has gone before His people on to resurrection ground, and to His present position of exaltation, Heb. 6:20, preparing a place for us, John 14:2-3.

3. *The Ark of the Lord*, Josh. 3:13; 6:11-13. Christ in His leadership directs our way over an uncharted course, Josh. 3:4; Matt. 28:7,10; John 10:27. He puts forth His mighty power on our behalf. His presence calls for reverence, Psa. 89:7; Heb. 12:28-29. In the river, the ark was their surety, Josh. 3:17, God's pledge of salvation, cf. Heb. 7:22. Go after Him, John 1:37,45; Heb. 12:1-2.

4. *The Ark of God*, 1 Sam. 3:3. God's presence was known immediately above the mercy seat, Exod. 25:22. This suggests the presence of the Lord with us, Matt. 28:18-20. The presence of the ark was the glory of Israel, 1 Sam. 4:22, and it was invested with power, 1 Sam. 5:8,11,12; 6:2. Christ is our glory, 1 Cor. 1:31, our strength, Phil. 4:13, our joy, 2 Sam. 6:15; Phil. 4:4, and our hope, Phil. 3:21; John 14:3; James 5:7-8.

5. *The Holy Ark*, 2 Chron. 35:3. This presents Christ in His Person and perfection, the holy one of God, Mark 1:24; Heb. 7:26. Dagon (as all other false gods) must fall before it, 1 Sam. 5:3,4; cf. Luke 11:22; John 18:6. Let Christ rule on the throne of your heart for victorious living and vital witnessing, 1 Pet. 3:15.

6. *The Ark of thy Strength*, Psalms 132:8. Miracles were often wrought at its presence, Josh. 3:14-17. We have been baptized into His death, Rom. 6:3-4, and know victory by His presence, Josh. 6:16; Rom. 8:32-33. The signs of John's gospel reveal the strength and glory of Christ as our ark.

Its Contents, Exodus 40:20,21; Deuteronomy 10:1-5; Hebrews 9:4. The testimony speaks of the obedience of Christ, Psalm 40:7-8. In Him as our ark the law of God is kept intact, and yet covered in mercy. He came to do the will of God, and is its perfect fulfilment, John 6:38. The rod of Numbers 17:8 presents Christ as the risen One, and the life giving Spirit, 1 Cor. 14:45. The rod budded, it sprang to life. The Lord died for our sins, yet was raised from the dead to life and glory, Isaiah 53:8; Acts 2:24. The rod blossomed. The beauty of Christ is the joy of heaven and of His people. The rod yielded almonds, and the Lord Jesus, the chosen One, is also the Firstfruits, 1 Cor. 15:20. By the Spirit we bring forth fruit unto holiness, Rom. 6:22; 7:4; Phil. 1:11. God is bringing many sons unto glory, Hebrews 2:10-11. Christ in the power of an endless life abideth a priest, Hebrews 7:3,16,24.

Its Covering The mercy seat served as the lid of the ark, and was kept in its place by a border of gold. The mercy seat points to the propitiatory work of Christ, Romans 3:25-26; 1 John 2:2, being sprinkled with blood, Lev. 16:14. The blood *upon* the mercy seat secures acceptance before God; the blood *before* the mercy seat assures our standing before Him. The mercy seat was the most important item in the house of God, Exodus 25:22. The material, its position, its use, and above all its place in the service of the day of atonement, foreshadowed Christ the righteous One, in whom mercy and truth met, Psalm 85:10.

Its Carrying The Ark was carried upon the shoulders of the priests, and was a conspicuous object for the people to behold when the camp was on the move. It was always enveloped in coverings before it was brought into the view of the people however, Numbers 4:4-6. The staves in the rings remind us that the Lord Jesus in His person brought the glory of God to earth. He ever journeys with His people, Hebrews 13:5. By faith we appropriate the blessings made available through His work. He becomes our Leader through the trackless desert waste. The Lord still blesses the home where His Son is welcomed, 2 Sam. 6:11 and John 1:12; Luke 24:29-31.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: LEVITICUS

The key word of Leviticus 16 is *atonement* which is mentioned fourteen times, whilst the key verses of the chapter are 30 and 33. In the New Testament, especially in Hebrews 9, this ceremony is used as one of the means of interpreting the work of Christ in His death. In Him ritual is transformed into an historical event, an atonement is made "once for all", Heb. 9:12; 10:12,14.

Aaron the Priest Presents the Dignity of Christ. This is seen in *his approach*, v. 2, which was to be only once a year, at the right time, and in the proper way; cf. Heb. 9:7,11-12. The mercy seat upon the ark symbolizes the very presence of God; only through Christ and His sacrifice can we approach God, compare John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-20. Aaron points to Christ, but generally by way of contrast.

His Attire, v. 4. He must be clothed with holy linen garments four of which are mentioned. These are symbolic of the inherent perfection and purity of Christ. The holy linen coat may suggest the unique righteousness of His character, the linen breeches may speak of the righteousness of His walk, the girdle may tell of the love and righteousness constraining all of His service, and the turban on his head may point to the holy intelligence and voluntary character of His obedience.

Christ our Lord was ever adorned with sanctity and grace, the Holy and Righteous One, Acts 3:14 R.V.; 1 Pet. 3:18. He was perfectly suited to be our Representative, and to undertake the work of atonement, 1 John 2:2; Heb. 7:26. The pure but unadorned garments remind us of Him, the One who needed no personal preparation or purification, being the essentially Righteous One.

His Atonement, vv. 11-12,15-16. Only Aaron could make atonement, and the provisional work that he did pointed to the final, real, and complete removal of sin by the Lord Himself, Isa. 53:6; Heb. 1:3; 9:26; 10:12. Aaron's entrance into the holy of holies reminds us of Him who has gone into heaven itself, within the veil, where He intercedes for us, Heb. 6:19-20; 7:25; Rom. 8:34.

The Offerings Tell of the Sufficiency of Christ, vv. 3,5,6,10-11,15. As the sin offering, our Lord bore the guilt and punishment of our sins, Isa. 53:10; John 1:29. As the burnt offering, He offered Himself in obedience to do the will of God, Heb. 10:7. Our attention is focused upon the sin offerings as it was a day of expiation for the confessed sins of Israel. Aaron's presentation was a dedication, v. 7, and speaks of Him who brought pleasure to God, Matt. 3:17; 17:5. Hebrews 9:14 points out many differences between

the blood of goats and the blood of Christ. The one is but the shadow, the other is the precious living substance. It is the Person that makes the difference infinite.

The Blood Speaks of the Adequacy of Christ, vv. 14-15; compare Heb. 7:27; 9:12,14-15; Rev. 1:5. His death was all pre-arranged, all prefigured, all foretold. His blood cleanses the heavens themselves, Heb. 9:23, and He now appears officially and openly on our behalf in the presence of God, Heb. 9:24.

The scapegoat tells of the ignominy of Christ, vv. 21-22; Isa. 53:6. The accumulation of the definitions of sins, vv. 21-22, and the solemn imputation of all to the scapegoat, anticipate the terror and the horror of Calvary. Ponder our iniquities laid upon Him, Isa. 53:6, His cry of dereliction, Ps. 22:1, His anguish, Ps. 22:12-13, how He became a curse for us, Gal. 3:13, and how He was led into a land not inhabited, Mark 15:34-35, bearing our iniquities, 1 Pet. 2:24; John 1:29. The burning of the sin offering outside the camp speaks of the rejection of Christ by the religious world, Heb. 13:11-12. May we take our place with Him there.

THE RED HEIFER: NUMBERS

The red heifer is taken up in Numbers 19 and Hebrews 9:13-14. It is a type of the sacrifice of Christ as the ground of cleansing, removing defilement contracted during our pilgrimage. Hebrews 8:5 and 9:13 show that the old institution was a copy and shadow of the realities of the New Testament.

The Sacrifice—the Character of Christ, v. 2, “a red heifer”. The ruddy type presents our Lord as truly man; “without blemish” points to His sinless nature, 1 Pet. 1:19. He is the Holy and Righteous One, Acts 3:14. There was no blot on the character of Christ, no blemish in His nature, 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26.

The Slaying—the Death of Christ. The heifer, one “upon which never came yoke” reminds us that no yoke rested on Christ, for He delighted in doing the will of God, John 4:34. The animal presented in verse 3 tells of His perfection; He gave Himself absolutely to God, and to death, to make us suitable for the presence of God. The word “slay” is used in Genesis 22:10, and is also found translated “kill” in Exodus 12:6. His death alone can answer for our sin and uncleanness. The Holy One was treated as unclean, and suffered without the gate, Heb. 13:12.

The Sprinkled Blood—the Efficacy of His Work, v. 4; Heb. 12:24. The reference to “seven times” would tell us of His perfection in death,

Godward and manward, meeting both divine requirements and human need, Lev. 16:14. His sacrifice was offered and accepted. His death is the greatest event in history. The fact that it was wholly consumed, vv. 5-6, may remind us that Christ was wholly devoted to God, and that every part of His being was laid down and accepted by God. Some see in the “cedar”, the “hyssop” and the “scarlet”, that the greatest, the smallest and the vilest respectively are accepted in the offering. The word translated “burn” here means “to consume wholly”, telling of the fire of divine judgment, and the anguish of His soul in death, Isa. 53:10,12.

The Priestly Ministry, vv. 3,4,6,7. Eleazer may represent the ministry of the saints, as helped by the Spirit of God in serving God with reverence and godly fear, restoring one that has become defiled, cf. Gal. 6:1. We need to view with priestly vision the death and judgment bearing of Christ, for the purging of the sins of the flesh, cf. Isa. 6:7.

The Living Water, vv. 17-18 R.V. marg. This may represent the ministry of the Spirit through the Word of God, revealing and applying the work of Christ for us and to us, Eph. 5:25-26; 1 John 1:7. The “ashes” remind us of the death of Christ as the gracious provision of God for us, for by His death He made purification for sins, Heb. 1:3. May we cleanse ourselves, 2 Cor. 7:1, and purge ourselves, 2 Tim. 2:21.

THE PROPHET: DEUTERONOMY

For this subject, compare Deuteronomy 18:15 with Acts 3:22-23. Deuteronomy 18:9-22 should be read as a whole for the verses form a single unit. Some of these verses wonderfully predict our Lord as “the prophet”; see John 1:21-27; 7:16-17,40-41; 8:28-29; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37.

The Deuteronomy context reminds Israel not to depend on diviners, for they would have a prophet of their own. They would have a succession of prophets to meet the constant danger of idolatry, vv. 9-14. The singular “prophet” is ultimately Christ, Acts 3:22. The Lord does not allow soothsayers because he has something far better for the people. He raises up the prophet, vv. 15,18, and gives him the word to speak, v. 18. Christ is the great fulfilment of the prophetic word, John 4:19; Heb. 1:2.

Moses was one of the Greatest Types of Messiah in the old economy. Note the following similarities: both were preserved in childhood, fasted forty days, contended with evil forces, suffered at home, endured murmuring, and introduced a new dispensation. Both were divinely commissioned and supported in their work; both had seventy helpers, had radiant faces, made intercessory prayers, were willing to die for the people;

both established memorials, had seven mountain experiences, and reappeared after death.

C.J. Rolls in *The Unveiled Christ* writes, "The seven mountains in the life of Moses reflect the greatness of the man, and realize their climax in the greatest of all deliverers, Christ Jesus. Note the mount of commission, Exod. 3:1-2; of conquest, Exod. 17:7-10; of commandments, Exod. 19 and 20; of construction, Exod. 24:12-18; of communion, Exod. 34: 2-4; of contemplation, Deut. 34; and of completion, Matt. 17:3.

Let us recall in the ministry of Christ the mount of commission, Mark 3:13-19, of intercession, Mark 6:46; John 6:15; of legislation, Matt. 5:1-2; of instruction, Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:3; Luke 21:5; of communion, Matt. 17; Mark 9; Luke 9; of administration, Matt. 28:16-20; and finally the mount of ascension, Acts 1:9-12.

These figures lend stateliness to the dignity of Christ, and place Him in a pre-eminence above all things".

Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19 remind us that the Lord Jesus not only lived out, but also spoke out God's truth. We are to take His every word as authoritative, as He Himself demanded, John 4:10. The prologue of John's Gospel begins with God revealing Himself to man through the Word, life, light, and testimony, all of which turn us to Christ, whilst the Gospel ends with the revelation complete. Through Moses and the law there was but a partial revelation. In Christ there is fulness and finality; the revelation is complete, and "grace and truth" came by Him, John 1:17. In John 8:21-30 Christ claimed He was sent by God, His message also is from God, with God's full approval, John 8:26,28. May we hear Him, Matt. 17:5; follow Him, John 10:27; keep His commandments, John 14:21,23; and bear witness to Him, John 15:27. Our response to Him should be, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him", John 9:38. Let us join with Thomas and say, "My Lord and my God", John 20:28.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

"And beginning at Moses . . . he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself", Luke 24:27. The theme of "Christ in the Pentateuch" is exhaustless. One feature of each of the five books has engaged our attention, but there are so many others which might have been developed.

In Genesis, consider Adam the head of the old race, and contrast Christ as the Head of the new creation, Rom. 5:12-20; 1 Cor. 11:2-10. Then there is Abel's sacrifice and our Lord's work, John 1:29. Ponder on the saving ark of chapters 6 and 7 together with Isa. 32:2; 1 Pet. 3:18-21. Think on Melchisedec, the king-priest, and the One who surpasses him, Heb. 7.

Joseph, the beloved son, delightfully foreshadows the Son of God as presented in John's Gospel.

In Exodus, spend time considering the passover lamb which clearly anticipates John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; compare also Isa. 53. The Lord Himself developed the subject of the manna in John 6. The smitten rock was a further pointer to Christ, Exod. 17; 1 Cor. 10:4. The glory cloud, the Shekinah, only faintly presented what has been fully brought out in our glorious Lord, John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:3. The tabernacle and the priesthood provide detailed previews of Christ and His work.

In Leviticus, the offerings, chs. 1-7, provide much of the background of the New Testament writers' pithy statements concerning the death of Christ in its many aspects; see for example Heb. 10. The plan of God and the work of Christ are remarkably presented in panorama in the feasts of chapter 23.

In Numbers, a striking presentation of our Lord's work on Calvary is given through the incident involving the brazen serpent, cf. ch. 21 with John 3:13-15.

In Deuteronomy, the cities of refuge together with the significant names that were given to them, look forward to Christ; see Heb. 6:18-20. The rock of chapter 32 points on to Christ the Rock of refuge, refreshment, and repose for the weary; see also Isa. 26:4 R.V. and 32:2.

Spend time for yourself prayerfully seeking Christ in this part of God's Word, and you will be rewarded. Seek and ye shall find!

Joshua 1

“A Prosperous New Year”

We long for prosperity as we enter another year and are full of confidence in God as we raise our “Ebenezer” in thanksgiving for past mercies. The revelation given to Joshua by God as he takes over the leadership of this great expedition gives us the secrets of success. Newberry translates “good success” as “do wisely” (v.8). Faith is a moral and spiritual principle of action which enables us to bring spiritual realities within the ambit of human experience. This is the abundant life the Lord provides for His own, (John 10:10). The principles of success are clearly given in this chapter:—

S—Submit to the guidance of God, v.2

What a vital factor this is in Christian living! It gives poise and purpose in life. Christ is our inheritance, as Canaan was their inheritance and our appropriation of the Lord is the antitype of their possession of the land. “I do give to them”, cf. Eph. 1:3. The call to action—“arise”, rouse yourselves for duty. Directions follow immediately as to the course which this activity is to take. Joshua having learned to obey, he was qualified to command. There must be activity—“go over this Jordan.” The hour has come to take possession of the inheritance. May we listen to His voice and be ready to obey.

U—Understand the purpose of God, vs.3-4

In the day of crisis, v.1, there was no need for despondency or despair. The purpose of God will go forward to its ordained completion; so look up and go on. The nation felt keenly the loss of their commander and wept thirty days, (Deut. 34:11). Over Jordan was the sphere of the Divine purpose for them and us, (Col. 3:1). It is a land of abundance, the gift of God to us, but their own energy, made effectual through His grace, could alone secure its possession. In point of extent it was a spacious region, v.4. We have a comfortable and an ample possession as we contemplate our land, (Eph. 1:3-14). God delights in large and bountiful gifts. The country may be small as compared with other lands, but it has “GREAT” boundaries and great possibilities. The sweep of the land—“the wilderness”—testing, yet the wilderness can be transformed (Isa. 35:1).

C—Claim the presence of God, v.5

This threefold promise is to faith an inexhaustible legacy. Since the gifts

and calling of God are without repentance on His part, the promise is irrevocable. Its immutability is inseparably linked with His faithfulness, “as I was with Moses” v.5. (Deut. 7:24). This should be an encouragement to us; this is no vague, indefinite assurance. In what a variety of dangers and trials God was with Moses. What a testimony his life presented to the reality of the Divine presence and guidance. What a ground of trust God gave to Joshua when He said, “so will I be with thee.”

C—Courage in the name of God, vs.6,7,9

Joshua had come to know God as a generous God, (Deut. 4:37,38), and as the God of encouragement, (2 Cor. 1:3). Three times he is encouraged to be strong and of a good courage. The strength and courage necessary to overcome his enemies had to be super-human. So we are exhorted to “be strong in the Lord”, (Eph. 6:10). This passage finds its illustration in Joshua, for the nations of Canaan are types of the principalities in Eph. 6:12. Note the good reasons God gave him to be courageous, indicated in the little word “for”. Best of all, “Thy God is with thee”, (Ex. 33:12-16).

E—Engage in the service of God, vs.1-2

Joshua did not stand idle waiting for God’s purpose to be made good to him and the nation. He enjoyed the service of God and was willing to move at the command of God. A man who “sought the Lord” (Exod. 33:11), a good soldier (Exod. 17), a courageous witness (Num. 14:6-9), an exhibit of the grace of God (1 Chron. 7:20-25; Num. 13:16), and a man honoured by God (Num. 27:18-20).

We are set free to serve God, (Exod. 7:16; Rom. 6:16,22). It is a service of love (Exod. 21:6; Gal. 5:13), and we should be ready to do “whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint” (2 Sam. 15:15).

S—Study the word of God, v.8

He was to talk the language of Scripture; to be steeped in the very diction and style of the Bible. This means meditation and delight (Psa. 1,2; 119:97,103). As we feed upon and digest it, it becomes part of us. Then obedience to it becomes intuitive, and spiritual success and prosperity will surely follow. It was no part of Joshua’s work to improve on what Moses had done; he was simply to accept it and carry it out. Note the importance of the Word—“law of the Lord”, its indwelling, “out of thy mouth”; its instruction, “meditate therein”; its influence, “observe to do”; and its issue, “make thy way prosperous”.

S—Surrender to the will of God, vs.16-17

This is as indispensable to spiritual life and prosperity as breathing is to the natural life. Remember and respond to the assurance of the Lord (John

7:17). We cannot escape the mandate of the Lord, "have not I commanded thee?" 1:9, also vs. 7, 10, 13.

The answer of the people given to Joshua is certainly the answer we should give to our Lord and Leader, "we will do, we will go" v. 16. The unanimity of the people in their loyalty to Joshua is a touching and a challenging example, v. 17. There was not one discordant note in that harmonious burst of loyalty.

Yet how far we are from such a state! How few are the hearts that throb with true loyalty to the Saviour and give Him hearty allegiance. It is not too late to renew our vows, close our ranks, crown Him King of our lives and go on humbly with the Lord.

Shall we pray, "Create in me a clean heart O God". "Wilt Thou not revive us again?" "Here am I, send me." Thus we shall experience prosperity of soul, blessing in our lives, and success in this year of grace and opportunity.

Joshua 6

1. **An impregnable fortress** (v.1) 'straightly shut up'. The aim is to terrify.
Fight your enemy Heb. 11:30.

- a. confidence in God —trust
 - b. absence of self confidence —humility
- these are the weapons of war

Why go round seven times?

to learn:
faith
submission
patience
association with God

The ark of the covenant was the indispensable centre, and thus victory ensued.

Faith is zealous, and makes no compromise with the world.

2. **A doomed city** (or the state of the sinner)

- a. under the curse of God v.17
- b. straightly shut up v.1
- c. quickly brought down v.21

3. **A strong assault** (or the victory of faith)

Compassing the city being the *measure* of faith

Blowing the trumpets being the *means* of faith

Carrying the ark being the *object* of faith

The shouting of the people being the *expectation* of faith.

Joshua 7

Failure

Failure by:

1. committing sin.
2. not consulting God
3. accepting carnal ways.

Beware of the dangers of:

1. **independence**
2. **indulgence** in sin
3. **indifference**

v. 1 an act of *sin*
an act of sacrilege
an act of selfishness

Joshua sent them out from Jericho and NOT Gilgal. Jericho was under a curse.

They forgot what the flesh is, and trusted in the flesh.

v. 3 confidence in themselves.

vs. 8 and 9 like Moses when sin was in the camp, Exodus 32:11

vs. 10 sanctify. Not a question of power, but of holiness
obedience
self-examination
humility
supplication

Ruth's Romantic Story

- ch.1 RUIN
- ch.2 RECOVERY
- ch.3 RECOMPENSE
- ch.4 RELATIONSHIP

A Gracious beginning 1:16 to 19
A Glorious end 4:17

ch.1 Ruth's discriminating choice

- wrong step vs.1,2
- widow's sorrow vs.3-5
- words of cheer v.6
- weighty decision vs.7-15
- wise resolve vs.16,17
- welcome home vs.18-22

ch.2 Ruth's diligent work

- her genuine desire vs.1,2
- her good fortune vs.3-8
- her grateful acknowledgement vs.9,19
- her gladdened heart vs.1-18
- God's guiding hand vs.19-23

ch.3 Ruth's resting place

- The humble believer vs.1-8
 - washing
 - waiting
 - watching
- The kinsman redeemer vs.9,10
- The relationship claimed v.9
- Receiving his promise vs.10-13
- Resting in his word vs.14-18

ch.4 Ruth's redemption effected

- The place of redemption v.1
- The parties involved vs.2-4
- Publicly executed v.4

Purpose declared vs.5-10

Pleasure announced vs.14-16

ch.1 **PREPARATION FOR CHRIST**

This book opens with a reminder of the dreadful days of the Judges, a mixture of captivity and deliverance, and this covers the conditions abounding up to the advent of Christ. The meaning of the names (see Introduction) tells us of:

1. **What God Intended**

“My God is King”. He acted in kingly power to bring to pass His own thought of blessing for Israel and through them the nations. “Delight” or “My pleasant One” was what God desired in the nation. He wanted them to be pleasant in His sight.

2. **Why Government Intervened**

Because of the sorrowful conditions existing among His people, God sent famine, which affected this family, as spiritual famine affected the nation before the birth of Christ. But His government eventually subserves the purposes of His grace and good news is heard, the Lord visited His people, hope revives and there is a return to Bethlehem v.19.

3. **What Grace Inspired, vs.16,17**

Three women stood at the crossways of life, each making her own decisions as to her future. They represent the human race in relation to Christ. Naomi learned from transgression and wisely decides to trust God and was blessed. Orpah hesitated, longed for Moab, went back, a lost professor. Ruth was inspired by Naomi’s example of faith in God and dedicated her life to love a lonely woman and dwell under the wings of Jehovah, finding rest and refreshment 2:12,9.

ch.2 **THE REVELATION OF CHRIST**

Here we are introduced to the central man in this book, who portrays the wealth, character, love and work of our beloved Lord.

His Greatness, v.1

The kinsman identified with us, He took our nature in order to be able to represent us and redeem us, Heb. 2:17,19. Great in character, in love, in power, in valour, and in resources, with the right and zeal to redeem His own.

His Goodness, v.4

Coming out of Bethlehem with grace on His lips. The Lord of Strength to

overcome all enemies, the ruler of Israel and the nations, Mic. 5:2; Psa. 2; Isa. 11:10,11,15; in Him there is grace to sustain and provide v.9.

His Guidance, vs.8,15

To the saints and the servants in His field. We are taken under His care and guardianship and He speaks to us through His Word or by His Spirit, v.8; John 16:13,14.

His Gifts, vs.14,16

Ruth is encouraged by His thoughtfulness and gentleness, for he knew all her history. So our Lord knowing all things prepares His saints for fellowship with Himself in the inner sanctuary and lavishes the gifts of His love upon us, John 13-16. He feeds us with food convenient and leads us in the way everlasting. Well might we ask "Why have I found grace in thine eyes?" v.10. May we come and gather, continue to glean in His field, and know His rich benediction v.12.

ch.3 ASSOCIATION WITH CHRIST

This is a chapter of relationships and rest. Do we today know our true relationships in spiritual things? Ruth is instructed to claim the highest place and let Boaz do everything for her. She can rest on him, look to him, and eventually live with him. So our Lord Jesus blesses us v.10, banishes our fears v.11, guarantees to help us v.13, and does not cast us out John 6:37, and lavishes His gifts upon us v.15. May we accept association with Him v.14, in death, in resurrection and rise to walk in newness of life Rom.6. Rejoice in our present relationship and future hopes with a risen, glorified and soon coming Lord, Col. 3:1; Phil. 3:20,21.

ch.4 REDEMPTION IN CHRIST

What a great day for Ruth, bought by Boaz and coming into union with her Redeemer. Like Boaz, our Lord went up to the gate to undertake all for us, the strangers. He became man, He laid down His life, redeemed the inheritance, and rose again to give us everlasting life, and united us to Himself Eph.5:30. He is building up His house Eph.2:20; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, and will make a name for Himself v.14, bringing glory to God, blessing to the Church and a restored inheritance to Israel Ezek. 37:21,22. The book ends on a kindly note and links "David" through whose line according to the flesh Christ came Matt.1, to reveal, to recover, to redeem and to relate us to Himself. May we worship, and respond to the revelation of this king, "for He is thy Lord" Psa. 45:11b.

Studies in Ruth

This little book is a literary gem, a classic unsurpassed and unrivalled, being full of grace and truth. It possesses a charm and beauty all its own, and is of far greater importance than most readers apprehend.

It commences with a famine but concludes with a roll of fame. The writer of the book is veiled in secrecy, like the book of Hebrews. Probably written by Samuel before David was made king (1 Sam. 25:1).

If written in the days of David the book is supplementary to the book of Judges, and introductory to the books of Samuel. Morally it follows the apostasy of Israel and the bringing in of the kingdom in David. The famine (1:1) may suggest the earlier part of Judges, ch.6:1-6.

Purpose

1. To give us the ancestry of David and the genealogy of Christ the Son of David (ch.4:21,22; Matt. 1:5-16).

2. The Sovereignty of God (2:12). God is watching over His people and He brings to pass what is good. He rules over all and in the darkest times He never loses sight of His purposes, bringing blessing to those who trust Him.

3. To illustrate the doctrinal importance of the goel—the Kinsman; Boaz is a picture and type of the Lord Jesus Christ (2:1; 3:12,13; 4:4-8,9,10).

The disastrous failure of the first leads to the necessity for the second man a kinsman-redeemer, a mighty man of wealth (2:1). The Lord our Redeemer (Job 19:25; Isa. 41:14; 63:16). In Heb. 2:14-15, our Lord is Kinsman Avenger-Redeemer.

Importance

Is this story of two women loyal to each other in adversity, worthy of serious study? We can look at its teaching in four different ways and study it to our lasting profit individually and in groups.

1. *Historically*

Jud. 2:10a,11,12,17; 21:25 give a dark and solemn picture of the third generation. While Ruth contains no reference to Israel's national and worldwide purposes of God, the closing verses of the book give to us its true significance. This book connects the old order of things with the new, taking away the first, and establishing the second in the gracious purpose of God (Heb. 10:9b).

The last name in this book is DAVID, God's chosen king, destined to be

the deliverer of Israel, to recover the inheritance, and to rule the nation in the fear of God. Compare the ten names of Ruth 4:17-22 with the special position given them in the genealogy of the Lord in Matt. 1:5,6. Note the names of Ruth and Boaz who were in the direct line of descent through which our Lord Jesus came. Five women are named in Matt. ch.1, indicating that Divine grace overcomes human weakness. From this weakness came forth 'Emmanuel'—"God with us."

What an honoured place Ruth the poor outcast enjoyed, raised to royal favour and position by Divine grace (Rom. 5:20; 9:5).

God's plan in inspiring the recording and presenting the contents of this book was to give us the ancestry of David, for this information is not given in the books of Samuel. This book is an appendix to that of Judges and a preface to that of 1 Samuel. It comes like an oasis in the desert between the two books of strife and sensuality, breathing the spirit of peace and purity.

The incidents here described took place some thirteen centuries before Christ came, yet God was already working out His own purposes for the introduction of His beloved Son into the world (Gal. 4:4-7)

2. *Typically*

There is some beautiful teaching here. It should be remembered that the book is Jewish, and the first application must be to God's earthly people. We shall touch this side in point three.

This interesting love story reminds us of a more wondrous story, that of Christ in His love for the Church (Eph. 5:25-27). Ruth may represent the Gentile bride of Christ—the Church. Boaz, the mighty man of wealth, redeeming the estate and securing Ruth (ch.4) is an example of the Redeemer, fulfilling His gracious purpose toward us (Eph. 1:7; 2:12-18).

Contrast the authority exercised in Josh. 14, it was by virtue of right; in Judges, it is by representation, "the Angel of the Lord" (Judg. 6), but here it is based on relationship (3:9,13). This pictures our Lord who took on Him the seed of Abraham (Heb. 2:16). As the Son of Man He gave Himself, a ransom (Mark 10:45). Boaz had the resource to redeem, and willingly He paid the price (ch.2:1; 4:9). The incarnation gave our Lord the right (Gal. 4:4); giving His life voluntarily displayed His resource (John 10:10; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Compare Ruth 4:9 with Matt. 13:38-44. Our Lord is also the Avenger (Heb. 2:14). The devil is defeated, the price determined by law has been paid for the purchase (Jer. 32:9-11; Eph. 1:14).

Thus the Redeemer becomes the Bridegroom. The day is soon to dawn when our Lord will consummate the union as illustrated in the romance of this book. The Revelation sets forth our Lord as the Kinsman (chs.1-3); the Kinsman-Avenger (ch.4:7); the Kinsman Redeemer (ch.8:18); and in chs.19-22 He is the Bridegroom. God's purposes are never frustrated by men or the devil. Our Lord conquers the enemy, redeems the inheritance, takes His bride, then brings in a new heaven and a new earth.

Naomi illustrates the Christian overcome by the love of ease in the world—Moab (Jer.48:11) but having learned by adversity, as did the prodigal, she is welcomed again into the house of Israel—Bethlehem, a picture of the Church.

Ruth illustrates the individual aspect, the history of a soul in its dealings with God, ch.1 deciding by faith; ch.2 gleaned under grace; ch.3 communing in fellowship, and ch.4 resting in redemption which seals relationship.

3. *Dispensationally*

It is a picture of the present age when Israel, having been set aside (Acts 15:14-18), God has turned to the blessing of the Gentiles as seen in Ruth; while in the restoration of Naomi is foreshadowed the coming restoration of the nation.

Primarily, this book has to do with Israel, and it unfolds the nation's past course, present condition, and future blessing. Here we have a bright picture, not of man, but of God's grace to the nation. It is the history of the mercy of God for a degenerate nation. It gives us the lineage of the man after God's own heart, and closes by showing how all blessing comes from David's Son.

Hebrew names are significant and often prophetic. "Bethlehem-Judah"—Bethlehem is the "House of Bread" which became the birth-place of Him who as the "Bread of God" came down from heaven to give life to the world. Judah is the royal tribe through which Israel's King was to come. Israel in her pristine glory (1:1) was the time when as yet the Lord ruled over them (Jud. 8:23). Naomi—"pleasantness", "attractive" or "beauty" (Psalm 27:4). These names represent the original state of Israel as called of God into His favour, under His blessed government. The nation springing out of Abraham began well, owning Jehovah's sovereign right to rule and He cast their lines in pleasant places. Even Balaam acknowledged their dignity as a nation (Num. 23:9,21; 24:7-9). But the nation grew weary of the government of God, asking for a king, they forsook and dishonoured God (1 Sam. 8:5). Famine followed (Deut. 11:8-17). Elimelech left their land and like the nation found bitterness but not rest (Lam. 1:1-6). In Mahlon—"sickness"; Chilion—"pining" is seen the evil consequences of the unequal yoke with its consequent chastening from God (Deut. 7:3; Isa. 1:5; Micah 6:13), left to pine away (Lev. 26:39; Ezek. 24:33; Lam. 4:9-10). This is Israel today without a king or priest.

A remnant returned, like the widows (1:6-22), but they are desolate (Psa. 98:6). Naomi represents the widowed nation, Israel after the flesh. Her two daughters-in-law may portray the state of Israel after this dispensation is closed. Orpah—the mass in Israel goes back to apostasy, to Moab's god. National Israelites will identify themselves with the Antichrist. Ruth, like the faithful remnant of that day, will hold fast to the promises of God,

exercising faith in Him (Zech. 13:9). Read the book of Lamentations and Hosea for Israel's exercises under affliction.

Returning at the "barley harvest" (Lev. 23:10-11), foreshadows the joy of resurrection. God will heal their backsliding, will love them freely and they will be reunited to Him (Hos. 14:4), Israel's return will bring blessing to the Gentiles (Zech. 8:23); now there is "a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

The good news of the kingdom preached by the two witnesses raised up by God will bring about the restoration of Israel. This day of grace is drawing to a close and the threshing time is very near, a night of trembling hearts, (Deut. 28:64,65).

As night follows day, the threshing floor will be trodden by the feet of the beasts of Rev. 13 and will bring in the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). Gentile nations will also be sifted (Isa. 30:28; 41:15), as will Christendom (Matt. 13:30).

As Ruth found her way to the feet of Boaz, so will Israel (Isa. 53), and be assured of His "fear not" (Lam. 3:57).

The Lord of the harvest has triumphed over Satan and will acknowledge Israel (Isa. 54:4-5; Jeremiah 50:34; Hosea 2:19-20). They will enter into possession of the land (Deut. 32:9; Jer. 10:16; 51:19). There will be a morning of relationship and redemption (Zeph. 3:14-17). How true, "The Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob" (Isa. 48:20; 40:1-2; Jer. 32:42-44; Psa. 65:9-13).

4. *Morally and practically*

Read with this book, Malachi and Revelation chs.2-3. This book begins morally, where Judges ends, in departure from God. This is the third generation and very little good is recorded of them. Like a funeral dirge the phrases, "They knew not the Lord", "did evil", "forsook the Lord", "provoked the Lord", "did not obey the commandments" (Judg. 2:10-13,17,19). In chs.1-16 it is national failure, in chs.17-21 it is Levitical failure as in Malachi. Some of the grossest sins were at Bethlehem-Judah, and in Ruth the events are connected with this name. Study the seven mentions in this book. It is a record of individual failure and individual faithfulness, especially Ruth and Boaz.

God still has a little remnant in the midst of the ruin (Rev. ch.2:3). These letters emphasise the collective, the ministerial and individual responsibilities today. The Lord save us from collective compromise as in many present day movements pandering to ecumenicalism. May we cherish the liberties bequeathed to us and grace to emulate the characteristics of Boaz and the ardent devotion of Ruth "Stand fast" (1 Cor. 16:13). Out of all the chaos and corruption that marked Israel's history, God's design for them was not frustrated, for grace triumphs over our failures. Read the encouraging words of Psa. 115:9-12.

MOMENTOUS DECISIONS, ch.1

The story belongs to the period of the Judges, perhaps chapters 17-21, it is like a water-lily in a stagnant pool. The names in vs.1,2 are all suggestive, yet tarnished by failure.

The “days when judges judged” R.V. they were turbulent days. Days of spiritual declension vs.1-2; spiritual disaster vs.3-5; spiritual discovery vs.6-7; spiritual destitution vs.8-14; spiritual decision vs.15-18; and spiritual discipline vs.19-22. May we learn from their adversity and forsake not the Lord our God.

A Tragic Story, vs.1-5

Connect verse one with Judges 21:25 for the dark background to this sad experience. There is famine in Canaan, in consequence of which a Hebrew family migrate to Moab. Captivity and war are the judgments in Judges, famine is the Divine visitation here for retrogression, relapse and apostasy Lev. 26:20,26. Famine drove them there and unholy connections kept them there. They went “to sojourn” in a far country and like the prodigal found desolation and loneliness. “In the days of adversity consider”—yes, your thoughts, ways, companionships, and your God. Ought this family to have left Canaan? and having left ought the sons to have married Moabitish women?

God tests our faith in His goodness by adversity, and adversity will either drive us nearer to Him or nearer the world. Elimelech did the natural thing, like Abraham Gen. 12:10-20, he pleased himself, followed the flesh and was dragged down by the world. Do not be a Jonah 1:3.

What a denial of the names they bore. Elimelech—“My God is king”, Naomi—“pleasantness”, Ephrathites—perhaps “fruitful”, Bethlehem—“House of Bread”, Judah—“praise”. When we lose sight of Divine Sovereignty, our delight in God decreases, we become Mahlon—“sickly”, Chilion—“pining, wasting away”, we lose appetite for the Bread from heaven, praise is no longer joyful and Moab a worldly type of Christianity becomes alluring—but it ends in death v.3.

Where God is King, He will make life pleasant and fruitful giving daily bread and making us joyful, Prov. 10:22; John 6:35; 1 Pet. 2:9; Phil. 4:4. Departure from God v.1, Jer. 8:5; brings the bitterness of desolation and death v.3.

Naomi remained alive and the two sons took the initiative and contracted unholy marriage in Moab.

Orpah means “neck” or “firmness”, used in a good sense in Song of Songs 4:4; but “stiff-necked” has derogatory associations Ex. 32:9; Prov. 29:1; Is. 16:6. Ruth means “friendship” or “rose” and everything recorded of her is fragrant. Verse 4c “ten years” probably covers the whole of their time there, hearts filled with anguish, minds with anxiety, three women left lonely and desolate Prov. 15:9-10.

Troubled Souls, vs.6-14

Naomi learned that death is upon everything here, and she has no further stake in Moab. "Then she started," she heard the good news of bread from God, believed the tidings and acted in faith. She proved that the "Lord is very pitiful" James 5:11; and God visits His people in blessing Psa. 85:1-3. News of revival and blessing is ever a call to return to God.

Decision must lead to action v.7. There cannot be a returning without a separation, Luke 15:18; 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Jn. 2:15-16.

Her action reversed her fortunes and affected the history of the world. Think of the blessing of the restoration of David and Peter Psa. 51; Luke 22:32. Christians who live a stagnant, low-level worldly life have very little effect for good on others. Ever act in the fear of God, respond to the provision and promptings of God and start back on the highway of holiness v.7. Jehovah and His land were still precious and attractive to her heart; and He honoured her by making her and her hopes attractive to Ruth. Think of the power of influence Rom. 14:7 and the wise choice of faith, Josh. 24:15; Matt. 5:16.

Discouragement vs.8-9. Much of this book is taken up with dialogue and the writer tells his story through conversations.

Naomi, as a backslider, does not encourage her daughters-in-law to accompany her. Out of communion with God ourselves, we are stumbling-blocks to others who may be seeking the Lord.

The Lord Himself spoke of the cost of discipleship to any ready to follow Him, Luke 14:26,27. Never speak lightly of what is involved in following the Lord or you make spurious or shallow conversions, John 6:60-66,

Naomi prays using the personal Name "ANWEH" of the God of Israel. She thanks Ruth and Orpah for their kindness. Her own resources have failed, and she thinks God has also failed so she has nothing to offer them:

Distress v.9b. The first stage of these souls. The journey is reached and Naomi wishes them rest and a happy married life. There is only rest in the Saviour, and happiness for those who marry in the Lord, 1 Cor. 7:39.

She kissed them farewell and the trio joined in loud weeping. Orpah readily succumbs to the persuasions of Naomi, parts company and returns to her idolatry. She speaks of the unbelieving mass of the nation that will elect to remain among the nations in the day of Israel's return to her homeland. Ruth clinging to Naomi portrays the believing remnant of the nation, which will trust in God's provision and ultimately come into touch with the mighty Kinsman-Redeemer with abiding blessings, Ruth 1:10.

Both Orpah and Ruth signify the nation in dispersion and unbelief. Orpah remained in that condition, while Ruth took the step of faith into blessing. Ruth is not emotional, she is not demonstrative, but devoted.

Youth, like a fresh rose bud, often withers in the blast, or drought of trial. The blessing of youth can be enjoyed, Ecc. 11:9; but not apart from Christ Mk. 10:21. Ruth was prepared to give up natural hopes in order to have part

with the people of God even in sorrow and affliction. The searching test is a disclosure of their characters.

Orpah had Bethlehem in her eye but Moab in her heart and went back. Demas loved this world and abandoned Paul; the claims of Christ may cut across the most sacred and intimate things of life, Luke 14:26,27.

Ruth will not readily give up the object of her love and devotion. Her's was a purely spiritual affection for the God of Israel, and at all costs be united to Naomi.

Depression v.13. For Naomi there was no prospect other than a lonely old age, embittered by the thought that the hand of the Lord had gone against her. Jacob-like she seems to despair Gen. 42:36,38. She had not the light we enjoy today, Rom. 8:28. Divine activity ever working for our good.

Naomi's words provoked more tears and they raised their voices in lamentation. The testing time had come and one goes back "but Ruth clave unto her" v.14. Her heart was fixed, her ardent affection knit her to what was of God, nothing held her back, she made God her very own.

We never hear of Orpah again, the remainder of the book is Ruth's romance. Orpah has much to her credit but the pull of Moab was too strong for her. She was prepared to sacrifice something, but not everything, never hold anything back from Christ, Mk. 10:29,30. It is easier to kiss than cleave, loyalty is better than sentiment, Acts 11:23; 1 Cor. 16:13-14.

MATCHLESS DEVOTION, ch.1 vs.16-22

The picture of the future as given by Naomi only served to deepen the determination of Ruth. Her faith, strong and triumphant, rose above the difficulties that shadowed the horizon and she refused to turn back. Her sevenfold confession is a classic expression of faithfulness vs.16,17.

Declaration "Entreat me not." Her decision was devotion to a person whom she loved. She was steadfastly minded to go forward; like Caleb, she "wholly followed the Lord." This is the language of a committed believer, separated from the former life she accepts companionship with Naomi as everything in life. By abiding in the Lord we can enjoy the sunshine of His presence every day.

Renunciation "I will go." In the energy of her faith Ruth overcomes the attraction of the land of her birth. Christian living is not only abiding it is also an active following of the Lord, who says "follow thou Me." He promises unerring guidance and expects unswerving allegiance. We are expected to emulate His character and love, 1 Pet. 2:21; John 13:15. We need resolution to share in His rejection and take up our cross and follow Him, Matt. 10:37,38.

Communion "I will lodge." Here is love strong and deep, finding here a lodging place, not a dwelling place. It means the setting aside of natural desires and relationships, and taking up service in, and to, His Name, John

1:39-41; Acts 15:26. Ruth would be cut off from her own people in Moab, but she will make Naomi's people her own, Heb. 11:13-16.

Identification "Thy people shall be my people." The connecting link holding old friendships is severed forever. She readily accepts the lot of a stranger, in true separation from the people of the curse and identification with the people of the covenant. Committal to Christ brings fellowship with His people, the blessed company of believers who own Him Lord, Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:23; 1 Cor. 1:9; Psa. 119:63; Mal. 3:16. The principle of vital godliness was rooted in her heart, and powerfully operative in her life.

Appropriation "Thy God my God." Here is faith's warm embrace bringing a change in relationship with God. Perhaps Ruth loved Moab well, but God better. Where do you put our God? Is there an 'L' in your God 'gold'. Everything she was going to enjoy depended on her making the God of Israel her very own possession.

Ruth's trust is placed in the living God, her eyes were opened, her vision enlarged, and her joy inexpressible. He is our God in a very special sense and like Thomas the note is personal "My God" Eph. 1:3,17; 3:14.

Consecration "I will die." Ruth was going all the way, be the road rough or smooth, she was determined that nothing would part her from the object of her love. We are called upon to be with Christ in His death, and share the cross in daily living Lk. 9:23. We are called upon to put off the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. 2:12, and live on resurrection ground, Col. 3:1; 2 Cor. 5:15. Is your life surrendered to God? Rom. 6:13; 12:1; is self crossed out in the abandonment of your devotion to the Lord? Have you died with Christ? Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21. Ruth will stay with Naomi until death, and die where Naomi dies. We can say, "neither death . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us" Rom. 8:38,39.

Separation "there will I be buried" v.17; Col. 2:12. There was no turning back, she was steadfastly minded to leave all and press on. Her decision was irrevocable and her love unquenchable even in death. May we emulate her steadfastness. In Col. 2:12 the emphasis is not upon "baptism" but "buried."

Devotion v.18. It was a person who drew Ruth from the comforts of home and the land of her birth to take this long wilderness journey of over forty miles to Bethlehem. Her resolution was firm and lasting, we need the steadfastness of Ruth today in following the Lord.

What is your choice? "wilt thou go with this man?" May we join Rebekah and say, "I will go."

The unshakeable firmness of Ruth must have cheered the heart of Naomi and "they two went on." This is a beautiful picture of our fellowship one with another on the highway to heaven, like the two on the road to Emmaus.

Destination v.19. What a touching scene, approaching the city, there was a buzz of excitement. The city was moved and came excitedly out to greet

them. There was a change in Naomi, perhaps the imprint of sorrow upon her countenance touched their hearts.

Think of the joy in heaven over one sinner repenting Lk. 15:7,10, and of the Church when raptured home to meet the Lord.

Her truthful testimony vs.20-22. Her experiences had been anything but pleasant, for the far country experience is generally a sad one and makes us bitter; plenty turned to poverty, fulness gives place to emptiness. Her unjust complaint v.20b, it is not fair to ascribe all the embittering element of things to God. The apparent troubles were used by God to bring restoration, blessing and happiness in the end, there is always an "afterward." Her deliberate action—"I went out," brought desolation—"home again empty." Self-will took her away; grace brought her home. Being "empty" put her in a fit state to receive grace and blessing. Are we full of material things? Are they crowding God out of our lives? 2 Tim. 4:10.

The time of her arrival was appropriate—"the beginning of barley harvest." It is figurative of resurrection and all that is connected with Christ as the Risen One. The true sheaf of first-fruits, Christ has been waved in resurrection, and because He lives, we shall live also, John 14:19. Everything is secured for us in the Risen Man and we share His triumphs. The harvest may signify the end of the age, Matt. 13:30,39. When the end comes, after the Church is glorified, Israel, like Naomi, with a believing remnant cleaving to her, represented in Ruth, will return to the land Is. 6:13; 10:21,22; Zech. 3:7.

May we be Resolute v.14, Unwavering v.16, True v.17 and Helpful vs.18-19.

MEMORABLE DAYS, ch.2 vs.1-12

In chapter one we see Ruth the sincere believer; now in ch.2, vs.1-12, as the humble seeker, and in vs.13-23 the grateful gleaner. God had met the need of her conscience in bringing her to Bethlehem, now His gracious provision for her as a gleaner in the field of Boaz, who will captivate her affections.

The Greatness of Boaz, v.1

"Naomi had a kinsman," thus we are introduced to Boaz the wealthy kinsman-redeemer. He was not a relation of Naomi's but of her husband. Why did Elimelech not turn to him instead of going down into Moab for help? In times of trial we turn aside and resort to the world instead of to the Lord. We have a Friend who is near, strong, wealthy and willing to help if we but turn and trust in Him at all times.

Boaz is the lord of the harvest and the dispenser of bounty, he beautifully portrays the Lord in His character and work.

1. *Worthy*—a kinsman related to the family, bound to them by the ties of nature. He became one of us in order to befriend us, Heb. 2:14-18. No mere stranger could have undertaken the responsibilities expected of the Kinsman. Our Lord as the Son of Man is the great Kinsman of all men and we need to know Him in a personal way. His sinless humanity is an essential feature of His fitness to span the gulf between God and man. As the seed of Abraham and David He qualified to become Israel's Redeemer and our High Priest.

2. *Wealthy*—so he could meet the full extent of their poverty. He possessed all the resources necessary for a redeemer. Think of the riches of our Lord, what a glorious person He is, and He is rich in glories. Meditate on His eternity, John 1:1; His humility, Phil. 2:5-8; His priority, Col. 1:16,17; His dignity, Heb. 1:3; and His sovereignty, Rev. 1:17,18. He is rich in grace, in mercy, in blessing and in power. What a galaxy of titles He possesses, what honours will yet be lavished upon Him.

3. *Mighty*—for He is strong. Boaz—"in him is strength," a mighty man of valour. Our Lord has all power in His hands, Matt. 28:16-18. In his strength He overcame the "strong one" Luke 11:22 and sin and death, and reached the throne of God as the Victor. His strength is available to us today, Phil. 4:13; Eph. 1:19.

God's word to us is "I have laid help upon One that is mighty."

The Gleaning of Ruth, vs.2,3

Her love is expressed in service for Naomi. She is willing to serve humbly for true love is never ashamed of toil. This gleaning after the reapers was a merciful provision for the poor, Lev. 19:9; Deut. 24:19, a right specifically granted in the law to the widow.

We become acquainted with Christ by means of the Word, and like Ruth we can enjoy the guidance of God, Prov. 3:5,6. Ruth had to provide for her needs by gleaning. She desired to go and was diligent in her work; like her we should search the scriptures and feed on Christ the Bread of heaven.

God's good hand led her to what God's heart was planning for her, v.3b, Psa. 37:23. She knew where to go to glean, "after the reapers," this world is a great harvest field, John 4:35,36.

The Greeting of Boaz, vs.4,5

While Ruth is gleaning Boaz appears on the scene, and salutes his servants. He comes with grace in his heart and a blessing on his lips, and his servants bless him. There was mutual love and confidence, genuine interest and grace in the relationship. We are suffering severely today from lack of an understanding sympathy, and common courtesy.

This unity is due to heart co-operation. As Boaz came from Bethlehem, so our Lord as to His human nature, Micah 5:2, comes from Bethlehem.

Ruth attracted his attention and his compassionate eye rested kindly on the stranger, v.5. How gracious he was to her, he showed her every kindness in his power.

The Grace of Boaz, vs.6-9,11-12

He took a personal interest in those who worked on his land, but he did not recognise Ruth. Our Lord observes every humble gleaner in His field and takes them under His care and guardianship. Ruth was known to the foreman, as one who came from Moab to trust in Israel's God, v.6.

Boaz gave Ruth permission to glean, v.8, protection from harm v.9, and provision for her need, v.9. The Lord encourages us to abide for spiritual nourishment cannot be found outside of Himself.

We need to hear His voice, follow His guidance and enjoy service in His field. Ruth was now accepted—"daughter," assured—"abide here" and encouraged—"go not to another field."

He designates her place of service, dispels all her fears and invites her to share in the fellowship of the household, v.9. This is richly suggestive of our place in the Church and our fellowship with the Lord and His saints. Liberty, protection and provision are ours in association with our heavenly Boaz, so may we recognise the Lord as Director of operations in His own fields and "abide fast." There are other "fields" which bring little profit and no fellowship so let us drink of the water provided by Boaz's servants and be refreshed by their ministry, Song of Songs 1:7,8.

Genuine Humility, v.10

She gratefully acknowledges his grace and has nothing to plead in his presence. She takes the true place of adoration, appreciating all his grace, 2 Sam. 9:8; Eph. 1:3,6. "She fell, she bowed, she asked Why?" She did not know why she had found favour with Boaz. His grace was the object of wonder as the loving kindness of our God to us, the undeserving, in providing a free and full salvation, Eph. 2:4,8.

As we think of the wealth of our inheritance in Christ may we ever remember His grace to us, "strangers" Eph. 2:12, but now accepted in the Beloved One. Boaz knew all about her, v.11, as does the Lord, known unto Him are all our ways and works, Rev. 2:2. He appreciates what we do in His name, Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:40. Boaz was impressed with Ruth's sacrifice in leaving parents and native land. She stepped out in faith like Abraham, Heb. 11:8-10, trusting God for protection and provision. Think of the new things grace has brought us into, 2 Cor. 5.

The Goodness of Boaz, v.12

Having explained how he had heard about her kindness to Naomi, he assures her that he is in full sympathy with her, v.12. He spake as a prophet

to instruct, v.8. Now as a priest to encourage her faith in the God of Israel, v.12. This is priestly benediction, refuge and rest under the wings of Jehovah.

MATCHLESS GRACE, ch.2 vs.13-23

Ruth has obtained personal recognition from Boaz and received comfort from him and he spoke to her heart, although she is a stranger v.13. She is refreshed at meal time v.14, and returns home to cheer Naomi with her gleanings vs.17-19. The reaction of Naomi is encouraging, and the relationship is sweet, as Israel will know at the second advent of the Lord, Hosea 6:1-11; Zech. 12:10; 13:1.

Encouragement, vs.13-16

Ruth is encouraged with the assurance that Boaz knows all about her v.11, and he is desirous of the blessing of God upon her v.12. She responds with gratitude, her request is almost equivalent to 'thank you'. This man of kindly thoughts and words v.13 was also kindly in act v.16. She is confident of his favour and can trust in his comforting words. What strength and encouragement for this lone stranger in her adversity. She had faced widowhood, exiled from her own land and people, and in Israel grinding poverty. Like her we are cheered by the words of our heavenly Boaz, He speaks to our hearts John 14:1 and dries our tears and allays our fears, John 20:15,20. He bestows peace and gives rest, and promises us victory over the world John 16:33. It is good to remember that we are unworthy of the least of all His mercies for we were strangers and aliens.

Ruth was privileged to dine with Boaz v.14. She became his guest and partook of his rich provision at mealtime. What joy, sitting at the Master's table, eating the Master's bread in fellowship with his servants. She was offered food and wine, and parched corn as much as she could, Song of Songs 2:3,4. Christ is the Living Bread and offers Himself to us in His Word in order to satisfy our souls. Our God is ever bountiful and we should have set times for feasting with Him and His Word. As we sit at His table S. of Songs 1:12; 2:4, may there be something for Him. The vinegar was probably sour wine, a tasty accompaniment to the bread, to refresh the weary workers. Ruth learns how he cares, and provides from his wealth, and what they have she can enjoy.

Dipping the morsel in vinegar may be significant of the death of our Lord, Psa. 69:21; Matt. 27:34, the "parched corn" speaks of Him who passed through the fire, brought pleasure to His God and as the Risen Lord offers to us the wine of His love and a share of the merits of His shed blood.

It was a mark of special favour to her, more than a courteous gesture, like the Lord, a manifestation of His love. This is indeed soul-satisfying grace. As we sit under the shadow of Calvary, remembering our Lord, there we are

satisfied. Pentecost brings us into blessing, sharing fellowship and enabling us to persevere in the teaching of the apostles.

The Lord ever refreshes the hearts of His servants, inviting us to dine with Him, John 21:12 and supplies our every need Phil. 4:19.

She is encouraged by his presence at the table v.14, and by his provision for the future vs.15,16, here is grace and always more to follow. Boaz instructed his young men to let her glean even among the sheaves and not humiliate her. Handfuls of purpose were dropped for her, each a gift of his grace. What bundles of blessings are strewn in the path of the earnest gleaner of truth, to comfort and cheer them in their work.

Enjoyment, vs.17-19

Ruth gleaned, and she beat out what she had gleaned. Gleaning means hard diligent service and involves stooping. May we never shirk the one, nor shun the other. She got rid of the chaff and the straw and went home with quality rather than quantity.

Patient continuance in well-doing brings its reward v.17. She gleaned, she beat, she took and then gave to her mother-in-law. This is still the order of helpful ministry, 1 Tim. 4:13-15; 2 Tim. 4:2. Preach the Word, do not eat the chaff or give it to others. An "ephah", rather more than a bushel, almost four gallons, a large amount for a gleaner. Personal satisfaction through the Word must precede transmission to others, Psa. 104:34. Always share with another the blessing received by grace, for the Lord ever gives more than we need. Naomi's question to Ruth is eminently personal and practical. May we daily and carefully glean from the Word, prayerfully assimilate the truth, and enjoy divine provision in the field of Christ. Ruth told Naomi all she knew about the great owner of the field, Acts 14:27; Psa. 66:16.

Enrichment, vs.20-23

The good news caused Naomi to break out in praise to God. She recognises the goodness of Boaz and, in his kindness, the amazing kindness of God. She rejoices in the faithfulness of God and His kindness to their dead relatives. The resources v.18 and the relationship "near of kin to us" that he is one who has the right of redemption.

Arising out of the family relationship is a variety of duties. It involved redeeming a relation from a state of slavery, or redeeming his field, Lev. 25:48; 25:25. The latter was important to Ruth ch.4:3f.

What a change in Naomi since returning home. She begins to see the hand of God in her experiences. Once sad, and inclined to be bitter, her heart begins to rejoice, Job 29:13.

Our Lord has not only the right to redeem, but He willingly came as sent by the Father to accomplish our redemption, Mark 10:45; Eph. 1:7.

Ruth is enriched by the words of Boaz, v.12, words of invitation and warning. Keep near the servants and keep in the field. Apart from the Lord

there is no blessing for us, and the fields are now white unto harvest, John 4:35. Naomi confirms the word of Boaz and speaks of protection under Boaz until the end of harvest. Ruth gladly obeys and keeps close to the one who was the means of blessing to her.

May we value His fields of truth, the fellowship of saints, and be marked by stainless innocence and devotion at home, vs.20,21.

May we emulate Ruth and be regular v.7.

Unhindered vs.15,16

Thankful v.10

Helpful v.18

“Where hast thou gleaned today”?

In the field of a wealthy man v.3; with friendly people v.4; with real encouragement vs.8,9 and Divine protection v.16; at the table of plenty, v.14; in fellowship with others v.14b; with rich recompense vs.16,17 and Divine benediction v.20 and assuring words v.21. How hast thou gleaned? With readiness vs.2,3; humility v.10; through affection v.11; in appreciation v.13; with diligence v.17; purpose v.18 and determination v.23.

MIDNIGHT DEVOTION, ch.3 Resting in the Lord

Ruth's conduct here brings her a step nearer to union with Boaz. It represents the exercise of the soul who has learned that all depends on the Redeemer showing grace and favour in the right of redemption. The book now moves on to its climax and Ruth's future marriage to Boaz.

Naomi's Plan, vs.1-5

She is anxious to recover the rights of her inheritance and gives good advice to Ruth. Ruth had found favour in the sight of Boaz, she had tasted of the riches of his grace, but had yet to find the rest of unbroken fellowship in union with him.

By 'rest' Naomi meant, to be settled down in a happy marriage. Union with Christ should be the aim of all Gospel ministry and only thus will there be rest and joy for the believing soul (Matt. 11:28).

Union to the mighty man of wealth is the remedy for her poverty. She had not taken the yoke with Boaz by the marriage tie. She listens carefully and responds in faith and obedience to the counsel of Naomi. She is told where Boaz is, and that he is a kinsman (2,3). Ruth must prepare herself to meet this man and be acceptable to him. The instructions have a beautiful spiritual counterpart in our union with our Lord.

1. “*Washing*” speaks of cleansing and confession. This is the first thing she has to do in order to make herself acceptable to Boaz. Surely this is the washing of regeneration we require (Tit. 3:5). The washing and acceptance are instantaneous (John 3:5; Eph. 5:26). Receiving the Word by faith and obedience to it effects cleansing (Ezek. 36:25,26). Daily confession of sin is a requisite for fellowship with the Lord.

2. “*Anointing*” speaks of sanctification through the Holy Spirit in our lives (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:27). Without the Spirit’s indwelling we are not acceptable to Christ (Rom. 8:9). We need Him to guide, teach, counsel and help us in prayer. Study the teaching of the Spirit in Romans chapter 8.

3. “*Raiment*” the robe of righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:22) makes us acceptable to the Father (Luke 15:22). Like the prodigal we receive the garment of salvation. Raiment also speaks of character and testimony, and this must be clean (2 Tim. 2:19,22).

4. “*Humility*” “Get thee down” v.3. Like the publican and Zacchaeus we must come down, or like Jacob we will be humbled before we can be helped (Gen. 32:25). The Lord is ever the perfect example of this grace (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5)

She came to Boaz as he winnowed barley (vs.2,3). Our work has to be winnowed by the Master. He will get rid of all chaff, for what is morally worthless will have no place with Him. Surely it is better to be winnowed by Christ than to be sifted by Satan. “Make not thyself known.” She has to wait for an opportune moment; let him finish his meal before she does anything. We have the privilege of coming at all times into the Lord’s presence and making our requests in His Name. Ruth readily submitted to Naomi and ventured her whole reputation and character upon the faithfulness of Boaz (v.5). May we follow her example and yield ourselves to God (Rom. 6:13; 12:1). She casts herself at his feet. Before, she offered a request (2:7), now she offers herself.

Ruth’s Prudence, vs.6-9

Having resorted to his feet she will recognise him as kinsman (v.9). She claims the fulfilment of his office as redeemer in her behalf.

It was harvest-time and therefore a time of feasting and enjoyment (Is. 9:3). The Master rests for his soul is satisfied (Is. 52:11). His heart is merry for Calvary is over, and in a coming day the believing remnant like Ruth, will seek rest at the feet of its Redeemer. God will then rejoice over Israel with singing (Zeph. 3:17). Ruth’s patient waiting and watching is rewarded (v.8). She is there as a suppliant although she was entitled by law to union with Boaz. He is startled and looking all round him, discovers there is a woman at his feet. Ruth claimed her kinsman and asks for the token of his protection and in goodness he readily responds (vs.9-10). Naomi possibly knew Boaz to be a grave, sober man and one who feared God, and Ruth as a virtuous woman, so all is honourable. Ruth had come to trust under the wings of Jehovah, and now she puts herself under the wings of Boaz.

Boaz’s Purpose, vs.10-13

There was no reluctance in Boaz to perform the part of a kinsman redeemer, and he appreciates her presence at his feet. Our Lord is ever

touched by our need today (Heb. 4:15) and like Boaz is ever ready to commend us (v.10) and encourage us (v.11).

Ruth is cheered—"fear not," you can trust me. How like our Lord who casts out fear as we trust in Him. Judgment is gone, pardon is ours and His peace can garrison our heart (Phil. 4:7). She is assured, "I will do all" you require, and he is faithful that promised. She is commended, "thou art a virtuous woman" (Prov. 31:10-31).

Boaz affirms that he is a kinsman, but there is one nearer than him. Should this man decline, Boaz will accept responsibility and do the part of a kinsman. The failure of the law and flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom but the second Man, the Lord from heaven, ever comes to the aid of all who trust Him.

Ruth's Peace and Provision, vs.14-18

Contentment marked Ruth as "she lay at his feet" (v.14). Trace the blessing associated with the feet of the Lord in Luke's gospel 7:38; 8:40; 10:39; 17:16; 24:39. She remained at his feet as a suppliant, then rose and went home in the twilight when no one would recognise her. There is a sacredness about our private prayer life and communion with the Lord that no-one else should know anything about.

She left his presence burdened with his gift, liberal in the extreme, to give to Naomi. This was the earnest, a pledge of the covenanted inheritance. How like the Lord Who gives us freely day by day and we have the earnest of the inheritance in our hearts (Eph. 1:14).

She carried the gift to Naomi, and every minister of truth should carry God's gifts to others with a glad yet burdened heart.

Ruth is advised to "sit still" for the activity of the flesh can accomplish nothing for God. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him, for in quietness and confidence shall be your strength (Is. 30:15). Naomi knew the character and thoroughness of Boaz, he would finish what he had begun. How true of our God and of His Son.

MERCIFUL REDEMPTION, ch.4

We have seen Ruth returning and resolving ch.1; serving and reaping ch.2; resting and receiving ch.3. Now related through redemption ch.4. Ruth may have observed that Boaz's interest was more than casual, that his affections were warm toward her, and her love was drawn to him. Being the honourable man that he was, love did not come before duty, for there was another man who was more closely related to Ruth. This man must have the first privilege to redeem Ruth and the inheritance.

The morning dawns and Boaz was found at the city gate, where all business was legally transacted in the presence of witnesses (Gen. 23:10,18).

1. Redemption Effected, vs.1-12

Boaz is a man of intention and integrity and goes up to the gate v.1. A man of influence and respected by others sat down, at his command, to witness the transaction. How like the Lord in the completion of His purposes of love and grace for His own.

(a) *Place of Redemption* v.1. "The gate" where our Lord was crucified Heb. 13:12. He died outside that He might bring us inside the veil. "Kinsman" denotes more than a close relative, it is used in Num. 35:19; Deut. 19:6; of the avenger of blood. The rights and responsibilities of the Kinsman are outlined for us in Lev. 25,35,39,47,48; Deut. 19:6-13; 25:5-13. They tell us of the possibility of an Israelite losing his land, his liberty, his life and his hope. These four losses are an interesting study when linked with this chapter and Boaz.

A man could lose his land, become a bondman and forfeit his liberty. In the cities of refuge provision was made for any person who had accidentally killed another, Josh. 20:9. If a man died childless, his kinsman was responsible to raise up the name of the dead by taking the widow to wife, as in Ruth's case. These give a background to the redemptive work of our Lord. Boaz came to the gate to redeem one whom he loved. The work rested upon him, and how much depended upon him. He had the right as a kinsman; he had the power as a mighty man of valour and wealth, and he was willing to pay the price and redeem Ruth.

The unnamed man v.1 is illustrative of the law, ten witnesses attesting its inability Rom. 8:3. The law, Deut. 23:3, could only keep Ruth out, much less bring her in.

(b) *A Public Redemption*, vs.2-6. Boaz gathered the elders of the city to be witnesses, typical of the law, so that they could authorise the transaction. The work of grace was not done in a corner, it was witnessed by heaven and earth, by God, by man, and by the devil. The near kinsman may represent the old man, but he cannot redeem v.6. How inadequate man is to meet the claims of God or the demands of a broken law. The Law was our kinsman-condemner, but the Lord is our Kinsman-redeemer, Job 19:25.

This is the redemption of the inheritance, not redemption by blood or by power from the bondage of Egypt. The year of Jubilee, every 50 years, gave opportunity for debts to be cancelled, servants set free, and inheritances re-occupied, returning to their original owners, Lev. 25:28.

The kinsman is reminded if he purchases the property, he must take Ruth also. All must be legally and publicly established and the act of removing the shoe may symbolise the right of the owner to set foot on the land, Psa. 60:8.

(c) *The Power of Redemption*, vs.7-9. The plucked off shoe was a public sign of renunciation in accordance with custom and it was handed over to the next kinsman v.8. Our Lord took up the right to redeem what Adam lost and by His work every hindrance was removed vs.1-8 for He settled the question at Calvary. Every claim was answered v.9 for the law was inadequate. Every

desire was fulfilled vs.10-17, for Ruth was united in marriage. Thus we are redeemed by the Lord 1 Pet. 1:18,19 in order to be joined in union with Him, Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:15-28.

(d) *The Purpose of Redemption* vs.10-12. Everything was done righteously and Boaz “bought all” v.9. He became the new owner, and Ruth as emblematic of the Church, is the real treasure in the field Matt. 13:44. The treasure may speak of the Christian as an individual, the pearl, the Church in its unity. Christ secured the one and found the other Acts 20:28.

Ruth the outcast was to become accepted and the name of the deceased would be perpetuated in the community. Our God as the God of redemption, has effected all for us through the death, resurrection, and glorious exaltation of His Son, Acts 2:32; Eph. 1:20-23.

2. Relationship Enjoyed, vs.13-22

Ruth was not only rescued from poverty but given status by the act of Boaz v.11. She was officially accepted in Israel by the representatives of the city, and communion culminated in union. God sanctioned the act of redemption in the fertility of Ruth vs.13,14. The people pronounced a blessing on Boaz and his bride, it is a prayer for fruitfulness. We need to pray for the continual extension of the kingdom of our Lord and that our lives may be fruitful and useful, Phil. 4:4. The fact of the marriage is declared but no details are given and this is in keeping with the ante-type, the marriage of the Lamb, Rev. 19:5-10. What a glorious day of presentation, Eph. 5:27, and of rejoicing Rev. 19:7. Note the focus on Naomi v.14, from the sadness of her return 1:20 to the gladness of this great moment. Boaz will be to her, a restorer, a reviver of her soul and a nourisher of her old age. The Lord brings abundant life John 10:10. God was the unseen Power behind all that happened and we should rightly recognise Him as the source of all happiness and blessing.

The son that was born is regarded as God’s gift, for He is over all and works out His will.

The bond which held Ruth to Naomi was the bond of love, and this binds every child of God to the Saviour and each other.

Ruth linked Naomi to the kinsman-redeemer and was better to her than seven sons. Affection for the child and motherly care for this child symbolised the realisation of everything to Naomi. She came back helpless and hopeless with no future but now she is revived and restored.

The neighbours congratulated her saying, “It is Naomi that has a son,” for new life has come to the family. They gave it the name “Obed”, and Boaz and Ruth readily accepted the suggestion. Obed means “serving, worshipping” and this is the purpose of God for all who possess new life.

1 Samuel 12

The Lord:

as witness v.5
righteous v.7
sent Moses v.8
sent a king v.13
His voice v.15
His commandment v.15
His hand v.15
will act v.16
sent thunder v.17
will not forsake v.22

These verses represent a simple outline of God's dealings with His people from the time He chose them and led them out of the land of Egypt, to their rejection of the Lord, and the instigation of the monarchy, and implies the hand of the Lord upon the people in judgment, and the ultimate end. Yet, it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people (v.22).

1. The **provision** of the Lord.
 - a. *leaders* v.6
 - b. *land* v.8
 - c. *liberty* v.8
 - d. *liberators* v.11
 - e. *lessons* vs.15 and 16
2. The **power** of the Lord to:
 - a. *emancipate* v.8
 - b. *encircle* v.11
 - c. *educate* vs.16 and 17
3. The **presence** of the Lord.
 - a. the *pledge* —His name's sake v.22
 - b. the *pleasure* —of His heart v.22
 - c. the *principle* —only fear Him v.24

A call to CONSIDERATION
 CONTEMPLATION
 CONSECRATION

1 Kings 21:1-20

The danger of illegitimate desire

1. The obsession that Ahab never controlled

- a. *The smallness of it*—a small vineyard, yet he had a kingdom!
- b. *The nearness of it*—hard by the palace—seemingly within his grasp, and yet denied him.
- c. *The largeness of it*—filling his thoughts—and excluding everything else.

2. The transgression he never intended

- a. how *reasonably* he began—offering to buy it.
- b. how *rapidly* he advanced to a situation of dishonesty and deceit.
- c. how *tragically* he concluded.

3. The possession he never enjoyed

- a. The *disturbing* voice of the prophet is matched in us by the voice of conscience.
- b. The *distorted* values never lead to satisfaction.
- c. The *divine* verdict of judgment.

What are you wanting? Is it within the will of God? Take heed.
Keep thy heart with all diligence.

2 Kings 6:1-7

Their agitation was due to either

1. natural dissatisfaction or
 2. normal development. q.v. 1 Tim. 4:12
- Here is effort growing out of enthusiasm.

1. **The expansion of the sphere** 'is too strait for us' (i.e. too small) v.1.

- a. *The pioneering spirit* v.2 'Let us go ...'
- b. *The subjection to spiritual authority* v.2 'Go ye ...'
- c. *Sympathy with each other* v.2b. 'Let us make a place there'

2. **The encouragement he showed** v.2c 'Go ye'

3. **The example set** v.3 'I will go'

The shepherd leads the flock, setting an example

4. **The experience supplied** v.4 'He went with them'

5. **The enthusiasm stimulated** v.4 'They cut down wood'.

No standing aside and looking on, Phil. 2:13. 'For it is God that worketh in you'

6. **The equipment selected** v.5 'The axe head ...'

Beware of borrowed things!

It can spoil your efficiency

It can lead to pride

7. **The expression of sympathy** v.6 'Where fell it ...'

The backsliding believer has to return to the place where all was lost. Where fell it? And he showed him the place.

Consider a. David with Bathsheba

b. Jonah and his rebellion

c. Peter and his denial

8. **Effective spirituality** vs.6 and 7. 'He put out his hand and he took it'

He could cut a stick, but he could not cut the beam.

The miracle was contrary to the law of gravity, so spiritual things are contrary to the laws of the natural things.

9. **The educated servant** v.7. 'he took it'

He had learnt the lesson, and then got on with the job.

The Message of Ezra

THE NAME Ezra was given to the book because of the important part Ezra took in the Restoration of the nation to a respect for the Word of the Lord. His name means “Helper”, and well fits his character. He was a Priest (7:1) and a Scribe (7:6,21) this was his chief occupation. He gave himself to the study of God’s Word and so was used of God to teach the people and bring about important reforms.

The book contains the history of the Return of the first two caravans of Exiles—the first under Joshua and Zerubbabel (chs.1-6); and the second under Ezra, fifty-seven years later (chs.7-10). Only the second section of the book therefore is biographical, in the sense that it relates to Ezra himself.

THE WRITER The whole book was compiled by Ezra. The first six chapters were no doubt compiled from existing documents. The book belongs to the post-exilic period of Old Testament History. Three historical books, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther, and three prophetic books, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

PURPOSE To record the spiritual history of the return. Nehemiah has to do more with the political. Ezra gives to us the Temple Re-building, and the Spiritual Reformation of the people.

KEY WORDS House of the Lord; House of God; Temple of the Lord.

MESSAGE (1) Revival of faith in God’s Word of promise and precept; (2) Resort to prayer at all times; (3) Response to truth in separation from evil.

Suggested Analysis

(A) Chapters 1-6 **Restoring the Building under Zerubbabel**

CHAPTER ONE *The Restoration of a Remnant*

(1) The providence of God (v.1) Keeping His people and His Word (v.1); (2) The proclamation of Cyrus (v.1b-4). Like the Gospel it was Divine in its origin (v.16); Kingly in authority (v.2; Matt. 28:18-20); Permanent in form (v.1c); General in its appeal (v.3); (3) The preparation of the people (v.4,5); (4) The provision for the work (vs.5-11).

CHAPTER TWO *The Registration of the People*

According to families (vs.3-19); to localities (vs.20-35); to service (vs.36-42); and to treasure (vs.43-70). Priestly praising, practical service (vs.65-70).

CHAPTER THREE *The Revival of Worship* "Be Right with God"

(1) Rebuilding the altar (vs.1-3), A united, interesting, scriptural gathering; (2) Recognising the feasts (vs.4-7); Worship, its exercise (v.4); its Expression (v.5); Its Enjoyment (vs.5,6); (3) Reconstruction of the Foundation (vs.8-10); (4) Rejoicing in the Lord (vs.11-13).

CHAPTER FOUR *Resistance to the Work* (1) The wiles of the enemy (vs.1,2); Plausible, pious, perilous. (2) The wisdom of the leaders (v.3) Enlightened, established. (3) The wickedness of the enemy (vs.4,5) Opposition, hindrance, frustration. (4) The worldly amalgamation (vs.6-16) Costly, (v.5); Influential (vs.7-10); Hypocritical (vs.11-16).

The work stopped (vs.17-24) The interruption was presumptuous, prejudicial and perplexing.

CHAPTER FIVE *Resuming the Work* Inspiration (vs.1,2); Interference (vs.3-6); Information (vs.7-12); Interest (vs.13-17).

CHAPTER SIX *Confirmation of the Decree* (vs.1-5); Provision of means (vs.6-12); Dedication of the temple (vs.13-22). Vindication of God (v.22).

(B) Chapters 7-10 **Regulating the Behaviour under Ezra**

CHAPTER SEVEN *His Exercise of Heart*

Priestly association (vs.1-7); Personal determination (vs.8-10); Royal commission (vs.11-14); Rich provision (vs.15-22); Thankful recognition (vs.23-28).

CHAPTER EIGHT *His Experiences on the Way*

The march of faith (vs.1-14); The man of fidelity (vs.15-20); The motive of fasting (vs.21-23); The materials guarded (vs.24-30); The mighty hand of God (vs.31,32); The ministration and joy (vs.33-36).

CHAPTER NINE *His Example of Piety*

The prince's recognition (vs.1,2); The priests' humiliation (vs.3,4); The prayer of contrition and confession (vs.5-15); Pleading God's grace (v.8); Mercy (v.9); and Righteousness (v.15).

CHAPTER TEN *His Execution of Discipline*

Trespass acknowledged (vs.1-5); Trespassers assembled (vs.6-8); Trembling at the Word (vs.9-14); Trespass put away (vs.15-17); Trespassers named (vs.18-44).

Psalm 16

“Our Glorious Lord”

(1) **His Moral Perfection** vs.1-4

(Luke's gospel in miniature)

“We listen to His language”

Of *dependence*

His plea for preservation and the principle—“In Thee do I trust”

Of *dedication* v.2

“Thou art my Lord”—Absolute surrender of will.

Of *delight* v.3

What we are—saints; where we are—earth; what He thinks—excellent.

Of *discrimination*

Separation from the world.

(2) **His Matchless Person** vs.5-8

“We look at His loveliness”

Lovely in His *enjoyment* v.5 “Lord my portion.”

Lovely in His *contentment* v.6 “A goodly heritage.”

Lovely in His *employment* v.7 “I will bless.”

Lovely in His *deportment* v.8 “I have set the Lord.”

(3) **His Merciful Passion** vs.9-11

“We learn from His loyalty”

His *calmness* v.9—My heart is glad.

His *confidence* v.10—Not leave my soul.

His *claim*—Thine Holy One.

His *compensation* v.11—Thou wilt show me.

His *resurrection*—Path of life.

His *exaltation*—Thy right hand.

His *satisfaction*—Pleasures for evermore.

“Leaving us an example” 1 Pet. 2:21.

Psalm 16

Psalms 14, 15 and 16 go together like other Psalms.

Psalm 14 The *folly* of the *natural* man.

Psalm 15 The *fellowship* of the *spiritual* man.

Psalm 16 The *features* of the *heavenly* Man.

vs. 1 to 9 The *pathway*, *perfection*, and the *pleasure* of the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man, as seen in Luke's Gospel. C.H. Spurgeon called this Psalm, the Golden Psalm.

See the fine gold of His *prayer* life, *purity*, *progress*, *perfection*, *passion*, *position*, now at God's right hand.

We can write over this Psalm: 'He is altogether lovely'.

vs. 1 to 4 The fine gold of His *Moral Perfection*. He is a *dependent* Man v. 1.

vs. 5 to 8 The fine gold of His *Matchless Person*. He is a *delightful* Man v. 5.

vs. 9 to 11 The fine gold of His *Merciful Passion*. He is a *devoted* Man, going into His death, but now risen, ascended, and exalted, now in God's presence, v. 11.

vs. 1 and 2 **The Moral glory of His unbroken communion with God.**

Marked by His *prayer* v. 1

confidence v. 1

allegiance v. 2

love v. 3

purity v. 4

Notice what He prays for:

v. 1 His *prayer* for *preservation* 'preserve Me' is translated over 300 times by 'keep Me'.

His *plea* for *preservation* 'in Thee do I put my trust', or 'in Thee do I find my refuge'. Make your own acrostic of the word 'preserve', and write down the things you would ask God to preserve you from this day. Here are the first and the last letters:

P for pride—the *cancer* of this generation.

E for evil speaking—the *curse* of our assemblies. May the Lord put a door on our lips.

v. 3 gives an exposition of what the Lord Jesus thought of His saints. It behoves me as a child of God to think well of His people. So, here is His absolute dependence upon God. 'Preserve me O God'. Here is the secret of

preservation: 'In Thee do I put my trust'. He has absolute confidence in the love of God. The *hand* of God to protect, and the *heart* of God to love. *v.2* gives us His allegiance to God. R.V. states: 'I have no good beyond Thee'. The Lord Jesus is not only a *dependent* man, but, here in *v.2*, a *dedicated* man.

dependence upon God.

confidence in the love of God.

subjection to the will of God. 'Thou art my sovereign Lord'.

One of the great needs in our assemblies today is: *crucified, surrendered, and dedicated* men and women.

We not only *believe* in the Lord Jesus, but we *belong* to Him, q.v. Rom. 12:1 and 2. We may remember the year, the month, the day, and the hour in which we were saved, but when did we surrender our lives to God?

It is good to know that we are kept, loved and cared for. And because of that we should be consecrated to Him.

v.3 The Moral glory of His unceasing care for the saints.

Think of this in the light of the 'upper room' ministry. Notice we are saints, or 'holy ones'. We have been set apart for God by the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

He not only has *cleansed* us, but has *claimed* us.

Notice we are in the earth—the excellent of the earth, described as the 'salt of the earth' in Matthew ch.6. What does He find in us: 'in whom is all my delight'.

Psalms 1 His delight is in the *Word* of God.

Psalms 40 His delight is in the *will* of God.

Psalms 16 His delight is in the *saints* of God.

Is this where I find my delight? Are we so associated with one another and with the Lord Jesus, and so appreciative of one another, that we can find our delight in the things of God?

What an *estimate* He sets upon us.

What an *appreciation* He expresses of us.

John chs. 13 to 17 explain why He finds His delight in us. 26 times in John 13 to 17 the word 'love' is mentioned.

John 13 He washes my feet.

John 14 He comforts my heart.

John 15 He anoints my lips.

John 16 He gives me the Holy Spirit.

John 17 He commends me to God, His Father.

vs. 1 and 2 looking *Godward*.

v.3 looking *saintward*.

v.4 looking *manward*.

v.4 The Moral glory of His unsullied purity.

He was not only the contented man, dedicated man, gracious man, but also the separated man q.v. Heb.7:26. Even the demons confessed Him as 'the Holy One of God'.

It was complete separation from the things of the world. We are looking here at apostate nations. Their sorrow would be multiplied because they have changed the one true God for many gods. Beware of material things, the desire to 'get on,' rather than to 'get through'. So many get engrossed by materials things.

vv.5 and 6 The Moral glory of His uncomplaining disposition

Notice his abundance in God; 'Jehovah is the portion of mine inheritance'. The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. Shew me a penny, Jn. 8. They all went to their own homes, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. He had a holy joy that filled His soul.

vv.1 and 2 His attitude to God.

v.3 His attitude to the saints.

v.4 His attitude to the world.

vv.5 and 6 His attitude to material things.

Notice: my portion v.1

my inheritance v.1

my cup v.1

my lot v.1

my goodly heritage v.2

He not only has abundance in God, but here is his enjoyment of the portion that God has given Him (v.6).

Abundance in God.

Enjoyment of God.

Contentment with God (q.v. Heb.13:5 and 6).

Are we getting our priorities right? Are we so engrossed in material things, that we are losing sight of the spiritual realities that are ours in Christ? Godliness with contentment is great gain. Many are worshipping GOLD instead of GOD, instead of being satisfied with Christ:

what He is

who He is

what He gives.

For me to live is Christ, Phil.1:21.

God wants better Christians rather than more Christians; and if there were better Christians, there would be many more Christians!

Does my neighbour know that:

I *belong* to Christ

I *behave* like Christ

I *believe* in Christ—or am I just another citizen?

Materially, the Lord had nothing. Spiritually and eternally He has everything. He is the perfect Servant of Jehovah.

v. 7 The Moral glory of His unerring guidance from God

He is a thankful and worshipful man. That's Isaiah 55. 'Morning by morning He openeth mine ear'. That is why it was said of Him: 'Never man spake like this man.' Read Isaiah 11 for the sevenfold counsel and understanding that the Lord Jesus enjoyed, and will be displayed in the millennial kingdom. He could say from His example, and His love; 'in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths'.

In days of difficulty and depression you can turn unfailingly to the Word of God, enter His presence and know divine guidance in the hour of your dilemma.

'My reins also instruct me in the night seasons'. In John 8, He spent the night in prayer on the Mount of Olives. Before He made the choice of any of His disciples, He spent the night in prayer. Matthew is the Gospel of Mountains. The Lord Jesus is often seen there in communion with God, His Father. That is what gave Him His *authority*, and His *ability*.

v. 8 The Moral glory of His unswerving devotion to God.

He is marked by allegiance to God His Father: 'I have set the Lord always before me'. In Philippians 3, Paul was a specialist: 'One thing I do'. Our problem is we have too many irons in the fire, and we accomplish very little. The Psalmist says: 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, one thing I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever'. Luke's Gospel says; 'He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem'. After this reference in ch.9, the word 'Jerusalem' occurs over 40 times, He had only one goal, and only one object in life, to please God His Father. 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'; and on the holy mount He added, 'Hear ye Him'. In the Acts, the Macedonian saints are an example of such loyalty.

v. 9 The Moral glory of His unspeakable joy, going into death.

Because of His *devotion*, *dedication* and *direction* from God, He says 'My heart is glad'.

My heart, my glory, my flesh, my soul (v.10). These four personal pronouns outline His dignity and devotion to the will of God, His Father.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He had a holy joy, a holy dignity and calmness. Heb.12:2 'who for the joy that was set before Him . . .'. One thing missing from the saints is holy joy. Material richness has resulted in spiritual poverty. The epistle to the Philippians was written from a dark, rat infested Roman dungeon. In Acts 16, they sang praises to God from inside the prison.

The joy of the Lord is your strength. The Lord Jesus was sustained by holy joy in Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha.

v. 10 The Moral glory of His uncorruptible nature.

Here is His confidence in God as He goes into death. Why did God raise Him from the dead? The resurrection is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament. No wonder Paul says: 'This thing was not done in a corner'. The Lord Jesus was seen by 513 witnesses.

He was raised from the dead because of:

His *character* 'Holy one'. This is His absolute sinlessness. In Him is no sin, q.v. His triumph in Matthew ch.4 at the temptation.

His *claim* 'I will raise it up again', speaking of the temple of His body. Thank God He died. Thank God He rose again, raised by the power of God.

His *crosswork* q.v. Romans 4:25. God's answer to the cross is the resurrection of Christ. The work is finished.

v. 11 The Moral glory of His unending glory at God's right hand

From the grave to the glory, He had a vision of the ascension. He is not only the risen Man, but the ascended Man. He overcame death, sin, hell and the grave. Of the 1,100 religions in the world, ours is the only one based upon an empty tomb, and linked with a risen Christ. Study His appearances after His resurrection. When He appears He brings comfort, and wipes away their tears. He confirmed the faith of Thomas, who said: 'My Lord, and my God'.

It assures of the:

present position of Christ

priesthood of Christ

pleasure of Christ. Heb. 11 tells of the pleasures of sin for a season. This

Psalm tells of pleasures for evermore.

A dependent Man

A comforted Man

A surrendered Man

A gracious Man

A separated Man

A delightful Man

1 Peter 2: 'leaving us an example'.

Psalm 22

For Quiet Meditation

TITLE—"AIJELETH SHAHAR", means "the hind of the dawn". The sufferer being likened to a hind pursued by hunters in the early morning. A meek innocent sufferer. True of the Lord Jesus suffering from God (vs.1-6a), from men (vs.6b-13) and from Satan (vs.19-21a).

(A) **THE CRUELTY OF CALVARY** vs.1-21a (1) **THE DESOLATION IN THE DARKNESS** (vs.1-5) **He is abandoned** (v.1). "Why"? He feels Himself deserted by God. Despair thinks itself forgotten. **Anxious** (v.2) He continually cries but finds no rest or deliverance. **Appealing** to the attributes of God (v.3) "holy". In the supreme agony of His soul He yet justifies God. He is abandoned to the curse of a broken law (Gal. 3:13). **Anticipating help** (vs.4,5) He looks at the past history of the nation (v.4). They were delivered, why then am I deserted? His hidden sorrow in making atonement with God.

(2) **THE DESPAIR OF THE DESPISED** (vs.6-8) A **defenceless** soul (v.6) "A worm", trampled under foot and despised, rejected of His own people (Isa. 53:3). "Tolath" is often translated "scarlet or crimson". From this worm came the scarlet dye for garments worn by the rich. A **despised** servant (v.7) "shoot out the lip", a strong indication of contempt (Matt. 27:39). The **delightful** Son (v.8). Let Jehovah rescue Him (Isa. 42:1). They mocked His faith in God.

(3) **THE DEPENDENCE OF THE DISTRESSED** (vs.9-11) Faith in an **unchanging God** (v.9) "Thou art he". Wholly cast upon God, entrusted to Him from birth. David proved God's love (Psa. 71:5,6). His **unfailing confidence** (v.10). His enemies insinuated he was not the Son of God (Matt. 27:43). His **utter loneliness** (v.11). Three illustrations of this are found in Psalm 103:6-7. Deep distress.

(4) **THE DISTRESS OF THE DESPONDENT** (vs.12-18) He compares his insolent enemies to wanton bulls (v.12). **Their reckless power**. These animals are strong and fierce as are his persecutors. How like the chief priests and scribes who engineered the arrest of the Lord (Matt. 27:20,25). He had human and spiritual foes.

Their raging attitude (v.13) Like a harmless lamb surrounded by ferocious bulls. The roaring lion ready to attack and devour its prey. True of Satan (1 Peter 5:8).

His recorded weakness (v.14) A feeling of faintness. He poured out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12).

His recognised discipline (v.15) "Thou hast"—His tormentors are Jehovah's instruments (Acts 2:23).

His ruinous foes (vs.16-18) Pierced and shamed. They crucified the Lord of Glory (Acts 3:13-15).

(5) **THE DESIRES OF THE DESOLATE** (vs.19-21a) Trusting in the faithfulness of God. "My darling—my only one, lovely or solitary one". The only-begotten, used of Isaac (Gen. 22:2; Rom. 8:32).

(B) **THE COMPENSATION OF CALVARY** vs.21b-31 (6) **THE DECLARATION OF THE DELIVERED** (vs.21-26). "Thou has answered me", the language of the **Risen Man** (v.21b). Thankful praise of rescue. **His resurrection ministry** (v.22). Brought a new relationship to God. He is the leader of the Praise (John 20:17; Heb. 2:14). The **Rejoicing Man** and responsive praise from saints (vs.23,25).

The Remembered Man (v.24) He knew affliction as the servant of Jehovah (Isa. 53:7)

The Recognised Man (vs.26,27) The harvest festivals a time of thanksgiving (Deut. 16:11-15).

(7) **THE DELIGHT OF THE DEVOTED** (vs.27-31) **The Regal Man** (v.28) The Governor in millennial times bringing prosperity to all (Psa. 72; Rev. 11:15).

The Regarded Man (vs.30,31) The triumph of His cause proclaimed, acknowledged and appreciated (Psa. 72:18,19).

Note thirteen "SHALLS" in vs.25-31.

Psalm 22

The Psalm of Calvary

THE CRY OF SUPREME AGONY v. 21a
THE CHEER OF SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY vs. 22-23

Seven looks of the Lord

The Upward Look of Desertion vs.1-3

Agonising Lamentation; Astonishing Expostulation v.1
Continuous Supplication; Spiritual Recognition vs.2-3

The Backward Look of Reflection vs.4-8

The Ancients Confidence vs.4,5; The Awful Contrast v.6
Aware of Reproach v.7; Accuser's Derision v.8

The Downward Look of Consternation vs.9-13

His Grand Confidence vs.9-10; His Grave Concern v.11
The Gathering Circle v.12; The Gazing Crowd v.13

The Inward Look of Desolation vs.14-17

Weak Condition vs.14-17
Woeful Calamity v.15
Wicked Cruelty v.16

The Outward Look of Isolation vs.18-21a

The Wanted Clothes v.18
The Wailing Cry v.19
The Wonderful Claim v.20b
The Work Completed v.21b

The Onward Look of Satisfaction vs.21b-24

His association with the saints v.22
His Acceptable seed v.23
His Afflicted Ones Sustained v.24

The Godward Look of Vindication vs.25-31

"His Universal" Acclaim v.27
Authority v.28
Allegiance v.29
Acknowledgement v.30
Announcement v.31

Psalm 84

The sweetness, strength and satisfaction of God's Presence

"A Psalm of the sons of Korah." Korah was a rebellious Levite against divine order and suffered retribution at the hands of God (Num. 16:30-35). "The children of Korah died not" (Num. 26:11). The "tents of the wicked" in verse ten looks back to Num. 16:10. The record of 1 Chron. 9:19 reveals the grace of God to the sons of Korah—"they were keepers of the entry"—"the threshold". Like them we can sing of the grace of God and rejoice in the privilege of nearness (Eph. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:9). Read Psalms 42 and 43 with this Psalm and note the change of mood here.

A Psalm of Fellowship with God. It is a beautiful thing—lovable v.1; it is a desirable thing—"my heart crieth out" v.2; a restful thing v.3 (Mark 6:31); an enjoyable thing—"still praising thee" v.4; a very helpful thing—a beatitude of encouragement v.5; a controlling thing—the pilgrim way in his heart v.7a; a most important thing—"appearing before God" v.7b; it helps prayer v.8; a protective thing—"God our shield" v.9; an excellent thing—stand on the threshold v.10; an inspiring thing—Divine protection and provision v.11; and a very personal thing—"the man that trusteth" v.12.

Fellowship is appreciated vs.1-4; is cultivated vs.5-8; and elevated vs.9-12.

Psalm 84

The Refreshing Presence of God

His Enthusiasm for the House of God, vs.1-4

The Heart's Attraction, v.1; The Holy Aspiration, v.2.

The Happy Association, v.3; The Humble Adoration, v.4a.

The Healthy Appreciation, v.4b

His Education on the Highway to God, v.5-8

Strength for the Soul, v.5a

Submission to God's Word, v.5b

Solace in Sorrow, v.6a

Supply for our need, v.6b

Society on the road, v.7

Supplication to God, v.8

His Enjoyment of the Service of God, vs.9-12

The Source of His Protection, v.9a

The Secret of His Power, v.9b

The Sphere of His Privilege, v.10

The Sufficiency of God's Provision, v.11

For Serenity and Peace, v.12

Psalm 85

The possibility, prayer, product and pleasure of Revival

The Psalm reflects the feelings of Judah shortly after the return from Babylonian captivity, and with it should be read Haggai, and the early part of Zechariah. The people had expected much from their deliverance but were now disappointed, and were unable to sing the songs of Zion. They had returned to a scene of desolation and to not a little opposition (Ezra 4).

Their recollection of former mercies vs.1-3; their request for revival vs.4-7; resolve to listen to God's voice vs.8,9; the refreshing prospect of harmony vs.10-13.

Verses 9-13 give us a picture of Millennial blessings, God's salvation is near v.9a (Isa. 11:9; 52:7); glory in the land v.9b (Isa. 4:5; 60:1-2,19; 62:2,3); Righteousness and peace v.10 (Isa. 2:2-4; 11:4-9); truth springing out of the earth v.11a (Isa. 2:3; 11:9; 52:7; Zech. 8:23); righteousness looks down from heaven v.11b (Isa. 11:4-9); the Lord gives what is good v.12a (Isa. 35; 65:20-25); Palestine will yield her increase v.12b (Isa. 35; 65:20-25); righteousness shall go before Him v.13a (Isa. 11:4-9; Micah 4:1-5); set us in the way of His steps v.13b (Isa. 2:2-4)." Dake.

Shall we request, "Revive thou me" (Psa. 119:154). REVIVE—
R—reverent reading of Thy Word; E—enthusiasm for Thy service; V—victory over self and sin; I—intercessory prayer; V—value of perishing souls; E—expectation of the Lord's coming.

Psalm 85

The Revival of the People of God

His Grateful Acknowledgement, vs.1-3

The Favour of God Extended, v.1a.

Fortunes Restored, v.1b.

Forgiveness Granted, v.2a

Freedom Enjoyed, v.3a

Fierce Anger Gone, v.3b

His Genuine Appeal, vs.4-7

Prayer for Restoration, v.4; Pleading for Remission, v.5

Plea for Revival, v.6a; Pleasure of Rejoicing, v.6b

Present Requirement, v.7

His Gracious Acceptance, vs.8-9

Respect for God's Word, v.8a; Realisation of Peace, v.8b

Restraint of the Will, v.8c; Reverence of Spirit, v.9a

Return of the Glory, v.9b

His Glad Assurance, vs.10-13

Restored Harmony, v.10

Reforms Anticipated, v.11

Realised Blessing, v.12a

Response of Grace, v.12b

Righteousness Reigns, v.13a

Revival Realised, v.13b

Psalm 110

Verse 1 of Psalm 110 is the most quoted verse in the New Testament. It is quoted 14 times, and on every occasion it refers to the Lord Jesus, and never to David. We have that confirmed in Acts chapter 2. As we think of these tremendous words, we are not surprised at the battle of the heretics of today, who try to deny the deity, the resurrection, and the glory of Christ, now in exaltation. If they could destroy this verse, they have accomplished much. But thank God the Lord Jesus Christ is vindicated now at God's right hand. The Psalm opens first of all with the Acts quotation. 'The Lord hath said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thy enemies the footstool of thine'. Then it presents the Lord in vindication, verses 5 and 6, 'The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge, He shall fill the place with dead bodies; He shall wound the head over many countries'. And in the millennial kingdom, at the end of the battle of Armageddon, the Lord Jesus Christ shall be vindicated by God the Father.

Think of the Psalm in this way:

We have here, not only the **GLORY OF HIS ACCEPTANCE**, (Sit Thou at My right hand), but the **GLORY OF HIS AUTHORITY**, v.2. (Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies). Between these two verses there are, at least, the present age of 2,000 years. And for the last 2,000 years, the Lord Jesus Christ has been seated in glory, exalted in God's presence, and seated at His right hand. That, my brother, my sister, thrills my heart. I'm linked with the risen, exalted, vindicated Man, and God will see to it that in all things He shall have the pre-eminence.

Then we see the **GLORY OF HIS ACCEPTANCE** again in verse 4, addressed by God again, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek". So, He is an **exalted Man**; He will be a **vindicated Man**. But, presently, He is a **representative Man**. He is our High Priest in God's presence, and while this order is linked with the millennial kingdom, it gives a glimpse of the present ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then the **GLORY OF HIS ACHIEVEMENT** in verse 6, which I think is a glimpse of the battle of Armageddon, the fulfilment of Ezekiel chapter 38 and 39. And you might be shocked to know that from Ezekiel 38, after the battle of Armageddon, it will take seven months to bury the dead. And it will

take seven years to cleanse the land. Such will be the vindication of God's lovely Son. He is the Great Lord and Christ.

So, first of all, in *verse 1*, I see the **Lord Expected** (until I make Thy enemies the footstool of thy feet). Possibly, verses 1,2, and 3 present Christ as a King. That's following the teaching of Hebrews 1 and 2. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever a sceptre of righteousness, is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom. But in Hebrews 2, as the Son of Man, He is the King of Creation. We see not yet all things put under Him. By faith, we see Jesus crowned with Glory and honour. By the grace of God He tasted death for every thing, and every man. So, here is Christ expected, the Lord as King and as Priest.

In *verses 2 to 4*, we see the **Lord Resplendent**, not only in *exaltation*, but now in *manifestation*, "Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies" v.2. This is the second advent of the Christ of Glory when He comes to take His rightful place, and reign and rule for a thousand years. "Of the increase of His government and kingdom there shall be no end." He will be the *abiding*, the *authoritative*, the *administrator*, and the *acceptable* Christ. Never before, and never again, will man reign for a thousand years, for my Lord never had a predecessor, and thank God He'll never need a successor. God has made Him both Lord and Christ.

In *verses 5 and 6*, we see the **Lord Triumphant**. He is now presented as a Judge (Revelation chapter 20, and Matthew chapter 25, where He judges the living nations). The living nations shall emerge from the terrible trial of the tribulation and will accept, possibly, the gospel of the kingdom. And those who do not accept that, will be judged by Him when He takes His rightful place at the head of the nations, and acts as the judge of the nations, and thank God that the one who will be triumphant, is refreshed, "He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head" v.7.

Why is verse 1 so often quoted in the New Testament? As said earlier on, it is to vindicate the deity, the equality of our Lord Jesus Christ. Possibly, this is the only place where this language is used, and there is an oath and a swearing of Jehovah to God, His Son, relative to His coming kingdom: sit Thou at my right hand. But the first thing that reminds me of this: The Lord Jesus is divinely addressed by His Father. Now the Pharisees never disputed that the Lord Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 22, quoted these words, "Why did David then, in Spirit, call Him Lord? The Lord said unto My Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." The closing verse, verse 46 says, from that day they asked Him no more questions. They were silenced for ever by the authority, and the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, relative to our Lord Jesus Christ. So here is one addressed by Jehovah: The Lord said unto My Lord, or My suffering Lord,

My Adonai. Absolutely *supreme*, absolutely *sufficient*. Here is the sovereignty of Christ in the millennial age, and in anticipation of that, He is addressed as Lord by God His Father, and asked to sit at God's right hand. He is not only *divinely addressed* by His Father, He is *divinely acceptable* to His Father. Never to any angel, never to any archangel, did God at any time ever say, 'Sit thou at My right hand'. This is the exclusive privilege and the eternal right of the Lord Jesus, as the Son of God. And I believe that this verse is a conversation in the counsels of eternity past, when God planned, and God provided, and God intended that His Son would be Lord. And everything pales into insignificance as we visualise and think of the satisfaction that Jehovah found in His Son, even in a bygone eternity, before He became the Man of Calvary.

But not only *divinely addressed*, and *divinely acceptable*, but *divinely approved*. Thou, and no other shall sit at My right hand. He is greater than David according to Psalm 2, in this connection, but is greater than angels in Hebrews 1. He is better than them morally, personally, positionally, creationally, universally, and as Lord. And the seven scriptures that are quoted in Hebrews 1, all emphasise the deity, dignity, authority, and supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ. No peer, no equal, no rival, divinely approved; 'Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet'. What does the present exaltation of Christ mean to our hearts? Well, He is there as my advocate according to 1 John 2, and He cares for my sins, an Advocate with God, our Father. But He is there as our Great High Priest, according to Hebrews 4 and 5, and He cares for all my sorrows. Touched with the feelings of our infirmities. My brother, my sister, there is a Man in heaven, and He *understands you* through and through. Thank God He does something better than that. He *undertakes for you*. That's the teaching of John 11. Does He not *understand*? He wept. He *undertakes*: Lazarus, come forth. And he came forth, bound hand and foot. There is not a pang that rends the heart, but the Man of Sorrows has a part. As our High Priest He cares for our supplications, Hebrews says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us. So the present ministry of the Lord Jesus is caring for my *sins*, caring for my *sorrows*, caring for my *supplications*. He lives in the power of an endless life, and is fulfilling His ministry at God's right hand. But, 'Sit Thou' is a command given to the Lord Jesus.

But there is another command given in *verse 2*. It is not now Christ in exaltation, but Christ in manifestation. He is coming forth as a King. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion. Rule Thou in the midst of thine enemies. What changes in His vindication, and in His manifestation when He comes to take up the throne of His father David. He shall be great, and of the increase in His government and peace there shall be no end. So He is acceptable to God, and authoritative because He is the Son of God. And to Him God said, 'Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies'—in spite of them.

They will be *subjugated*, they will be *subdued*. He will be *honoured*, He will be *accepted*, He will be *adored*. After the scene of His *rejection*, there will be the scene of His *vindication*, and His *manifestation*. Rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. We sing with holy joy:

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

My brother, my sister, we are not only linked with the Priest, we are linked with the coming King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord Jesus in His *manifestation*.

In *verse 3*, we have the Lord in *association* with the people of Israel. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth'. I think that the nation of Israel is in view here, the remnant of that nation, who have been sealed according to Revelation 14, possibly part of the 144,000, who may, in that day, preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. What marks them in that day? They are marked by *surrender*. 'They shall be willing'. And they are marked by *sanctification*, 'In the beauty of holiness'. They are priestly warriors, ready to stand at His side and to share in His victory, 'From the womb of the morning: Thou has the dew of Thy youth'. This may be a reference to the perpetuity of the purity of the Lord Jesus in that day. Eternal youth, because of eternal purity, and eternal sinlessness. So, here He is associated with these witnesses in that day. They will be *satisfied*, they will be *sanctified*, they will be *surrendered*, and they will be *sent* by the Lord Jesus to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.

What is the message to my heart from this verse? 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power'. There are two companies in our assembly, and it is a tragedy. There are the 'I can't' and the 'I cannot'. One of the problems is, there is plenty of work to do; there are many avenues of service we can engage in, but where are the men, where are the women: they are just not willing. In my 60 years I have been in 400 assemblies in this land, and I can say from observation, as well as experience, they are not too many that are willing. I remember an Irish brother saying, there are two types of willingness; those who are willing to work, and those who are willing to watch them. Where are you, my brother? Are you a watcher, or are you a worker? My son, go work today in my vineyard. When I think of the cost of our redemption. When I think of the cheer of the intercession of the Lord Jesus, and the certainty of His coming again, and of our association with Him, should we not be willing. It was said of the Roman saints, as recorded in Romans chapter 6, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you'. Of the Philippian saints Paul says, 'Ye have obeyed much more in my absence'. It is alright while the evangelist, or the

ministering brother is there, we are industrious, enthusiastic, and eager. But when the ministry is over, sometimes the initiative is gone, and we go back to 'square one'. My brother, what are you contributing to the local company? Do you sit and grumble? Do you sit and gaze? Do you sit and criticize? Or are you giving something to God, in worship? Something for the saints in ministry. Something for the ungodly in character and conduct, that you might woo and win them for the Lord Jesus. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power'. It will be easier in that day for he will be King, and He will be Lord, and so they will be happy to associate with Him, and serve Him with reverence and with godly fear. Christ in His *manifestation*.

In verse 4 it is Jehovah again: 'The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent'. This verse tells us of the unceasing sympathy of the Lord Jesus: 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'. Melchizedek is one of the peculiar characters of both the Old and New Testament. He is used *historically* in Genesis 14, used *prophetically* in Psalm 110, and used *doctrinally* in Hebrews 7. And in all the references he is linked, essentially, with our Lord Jesus Christ. He was *not* the Lord Jesus. Made like unto the Son of God, in royalty and dignity Genesis 14; that's the first battle in the Bible, and Revelation 19 is the last battle in the Bible, the battle of Armageddon. And the priest who appears at the end of the battle of the kings in Genesis 14, with bread and wine, this wonderful man Melchizedek, it is after his order that the Lord Jesus Christ in His administration, will be as a priest and a king, according to Zechariah 6 upon His throne He shall sit, as a priest and as king. Now, doctrinally, that is applied to the Lord Jesus in Hebrews chapter 7. You will notice how He is addressed, 'The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek'. Here is the sovereignty, and yet the sympathy of the Lord Jesus, as a priest in God's presence, In that coming day there will be no sacrifice associated with the priesthood, as there is here, as there will be no atoning sacrifice. But there will be commemorative sacrifices according to the book of Ezekiel. So, here is the Lord Jesus in His inauguration addressed by God: 'Thou art'. Not Thou shalt be, not Thou hast been, but 'Thou art'. It is the present continuous tense that is chosen. He will be essentially and eternally a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As a king, He will sit upon His throne, and as a priest He will function for His people. Thus we are reminded that in the millennial days, the Lord Jesus will not only be an *absolute monarch*, ruling over all, He will be an *acceptable priest* ministering for all in that day of His glory.

In verses 5 and 6 we are reminded of the Lord Jesus in His *vindication*: 'The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.' Not only the *consecration* of His people (verse 3), and His *inauguration* into the priesthood in verse 4, but here is His *vindication* as a

warrior. The King, the Priest, the Warrior, and, in verse 6, the Judge. The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings. If in verses 1 and 2, the Lord Jesus is *waiting*, in verse 4 *He is welcome* in heaven, in verses 5 and 6 there is going to be *warring* on the earth. As already said, this will be the battle of Armageddon which takes place after the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. The one is in heaven, and the other is on earth. If you want to get the connection, read from Revelation ch.7 to Revelation ch.19, and you will find the various individuals that will be associated with that day, and who will be subdued in that day. There will be the Western Europe powers, no doubt under the leadership of the Antichrist as seen in Revelation chapter 13. Not only that, but we are reminded that the king of the North, possibly the Arab nations, seen in the king of Assyria in Isaiah 28, will be associated and will all gather around the city of Jerusalem. The prize of that day will be the oil of the Middle East, and the mineral wealth of the Dead Sea. The fringe has only been touched; and someone has said, possibly prophetically, the wealth of the Dead Sea is almost incalculable, it is immeasurable. And the nation of Israel will be blessed not only with the oil, but with the minerals of the Dead Sea. And that sets the eyes of the nations, the United Nations under the antichrist; the king of the North, possibly the Arab states and their satellites according to Ezekiel 38, and Russia, Gog and Magog; and they will all associate and amalgamate around the city of Jerusalem. This will appear to be crushed, the end near, the conquest to be almost over, but suddenly the Son of Man appears in the heavens, and He comes to rule, He comes to rout the warring nations, set to rise upon the city of Jerusalem, the land of Palestine, and He shall crush them, He will subdue them, and they will be overwhelmingly defeated in that day. So, here is His *administration*, the Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. After the tribulation of these days, the Lord Jesus will emerge, and will strike terror into the heart of every king that opposes the nation of Israel. I am glad that I am not going through the tribulation. I am not even looking for the undertaker, I am looking for the 'uppertaker'. We will be far above all, associated with our Lord Jesus Christ in God's presence. When He comes to be revealed, when the second advent arrives, we shall appear with Him in glory. In grace He met our need and saved our souls, and He will give us not only a glimpse of that glory, but a little share in that glory. He comes to be admired in His saints. My brother, my sister, the best is yet to be.

Notice the '**shalls**' in these verses. *Verse 5*: 'The Lord at Thy right hand **shall** strike kings'. *Verse 6*: 'He **shall** judge among the heathen, He **shall** fill the places with the dead bodies; He **shall** wound the heads over many countries.' *Verse 7*: 'He **shall** drink of the brook in the way: therefore **shall** He lift up the head'. Here is the *demonstration* of that day, He shall strike through kings. Think of the world's unrest, its attitude, partly fulfilled in the rejection of the Lord Jesus, Acts chapter 4, finally to be fulfilled when the

nations are in absolute rebellion and revolt against God, and against His Christ; He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. We sometimes say, he who laughs last, laughs longest, and the laughter of God is to be dreaded; the Lord shall have them in derision. 2 Thessalonians says, God shall send them strong delusion, that they might believe the lie. They would not have the Christ, but they will have the antichrist. God will see to it that they will be finally and fully deluded, He shall send them strong delusion. He is sending them peace, He is sending them grace, life, offering them the Gospel, but they will not have His Christ, so they will have the antichrist. Another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. But, O the dreadful consequences. In 2 Thessalonians ch. 1, the Lord Jesus comes to vindicate His place, and His character in that day. He shall judge among the heathen. This might be a reference to Matthew 25, the judgment of the living nations after the judgment of the Great White Throne. This takes place at the end, and suggests the millennial kingdom. Every eye shall see Him, and many shall weep because of Him. Rejected, despised, and set at nought, every knee shall bow, every eye shall weep, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. My brother, my sister, we are associated with a rejected Christ. Do not be distressed, do not be upset if you are misunderstood or mis-represented. One translation of Hebrews 13 says, "share the insults intended for Him" (Weymouth). This is our day of rejection: *that* will be the day of our exaltation; the day of our rejoicing; the day of our vindication. He shall judge among the nations.

He shall fill the places with the dead bodies is the day of invasion, and the day of devastation. Ezekiel chs. 38, and 39. What a battle Armageddon will be! Some have suggested that there might be 100,000,000 men surrounding the city of Jerusalem, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes. No matter how large, no matter how many, no matter how strong, no matter how mighty, no matter how well equipped they might be with all their wonderful ingenuity, He shall strike through kings, He shall fill the places with dead bodies. Ezekiel 39:12 says it will take seven months to bury the dead. When you think of Palestine with all its heat, its wonderful weather, its glorious sunshine, there will be dead bodies lying around for seven months. Such will be the slaughter of the enemies of Christ and His church in that day. We shall be more than conquerors through Him that loves us.

He shall wound the heads over many countries. Some versions give this as 'head', rather than 'heads'. If it is the 'heads', it might refer to the antichrist, the king of the North, the king of the South, the king of the East, as they surround Jerusalem, according to Zechariah 14. I am inclined to look beyond that. If it should be 'head'—the originator, the organiser of the opposition, and the rebellion of the Devil, himself—He wounded His heel at

Calvary. He wounded his head after the battle of Armageddon. Revelation ch.20 reminds us that for a thousand years, the Devil will be cast into the bottomless pit. No more deception, no more distress, no more rebellion, but a 1,000 years of peace, and of prosperity, and of the beneficent reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder Psalm 24 says, "Lift up your heads O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. An exclusive title only given to the Lord Jesus. David and Solomon in all their glory were never addressed as the king of glory. That is the exclusive right of our Lord, our King, our Saviour, and our Priest—the Lord strong and mighty in battle. I think that this is the battle of Armageddon. The Lord has creatorial rights—The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. He has moral rights, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?' The four qualifications are given: 1) He that hath clean hands; 2) and a pure heart; 3) who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity; 4) nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. My Lord will reign for a thousand years because He has moral fitness, and moral rights. He that hath clean hands—the Gospel of Mark. A pure heart—the Gospel of John. Who hath not lifted up His soul to vanity—the Gospel of Luke. Nor sworn deceitfully—the Gospel of Matthew. That is why it says of Him in Philippians chapter 2, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." So, here is the Lord Jesus in *His administration*, He shall wound the head over many countries.

Finally, *verse 7*, is the Lord in *His satisfaction*. He shall drink of the brook in the way. Verse 1 opens with a clear assertion of the deity of Christ, but here there is a beautiful touch of His humanity. And in that day the Lord Jesus will be refreshed by the name that God has given Him, by the glory that God has bestowed upon Him, by His church who will stand at His side, by a *redeemed, regenerated, restored* Israel brought into the Land. He will be absolutely refreshed. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Thank God for a *sovereign* Christ, now the *seated* Christ. One day it will be the *satisfied* Christ. Well might we say, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Therefore shall He lift up the head; this is possibly a reference to the Lord Jesus in His glory, and in His majesty. Head over all things in the church, the head of creation, the head of every man. Headship and lordship are only vested in the Lord Jesus, and God will see to it that He will be recognised. "Jesus Christ is Lord." He died to be my Lord. He has been decreed as my Lord. God hath made Him both Lord and Christ. He could demand to be Lord, but He simply desires to be Lord. Crown Him as Lord in your heart, as Peter says. What is the message of this Psalm to my heart today? *Verse 1* I should acknowledge His Glory, as Lord.

The Lord Jesus is Lord 60 times in 1 Corinthians. We believe in the Lordship of Christ in our assemblies. We know so much, but we do so little. Is He your Lord, my brother? Is He your Lord, my sister?

Psalm 119

The Divine Highway Code for Pedestrians

1. The Secret of Prosperity	1-8	Contact with God
2. The Search for Purity	9-16	Cleansing thro' the Word
3. The Suffering of the Way	17-24	Crying for Help
4. The Strength in Trial	25-32	Concern for God's Will
5. The Sense of Dependence	33-40	Cleaving to the Word
6. Standing in Testimony	41-48	Confessing the Lord
7. Sustained in Pilgrimage	49-56	Comforting Solace
8. Society on the Road	57-64	Communing with God
9. The School of God	65-72	Chastened by the Lord
10. Seeing God's Hand	73-80	Confidence in the Lord
11. Snares to Trap	81-88	Calling for Comfort
12. Stability by the Word	89-96	Considering Thy Testimonies
13. Spiritual Tastes	97-104	Contentment Expressed
14. The Shining Light	105-112	The Conviction of Truth
15. The Separated Walk	113-120	Conquering thro' the Truth
16. Seeking Divine Help	121-128	Circumstances of Distress
17. The Smile of His Face	129-136	Character Tested
18. The Source of Joy	137-144	His Conception of God
19. Strength for each Day	145-152	Confirmation of Faith
20. Seeking Rejuvenation	153-160	The Confidence of His Soul
21. Satisfaction in Life	161-168	Continual Song
22. The Singer's Choice	169-176	Constant Delight

The Song of Solomon

This book is unique in Holy Scripture in that it is the only book that deals solely with human love, doubtless Solomon's, as ch.1 v.1 states and the internal evidence sustains. It may also infer that it is about Solomon 1:4; 3:7-11; and 8:11.

It is the chiefest, most superlative song of the monarch's 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32). It was sung at the passover in the spring. It is a magnificent literary gem, and it is a pity that such a masterpiece should sometimes be perverted.

Background

H.A. Ironside suggests: "King Solomon had a vineyard somewhere in the hill country of Ephraim, about 50 miles north of Jerusalem (ch.8:11). It was let out to keepers (ch.8:11) consisting of a mother, two sons and two daughters (ch.1:6—8:11), the Shulamite (ch.6:13) and a little sister (ch.8:8). Solomon disguised came to the vineyard and vowed an interest in the Shulamite. He won her heart and left with a promise that some day he would return. He did return in all his kingly splendour to make her his bride" (ch.3:6,7).

Interpretation

Here we run into difficulties:

It is not historical but allegorical depicting:

- a. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, their wilderness wanderings and their entrance into Canaan.
- b. Primarily the union of Jehovah with Israel. Particularly with His godly remnant (Hosea ch.2:19,20).
- c. Christ and His Church (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-33). This is improbable as Solomon did not write to set forth the mystery of the Church, this was all hidden under the whole economy of Hebraism.
- d. The higher critical notion of H. Ewald (1826) of a shepherd lover from whom Solomon despicably tries to seduce the shepherdess seems dishonouring.

It is better taken literally, a song of love written in the form of a series of dramatic poems, "love" is mentioned 25 times, "beloved" 20 times.

Deal with it devotionally: the union between Jehovah and Israel, and our Blessed Lord Jesus and the believer.

It has five canticles, some say six.

1. **The appeal for love** (1:2—2:7)
 Remembering her Beloved, 1:2-4
 Repelling scorn, 1:5-6
 Request for fellowship, 1:7-11
 Rejoicing in her Beloved, 1:12-17
 Recognising her lowliness, 2:1-7
2. **The awakening of love** (2:8—3:5)
 Listening to his voice, 2:8-13
 Longing for his company, 2:14—3:5
3. **The appreciation of love** (3:6—5:8)
 Love's protection and provision, 3:6-11
 Portraying her beauty, felicity and ability, 4:1-6
 His proposal and pleasure in her, 4:7-16
 Her declension and distress, 5:1-8
4. **The attraction of love** (5:9—8:4)
 Describing her Beloved, delighting in Him and devotion to Him,
 5:9—6:13
 His impression of her sufficiency and acceptability 7:1-9
 Her response of devotion 7:10—8:4
5. **The assurance of love** (8:5-14)
 Return to Shulam, v.5
 Renewal of vows, vs.6-7
 Reward of faithfulness, vs.8-9
 Reply of satisfaction, vs.10-12
 Request to tell the story, v.13

Application

These five canticles suggest:

1. A YEARNING LOVE
2. A CHASTENED LOVE
3. A GROWING LOVE
4. A TESTED LOVE
5. A SATISFIED LOVE

Can you say with Peter "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" John ch.21:17.

Isaiah 42

The Approved Servant of Jehovah

Introduction Chapters 40-66 of Isaiah are mainly consolatory and Messianic. "They are Prophecies of Peace; the Purpose of Peace, chs. 40-48; The Prince of Peace, chs. 49-57; The Programme of Peace, chs. 58-66". Dr. Campbell Morgan.

Chapter 42 is the first "Servant Song", presenting His Character, Mark's aspect. Chapter 49:1-13, the second "Servant Song", emphasizing His Calling, Luke's aspect. Chapter 50:4-9, the third "Servant Song", stresses His Consistency, John's aspect. Chapter 52:3-53:12 the fourth "Servant Song", telling us of His Credentials, Matthew's aspect. These give glimpses of our Lord as supported by God, sheltered by God, schooled by God, and satisfied by God.

In chapter 42 the description of the Servant of Jehovah is full of stately beauty. He is presented in Person, His manifestation is announced, His commission declared, His method described, and His might foretold. This Servant of God was to be called, endued and given by Jehovah, and that for the glory of His name. The chapter has five divisions as follows:

1. **THE GENTLE SERVANT** vs. 1-4: **HIS CHARACTER** God had only one perfect Servant on earth, His own well-beloved Son, Matt. 12:17-21; Mk. 1:11. He speaks of Him as "My Servant"; others are named, Abraham, Moses, Cyrus and Israel. Note the doctrine of the "Trinity" in verse one.

His Manifestation v.1 Note the striking contrast between His gentleness at His first advent (1-8) and His greatness at His second advent (9-17); between His meekness and His might. **The Select and Elect Servant** "My Servant", God invites us to look on His dear Son, as the perfect, pattern Servant, "chosen". **Godward** in His Relationship and Equipment. "My Spirit upon Him".

The Sustained Servant "I uphold", chosen, loved, endued by God in His service. The seat of the Spirit is fixed in Him. He visited and remained on Him John 1:33; Isa. 11:2; Luke 4:8; John 3:34. All that He does will be vindicated.

His Mission as the powerful Servant v.1d. This is the task committed to Him; the ministry of Messiah. He is commissioned to bear witness to the Gentiles and of healing and restoring the blind and the imprisoned, vs.6,7. "Judgment" refers to the principles of righteousness, rooted in God's nature, the true religion of Jehovah.

His Manners vs.2,3 **Selfward** He was marked by Humility. He sought no notoriety of prominence down here, He never asserted Himself, or pleased Himself. Matt. 11:29; John 8:42; 6:38; Rom. 15:3. He was prudent in all His ways Acts 10:38.

Manward v.3 He was a man of sympathy, gentleness and restraint. He was unfailingly kind to the sick and sinful. How tenderly He bound up the "bruised reed" so that it could give music again, and nursed back the smoking flax to flame once more. We need to be imbibed by the same spirit Heb. 12:12. A limit is set to this ministry as seen in Matt. 12:20. If the reed be bruised, discord, and not music, results; if the wick smokes, instead of light, there is an offensive odour. He endures these in His grace, does not immediately judge them, but in His Second Advent He will shew them no mercy vs.14,25.

His Manliness v.4 His courage in steadfastly enduring suffering Heb. 12:2. The words "fail" and "discouraged" contrast with "reed" and "flax". He did not burn offensively, nor was He a bruised reed. In His life He was to God both incense and music, R.V. The word "fail" is used of the failing eyesight of Eli, 1 Sam. 3:2. The constancy of the Lord confirms the character of His mission.

2. THE GLORIOUS SERVANT, vs.5-9 HIS CREDENTIALS APPROVED

In the previous section the Father was speaking about His Son; now He speaks to Him. Our Lord introduces the New Covenant of salvation for Israel and the Gentiles and illuminate and liberate them alike through the preaching of the Gospel vs.6,7. He knew the guardianship of the Father's love, John 15:10, and carried out the glorious greatness of the Father's programme for Him. This Servant is glorious in His calling v.6a, His communion v.6c, in His conquest of sin v.7; and in His claim to glory like Jehovah v.8. The fulfilment of former prophecies predict what He will yet do in His Second Advent vs.10-12; in judgment vs.13-15, but redemption for Israel v.16. God permits no rivalry to His Son nor praise to graven images v.8.

3. THE GLADDENING SERVANT, vs.10-12 CREATION AND CREATURE ACCLAIM HIM

This is a hymn of praise to God in which all men are invited to join even the nomadic tribes of the desert and the hated Edomites. The conversion of the Gentiles is foretold here with outbursts of singing, see Psa. 93 and Pss. 95-100 similar in theme and language. See also Isa. 12. Here is Jehovah intervening in the politics of earth, showing grace to Sheba and Kedar Isa. 60:6,7. The "new thing" here foretold promotes this song of praise, Rev. 11:15.

4. THE GOVERNING SERVANT, vs.13-17 HIS CONQUEST APPROVED

Here is the ministry of Christ in judgment and power. The indication of a

successful campaign in judgment upon His enemies, and His zeal as a man of war Zech. 13:3, in the Day of the Lord Pss. 2,4,6,9. Psa. 110:2,5,6. Jehovah's silence during Israel's years of oppression is now over. The convulsive utterance of uncontrollable emotion, like a "travailing woman". The "crying out" v.14, in Aramaic it is used of the bleating of sheep. Judgment is not only decreed v.14, it will be devastating v.15, but for Israel it will be delivering and delighting v.16. He will bring the captives home through the trackless desert. Our God is both Almighty and All-beneficent.

5. THE GRIEVOUS SERVANT, vs.18-25 HIS CONDEMNATION APPROVED

The chapter closes with a rebuke of Israel for unfaithfulness. Their wilfulness will eventually destroy them. To them God gave a perfect revelation, the Law, intending Israel to be His messenger to declare it to the Gentiles. They refused the embassy, rejected the Law and became more blind than the idolatrous nations v.22. The Messiah, the True Messenger, made the Law great and glorious v.21.

The second call goes unheeded by the sons of Israel and in consequence judgment fell upon Israel v.25. It rests upon them still. Judgment is designed to teach, and not destroy. May the lesson not be lost on us 1 Peter 4:17-19.

"The Servant" was:

Sustained by God, v.1a

Endued by the Spirit, v.1c

Reliable in Service, v.4a

Victorious for God, vs.13-15

Assuring to Israel, v.16

Near to God, v.6

Thankful and Tuneful, vs.10-12.

Isaiah 54:2

‘Enlarge the place of thy tent’

The missionary’s motivation:

Attempt great things for God

Expect great things from God (William Carey)

The Missionary’s **Expectation** ‘enlarge’

The Missionary’s **Dedication** ‘spare not’

The Missionary’s **Preparation** ‘strengthen thy stakes’. Drive them deeply.

Suggestive Outline of Daniel

Daniel was a contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel and may have been acquainted with Habbakuk. In B.C. 606, Jerusalem was taken and Daniel was carried away captive (1:1). This was the beginning of the 70 years captivity (Jer. 25:11). He is referred to as specially righteous (Ezek. 14:14) and as wise (Ezek. 28:3). He was a man “greatly beloved” (9:23; 10:11,19). Described by the Lord as a Prophet (Matt. 24:15). He was marked by purpose of heart, purity of life and perseverance in prayer. **Purpose:** to show the universal Sovereignty of God in the government of the nations (2:28,37; 4:25). The Sovereignty dealing with despots. It gives the commencement, the character, the course and the consummation of “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24). The supreme objective is the revelation of His superior sovereignty as “Son of Man”, and His heavenly Headship as “Son of God”, for He is the “Governor among the nations” (Psa. 22:28).

(A) CHAPTERS 1-6 HISTORICAL

“THE PRESERVATION OF DIVINE PRINCIPLES”

Chapter one

The Development of Daniel His Education

The Captivity vs.1-2 The reality of God’s government, the certainty of Divine judgment. *The Command* vs.3-5, selection v.3; suitability v.4; service v.5. *The Change of Name* vs.6-9, deliberate v.7; defeated v.8; Divine care v.9. *The Courage shown* vs.10-14, temptation v.10; testing vs.11-14. *The Compensation* vs.15-17, physically vs.15,16; mentally v.17. *The Commendation* vs.19-21, vindicated vs.19-20; rewarded v.21. Picture of faithful remnant in tribulation days.

Chapter two

The Dream of the King Daniel’s Interpretation

One of the great key prophecies of the Bible. The Image—outward power ch.7. Beasts cruelty—*Consternation over it* vs.1-3. King’s distress and dilemma vs.1-3; demand, disappointment and decree vs.4-13. *Supplication about it* vs.14-18, concern vs.14-15; courage vs.16-17; communion v.18. *Revelation of the Dream* vs.19-30, Divine perception v.20; power v.21; purpose v.22; pleasure v.23. Human declaration and dependence vs.29-30. *Interpretation of it* vs.36-49, *Its scope*—Prophetic history of Gentile world rule. *Form*—a male human colossus. *Focus*—The “latter days”. Characteristics—five world empires. Four marked by division, diversity, deterioration.

The fifth—durability. First kingdom—autocratic; second—oligarchic; third—aristocratic; fourth—democratic; fifth—theocratic.

Chapter three

The Dura Image Erected *Devotion Persecuted*

Look at this chapter as history, parable and prophecy. *The Image of Gold* vs.1-7, dedication vs.2,3; proclamation vs.4-7. *The Indictment of the Jews* vs.8-15; crafty vs.8-12; cruel vs.13-15. *Integrity of the Captives* vs.16-23, Courage vs.16-18; composure vs.20,21; calamity v.22. *The Intervention of God* vs.24-30, King's concern vs.24-27; confession v.28; command v.29; conduct v.30.

Chapter four

The Debasement of Nebuchadnezzar *Denunciation of Sin*

(Rev. 13:1-8). *Proclamation* vs.1-3; *Communication of dream* vs.4-18; disturbed vs.4-7; discerned v.8; display of greatness vs.10-12; denunciation vs.13-16; design vs.17,18. *The Interpretation* vs.19-27. Daniel the preacher. Message is honest vs.19-21; personal v.24; faithful vs.25-27. *The execution* vs.28-37, defiant vs.28,29; deranged vs.30-33; delivered vs.34-36; delighted v.37.

Chapter five

The Doom of Belshazzar *Daniel's Dignified Demeanour*

(Rev. 17-18). "that night" v.30, a night of drunkenness vs.1-2; of defiance vs.3-4; of dismay vs.5-9, of declaration vs.10-22; of discovery vs.23-28; of disaster v.30.

Chapter six

The Den of Lions *Daniel's Deportment*

(Matt. 24:15-26; Rev. 13,14,15). The minister's dignity v.3; malicious designs vs.4-9; the Monarch's dilemma vs.10-16; the morning discovery vs.19-22; the magnificent dominion vs.27,28.

(B) CHAPTERS 7-12 PROPHETICAL

"THE PRESENTATION OF DIVINE PURPOSES"

Chapter seven

The Dream of Daniel *Degeneration of Empire*

(Hosea 13:7,8; Rev. 13:12-19; 17:15) Perhaps the moral aspect of ch.2. The degeneration of world powers vs.1-8; the dominion of the Son of Man vs.9-14; description of the kingdoms vs.15-27.

Babylon v.4 Strength and swiftness—power without pity. *Persia* v.5, Torture and tyranny—might without mercy. *Grecian* v.6, Dominion dividing—ferocity without feeling. *Roman* ? v.7, All determining and

degrading—cruelty without conscience. *Messianic* v.9, Peace and provision—Sovereignty and purity.

These may refer to the “feet” of the Image 2:42. Kingdoms yet to rise, the end of Gentile power, vs.25,26, the Antichrist.

Chapter eight

Daniel's Vision *His Discovery*

A change in language and location. In ch.2:4–ch.7, the language is Aramaic and refers to Gentiles. Chs.8 to 12 written in Hebrew relating to Jews.

Prediction vs.2-12, location v.2; aggression v.4; attack v.6; achievements vs.7-8; desecration vs.10-12. *Conversation of angels* vs.13,14. *Communication* vs.15-19, interest v.15, instruction vs.16-19. *Interpretation* vs.20-27, clear vs.20,21; certain v.23; conquest v.24; conclusion v.26; condition v.27.

Chapter nine

Dealings with God *His Dependence upon God*

Ch.2 united prayer; ch.6 private; ch.9 intercessory; ch.11 persistent prayer.

The Prayer vs.1-19; *The Answer* vs.20-27; *Elements in Prayer* Preparation of heart vs.1-3; confession of sin vs.4-10; verification of the Word vs.11-14; supplication for mercy vs.15-19. *Encouraging answer* The sent Angel vs.20-23; the seventy weeks vs.24-27; seven great personages, seven great events vs.24-25. Lunisolar years of 360 days. The half-week v.27, identical with 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14. 42 months Rev. 11:2; 13:5; 1,260 days Rev. 11:3; 12:6. The covenant Isa. 28:15-18. The Desolater (R.V.) may be the Assyrian, king of the north Isa. 10:5; Micah 5:1-7.

Chapter ten

Divine Revelation *His Distress in Prayer*

Chapters 10,11 and 12 are one vision. Ch.10 the prologue; ch.11 the revelation; ch.12 the epilogue. The mourning of Daniel vs.2-3; the majestic angel vs.4-6; most unworthy vs.7-9; mysterious ministry vs.10-21; Prayer gives inspired vision vs.7-11; gains instant hearing v.12; grants instructed understanding v.14; genders inward strength vs.18-19; glorifies God v.21.

Chapter eleven

Darius to the Devil's Masterpiece *Details of pre-written History*

Prophecies concerning Persia vs.1,2; Grecia vs.3,4; Syria and Egypt vs.5-20. From Antiochus to Antichrist vs.21-35; from Antichrist to the Assyrian? vs.36-45. The latter is “the time of the end”, the seventieth seven 9:27; fifteen references in this book. Between v. 35 and 36 is a long interval, the present age. Study closely vs.21-30; the godly remnant vs.32-35. The eight features of the Man of Sin vs.36-38, and perhaps his end vs.40-45.

Chapter twelve**Deliverance for Israel** *Delight for Daniel*

The reliable Prince v.1; the restoration of Israel vs.2,3, (with Ezek. 37). Revelation to Daniel vs.4-13, the Great Tribulation vs.1-4; the gracious revelation vs.5-10; the good preparation v.10a; the grievous abomination v.11, and gracious consolation, v.13.

Outline Studies in the Minor Prophets

INTRODUCTION

In His Word God has made ample provision for all our needs. Its lofty thought and noble images, its heavenly doctrines and personal applications are meant to expand the intellect and transform the affections. Remembering that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2 Tim. 3:16, we should read and ponder, not merely favourite sections, but *all* the book.

Why "Minor Prophets"?

There are no degrees in inspiration, and the name *minor* refers only to their size, being smaller than the previous four "Major Prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel). The Minor Prophets are among the most neglected in the O.T., yet they have a fascination, value and message for our day.

When Written

These writings, if read in chronological order, and if their historical setting is observed, take on a new beauty and speak clearly to our heart and conscience. The opening verses of each book give us some guidance as to their historical settings. Dr. Scroggie in his book *Fascination of Old Testament Story* offers the most helpful suggestions as to chronological order.

Prophecy	History	Date B.C.
Joel	2 Kings 11-12	837-800?
Jonah	2 Kings 13-14	840-784
Amos	2 Kings 14:23 to 15:7	810-705
Hosea	2 Kings 15:8-20; Isa. 18:1	810-725
Micah	2 Kings 15:8-20; Isa. 7:8; Jer. 26:17-19; 2 Chron. 27-32	756-698
Nahum	Jonah; Isa. 10; Zeph. 2:13-15	663-606
Zephaniah	2 Kings 22 to 23:34; 2 Chron. 24 to 36:4	630-610
Habakkuk	2 Kings 23:31 to 24; 2 Chron. 36:1-10	608-598
Obadiah	2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36:11-21	586-585

Haggai	Ezra 1-6	520-
Zechariah	Ezra 1-6	520-518
Malachi	Neh. 8-13	433-397

It will be found on close examination that the tone and contents of each prophet are determined by his historical position and we can better understand the general drift and message with this background.

The Minor Prophets may also be viewed in relation to the captivity thus:

1. *Pre-Exilic*. In the North: Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Micah.
2. *Captivity*. Obadiah (with Daniel and Ezekiel).
3. *Post-Exilic*. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Devote at least two hours each day to the reading of the books of Hosea, Amos and Zechariah and a shorter period to the other books if you want to capture something of the spirit, longings and zeal that marked these men of God in the delivery of their inspired messages.

Cameos of the Prophets

Hosea, the Pleading Prophet, 11:1,3,8; 14:3. The theme is twofold: the unwavering love of Jehovah and the callous indifference of Israel to that love. Here we find the pitying, solicitous care of the parent, and love that endures in spite of all indifference and opposition, cf. 1 Cor. 13:7-8. God's loving kindness towards a backsliding nation will end in restoration and blessing, Hos. 14:1-8.

Joel, the Plain Prophet. His style and language are in description graphic, in arrangement lucid, in imagery original and varied. He describes the "Day of the Lord" with vivid metaphor. In an especial manner he is the O.T. prophet of the Holy Spirit and of His dispensation. The theme of his book is extended by Amos and Isaiah, referred to by Peter and unfolded by John in Revelation. Here barrenness is turned to bounty, and judgment to jubilation.

Amos, the Pastoral Prophet, 7:14. This humble man God used to accomplish His purposes and speak His message. His style is full of energy, elegance and yet simplicity. The sights and scenes of his native hills and wild wastes provide him with rich vivid imagery, e.g., threshing instruments, 1:3; cedar and oaks, 2:9; the roaring lion, 3:4; the snared bird, 3:5; two legs and a piece of an ear, 3:12; hooks and fish hooks, 4:2; showers, 4:7; mildew and blight, 4:9; mourning husbandmen, 5:16.

Obadiah, the Privileged Prophet, lived up to his name as "the servant" or the "worshipper of Jehovah". He was either a contemporary of Elisha or

Jeremiah and possibly wrote his prophecy after the plundering of Jerusalem and before the fall of Idumea; cf. Ezek. 35; Jer. 49:7-22 and Lam. 4:21. This is the shortest book in the O.T. and a brilliant prophetic cameo. His language is simple, his words few and his meaning manifest. The book gives the character, career, doom and downfall of Edom.

Jonah, the Pursued Prophet, gives us the history of God's gracious dealings with a saint and a nation. Here is love that will not let us go in spite of our wilfulness; cf. Titus 3:4-5; Luke 22:31-32 and John 21:15-19. The reference to this servant in 2 Kings 14:25 shows beyond dispute that he was an historical character. Our Lord's mention of his work (Matt. 12:39-41; Luke 11:40-32) makes it clear that the story is true. Jonah is the only prophet sent to a heathen people. The book is a simple narrative, with the exception of chapter two.

Micah, the Practical Prophet from the village, 1:10-15; 6:8. Through the medium of his message we may judge of his personal qualities, and of his power as a preacher. He is not to be confused with Micaiah the son of Imlah, who prophesied in the days of Ahab, 1 Kings 22:8, 13. It is a peculiarity of his style that he indulges in dramatic interruptions and answers; e.g., 2:5, 12; 3:1; 6:6-8; 7:18. His wonderful description of Jehovah's character in chapter 7:18-20 is one of the most exquisite things to be found in the O.T.

Nahum, the Poetic Prophet, has but one theme, the destruction of Nineveh. The book is a historic illustration of the text, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord", Rom. 12:19; Psa. 94:1; 99:8. Judgment is announced in chapter 1, described in chapter 2, and reviewed in chapter 3. He describes the righteous character of God's moral government of the world.

Habakkuk, the Perplexed Prophet, was a lyric poet of high order (see especially chapter 3). He encourages all who truly believe to trust in God, 2:4. The prophecy's excellence lies in its spiritual value, "the just shall live by his faith", 2:4; cf. Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38. Though puzzled by the ministry of suffering and God's strange silence and apparent inaction, he clings to God with a faith that eventually triumphs.

Zephaniah, the Promising Prophet. His name means "one whom Jehovah hides" or "treasured", 2:3; Psa. 27:5. He deals with the "Day of the Lord" and his message revolves around two days, one the "day of wrath", the other "the day of salvation". He insists that darkness always follows sin, and departure from God always brings a withdrawal of God's power. When the heart returns to God in repentance, however, all is restored.

Haggai, the Preaching Prophet, 1:13. His words of exhortation to those

who were neglectful of their responsibility, their putting their own things first, allowing the material to shut out the spiritual, need to be heeded by us today. Like his contemporaries, we need to be courageous and industrious.

Zechariah, the Portraying Prophet, was a younger contemporary of Haggai, 2:4. He was one of the greatest of ancient inspired seers and his chapters are full of the most striking visions recorded in the O.T. The latter chapters of the book are distinctly messianic and apocalyptic, and lift our vision far beyond even the near future to the distant horizon for "Jehovah blesses".

Malachi, the Patient Prophet of exhortation. His message is directed to the people of Israel and Judah, both branches being viewed as one in the economy of God. He is clear and forceful in his statements, his lecture-like method of questions and answers has a message for us (see "Ye say", 1:2,6,7; 2:14,17; 3:7,8,13).

Hosea

Title This is taken from the name of the writer, which means “salvation” or “deliverance”. He is described as the son of Beerī and was a prophet of the Northern Kingdom. He could be described as the John of the O.T. He was in a very real sense “the prophet of the sorrowful heart”.

Date The reigns of the kings named in 1:1 cover over one hundred years. From the death of Jeroboam II in 792 B.C. until the accession of Hezekiah in 722 B.C., some 70 years may well have been spanned by Hosea’s ministry. His was the longest prophetic ministry of all. His contemporaries were Amos, Isaiah, and perhaps Jonah.

Setting His ministry is directed mainly to his own people Israel in the Northern Kingdom. This was probably the darkest period in Israel’s history. The first verse of the prophecy indicates the true setting: four of the kings mentioned belonged to Judah, and only one to Israel. The historical background of Hosea’s ministry is contained in 2 Kings 14-20.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Read 2 Kings 14:23-27; 15-17. Jeroboam II was a brilliant and victorious man, yet wicked in the extreme and in spite of the apparent external prosperity of his kingdom, there was internal moral corruption. After his death his son Zachariah came to the throne, only to be murdered within six months, 2 Kings 15:8-10. The murderer, Shallum, reigned one month and was in turn murdered, 2 Kings 15:10-15. Later another king, Pekahiah who reigned two years was assassinated by Pekah, who in turn was slain by Hoshea after two years. These conditions are referred to in Hosea 4:2; 5:10-11; 7:3-7; 8:8; 10:7. They sought help from Assyria and Egypt instead of from Jehovah, 2 Kings 16:7-9; Hos. 5:13; 7:11; 12:1.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

were even worse. Moral degeneracy, caused by the introduction of idolatrous customs and rites, was everywhere manifest. The land was full of idolatry and harlotry, Hos. 1:2; 2:4,5; with Amos 2:7-8; 5:7-12; 6:4-6. The rulers and the priests were as corrupt as the common people.

RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS

were detestable and vile. The worship of the gods of the heathen nations with whom they had formed alliances was rampant and culminated in their

dispersal in 719 B.C. In Hosea, Israel is referred to under the designation either of Samaria or Ephraim. The former was the capital city, and had been since the beginning of Omri's dynasty, hence its use to designate the nation, 1 Kings 16:24-27; Isa. 7:9. Study the references to Ephraim in this book. Here is a nation morally rotten, politically doomed and spiritually adulterous, Hos. 6:7-10; 13:1-2. To bring home to the nation her sin, God caused the prophet to enact a living representation of Israel's failure and shame, 1-3. The children born to Hosea received symbolic names setting forth God's thoughts regarding His people. He would "scatter them", "have no mercy", and treat them as "not my people" ending in their being disowned.

Spiritual Application

Read this book with 2 Timothy 3 and Revelation 2-3, for the pattern is still with us. God will judge sin in His people, 1 Pet. 4:17, yet when there is repentance and confession there is a reversal of judgment and the enjoyment of divine love; see Hos. 14. Messianic references are 1:11; 2:15-23; 3:5; 11:10-11; 14:4-8; and Hosea in his willing obedience, forgiving love, unswerving fidelity, and yearnings for the nation portrays our blessed Lord.

An Analysis

ISRAEL'S INSINCERITY ILLUSTRATED, chs. 1-3.

Their Ungodliness, ch. 1. a. The Proposal, 1-2; b. The Partnership, 4-5; c.

The Product, 6-9; d. The Promise, 10-11.

Their Unfaithfulness, ch. 2. a. The Sorrow of Love, 1-5; b. The Severity of Love, 6-13; c. The Shelter of Love, 14-17; d. The Sympathy of Love, 18-23.

Their Unworthiness, ch. 3. a. Personal Instruction, 1; b. Humble Submission, 2-3; c. National Interpretation, 4-5.

ISRAEL'S INIQUITY INVESTIGATED, chs. 4-7.

Their Ignorance, 4:1-11. a. Their Shame and Sorrow, 1-3; b. Their Stumbling and Sinning, 4-8; c. Their Selfishness, 9-11.

Their Idolatry, 4:12 to 5:15. a. Disgusting, 4:12-14; b. Defiant, 4:15; c. Deluding, 4:16-19; d. Defiling, 5:1-8; e. Desolating, 5:9-15.

Their Impenitence, 6:1 to 7:16. a. The Cry, 6:1-3; b. The Complaint, 6:4; c. The Chastisement, 6:5-6; d. The Crimes, 6:7-11; e. The Chiding, 7:1-5; f. The Condemnation, 7:6-16.

ISRAEL'S INDIFFERENCE ENTREATED, chs. 8-10.

Their Foolishness, ch. 8. a. Disregard, 1-3; b. Defiance, 5-6; c. Defeat, 7-14.

Their Fickleness, ch. 9. a. Bankruptcy, 1-3; b. Bondage, 4-6; c. Bitterness, 7-10; d. Barrenness, 11-14; e. Banishment, 15-17.

Their Faithlessness, ch. 10. a. The Vine Valueless, 1-2; b. The Vows Void,

3-8; c. The Verdict Voiced, 9-13; d. The Victim of Vengeance, 14-15.
ISRAEL'S INTERESTS INDICATED, chs. 11-14.

The Divine Review, ch. 11. a. The Divine Sovereignty, 1-4; b. The Divine Sorrow, 5-7; c. The Divine Sympathy, 8-9; d. The Divine Salvation, 10-11.

The Divine Rebuke, ch. 12. a. The Divine Controversy, 1-2; b. The Divine Compassion, 3-6; c. The Divine Constancy, 7-11; d. The Divine Care, 12-14.

The Divine Relation, 13. a. Israel's Pride, 1-6; b. Israel's Punishment, 7-14; c. Israel's Perversity, 15-16.

The Divine Restoration, ch. 14. a. The Prophet's Appeal, 1-3: Conviction, 1; Contrition, 2; Confession, 2,3a; Confidence, 3b. b. The People's Acceptance, 4-9; Forgiveness, 4; Freshness, 5-6; Fulness, 7; Fruitfulness, 8.

Suggestions for Study EVANGELICAL OUTLOOK

1. "Sin" in chapters 4 and 5. How Defiling, Degrading, Devouring, Deadly and Destroying.
 2. *Love*. It Seeks, Serves, Survives, is Sympathetic. It Sustains, Suffers and Sacrifices, 2:14 to 3:5.
 3. *N.T. Anticipation*. The necessity of the knowledge of God, 4:1-6; of repentance, 6:1; 14:1-2; and the love of God, 3:1; 11:1-4.
- Note: *Love*, *Lovers*—14 times in the book; *Return*—14 times; *Know*, *Knowledge*—18 times; *Mercy*—10 times; *Iniquity*—11 times; *Whore*, *Whoredom*—19 times; *Ephraim*—over 30 references.

HOMILETICAL MATERIAL

This book gives some rich matter.

1. A lovely picture of the ways of God in love, 11:1-4.
2. The 59 "I wills" are a revealing study. Consider for example the "I will" of *visitation*, 1:4; 2:11; 7:12; of *devastation*, 1:5; 2:12,18; 8:14; of *consolation*, 1:7; 10:11; of *rejection*, 1:6,9; 2:4; of *prevention*, 2:6; of *correction*, 2:7; of *retribution*, 2:13; 4:9; 13:7-9; of *affection*, 2:14,19; 14:4; of *recompense*, 2:15; of *attention*, 2:21; of *restoration*, 2:23; 14:4; of *destruction*, 4:5; 5:14-15; and of *redemption*, 13:14.
3. The Valley of Achor, Josh. 7:2,4; Isa. 65:10; Hos. 2:15.

PRACTICAL AND PROPHETICAL

Hosea the man: his *Troubles*, *Trials*, *Tenderness*, *Training*, *Teaching*, and *Triumph*. These illustrate Israel's life of departure from God, God's method in restoration and His attitude to them in spite of backsliding. The "Day of the Lord" will finalise all for the nation of Israel.

Joel

We have no information respecting Joel except such as is derived from the book which he has left us. He was specially a prophet to Judah and the man is lost in the ministry and message he delivers. He was a native of the Southern Kingdom and was not a priest, 1:13; 2:17. He has been called the *Pioneer of The Prophets*.

Name His name means “Jehovah is God” and certainly characterises the message he gives in this book. His mission was to reveal that Jehovah was the Governor of nature and of nations. The substance of his message was *the day of the Lord*. Local things are used to teach “last things”, a day teaches of “the day”. His prophecy consists of one utterance, in and to Judah.

Date He probably prophesied in the early days of Joash B.C. 870-865. The date is principally determined by internal evidence. There are no distinct references made to the Assyrian or Babylonian invasions, B.C. 721-586. The Syrians are not mentioned. The enemies mentioned are the Philistines, Phoenicians, Edomites and the Egyptians, 3:4,19. Idolatry is not mentioned and the Temple worship is satisfactory, cf. 2 Kings 11:17; 12:2; 2 Chron. 20. Note his allusions to the centre of public worship which was at Jerusalem, 1:9,13,14; 2:15.

Purpose

The purpose is both to warn and encourage. The first section closing at chapter 2:17 deals with the calamity, the plague of locusts and a call to repentance, the coming Spirit, the conquered nations and the comfort of God's presence, 3:21.

An Analysis

THINGS PRESENT, REVELATION AND DESOLATION, ch. 1.

The Call to Attention, 1-3. Opportunity, Capacity, 2; Responsibility, 3.

The Call to Contemplation, 4-12. The stripped land, 4,10; The sobbing drunkards, 5; The strangers' invasion, 6; The stricken wife, 8; The spiritual poverty, 9; The smitten husbandmen, 10-12.

The Call to Lamentation, 13-20. The Lord's messenger, 13; The Lord's message, 14; The Lord's meaning, 15-16; The Lord's method, 17-20.

THINGS IMMINENT. APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION, 2:1-29.

The Approaching Day, 1-2. The appeal and anticipation, 1; The amazement, 2.
The Awful Devastation, 3-10. Consuming, 3; Conquering, 4-5; Confident, 6-8; Calamities, 10.
The Appealing Lord, 11-17. Intervention, 11; Contrition, 12; Confession, 13; Restoration, 14; Preparation, 15-17.
The Assuring Word, 18-27. The divine pity, 18; Promise, 19; Power, 20; The divine pleasure, 21; Provision, 22,24,26; The divine promise, 23; The divine presence, 27.
The Amazing Spirit, 28-29. The Spirit experienced, 28; The signs expressed, 29.

THINGS DISTANT, RESTORATION AND VINDICATION, 2:30 to 3:21.

The Judgment of the Nations, 2:30 to 3:8; cf. Matt. 25:31-46. Reversal of estimates, 3:1; Righteous judgment, 3:2-3; Retribution on nations, 3:4-8.
The Justice of Jehovah, 9-16. The announcement of war, 9-10; The assembling nations, 11-12; The awful judgment, 13-16; The alluring mercy, 16 (end).
The Joy of Judah, 17-21. By the knowledge of Jehovah, 17; By the blessing of Jehovah, 18; By desolation from Jehovah, 19; The salvation from Jehovah, 20; The recognition of Jehovah, 21.

Interesting Features

1. Chapter one gives the greatest description in all literature of locust devastation. "The locust presents a combination of terrors, for it resembles a horse in its head, an elephant in its eyes, a bull in its neck, a stag in its horns, a lion in its breast, a scorpion in its belly, an eagle in its wings, a camel in its thigh, an ostrich in its feet, and finally a serpent in its tail".
2. Here is the first intimation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, 2:28,29.
3. Joel prophesies the scattering of Jews over all the face of the earth and their final restoration, 3:1-2.
4. Some authorities see in 1:4, four species of locust, described as (i) the gnawing locust, (ii) the swarming locust, (iii) the licking locust, and (iv) the ravaging locust. Are they figurative of *four great empires* that have rendered the land of Palestine desolate, namely Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome?
5. Notice the desolation of Egypt and Edom, 3:19, and the contented nation of Israel, 3:20-21.

For Your Meditation

1. A rent heart, 2:13—genuine repentance; A rent veil, Matt. 27:51—

because of redemption; a rent heaven, Isa. 64:1—showers of refreshing.

2. Trace the expression "The Lord your God" and its seven connections.

3. The things that God will do and will be to Israel. The many expressions "I will".

4. Compare and contrast with Acts 2 what is said about the outpouring of the Spirit.

5. The Day of Jehovah, an expression that occurs five times in this short book of seventy three verses. Look these up and collect other references in the Minor Prophets. The expression refers to that lengthened period which will follow the coming of the Lord for the Church, when God will deal in judgment with the earth preparatory to the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth. Its N.T. references suggest its coming will be sudden, 1 Thess. 5:2, preceded by apostasy, 2 Thess. 2:3, that it will be great and notable, Acts 2:20, a time of judgment, Matt. 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36, involving the recompensing of men and angels, Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7. Joel reminds us that it will be ushered in by fearful judgments, 2:1-11, then followed later by a time of rich blessing and Israel's restoration, 2:25-29; Zeph. 3:11-17, the enjoyment of the presence of Jehovah among His people, Joel 3:17-21, and universal peace, Micah 4:5. Read Amos 5:18-20; Obadiah 15; Zeph. 1:7,14; Zech. 14:1; Mal. 4:5. The visitation of locusts and drought in Joel's day was a forecast of that final "day" so often mentioned in the Prophets.

Compare the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem, Joel 3:1, with Isa. 11:10-12; Ezek. 37:21-28; Jer. 23:5-8; Acts 15:14-17: the judgment of the nations, Joel 3:2-14 with Matt. 25:31-46 and Rev. 18:14-24: the shaking of heaven and earth, Joel 3:15-16, and Isa. 24:18-20.

Amos

Amos belonged to Tekoa, a small town about six miles south of Bethlehem and about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Very few particulars are given about him and these are all found in his book. He did not belong to the Northern Kingdom, but to Judah. He is a singular figure among the O.T. prophets. His name means *bearer* or *burden* and in his call he became a “bearer” of the Word of God which was in reality a “burden”. We should not find service for God a burden yet we should be burdened in service.

From one of the bleakest districts in Palestine and in obedience to Jehovah’s command Amos appeared in Bethel to discharge his prophetic mission and deliver the message of Jehovah to the people, 7:13-14. The fact that he belonged to Judah and yet prophesied in Israel made his ministry and message all the more disturbing. Never previously had a prophet of Judah prophesied in and against Israel. He was not a courtier like Isaiah, nor a priest like Jeremiah, but an ordinary working man, 7:14-15.

Date Amos prophesied nearly two hundred years after the death of Solomon and about one hundred years after Elijah. The period is fixed by the opening verse; see 2 Kings 14:23. He ministered during the time of Uzziah and in the second half of the reign of Jeroboam II. He appeared (B.C. 809-784) rebuking the sins of the monarch, princes, priests and people. He was contemporary with Hosea and Jonah. He was familiar with the prophecy of Joel, so that Joel must have preceded Amos by some years and his ministry is somewhat earlier than that of Hosea.

Setting This is similar to that of the early part of Hosea’s ministry. Jeroboam II raised Israel to the zenith of its power and splendour and his reign was one of great prosperity. But the prophet was not deceived by the outward prosperity and tranquility of the land. He was like Elijah in that he stood alone and spake with equal vehemence on the subject of Israel’s sin. His ministry compassed primarily Israel, but then widened and embraced Judah, and then widened still more, and included the Gentiles, chs. 1-2.

Style His style is homely, full of energy, elegance and simplicity. He makes use of imagery to enforce his message and does so in prose rather than in poetry. “No other prophet furnishes us with these metaphors from the scenes of nature in such fresh, vivid, and rich variety. In him we read of the iron sledges of the thresher, 1:3, of stormy hurricanes, 1:4, of the cedars and oaks with their deep roots, 2:9, of the hungry lion roaring in the forest, 3:4, of

the snared bird, 3:5, of the shepherd tearing out of the mouth of the lion two legs and the piece of an ear, 3:12, and many others worth tracing". His vocabulary, his figures of speech, his illustrations are all reminders of the country life from which he came.

His Courage Although a native of Judah, Amos went to Bethel in Israel in order to utter his prophecies, Bethel being the centre of Israel's idolatry, 1 Kings 12:28-29. Amaziah, the priest of the golden calf, endeavoured to drive the prophet back to Judah, but even to Amaziah's face this courageous servant of Jehovah announced the fate of the priest and his family with no uncertain words, 7:14-17. Humanly speaking he was alone, but like Elijah, John Baptist, Luther and John Knox he would certainly have declared that it is better to be alone with God. That faith inspired him with a courage that no opposition could shake and that no danger could daunt. He discerned that it was a time of outward prosperity and inward decay, a time of religious formality and nauseating hypocrisy. Like Martin Luther, long after, Amos might have declared, "Here I take my stand; I can do no other, so help me God", cf. Eph. 6:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:16-17.

Lessons for Today

1. God, who is God of all the earth, has no favourites and His judgment applies to all nations, and if to nations, likewise to individuals, chs. 1-2; 1 Pet. 4:17-18.

2. Special privileges bring special accountability, 3:1,2,8.

3. Outward religious form and ritual is no criterion of a right state of heart before God, or a correct knowledge of God, 5:16-27.

4. By repentance and obedience to the voice of God, judgment may be averted: "Seek the Lord", 5:1-14.

5. Failure to obey the righteous will of God inevitably leads to disaster. All need to repent of sins and turn to God. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." The writing is on the wall of civilisation, the hand moves on relentlessly, and judgment is written in letters of flame. Judgment will fall as surely as autumn follows summer.

An Analysis

SOBS OF DECLAMATION, chs. 1-2. THE NATIONS.

Introduction, 1:1.

Denunciation against the nations, 1:2 to 2:16. Predictions: Damascus for cruelty, 1:3-5; Gaza for treachery, 1:6-8; Tyre for complacency, 1:9-10; Edom for enmity, 1:11-12; Ammon for tyranny, 1:13-15; Moab for inhumanity, 2:1-3; Judah for infidelity, 2:4-5; Israel for profanity, 2:6-16.

Note the formula "For three transgressions . . . and for four".

Keynote. The sovereignty of God over all nations; all are responsible for their wrongdoing.

SPEECHES OF LAMENTATION, chs. 3-6.

Israel's present guilt, ch. 3. Privileges enjoyed, 1-3; Punishment announced, 4-15; its certainty, 4-9; necessity, 10-13; severity, 14-15.
Israel's past sin, ch. 4. Divine condemnation, 1-5; wicked women, 1-3; worthless sacrifices, 4-5. Divine chastening, 6-13. Note "yet have ye not returned unto me", 6,8,9,10,11; also the pronoun "I".
Israel's future judgment, 5:1 to 6:14. Judgment deserved, 5:1-15; Judgment decreed, 5:16 to 6:14. Note the lamentation, 5:1-3; the exhortation, 5:4-15; the devastation, 5:16-27; the condemnation, 6:1-11; and the retribution, 6:12-14.

SIGNS OF REVELATION, 7:1 to 9:10. SYMBOLICAL.

First Vision, 7:1-3. The scourging locusts, 1-2a; The pleading servant, 2b-3.
Second Vision, 7:4-6. The contending fire, 4; The concerned servant, 5-6.
Third Vision, 7:7-9. The measuring plumbline and the coming judgment. Historical interlude, 7:10-17. A political priest and a true priest.
Fourth Vision, ch. 8. The basket of summer fruit. The coming destruction, 1-3; The curse of covetousness, 4-8. The coming judgment, 9-14.
Fifth Vision, 9:1-10. Jehovah standing by the altar. The severe punishment, 1-4; The sovereign's power, 5-7; The sifting process, 8-10. Judgment executed to the full.

A SONG OF RESTORATION, 9:11-15. THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM.

Restoration of the nation, 11-13. Sanctuary restored, 11a; Breaches repaired, 11b; Edom repossessed, 12; Produce revived, 13.
Rule of Messiah, 11-13. Note, I will "raise up", "close up", "build".
Restored to the land, 13-15. Joy restored, 13; Freedom reclaimed, 14; Security enjoyed, prosperity assured, 15. The word of Jehovah cannot fail.

Suggestions for Study

1. Collect a list of sins in this book; this is most revealing and humbling.
2. Trace the cause, course and calamity of divine judgment.
3. Note recurring phrases, e.g.: "Thus saith the Lord"; "Hear the word", 22 times; "for three transgressions . . . and for four", "seek the Lord". Collect the questions in the book and their answers. Consider the "I will's" of Jehovah—there are over 40 references.
4. Study Amos's life as a preacher, e.g., his call, his country, courage, concern for the people, his condemnation of national sins, confidence in God and communication of truth.
5. Consider the quotation of 9:11 by James in Acts 15:14-18. (1) The visitation of the Gentiles began after Israel had rejected the second offer of

mercy. Now, this people taken out is called of God by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and constitute the Church, designated as the Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:12,13; Eph. 1:22,23, a called-out assembly. (ii) James declares that this outgathering of the Gentiles is in harmony with what the prophets taught. (iii) The dynasty and kingdom of David would be restored and set up; 2 Sam. 7:4-17; Isa. 2:1-5; 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Zech. 14 with Matt. 24:29-31; Rom. 11:26,27. (iv) This will mean a world-wide Gentile conversion, Acts 15:17. They will be brought into blessing, Isa. 11:10; 60:5; 66:23.

Obadiah

Obadiah was a name common among the Jews and several occurrences are found in the Old Testament, but there is nothing to indicate that any of them wrote this book. The name means “worshipper” or “servant of Jehovah”, and this book proves that the prophet lived up to his name.

Authority This is the shortest book in the Old Testament. It is a brilliant prophetic cameo. It comes as a message of Jehovah against a proud and cruel nation and reveals that retribution falls on resolute sinfulness.

Date The Revised Version rendering of verses 11-14 (e.g., “look not” instead of “thou shouldst not have looked”) would seem to indicate that the prophecy was uttered *before* the fall of Jerusalem, and not after it. The writer explains in detail the cause of the overthrow of Edom as referred to in Joel and Amos. Certain verses in Jeremiah (e.g., 49:7-22) apparently quoted from this book, make it probable that the capture referred to is that by Nebuchadnezzar. The prophecy may have been spoken between the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the subjugation of Edom by Nebuchadnezzar in 581 B.C., Psa. 137:7; Lam. 4:21-22; Ezek. 25:12-14.

Purpose

The book gives the character, career, condemnation and downfall of Edom. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, and the prophet reveals them as proud, bitter, and resentful, ever seeking an opportunity to harm Jacob's descendants. As the servant of Jehovah, the writer shows that God is the Righteous Ruler, and although Israel may be suffering from the cruelty of her ancient enemy Edom, God will deal in judgment because of His holiness. This book strikingly illustrates the truth of Numbers 32:23, “be sure your sin will find you out”. The prophecy concludes with a promise of restoration for Israel, vv. 17-21.

Historical

Edom was a descendant of Esau, and Israel from Jacob. Antagonism was manifest in the family circle and continued when they became two nations, Edom and Israel, Gen. 25:22; Num. 20:18-21; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Chron. 20:22. Of all the nations who afflicted the Jews, the chief were the Assyrians, the Chaldeans and the Edomites; and three of the prophets were commissioned specially to pronounce their destruction. Nahum foretells the destruction of the Assyrian, Habakkuk that of the Chaldeans, and Obadiah the destruction

of Edom. The antagonism of Edom to Judah came to a head in the time of Christ. According to the flesh He was a Jew; Herod, king of the Jews was an Edomite. To him our Lord never spoke, suggested by Luke 23:8-9. This book warns the nations in all ages of the peril of Jew-baiting, anti-semitism, or hatred of the Jews, whose cause God Himself will undertake, and whose enemies He will destroy. The evil is pride and violence, v. 3, the issue, retribution and judgment. Historically, the book tells the story of the destruction of Edom and allegorically sets forth the destruction of the flesh, Gal. 5:6,16.

Prophetical

The key verses are 15-21, and the phrases "day of the Lord", "the kingdom shall be the Lord's", clearly point to the final "day of the Lord". The kingdom of Edom may be revived in the last days and "all" the heathen will be effaced. This refers to the destruction of the Gentile armies at Armageddon. They will assist the armies of the Anti-Christ against the Jew, even as their forefathers assisted Nebuchadnezzar. Then Israel shall possess her possessions in the millennium, v. 17. The Edomites will be extinguished, v. 18, though this was partially fulfilled by Titus in A.D. 70. Their land will be annexed. This will probably be done by the Lord acting on Israel's behalf, Joel 3:19-20. The land of Edom will remain a desolation and thus will be a permanent warning to the millennial nations of the fate that awaits those who are the antagonists of God's chosen people. The end of all prophecy is "the kingdom shall be the Lord's".

Practical

This little book has a twofold message for our day, (1) Sin, vv. 3-4; 10-14; and (2) Salvation and Sovereignty, vv. 17,21.

1. *Sin*. Pride is the sin of sins, v. 3a, and the sin of our day among those who profess to follow the Lord, who was "meek and lowly". This leads to five other sins, independence, v. 3b; injury, v. 10; indifference, v. 11; indulgence, v. 12; and interference, v. 14. Note "thou stoodest on the other side", v. 11 and "thou shouldest not", vv. 12,13,14. The message therefore which Obadiah has to bring to us is the sin of *neutrality*. If we are to play the man at all it is impossible to be neutral. The church needs men of conviction and character, to stand in moments of grave moral issue. How much injury have you caused to your brother by passive or active opposition? Have you rejoiced in the calamities that have befallen others? How many saints have we cut off by scandal, v. 14? Are we like the priest and the Levite, passing by on the other side, Luke 10:32, doing nothing for God or man?

2. *Salvation*. In contrast to the man of pride of heart, which is deceptive, presumptive and destructive, v. 3, there is the coming day of victory—

“deliverance”, v. 17, sanctity—“holiness”, and security—possess your possessions. Do you live up to your name as the Lord’s servant? Are you serving the Lord, or criticising those who do? Do you really worship the Lord? or are there other objects of interest and affection and He only has second place? The Lord is looking for men like Obadiah today! The secret of Jacob’s history is that he was prompted “by faith”, Heb. 11:21. The secret of Esau’s degeneration is that he was a “profane person”, Heb. 12:16.

An Analysis THE DOOM OF EDOM

THE REVELATION OF EDOM’S SHAME, 1-9.

The Human Messenger, Obadiah, 1a.

The Divine Message, the vision and the voice, 1b-9.

Diminished, small, despised, 2; Deceived and defiant, 3; Self-deification, as the eagle, 4; Self-protection, among the stars, 4; Degraded by the Lord, cut off, 5; Despoiled by the enemy, they had enough, 5; Deserted by friends, deceived, against thee, 7; Destroyed by the Lord, their wise and mighty, 8-9.

THE RECORD OF EDOM’S SIN, 10-14.

Their Sin Defined, violence, 10a.

Their Sin Denounced, shame cover thee, 10b.

Their Sin Detailed, 11-14.

Note: Refusing Judah help, 11; Rejoicing over calamity, 12; Ravaging their cities, 13; Resisting their escape, 14.

THE RETRIBUTION FOR EDOM’S SIN, 15-21.

The Day of Retribution, day of the Lord near, 15.

The Law of Retribution, as thou hast, 15.

Revelry and Ribaldry, 16.

Rescue and Retribution, 17.

Israel Established and Enriched, 17.

Edom Extinguished, fire and stubble, 18-19.

The Endless Kingdom, the Lord’s, 21.

Meditate on carnal security and its end, 3-4; callous, cold indifference, 11; the blessings of victory, 17-18.

Jonah

The Disappointed Prophet

Jonah was a real person, an historical character who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II; read 2 Kings 14:23-27. His name means “dove” and his father’s name Amittai means “the truth of the Lord”. This dove-like man was the bearer of divine truth in a dark, degenerate age. He lived in Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, near to Cana of Galilee. his sphere therefore was the Northern Kingdom, and he was a Galilean, John 7:52.

Historicity

This book has been widely attacked by a host of sceptics and “higher critics”, no doubt inspired by Satan. The book is a record of actual facts, not an allegorical fiction or a parable intended to impart religious instruction. Unbelief always stumbles at that which displays the supernatural and demonstrates the miraculous. The account is given in a straightforward way, in plain language and without any fanciful and ambiguous words. That this book is a strictly historical narrative is manifestly evident from the manner in which the existence and ministry of this prophet, together with the main facts of his history, are referred to by our Lord (see Matt. 12:38-41; Luke 11:29-30). The Lord called the experience of Jonah a “sign” of His own resurrection. To deny this history casts doubts upon the knowledge and truthfulness of our blessed Lord, the “faithful and true witness”, Rev. 1:5. This book is placed among the sacred writings under the direction of the Spirit of God.

Difficulty

When the book was written is uncertain, but Jonah exercised his prophetic office either before or very early in the reign of Jeroboam II. He would thus be a contemporary of Hosea and Amos, perhaps ministering earlier than they did and therefore one of the most ancient of the prophets whose writings we possess. His book is historical rather than predictive.

Ministry

This book being primarily historical, the history of a prophet, it is also biographical—the story of a prophet. The book gives only a very small part of his ministry, and is a continuation of what he had done previously, “Now the word of the Lord came”, 1:1. The book is a simple narrative with the exception of chapter 2, which is both prayer and thanksgiving. His style is

simple, vivid, graphic, and exceedingly frank in its personal disclosures. It is a plain, simple record of fact, and looks forward to the preaching of repentance to the Gentiles, and to their ingathering with believing Israel in the family of God. In fact, God turns from apostate, morally sunken Israel, such as we have learned to know it from the descriptions of the prophets. Jonah, the very messenger who had announced coming deliverance to Jeroboam, turns by divine commission to the Gentiles.

Story

Jonah was commanded by God to go to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, and carry God's oral message. The city was surrounded by a wall sixty miles in circumference, fifty feet broad, one hundred feet high, fortified by fifteen hundred towers all two hundred feet high. Six hundred thousand people lived within its walls. Jonah had to travel about 500 miles over mountains, through trackless forests and across burning deserts in constant danger from wild men and animals. Why did he want to avoid delivering God's message, and decide to journey a considerable distance in the opposite direction? He gives the answer in his prayer to God, 4:2-3. He knew that the preservation of Nineveh meant the eventual conquest and destruction of Israel. No wonder he fled in the opposite direction. Disaster came to him, and to save the ship and crew, at his own suggestion, he was thrown into the sea. Miraculously preserved, he was later re-commissioned and carried out his instructions to the letter and thus glorified God. Have we not followed this man in many ways? Many are willing to carry out the Lord's commission in missionary service, but smug complacency and an exclusive spirit rejoice in divine blessing but share nothing of its fulness. Study the book thus:

Jonah in declension	His portion in the storm, ch. 1
Jonah in distress	His prayer in the fish, ch. 2
Jonah in devotion	His preaching in the city, ch. 3
Jonah in displeasure	His pleading with the Lord, ch. 4.

Suggested Analysis

THE TRUANT AND TROUBLED PROPHET, ch. 1.

The commission he received, 1-2; The course he pursued, 3-4; The confusion he caused, 5-8; The confession he made, 9-10; The calm he prophesied, 12-14; The conversion of seamen, 15-17.

THE TRUSTING AND TESTIFYING PROPHET, ch. 2.

His prayer: *Its occasion*, danger and distress, 1:17 to 2:3.
Its object, forgiveness and freedom, 2:4-8;
Its outcome, salvation and song, 2:9-10.

THE SERVING AND SUCCESSFUL PROPHET, ch. 3.

His renewed command, 1-2; His ready compliance, 3-4; The repentant city, 5-9; The riches of grace, 10.

THE SELFISH AND SULKING PROPHET, ch. 4.

His displeasure, 1, and discontent, 2-3; His discourtesy, 4, and despondency, 5-6; His discipline, 7, and dissatisfaction, 8-9; The divine appeal and attitude, 10-11.

ch.1 LIVING DEFIANTLY

The commission he received, v.1
 The course he pursued, vs.2-4
 The confusion he caused, vs.5-8
 The confession he made, vs.9-10
 The calm he prophesied, vs.12-14
 The conversion of the crew, vs.15-17.

ch.2 LIVING DEPENDENTLY

His communion, v.1
 affliction, v.2
 perception, v.3
 education, v.4
 realisation, v.5
 preservation, v.6
 reflection, v.7
 valuation, v.8
 adoration, v.9
 salvation, v.10.

ch.3 LIVING DEDICATEDLY

The Renewed Commission, vs.1-2
 (divine v.1, directive v.2)
The Ready Compliance, vs.3-4
 unhesitatingly, undaunted v.3
 uncompromising, unflinching, v.4
The Repentant City, vs.5-9
 national and visible, v.5
 personal, v.6; vital, v.7
 real, v.8; practical, v.9a
 effectual, v.9b
The Riches of God's Grace, v.10
 experienced, enjoyed.

ch.4 LIVING DEJECTEDLY

His displeasure, v.1
 discontent, vs.2,3
 discourtesy, v.4
 despondency, v.5
 deliverance, v.6
 discipline, v.7
 dissatisfaction, vs.8,9
 God's dealings, vs.10,11
 His sovereignty, v.11a
 pity, v.11b.

Suggestions for Study

1. *Evangelically.* Chapter 1 is a picture of a sinner running away from God. Sin its character, course, calamity, confusion and consequences.

Chapter 2 the sinner's cry, condition, concern, confession and complete deliverance.

Chapters 3 and 4, the preacher's appointment, announcement, ambition and amazement. Then he becomes petulant, full of self, gloomy, angry, disciplined and silenced.

2. *Typically. Jonah a type of Israel.*

- i. His commission and theirs, Jonah 1:1-2; Psa. 147:19-20; Isa. 43:10-12; Rom. 3:1-2; 11:29.
- ii. His disobedience and theirs, Jonah 1:3; Psa. 78:5-12; Rom. 2:24.
- iii. Cast into the sea, Jonah 1; cf. Israel scattered among the nations, Deut. 4:25-27; Ezek. 23:16-20.
- iv. Miraculously preserved, Jonah 1:17; Jer. 30:10-18; 46:28; Rom. 11:2,5.
- v. Distress of soul and restoration, Jonah 2; Zech. 12:10; Isa. 66:20; Ezek. 37:12; Jer. 50:19-20; Rom. 11:26.
- vi. Preaching, Jonah 3; Zech. 8:7-23; Psa. 98:1-3.

Jonah a type of Christ. Note both the comparisons and the contrasts; e.g., the prophet, his witness, his service, death and resurrection.

3. *Practically.* Consider the servant of God; his revelation from God, responsibility in service, running away, chastening, repentance, being recommissioned, restored, then perplexed and fainting.

Micah

The opening verse gives to Micah a period of activity under three Jewish kings, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. No direct information is given in the book to suggest which king was on the throne when the prophet set forth upon his career. He may quite easily have figured as a prophet in the three reigns.

Name The book is named after the man who wrote it. His name means “who is like Jehovah” and this characterises his life and message, 7:18. There is none like Israel’s God for justice, mercy, truth and grace. This Micah seeks to make known. There seems little doubt that he was the author of this book: see Jer. 26:17-19, which seems to confirm this fact, cf. Micah. 3:12. Little is known of the personality of the prophet. He was a man from the provinces, down near the Philistine border. He must have been a man of strong convictions to speak against the evils of his day, 3:8.

Time This is given in the opening verses; three kings, all of the Southern Kingdom. Their reigns cover a period of sixty years of social decay and political unrest. The reference to these kings gives the limits of time during which the prophet worked. He may only have served during the reign of Hezekiah. Amos and Hosea figured in the Northern Kingdom, Micah in the Southern. He belonged to the country in contrast to Isaiah, the man of aristocratic birth. If Micah ministered near the end of Jotham’s reign and lived to witness the apostasy of the government under Ahaz he may have witnessed its partial recovery under Hezekiah. “The date of writing could be between 740-695 B.C.” (Scroggie). He was the only prophet who addressed his message to both Israel and Judah.

Style The literary style is not uniform. Sometimes it is abrupt, at other times smooth and simple and full of poetic beauty like Isaiah. He indulges in dramatic interruptions and answers, e.g., 2:6-12; 3:1; 4:9; 6:6-8,10-11; 7:14.

Mission His mission was to proclaim to Israel and Judah that judgment was at hand. He deals with the moral and social wrongs more than the things of state. No class was exempt from the prevailing corrupting influences; princes, priests, prophets and people were all involved in the moral decay, 2:1-2,8,9,11; 3:1-3,5,11. Early in his prophecy he mentions no less than ten towns and villages in the neighbourhood of his home, warning them of the

approaching calamities, 1:10-15. He pictures the callousness of the higher classes and the privations of the people. The poor were robbed of all that they held precious, cast out of their homes, deprived of the means of livelihood, 3:1-4. It is truly an evil picture that the prophet paints of his country in his own day. Micah was the prophet of justice and mercy, the stern demands of morality and the free grace of the Gospel, 6:8. The leaders of the nation, temporal and spiritual, both in their own way, are blind leaders of the blind. There is in them neither foresight nor insight, thus the nation is on the high road to ruin.

Special Features

He makes several clear and specific prophecies: i. Destruction of the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, 1:6-7; 2 Kings 17:3-6, and the advance of Sennacherib against Jerusalem, 1:9-16. ii. Destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, 3:12; 7:13. iii. Cessation of prophecy, 3:5-7. iv. Deportation of Jews to Babylon, 4:10. v. Location of the birthplace of our Lord Jesus, 5:2. vi. Indication of millennial glories, universal, peaceful and supreme, 4:13; see Isa. 2:2-4. vii. The re-gathering and deliverance of the remnant of Israel, 2:12; 4:6-8; 5:8.

Micah 5:2 is quoted by the chief priests and scribes regarding the birth of the Messiah, Matt. 2:6; see also John 7:42. The Lord Jesus quotes Micah 7:6, when sending His twelve disciples on their mission, Matt. 10:35-36.

Suggested Analysis

EXECUTION OF JUDGMENT FORETOLD, 1-16.

Proclaimed to people, 1-2; Portrayed in storm upon Israel, 3-7; Lamentation of prophet, 8-9; Description of judgment upon Judah, 10-16.

EXPOUNDING THE CAUSES OF JUDGMENT, 2:1-13, NATIONAL SINS.

Sins of rich, 1-5; Sins of prophets, 6-11; Signs of salvation, 12-13.

EXPOSING THE CONDUCT OF RULERS, 3:1-11, SOCIAL SINS.

Sins of the Princes, 1-4; Prophets, 5-8; Sins of Princes, Priests and Prophets, 9-11; Coming judgment, 12.

EXALTATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 4:1-13.

The centre of worship, 1-2; The centre of peaceful rule, 3; The centre of righteous rule, 4-5; Captivity then conquest, 9-13.

EXPECTATION OF MESSIAH, 5:1-15.

Affliction of Israel, 1; Advent of their Ruler, 2; Messiah's attitude, 4; Authority and ability, 5-15.

EXPOSTULATION OF JEHOVAH, 6:1-16.

Appeal of Jehovah, 1-5; Answer of people, 6-7; Answer of prophet, 8-9; Awful sin of people, 10-16.

EXPRESSION OF THE PROPHET, 7:1-20.

Lamentation, 1-6; No righteousness, 1-4; No security, 5-6. Confession, 7-8; Submission, 9-13; Restoration, 14-20.

Study the wonderful description of Jehovah's character in chapter 7:18-20.

Spiritual Teaching

This book shows the connection between moral declension and national disaster and is most applicable to our day and generation. Here is denunciation of the spiritual, social and moral evils of his day and our day. A summary of its spiritual message is given in the trite statement of chapter 6:8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God". These three things emphasize the supreme necessity of our outward actions corresponding with the inward motives; to "do justly" is to be righteous in our actions; to "love mercy" is to be righteous in all our thoughts, desires, motives and affections; "to walk humbly before God" is humility of heart and life before God. The true nature of religion is an internal rather than an external matter, a matter of the heart and the inner life rather than offerings at the sacred courts. Inward sincerity and outward faithfulness are the things that God delights to find in His saints, e.g. Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Job and Daniel.

For Preachers

Coming Judgment, 1:1-5, the call—hear all ye people. Hearken, O earth—the trial of the Great Judge, the accused, the witness, v. 2,5. The centre of judgment, 3; divine, searching, solemn, righteous. The circumstances, 4; figuratively given, hills, valleys, etc. The cause of judgment, 5; transgression, idolatry, iniquity, 2:1-3. The consequences of judgment, 1:6-9; incurable wounds in Jerusalem.

Ministers of the Word, 2:7; 3:5-8. i. FALSE MINISTERS, 3:5-7; Deceptive—"make my people err"; Derisive—"prepare war"; Destructive—"bite with their teeth"; Hypocritical—"Cry peace yet war comes"; Darkness—no vision; Defeat—"be ashamed"; Disgrace—"no answer"; see also 2:11.

ii. TRUE MINISTER, 3:8; 2:7; Divine resources—spirit unrestrained, 2:7. Divine revelation—words do good, powerful and productive; walk uprightly, human response. A ministry of power, fulness, light and courage, 3:8.

The Mercy of God, 7:18-20. i. Expressed—He pardons, He passes over, He restrains anger, delights in mercy. Pardon, free, full, final, v. 18.

ii. Enjoyed—restoration, compassion, sanctification (subdue sins, abolition of sins into depths of sea), v. 19.

iii. Exulted in—the covenant and confidence, v. 20.

Nahum

Nothing is known of the prophet Nahum except that he belonged to Elkosh, the location of which cannot be established with certainty. Some say that is “was not far from Capernaum”, which means “village of Nahum”. Nahum may have been a descendant of Israelites who had been left in the north after the deportation by the Assyrians, 2 Kings 18:9-11. He addressed Judah and not Israel, though he spoke in the land of Israel. It is clearly with Judah that he is concerned.

Name The prophet’s name means “comforter” or “consolation” and this aptly describes his ministry which was not only timely but particularly consoling to Judah, 1:7,15. Possibly the name was given him by his parents in some time of trial, indicating that God was to comfort their hearts by the child He had bestowed. His book presents *the comfort of retribution*, and his message is a cry in the light of the execution of divine vengeance upon the oppressors of his people. For Judah it is an exultant shout of triumph over the speedy downfall and destruction of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

Date The date is not given but may be assumed from its theme and contents. The fall of Nineveh, though still future, must be after the sack of Thebes (No-Amon, 3:8 R.V.) by the Assyrians in 661 B.C.; Nineveh itself fell in 607-606 B.C. and four years later the last of Assyria, as an empire, vanished unlamented. Some time within the compass of these two dated happenings Nahum delivered his prophecy. The fall of Assyria was followed by the rise of Babylon.

It is not indicated who were the kings reigning in Israel or in Judah at the time of his ministry. Probably his message was given during the reign of Hezekiah when Jerusalem was besieged by Assyria; see Isa. 36.

Setting “The Assyrians were the cruellest of all the great empires of antiquity. They gloried in their record of a ferocity at which we stand aghast”, (Sayce). Farrar writes, “Judged from the vaunting inscriptions of her kings, no power more useless, more savage, more terrible, ever cast its gigantic shadow on the page of history as it passed on to the way of ruin. They cut down warriors like weeds or smote them like wild beasts in the forests and covered pillars with the flayed skins of rival monarchs”. This is the power upon which Nahum, filled with unshaken faith in the Eternal Righteousness, is commissioned to pronounce the doom of God.

Purpose Nahum reveals the twofold character of Jehovah exercising judgment and mercy; judgment to His adversaries and mercy and grace to His own people. His theme is the overthrow and destruction of Nineveh. He reveals the continued conflict between good and evil, between right and might, and that the final issue is with God. It was to Nineveh that Jonah was sent. To them he declared the might and the power of God; and as a result they turned to God. Nahum's prophecy opens about 150 years later, and what a drastic change in the moral condition of the nation is pictured here. There is complete apostasy from God and Nahum declares what God is going to do in consequence of their sin and apostasy.

Title This is given in the very first sentence, "The burden of Nineveh", and provides a key to the understanding of the book. The sub-title, "The book of the vision of Nahum" suggests that he had seen the things which he declares. He had been caught up into the secret place of the most High, and had looked out upon both Judah and Nineveh from this vantage ground. This is an essential pre-requisite for any divine ministry. The book is an historic illustration of the text "Vengeance belongeth unto me", Rom. 12:19 R.V.; cf. Ps. 94:1; 99:8.

Suggested Analysis

One of the clearest basic outlines is that by G. Campbell Morgan. Ch. 1. The Verdict of Vengeance, Ch. 2. The Vision of Vengeance, Ch. 3. The Vindication of Vengeance. A more detailed review of contents may be shown as follows:

THE DOOM OF NINEVEH DECREED, ch. 1.

Introduction—the voice and the vision, 1.

The Description of the Judge, 2-6. The vision. The voice of Jehovah—the Lord is jealous, He avengeth. Vindication of His power—patient, "slow to anger", powerful—in the air, sea and land; persistent—"by no means clear the guilty", R.V. His anger is real, righteous and terrible, 6.

The Deliverance of Judah, 7-15. The verdict.

Protection for His own, 7. His goodness is powerful and watchful. Destruction for His enemies, 8-14. Nineveh's power removed as stubble, 10, as a yoke, 13, as a bond, 13, cut off, 14. For Judah a promise of restoration, 12, redemption, 13, rest, 15.

THE DOOM OF NINEVEH DESCRIBED, ch. 2.

The Coming Conqueror, 1-2. The Medo-Babylonian army.

The Conditions of the Conflict, 3-6. The coming army terrible and invincible, 3-4; the defenders brave but beaten, 5-6.

The Conquest, 6-9. Gates opened, palace destroyed, queen captured, inhabitants flee, city spoiled.

The Consummation, 10-12. Its site obliterated, 11; rulers defeated, 12; resources destroyed, 13.

In verses 1-12 we see the *manner* of its destruction and in verse 13 we have the *mystery* of it.

THE DOOM OF NINEVEH DEFENDED, ch. 3.

Vice Rampant, 1-3. Corruption and cruelty.

Vengeance Retributive, 4-7. Exposed, 5; disgraced, 6; forsaken, 7.

Vice brings Ruin, 8-19. Comparison with Egypt, 8-12; no protection, 8-13; no preparations, 14-18; no pity, 19.

Message for Today

Nahum is the complement of Jonah. In Jonah judgment on Nineveh is *withdrawn* but in Nahum the judgment is *executed*. Note the two-fold nature of the ministry suggested by the text, "Behold therefore the goodness (Jonah) and severity (Nahum) of God", Rom. 11:22; cf. Gal. 6:7-8 and Nah. 1:7-8.

We know what God is by what He does. His nature is known by His works. The conception of God's character governs the moral condition of a nation. According to a man's conception of God, so will be his conception of morality, of goodness, of responsibility, and so will be the purity and the power of his life. And whilst God has spoken finally and more fully in His Son than in the prophets of Old Testament times, it is still true that the place we give to God, the honour we ascribe to Him, the consciousness we have of His holiness, His justice, His goodness, His truth, His faithfulness, and the degree to which we draw upon His sufficiency and grace, will govern the moral and spiritual condition of our lives. We may see in Nineveh a picture of the world that knows not God, Psa. 10:1-6, and which is hovering under the judgment of God.

This book reveals God as Ruler over His universe and emphasizes the duty of nations as well as individuals to own His sway and obey His word.

This book reinforces our faith by a vindication of Jehovah as the avenger of His people, as the punisher of oppressors, cf. 2 Thess. 1:6-10. It is still true that "the wheels of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small", cf. 1:2. Sin is a principle of self-annihilation. Evil contains within itself the seed of inevitable decay. Only goodness lasts. Only love is eternal, for "love is of God". "Of the thirty Roman Emperors and Governors who persecuted Christians, not one came to a peaceful end".

For Your Study

Trace the "I wills" in this book and the references to "the Lord".

Meditate on Divine judgment. *It is real*, ch. 1: provoked, 2-3; portrayed, 4-6; and promised, 13-14. *It is righteous*, ch. 2: the ravages of war, 1-7; the enemy's approach and the attack, 3-7. The ruin of the city, 8-13; despair, 8-9, desolation, 10, destruction, 11-13. *It is retributive*, ch. 3: massacre in its streets, 1-3; manifestation of its shame, 4-7; the moving of its inhabitants, 8-13; the mighty melt away, 14-18; and none mourn her disappearance, 19.

Habakkuk

Nothing is known of Habakkuk apart from this book. From the fact that he makes no mention of Assyria, and speaks of the Chaldean power as growing with almost incredible rapidity, it is concluded that he prophesied in Judah during the reign of Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim shortly before the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, 1:5-6; 2:3; 3:2,16. In this case the background of the book extends over a period from 625 to 605 or even to 597 B.C.

Period He was in all probability a contemporary of Jeremiah. Both prophets are alike in respect of their emphasis on personal fellowship with God. When Habakkuk delivered his message, the condition of things calling for reformation still existed; read 2 Kings 21 to 24 and 2 Chron. 34 to 36.

Name The prophet's name means "embracing" or "wrestler" and occurs in other portions of the Word (e.g., Gen. 29:13; 33:4; 48:10; 2 Kings 4:16). "He embraced the people in his arms, he comforts them and lifts them up, as one embraces a weeping child to quiet it, with the assurance that, if God will, it shall be better soon", Luther.

The book is built up around the meaning of his name. He "embraced" his God in prayer for he was perplexed, 1:4, 12-15, he "embraced" God by faith for he expected a solution to his problems, 2:1-4, 14, 20, and he "embraced" God with songs of victory as he anticipated the glorious triumph of God over all evil, 3:1-19.

Purpose In this book we have a man of faith asking questions and receiving answers. He wrote to encourage those who truly believed and trusted God. His message informed them and us that Jehovah has not changed, but that since Judah has sinned by turning aside to idols, God would use the Chaldeans as His sword to execute judgment upon the guilty people. The book opens in mystery and questioning whilst it closes in certainty and affirmation.

Its Spiritual Values This book excels in wonderful and awe-inspiring descriptions of the majesty of God. Habakkuk has been called the "free-thinker among the prophets" and the "doubting Thomas" of the Old Testament. Yet he was the "Grandfather of the Reformation", because the great doctrine of justification by faith Paul found had been anticipated and confirmed by Habbakuk, 2:4, and Luther learned it from Paul. Habbakuk aired his doubts and difficulties concerning the rightness of the moral

government of God. He makes a confidant of his best and truest friend and being one of the Levitical choristers he moulds the third chapter of his book in the form of a Psalm (note the three occurrences of the word "Selah").

Message The keynote of the book is contained in the phrase "the just shall live by his faith" or "in his faithfulness" 2:4 R.V. marg. Three great New Testament books take up this phrase and through their different emphases unfold something of the wealth expressed in it. In Galatians the word "faith" is underlined, 3:11, as that which distinguishes true Christianity from mere law-keeping. In Romans where the question "how can man be just with God" is fully answered, the apostle places the stress on the word "just" in the question from Habakkuk, Rom. 1:17. In Hebrews, the writer addresses those who had started on the Christian pathway by faith but who were forgetting the former days. To such he emphasises the word "live" in the quotation, 10:38, to press home the salutary lesson of continuing in the Christian life by faith. In his "Song of Ascents" the prophet passes from trouble, ch. 1, through trust, ch. 2, to triumph, ch. 3.

Suggested Analysis

HIS PERPLEXITY. THE TRIAL OF FAITH, ch. 1.

The Sins of God's People, 1-4. Why is God so deaf?

His burden, 1; His problem, 2; Divine indolence, 2; Iniquity and insurrection, 3-4; Divine indifference, 3-4.

The Strangeness of God's Way, 5-11. History under divine control, 5-6; Invasion by a dreadful foe, 7-11.

The Strength of God's Character, 12-17. Appeal to the majesty of Jehovah, 12a; Apprehension of the purpose of Jehovah, 12b; Anxiety about the government of Jehovah, 13; Awareness of the wickedness of nations, 14-17.

HIS PATIENCE. THE TRUST OF FAITH, ch. 2.

The Attitude, waiting, 1.

The Answer, write the message, 2-4.

The Announcement, woes on the Chaldeans, 5-19.

The Anticipation, Jehovah reigneth, 20.

HIS PRAYER AND PRAISE, THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH, ch. 3.

His Petition. For remembrance and revival, 1-2.

His Praise of Jehovah, 3-15. Poem about divine glory, 3-6; Divine government, 7-11; Divine goings, 12-15.

His Peace in Jehovah, 16-18. Fear and trembling, 16; Faith and trouble, 17; Final triumph and joy, 18.

His Power in Jehovah, 19. Faith makes him sing, 18; Faith makes him strong, 19; Faith makes him swift, sure, 19.

Suggestions for Study

1. Collect and meditate on the beautiful texts in the book, e.g., 1:12-13; 2:14,20; 3:18-19.
2. Discover why we might appropriately entitle chapter one as "The wailing chapter", chapter two as "The waiting chapter" and chapter three as "The worshipping chapter".
3. Find verses which present this man of God as a seer and scholar in chapter 1, as a watchman and preacher in chapter 2, as an intercessor, poet, singer and saint in chapter three.
4. Trace the attributes of Jehovah in the book.
5. Carefully and prayerfully weigh the message of 3:17-19. Remember we too walk by faith and not by sight, 2 Cor. 4:16-18.

Message for Today

The book declares and demonstrates the consistency of the character of God in view of permitted evil. We may rest here having unshaken confidence in God when all around us fails.

Zephaniah

From the opening verse of the prophecy we learn something about Zephaniah, the writer. His genealogy is traced back for four generations to Hezekiah, R.V. This would suggest that he was the great-grandson of this famous king and therefore of the royal house of Judah. He is supposed to have been a youth and about the same age as Josiah or a little older. Zephaniah's claim to inspiration and authority is seen in the words of chapter 1:1, and the oft-repeated words "saith the Lord", 1:2,3,10; 2:9; 3:8,20.

Title Zephaniah means "Hidden of Jehovah", or "Jehovah hath guarded" and this truth is emphasised in his message (cf. 2:1-3 with Psalm 27:5; 83:3). In view of the high-handed injustice of the ruling officials, 1:8, and the general corruption of all classes, 3:1-7, his prophecy points to a time before Josiah's reform. The prophet was encouraged, equipped and thrust forth by the God who guarded him.

Setting 2 Kings 21 to 23:23 together with the early chapters of Jeremiah provide the historical background for this book. Zephaniah saw the menacing hordes of Scythians, rising over the horizon, swift and terrible in their movements. Jeremiah, his contemporary, looked upon a similar enemy as the source of the greatest danger at that moment. The position of Judah was delicate and difficult, for with its small resources it could not hope to prevail over the great powers. *When the greater nations to the north and south of Judah strove for the mastery of the world, the weak nations that lay between became involved and were often ravaged.* Aware of the seething unrest all around, Zephaniah became a preacher of righteousness and denounced the evils of his age in unsparing terms.

Date The title directs our attention to Josiah's reign, (641-610 B.C.). He was doubtless instrumental in Josiah's revival, 2 Kings 22-23; 2 Chron. 34-35, but the spiritual movement proved superficial. With the captivity impending, Jer. 2:11-13; Zeph. 3:1-7, Zephaniah points out that the moral state of Judah, which because of the reformation under Josiah was outwardly improved, was not deep and sincere enough to avert disaster.

Scope Zephaniah was the last of the Minor Prophets to minister before the Captivity. He does for the two tribes of the Southern Kingdom what Hosea had done for the ten tribes of Israel. Both books have a retrospective

and a prospective character. Zephaniah is pre-eminently the prophet of "the day of the Lord", a subject which connects him with the ministry of Joel. In both there is firstly a threatening of judgment, then a call to repentance and lastly the promise of the golden age of glory and peace of a restored universe.

There is no compromise in the language used. He denounces sin and announces judgment with perfect fearlessness and closes his book with a song full of inspiration and hope looking forward to the inauguration of the Millennial Kingdom.

Message The key to the book is the phrase the "day of the Lord", 1:7,8,9,10,14-18; 2:2,3; 3:8. C. Morgan summarises it thus: "the content, the extent, and the intent of the Day of the Lord". He sees in the approaching invasion of Nebuchadnezzar a foreshadowing of the coming great day of the Lord in which all judgments of earth will culminate. This is to be followed by the restoration of Israel and the blessing of both Israel and the nations in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ to be inaugurated after His second advent.

There is comfort and assurance; "sing", "be glad and rejoice", 3:14; "thou shalt not see evil any more", 3:15; "fear thou not", 3:16. *There is challenge*; "Let not thine hands be slack", 3:16. Read this book along with 2 Peter 3 for the spiritual lessons for today.

Suggested Analysis

Introduction, 1:1. The prophet's authority and associations.

THE DECLARATION OF JUDGMENT, 1:2-18.

Judgment Announced, 1:2-13. Judgment upon the whole earth, 2-3; its universality, 2; its severity, 3. Judgment upon Judah, 4-6; its causes, idolatry, 4; apostasy, 5-6. Judgment upon all classes, 7-13; princes, 8; oppressors, 9-10; merchants, 11; the indifferent, 12. The day of Jehovah's sacrifice, 7-9; of Jehovah's scrutiny, 12-13.

Judgment at Hand, 1:14-18. A day of dense darkness, 14-15; distress and desolation, 15; of blindness and helplessness, 17; of jealousy and judgment, 18.

THE EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE, 2:1-3.

A Call to Recollection, 1, the need and the means.

A Call to Repentance, 2, danger in delay, "before, before, before".

A Call to Realisation, 3, "Seek ye the Lord . . . seek righteousness, seek meekness".

THE CONTEMPLATION OF JUDGMENT, 2:4-15.

The Compass Embraced: in the west—Philistia, 4-7; in the east—Moab, 8-9; in the south—Ammon, Ethiopia, 12; in the north—Assyria, 13-15.

The Certainty of their Doom, “as I live, saith the Lord of hosts”, 9.

The Cause of Disaster, pride, cruelty, selfishness, defiance, 8,10.

The Comfort of Judah, “the Lord their God shall visit them”, 7.

THE CORRUPTION OF JUDAH, 3:1-7.

Note the sins exposed: oppression, 1; declension, 2; refusing correction, 2; evil leadership, 3-4; civil and religious shamelessness, 5; corruption, 6-7.

THE INDIGNATION OF JEHOVAH UPON THE NATIONS, 3:8.

THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAITHFUL, THE CONVERSION OF MANY, 3:8-10.

Judged, 8; blessed and serving, 9; pure in language, sincere in worship and united in service, 9; prayer and thanksgiving, 10.

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL, 3:11-18.

National recovery, 11; moral rectitude, 12-13; humble, dependent, upright, sincere, 11-13; joyful song, 14; emancipation, 15.

THE JOY OF JEHOVAH, 3:16-20.

His Presence with them, “in the midst”, 15.

His Power for them, “he will save”, 17.

His Pleasure in them, “rest, rejoice”, 17.

His Purposes for them, “I will”. Songs instead of sorrow, 18-19; security instead of scattering, 20a; recovery and restoration, 20b; God fulfils the promise of the Abrahamic covenant, Gen. 12:1-3.

For Meditation and Study

What difference, if any, do you see in the subject of the “day of the Lord” as presented by Joel and Zephaniah?

Collect all aspects of sin, and consequent judgment. Could you preach the gospel and give warning of judgment from this book?

Search for the threefold cords of truth and blessing in chapter 3. Are these a revelation of our character, condition and conduct today?

Muse on the expression, “in the midst” and apply its teaching for us today.

Study the “I wills” in the book.

Haggai

Haggai is the first in order of the Minor Prophets after the captivity. The deportation of the people into captivity was in three stages that extended over a number of years. The restoration to their homeland was similarly in three separate phases. The tone of ministry given by the “prophets of the restoration” met the need of the people as seen in the historical records of Ezra and Nehemiah. Haggai and Zechariah gave ministry to incite the immediate re-building of the Temple, restoring the Mosaic institutions and unfolding the great future of the nation.

Name Haggai means “festive” or “feast of Jehovah”. Probably he was born on a feast day, and the name may have been given in joyous anticipation of the imminent end of the captivity. Certainly he was commissioned to encourage his people in order that they might enjoy a feast. The people needed encouragement for they went back to a devastated land, to a desolate city, and to a temple in ruins. His call to the prophetic office is assigned by himself to the second year of Darius, i.e. B.C. 520. His mission was to urge the people to complete the restoration of the temple without delay. The ministry of the prophet was effective and the people energetically responded to the challenge.

Date The historical setting of this book is found in Ezra chapters 1 to 6 and especially chapters 5 and 6. His prophecies are clearly marked but dating by referring to the reign of a Gentile monarch indicates that the power had been handed over from Israel to the Gentiles for the time being. He delivered five distinct messages in the space of four months, from September to December 520 B.C.

Style and Purpose His ministry was methodical, his theme being developed at each stage of the work. His presentation is somewhat rhetorical, as his fondness for searching questions indicates. The messages were brief, plain, curt and businesslike, good practical ministry which was attended with immediate success. The work of rebuilding the temple had been arrested by the Samaritans and the new ruler, Ezra, 4:7-24. For fifteen years God’s house was totally neglected. In view of this neglect, God raised up two prophets through whom He might speak to His people, Haggai and Zechariah. Exhortation and encouragement marked the ministry of these servants and should be a feature of ministry today, 1 Cor. 10:11. The internal evidence that Haggai was speaking Jehovah’s message is beyond dispute,

Hag. 1:13. Five times in the 38 verses he tell us—"The word of Jehovah came"; nine times "Thus saith", or "saith Jehovah of hosts"; this latter title he uses 14 times and "Jehovah" 19 times.

Message This is firstly a word of exhortation to those who were neglectful of their responsibility, who were allowing the material to shut out the spiritual. Secondly, a word of encouragement to those who, while doing the work, were being discouraged by those who should have helped them. The prophet aimed at stability and tranquility in the lives of the people, and he realised that those lofty ends were bound up with completing the building of the temple and connecting and continuing to give God His portion in its regular and scriptural system of worship. "Be strong", be courageous, do the Lord's work in His way at His time, by His Spirit and to His glory, he pleads.

Suggested Analysis

A CHALLENGING MESSAGE OF REBUKE, 1:1-11.

The Date and the Event, 1.

The Challenge of God, "This people say"; a contrast of houses, thought, works, 2-4.

The Call to Consideration, 5-6; scarcity, hunger, thirst.

The Counsel of God, 7-8; consider, climb, construct.

The Cause of God, 9-11; why, because, therefore.

A COMFORTING MESSAGE ON THEIR REVIVAL, 1:12-15.

The result of the first message. Recognition, "obeyed" 12a; Reverence, they "did fear", 12b; Response, "did work" 14b; Resource, "I am with you", 13; the date, 15.

A CHEERING MESSAGE OF RE-ENCOURAGEMENT, 2:1-9.

The Depression of the People, 1-3.

The Declaration of the Lord, 4-5; be courageous, industrious and inspired, 4.

The Demonstration of His Power, 6-9; His Power, 6; His Provision, 8; His Purpose, 7; His Pleasure, "I will fill", 7.

A CORRECTIVE MESSAGE ON RESPONSIBILITY, 2:10-19.

Their Impurity, 11-13, an Appeal to the law.

Their Impatience, 14-19, an Application of the law. Holiness is not contagious but uncleanness is; "so is this people", "so is every work of their hands", 14.

Their Inspiration, 19b; an Announcement of grace.

A CONFIRMING MESSAGE OF REWARD, 2:20-23.

The Event and Date, v. 20. A word of encouragement, v. 23.

The Divine Plan, “I will shake the heavens and the earth”, 21.

The Divine Purpose, “I will overthrow . . . destroy”, 22; a destructive end and the overthrow of enemies.

The Divine Promise in Constructive, 23. There will be universal subjugation, 22; but for this servant personal preservation, 23.

Summary of Messages

These five messages are a little Pentateuch and some of the teaching of each book will be found in the corresponding message.

1. God’s call to repentance—for the conscience.
2. God’s call to diligence—for the will.
3. God’s call to endurance—to the spirit.
4. God’s call to obedience—for the mind.
5. God’s call of assurance—for the heart.

For your Meditation

1. What do the phrases mean to you, “Thus saith the Lord”, “the word of the Lord”? Trace all references to the Lord speaking in this book.
2. Why is the title “Lord of hosts” used so often in Haggai and Zechariah?
3. Study all the questions asked by Jehovah.
4. Feast on the “I wills” of encouragement.
5. The words of Jehovah in chapter one are: condemning, 2; challenging, 4; considerate, 5; commanding, 8; cheering, 8; chiding, 9; commendable, 12; and comforting, 13.

Spiritual Application of the Book

The temple of God is used metaphorically in a three-fold way in the New Testament.

1. Of the church in its aggregate, age-long character, a holy temple, a building, Eph. 2:21, composed of living stones, 1 Pet. 2:5. Christ is building His church and through the evangelist is adding living stone to living stone in that structure of which He is the Chief Corner Stone.

2. Of the local assembly, 1 Cor. 3:17. Each believer as well as full-time servants of God are responsible to build into this temple gold, silver and precious stones, always serving in the light of the judgment seat of Christ and for the lasting upbuilding of the local company of believers.

3. Of the believer’s own body which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 6:19. In our bodies we should glorify God by holy living. Are we failing in these three aspects; does the temple lie waste? Are we too busy with our own things to honour God in spiritual matters? Put God first in life, Matt. 6:33; and in service, 1 Cor. 15:58.

Help from Haggai

Haggai and Zechariah were the post-exilic “prophets of work” commissioned by God to encourage His returned exiles to complete the restoration of the temple. The task had lapsed for almost sixteen years. Under their stimulus it was finished in four years, Ezra 6:14,15. It is interesting to record that Haggai’s name stands with Zechariah’s at the head of certain Psalms in the Septuagint; Psa. 137; 146; 147; 148. Haggai was probably one of the Jewish exiles who returned under Zerubbabel, the civil head of the people, and Joshua the high priest in 536 B.C. when Cyrus granted them their liberty, and furnished them with the necessities for restoring the temple at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:1-4; 2:1-70.

His prophetic office extended over a period of about four months only. He gave five distinct messages, delivered on separate occasions between September and December 520 B.C.

Style and Purpose Haggai is plain, curt, business-like. He was fond of questions, and his interrogations compel attention, 1:4,9; 2:3,12,13,19. His ministry was intensely practical and of the highest importance. His purpose was to exhort and encourage the defeated, dispirited and easy-going Jews to renewed activity in building the temple. He was profoundly in earnest, and became the most successful in his purpose of all his class.

Its lessons His brief messages may be only the epitome of the original discourses. (1) God’s things claim to be paramount, and nothing must be allowed to supersede that claim, Matt. 6:33. (2) Do not become self-centred and have wrong priorities—putting material acquisition before spiritual work. (3) We can only be sure of the present for doing the will of God in ready obedience, Rom. 6:17b; Phil. 2:12a. (4) Zeal and faithfulness in the Lord’s work are maintained by a true vision of the coming glory, Hag. 2:6-9.

Its message is summarized for us in 1 Corinthians 15:58. Also “I am with you”; “my spirit remaineth among you”, Hag. 2:4,5; “I will take pleasure in it”; “I will be glorified”, 1:8.

Chapter One VERSES 1:1-11

Indolence, Instruction, Inspiration. Haggai is not known outside Ezra and this book. He was a prophet working in conjunction with Zechariah. His name means, “My feast” or “Festive”, and may have been given in joyous

anticipation of the imminent end of the captivity. He was the first prophet to speak after the captivity. The book of Ezra, especially chapters 4,5, and 6, should be read in order to understand the significance of these messages. For fifteen years the house of God lay desolate. God sent Haggai to rebuke the remnant, and Zechariah to encourage them.

The Condition of the Temple, vs.1,2. *Through Indifference*. The message is dated the second year of Darius I the Great, a king appearing in profane history. This was about sixteen years after the decree by Cyrus, Ezra 1:1-4.

The sixth month is our August-September. The first day would be the time of the new moon, when special offerings were presented to God. The message is addressed to the two leaders who are partly responsible for the low moral condition of the people of God. Zerubbabel means "sown in Babylon". The governor was of the royal line through David, 1 Chron. 3:17,19. Shealtiel—"I have asked of God"—is called Salathiel in 1 Chronicles 3:17; Matthew 1:12.

Zerubbabel's Chaldean name was Sheshbazzar, which implies that he was appointed Persian governor over Judah, Ezra 1:8.

Joshua, "Jehovah is salvation", was the high priest. In these men we have the prophet to rebuke our conscience, the governor to rule the will, and the priest to refresh the heart. These offices find their complete fulfilment in our Lord Jesus Christ who never failed God or man. Ezra gives us the political reason for cessation of work, opposition from without. Now Jehovah gives us the moral reason, that is, frustration and apathy—"The time is not come", v.2. The title "Jehovah of hosts" is common to the last three prophetic books of the O.T., being used about 90 times in these books. The title implies that the hosts of heaven are the possession of Jehovah. It declares that His sovereignty for universal dominion belongs solely to Him. Condemnation by such a Monarch should be heeded with trembling earnestness.

The people were indifferent to the house of God. Here is God's appraisal of the nation, not My people, but "this people", a contemptuous expression. Their attitude was indefensible; their indolence inexcusable. Their enthusiasm ebbed dramatically; their zeal had evaporated with the resultant blight on their spiritual and national life. Today, instead of carrying out the principles of the house of God, our energies have sometimes been diverted to "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's", Phil. 2:21. We believe in evangelism, yet neglect the truth of the assembly, which involves reproach.

Procrastination was robbing them of the presence and pleasure of the Lord, v.8. "The altar was an admirable testimony to their faith—they allowed it to be a substitute for the temple", W. Kelly. Have we been hindered in obeying the truth? Gal.5:7; have we left our first love? Rev.2:4. They thought that the seventy years of chastisement had not quite expired,

and that they need not bestir themselves. Their priorities were wrong; God and His things must be first, Matt. 6:23.

The Cause of Neglect, vs.3-5. *Indolence*. They were forgetful of the reason for which they had been delivered from exile, Ezra 1:3. They were not to please themselves, but to rebuild the temple. The word was appropriate, “then”—it was authoritative, “the word of the Lord”; the agent—“by (or through) him”. He was only the medium or instrument to convey God’s message for the crisis. The message was arresting and arousing, “Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?” He charges them with neglect, in that they built their own houses and were doing nothing about building the temple. The cause of the divine complaint was that their personal interests came first, v.4—apathy about the temple of God, but plenty of activity in material things. They were busy beautifying their own homes; they wanted the best and their homes must be both comfortable and elegant. How modern this is! Most of us live in modern homes, with everything desirable for comfort and enjoyment. We have been delivered to serve God, not only by worship, but by work and witness in the world.

The Lord’s temple today is the church, Eph. 2:19-22. “Building” is a positive thing, and honouring to God. The Lord’s challenge is, Count the cost, then build, Luke 14:28. “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith”, Jude 20. Build to edify the body of Christ, Eph. 4:12-13. This will enable us to walk in holiness, dependent upon God, and in subjection to Him, thus to become a witness to the grace of God in this world.

To wave aside our responsibilities, to say the time has not yet come, does not justify our sloth and neglect. “Go work to day”, Matt. 21:28. “Go home . . . and tell them”, Mark 5:19. “Go, stand and speak”, Acts 5:20. “Go ye into all the world”, Mark 16:15. The Lord tells us, “Work for the night is coming”, John 9:4. Do the Lord’s work in His way, at His time, by His Spirit and to His glory.

“Consider your ways”, v.5. Four times in this book Haggai uses this injunction, 1:5,7; 2:15,18. It means to ponder, earnestly and with all one’s heart, one’s ways and actions to consider what is the result of occupation with our own things. For them it meant calamity, v.6.

The Complaint of Jehovah, v.6. *Inadequacy*. Their work, food, drink, clothes and wages brought frustration, v.6. Their homes and their careers which occupied so much of their time brought them no satisfaction. There was scarcity—“bring in little”; empty—“have not enough”; they were thirsty—“not filled”; chilly—“none warm”; and in poverty—wages brought no reward. There was great activity, but little return. The neglect of God’s house leads to spiritual starvation. No spiritual satisfaction—not filled with drink.

The Call of Jehovah, v.7. An unfinished, neglected temple spoke of their lack of concern that God dwelt in their midst. God has chastened them with bad harvests and calls them to consider their fruitless activity. The first exhortation was in rebuke; now it is encouraging them to resume the work of the house of God.

The Command of Jehovah is addressed to the will, v.8. This call to activity requires spiritual energy, "Go up". Their interest turned to their own comfort instead of the work of the Lord. Spiritual elevation is necessary, "Go up to the mountains". Cedar from Lebanon had been required for Solomon's temple. The hill country of the centre of Palestine had wood in abundance for the work of reconstruction. As they laboured, they enjoyed the pure air of the mountains. Spiritual exercise is encouraged—"bring wood". It was time to act for God. We must rise again into those spiritual realms of communion with God and go forth and build.

We need spiritual enthusiasm—"build the house". In Nehemiah's day "the people had a mind to work", Neh. 4:6b. Their enterprise was encouraged and would be rewarded. The Lord promised His presence, His pleasure and His power, Haggai 1:8. They were assured that the work would not only be a credit to them, but a glory to God. The building will please Him and fully serve the purpose of a temple. The house will be marked by holiness, prayer, worship and testimony to the goodness of God.

Divine Chastening, vs.9-11. God chastened them with bad harvests. Their expectations were high, but "it came to little". Their self-indulgence is rebuked and exposed, and judgment fell upon them as on their fathers, Isa. 5:10. The disasters and calamities were no mere natural coincidences, but the hand of God in discipline for neglecting His work. They allowed God's house to remain in the ruinous, forsaken-looking state in which those who had laid waste the city had left it. A building begun and abandoned, such as may be seen at a street corner in bad times, is the very image of desolation. Has this been our experience? Lost vision, yet intense eagerness about our personal concerns, yields the barren years devoid of blessing. God's call was to review priorities, and to finish the temple. The people were aroused, they feared the Lord, v.12, and returned to the work, v.14.

VERSES 12-15

A MESSAGE OF RE-ENCOURAGEMENT, 1:12-15. Here is the response of the remnant to the challenging message of the prophet.

Their Ways Considered, v.12; "Then"; the response of the leaders was encouraging. Unitedly and wholeheartedly they obeyed the voice of the Lord. God had His messenger to deliver His message to the people then and today. The man of God is encouraged to preach and teach the word in the

fear of God, 2 Tim. 4:2. We should not only listen to the Word of God but delight in it, meditate in it, and make haste to keep it, Psa. 119:17,34,48,60. Obedience and reverential fear are naturally linked together. This is the ready response of the spiritual man to ministry from God.

The Word of Encouragement, v.13. This servant was not only conscious of the Lord's presence and help, but he was controlled by the messages he gave. He spoke with the full authority of Jehovah.

The assurance of the Lord's presence: not as a mere onlooker, but to furnish them with divine strength to do His will and work. The Lord supplies all that is necessary for His work in all ages. This assurance encouraged Moses, Exod. 3:12; enabled Joshua to lead the nation, Josh. 1:5; was desired by Solomon, 1 Kings 8:57; enjoyed by Isaiah, Isa. 41:10. The Lord Jesus gave the same message to His disciples, Matt. 28:20, and it is embraced by saints suffering persecution, Heb. 13:5.

The consciousness of the Lord's presence and help is indispensable in service or danger, Acts 27:22-25; it is the most significant and central thing in life.

The Word of the Lord, v.14. The Lord stirred up the leaders and the people. The Lord so inclined the hearts of His people that enthusiasm was regenerated and they pursued the work of rebuilding. This message was timely and had a stirring effect spurring all on to greater effort. Apathy, hesitation and timidity disappeared, and as impelled by divine enabling they assembled at the temple site and completed the work in twenty-three days.

If God is not with us, even our efforts to build His house will come to nothing.

Chapter Two

A MESSAGE OF CHEER AND CONFIRMATION, 2:1-9. *For many of these colonists it was a time of depression. They were disheartened by the fact that, owing to their poverty, fewness of numbers and lack of skilled workers, the temple was bound to be inferior to Solomon's temple.*

A Recognition of Difficulties, vs.1-3. We become discouraged whenever we look at the work of others, and find that our work is inferior. Human disparagement engendered pessimism and discouragement, calling for a word of cheer from God. Their state of mind was the moving cause of Haggai's message of encouragement. The seventh month and the twenty-first day was the seventh day of the feast of tabernacles, Lev. 23:34. This was a festival, and the call to praise and thanksgiving in an unfinished and impoverished temple might naturally suggest gloomy and depressing thoughts. They should have been rejoicing after the rest and happiness. The older men were not slow to show their contempt for the new building, Ezra

3:12. It is sad to keep looking back to the good old days, and disheartening to the young. We cannot live on memories, and thus hinder the present work of construction. They needed workers not weepers; we need to keep building the assembly of God.

The Realization of the Divine Presence, vs.4,5. “I am with you”, v.4. This refers to the promise of God made years before that He would work among His people, Exod. 34:10. When we claim God’s promises and trust Him to work, He responds. The threefold injunction brought inspiration: “be strong”, “I am with you”, “my spirit remaineth among you”. They were given a work to do, so they need not be despondent and deplore the lost glory of the past. We need to heed the exhortation, Matt. 20:4,7; Luke 19:13c; 1 Cor. 15:58. We need to nerve ourselves, pluck up courage and persist. It is remarkable that the presence of the Spirit should be used as equivalent to a fulfilment of the covenant on God’s part, v.5. This is a day of unprecedented opportunities to be grasped to further the cause of the gospel in this materialistic age.

The Reassurance of Divine Resources, vs.6-9. They were exhorted to be courageous, industrious, and inspired to build for God. Now they are assured that Jehovah, as Sovereign Lord, will manifest His almighty power, causing convulsions in the kingdoms of this world, v.6. This verse is alluded to in Hebrews 12:26-28 as an event still lying in the future, the second advent of Christ. The disturbance of the physical universe and the upheaval of the nations will establish the Messianic kingdom. The divine purpose is to fill the new temple with the glory of the Lord. If their temple lacked material glory, this temple will be greater, in that the Lord Jesus will grace it by His physical presence. In the first temple God came to it dwelling in a cloud; the distinguishing glory of the latter temple would consist in this, “The Lord is there”, Ezek. 48:35.

“The desire of all nations”, v.7, or “the desirable things of all nations shall come” R.V., shows the worldwide popularity of this temple. This may be a reference to what Isaiah says, “the wealth of the nations shall come unto thee”, Isa. 60:5,6. Everything which the nations count precious—their wealth, glory, natural characteristics and special gifts and aptitudes—shall be brought to beautify God’s house, Rev. 21:26; Isa. 60:13. The nations will come up to Jerusalem with their homage and wealth to worship Jehovah in the millennium. The “wealth of the nations” rightly belongs to Jehovah, Hag. 2:8.

Divine possessions are abundant, v.8, the material things that are required to build the house of God. For us, all the resources of the indwelling Spirit are available for spiritual development. The word “desire” is immediately associated in verse 7 with the filling of the temple with glory. God accepted the responsibility of glorifying the building. Then the magnificence of

Solomon's temple will pale into insignificance by comparison with the glory of a future day, v.7b.

The benediction of peace rests on the house of God, v.9. In that day the Lord will establish peace on earth, enjoyed as never before, Isa. 60:18. Then this place, Jerusalem, the city of the great King, shall be the joy of the whole earth, Ps. 48:1,2.

Thus the remnant were encouraged, their fears dispelled, for the future was far more glorious than the past. May we be courageous and industrious in the light of the blessed hope, Titus 2:13.

A MESSAGE OF RECOVERY AND DETERMINATION, 2:10-19. This fourth message has to do with cleansing and blessing. It is a corrective message on responsibility; right conduct is important to God. This severe message was intended to dispel false expectations.

Their Impurity, vs.11-13, an *appeal* to the law. By a ritual comparison the prophet reminded them that the neglected temple was an insult to God, and rendered all their worship unclean. A holy thing does not communicate its holiness to whatever touches it, but, on the contrary, what is unclean contaminates what it touches. Their ceremonial carelessness in spite of conforming to legal requirements was unacceptable to God. Sodom left its mark on Lot, and defilement is transmittable. God looked at the heart, and their motives were not pure.

Their Impatience, vs.14-19, an *application* of the law. Holiness is not contagious, but uncleanness is. "So is this people", v.14. Uncleanness might be contracted in many ways. Contact with a dead body was a common one, Num. 19:11, and communion with God was impossible until the contamination had been ceremonially removed. Their lack of zeal for God had vitiated all their religious services. There must be true repentance; the inward unrighteousness contaminates all, Ps. 51:6,7,10; 66:18. Their present obedience would bring material prosperity, but they must give God time.

An *appeal* for consideration, v.15. They were asked to reflect upon the past state of affairs. Everything seemed to be cursed. The pollution of nature, the result of their sin, could not be immediately set right, 1:11. The discipline of God brought blight, yet they were quite indifferent, v.17. We should be deeply concerned about the lack of blessing in our assembly, and ask ourselves, "Is it I?". We dare not be indifferent to barrenness as Israel was, v.17. Their affliction was due to the punitive hand of God laid upon them in chastisement. His governmental dealings are to bring the soul back to God. It was effectual in David's case, Ps. 51, but completely ineffective in this case.

Their Inspiration, v.19b, an *announcement* of grace. From this day onwards there will be blessing and prosperity instead of failure. Study the “I wills” of encouragement given to these defeated saints. Seeing that they were now obedient, their circumstances would change and God would bless them. Like the Philippian saints who obeyed the mind of God during Paul’s absence, may we obey from the heart the mould of teaching delivered to us, Phil. 2:12; Rom. 6:17.

A CONFIRMING MESSAGE OF REWARD, 2:20-23. This final message of assurance is addressed particularly to Zerubbabel, to lift him out of fear and depression.

The Divine Plan, “I will shake the heavens and the earth”, v.21. Jehovah here guarantees the overthrow of all their enemies; in the approaching convulsions God’s kingdom will stand. The Jews were still anxious about the future. Although assured that their religion would still exist, they might fear for their civil liberties. The message is addressed to their civil leader, and therefore the representative of the people in their civil capacity. These convulsions look beyond any empire in Zerubbabel’s day to the more distant future, and still await their full accomplishment. Zerubbabel may be taken as a type of the Messiah. Here we have a picture of the future tribulation days, and the second advent of our Lord Jesus. The day of the coming Conqueror will mean thrones will be overthrown, military forces completely routed, and terrible confusion created among them.

The Divine Purpose cannot be hindered by the military might of all the nations of the earth, v.22. The kingdom of Messiah will be set up. He is the “stone” that smites the image and destroys it, Dan. 2:44-45.

The Divine Promise, v.23. The title “Jehovah of hosts” occurs fourteen times in the two chapters. It would indicate Jehovah as Ruler and consequently Creator of the highest material objects and spiritual agencies. It is connected only with the marshalled myriads of heaven.

The armies of the nations, gathered up to besiege the holy city, will be destroyed by the Son of man in all His glory and power. In that day Zerubbabel as representative of the people and of the royal line of David would be made a signet ring, the symbol of authority, Gen. 41:42; Esther 3:10; 8:2. It was prized accordingly, and jealously guarded as a very precious object, Jer. 22:24. The Lord Jesus is pictured here as being invested with all rule and authority, and God will set Him on the holy hill of Zion. All the promises made to Abraham and repeated to Isaac and Jacob will be fulfilled, Gen. 12:1-3; 15:5; 22:17, and other verses in Genesis. The covenant made is everlasting, 17:7, unconditional and irrevocable.

The nation of Israel, chosen by God, will come into blessing. The seal and signet make Israel absolutely secure. Their blessings are for the earth; ours are heavenly, linked with the Son of God coming to receive us unto Himself, John 14:3; 1 Thess. 4:14-18.

May we capture the enthusiasm of Haggai in serving the Lord:

H-had a message from God, 1:13.

A-authority from God, 1:2.

G-gladdened the hearts of the saints, 1:13; 2:4.

G-guided them in the ways of God, 1:7-8; 2:4.

A-assured them of God's presence with them, 1:13; 2:4.

I-instrumental in getting work done for God, 1:12.

Zechariah

This book surpasses all the Minor Prophets in its Messianic emphasis and in its unfolding of events connected with both the first and second advents of our Lord. Isaiah and Zechariah are the most Messianic of all the prophets. Zechariah is the most truly apocalyptic and eschatological of all the writings in the Old Testament. Read Zechariah 6-14 with Isaiah 40-66, tracing the references to the first and second advents of Christ.

Zechariah was contemporary with Haggai, Ezra 5:1, and their prophecies belong to the same era of history. Zechariah seems to take up his message where Haggai finishes. Haggai had said "from this day will I bless you", Hag. 2:19, and Zechariah takes up the theme supplementing, developing, and amplifying the message of Haggai.

Title Zechariah means "He whom Jehovah remembers" and the name was given to various kings, princes and prophets in Israel. The theme connected with God, *remembering* is worth tracing with the help of your concordance; e.g. Gen. 9:15; 19:29; Exod. 2:24; Psa. 98:3; 103:14; 105:42; 115:12; 136:23. Thus amid the pressure of circumstances and problems that challenged this nation, God demonstrated His mindfulness in sending them Zechariah. He was of honourable priestly descent, his grandfather, Iddo, being head of one of the twelve priestly families, or courses which returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua (see Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Neh. 12:4-16). When called to the prophetic office Zechariah was still very young, Zech. 2:4. He is the central figure in the group of the three post-exilic prophets, and his voice was among the last of that unique and wonderful succession of men who brought the oracles of God to men.

Time In the second year of Darius, B.C. 519, he began to prophesy, 1:1. He commenced in the same year as Haggai, the latter preceding him by two months. Zechariah prophesied for a longer period than his contemporary and his predictions are a sequel to those of Haggai. They stretch out in a series of visions set in his own days but sighing not only for the first but also the second advent of Christ. His later prophecies are dated about two years after his opening visions, 7:1, and it is possible that the ministry of chapters 9-14 was considerably later than that contained in chapters 7 and 8.

Theme He sets forth the highlights of history from the return from Babylon to the redemption accomplished by the Messiah, 1:12-17 with 12:10 and 13:7. His purpose in the first section of his book is to encourage the

rebuilding of the temple, and in this his mission was comparable to Haggai's. The object of the second part is to encourage them further after the temple was built, and to wean them away from the material to the spiritual. He shows that the abounding discord, disunity and drought will continue until they adjust their lives by entering into right relationship with God. The visions given to the prophet would verify God's guidance and goodness and assure him and the nation that the sovereignty of God's discriminating justice and His work of salvation, 3:2, would be realised through the Branch, their Priest-King 3:8; 6:12-13; 9:9-10. The prophets vary greatly in their presentation of truth, but in substance they are in perfect harmony. "To him give all the prophets witness", Acts 10:43.

Practical Teaching Zechariah was a great encourager and his wonderful visions, which form the greater part of his prophecy, are full of the spirit of good cheer. He believed that a good time was coming for his people, an era of peace and prosperity in which the city, that had run with blood, would be "full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof", 8:5. *Zerubbabel the Governor must have been greatly encouraged by this heart stirring message.* The temple would be rebuilt and the sacred lamp would shed, as of old, its radiance over the shrine, a symbol of that light of truth shed abroad over a world of darkness, ch. 4. Our resources in God are inexhaustible as we serve not by might or power but by His Spirit, 4:6. To the unscaleable obstacles we are encouraged to say "Who art thou", 4:7. Satan must be rebuked and the Lord's people cleansed, clothed and vindicated, ch. 3.

Suggested Analysis

INTRODUCTION, 1:1-6. THE PROPHETIC CALL.

Preface, 1; pleading, 2-3; punishment, 4-6.

INSTRUCTION. 1:7 to 6:8; THE PROPHETIC COMMUNICATION.

The panoramic visions. Eight pictures.

1. *Myrtle Trees*, 1:7-12. Divine care and sympathy, 13.
2. *Horns and Smiths*, 1:18-21. Divine safety, 21.
3. *Measuring Line*, 2:1-13. Divine security, 5,10.
4. *High Priest*, ch. 3. Divine salvation and suitability, 2-5.
5. *Golden Lampstand*, ch. 4. Divine sufficiency in service, 6.
6. *Flying roll*, 5:1-4. Divine scrutiny, 4.
7. *Ephah*, 5:5-11. Divine severity, 8-11.
8. *Four chariots*, 6:1-8. Divine sovereignty, 5.

INTERLUDE. 6:9-15. THE PROPHETIC CLIMAX.

An object lesson: Christ the coming Builder, Ruler and Priest.

INTERROGATION. THE PROBLEMS VOICED, chs. 7-8. FOUR MESSAGES.

1. *First message*, ch. 7. Inquiry, 2-3; interrogation, 4-7. Examine the motive in fasting and the measure of their obedience.
2. *Second message*, 7:8-14. Inward righteousness rather than outward forms.
3. *Third message*, 8:1-17. Word of restoration. His presence and power, 3-6.
4. *Fourth message*, 8:18-23. Word of reassurance. His purpose and provision, 22-23.

INTIMATION OF PUNISHMENT AND VICTORY, chs. 9-14. TWO BURDENS, 9:1; 12:1.

1. *The Burden of the Nations*, chs. 9-11. Subjugation of the nations, 9:1-8. The Saviour King, two advents, 9:9-17. The sustaining Lord, ch. 10. Gives prosperity, liberty and victory. The Shepherd rejected, ch. 11. True Shepherd abhorred, false shepherd received.
2. *The Burden of Israel*, chs. 12-14. The grievous destruction 12:1-6; a gracious salvation, 12:7-9; a great lamentation, 12:10-14; a generous provision, 13:1; the grand purification, 13:2-6; God-sent affliction, 13:7-9. The glorious consummation, ch. 14. The Day of the Lord will be a day of devastation, 1-2; of visitation, 3; of vindication, 4-8; of coronation, 9; of restoration, 10; of satisfaction, 11; of destruction, 12-15; of profession, 16; of sanctification, 20-21.

For your Meditation

1. Trace the key words of the book. The Lord of Hosts, 50 times; "I will", 42; "Jerusalem", 41; "behold", 21; "see", 21; "the word of the Lord came", 17 times. "In that day" about 20 times in chapters 11-14; "turn" or "repent", 16; with other words oft repeated, "dwell", "inhabit", "house".
2. Its Messianic study is most fascinating. The Lord's Servant the Branch, 3:8; The Man the Branch, 6:12; The King Priest, 6:13; True Shepherd, 11:1-11; 13:7, contrasted with the false shepherd—Antichrist, 11:15-17. The Sovereign Lord of the whole earth, 4:14; Jehovah's fellow, 13:7; His lowliness, 9:9; crucifixion, 12:10; smiting and suffering, 13:7. The Omnipotent Ruler of the universe, 2:11-12. His second advent in glory, 14:4; the Deliverer of Israel, 2:8-9; setting up His throne, 2:10-11; He will be King over all the earth, 14:9; and restored Israel will be holiness unto the Lord, 14:20-21.

Malachi

The prophet Malachi is introduced in the first verse of the book which bears his name. Nothing is known of Malachi beyond what we may gather from this book and some think that his name, meaning “my messenger”, is merely a title. Tradition has it that he was a Levite and a member of the Great Synagogue. Read Malachi at least ten times to grasp the importance of his ministry for our day.

Canonicity This is clearly established by references to it in the New Testament (see Matt. 11:10; 17:11-12; Mark 1:2; 9:11-12; Luke 1:17 and Rom. 9:13). Perhaps seventy years had passed since the voice of the prophet had been heard in the land. These were years of silence, disillusion and retrogression for the nation. The temple had been finished and the ancient worship restored, but religious ardour had gradually died away.

Commission The opening words clearly reveal his mission was of God, 1:1. His was a heavy burden, the last spokesman to utter his soul and retire from the scene. After him the voice of God was not heard through a prophet for some four hundred years. His was a word of stern rebuke and solemn warning concerning judgment. There is an element of mystery about him as there was surrounding Elijah to whom he refers, 4:5-6. He delivers his message, reproves the people and disappears as suddenly as he came. His burden was “the word of the Lord” and being committed to the word of Jehovah he was truly the messenger of Jehovah.

Conditions A spirit of moral indifference and even religious scepticism had crept over the nation, involving priest and people alike. The people were intermarrying with the surrounding heathen nations; they neglected worship saying “Behold, what a weariness is it”, 1:13. The poor were oppressed by the rich; divorce was all too common; injustice, deceit, treachery and false swearing abounded. The priests went through the services in such a half-hearted fashion that it would have been better to shut the doors of the house of God, 1:10 R.V. In such an hour Malachi sounded forth his call to repentance, yet there was no trace of revival. He lived in a corrupt age and his book, especially at the first, has a tone of gloom. Later we see the light and hope of the coming Messiah, 4:1-6.

He differs much from Zechariah, who is an encourager. Malachi is a rebuker yet both have their place in the kingdom of God. Popular preachers

to the masses are often encouragers, but it demands a prophet, equipped of God, to stand out against downward trends and rebuke those who depart from God.

Date The book is not dated, but it bears every sign of belonging to the same period as Nehemiah. The abuses he attacks were just those common in Nehemiah's day. A comparison of Nehemiah 13 with this prophecy would suggest that he was contemporary with Nehemiah (compare Neh. 13:29 with Mal. 2:8; Neh. 13:23-25 with Mal. 2:11-12; Neh. 13:10-13 with Mal. 3:8-10). The book of Nehemiah nowhere suggests the presence of Malachi, so we presume he came on the scene at some later time. The godly influence of Nehemiah had passed and the priests had become cool and formal, slovenly, deceitful and evasive, 1:6-14; 3:14. It was probably written between 420-400 B.C.

Challenging Message His is the old prophetic message like that of Amos and Micah, dwelling on the theme of the necessity of spiritual revival. His was a day of hollow, insincere, formal worship and niggardliness in giving. Does not its prophetic picture suit our times? Compare the "wherein's" with the message of Revelation 2-3 and the Epistle of Jude. Indifference marked Israel then and it is the hall-mark of our day. We still hear "Behold, what a weariness is it" and "It is vain to serve God", Mal. 1:13; 3:14. They profaned the table of the Lord, compare 1 Cor. 10-11. Holiness of life was lacking, Mal. 2:8,9; the priests caused the people to stumble. Malachi was a bold man to speak thus and make an enemy of the priesthood. Our Lord did this and was rejected with the cry, "Away with him, crucify him". Malachi called the people robbers of God and appealed to them to prove God, 3:8-11. Our gifts to Him should be thank-offerings not investments, Heb. 13:15-16. Paul strikes a higher note in his appeal, Rom. 12:1-2. Only that which costs us something and is in measure a sacrifice is worthy of God and honoured of Him. The prophet's attitude to evil is uncompromising, Mal. 2:10-16. Would that these solemn words on divorce were heeded more today. One of the greatest needs of the Church now is for a Malachi to arise and "purify the sons of Levi". He closes on a joyful note, looking forward to a better day when the "sun of righteousness (will) arise with healing in his wings". As the sun is the grandest object in nature, so in Christ we have the noblest exhibition of the righteousness of the old covenant that human history has ever known. In His spotless life and exalted teaching we see the very effulgence of divine glory. G. Campbell Morgan sums up the book thus: Fundamental Affirmation, 1:1-5; Formal Accusations, 1:6 to 2:17; Final Annunciations, chs. 3-4.

Analysis

INTRODUCTION, 1:1. The message and messenger.

THE INTEREST OF GOD, 1:2-5. UNCHANGING LOVE.

God's sensitive love and special favour, 2. Israel's sceptical mind and sinful folly, 2b.

THE IMPIETY OF THE PRIESTS, 1:6 to 2:9. RELIGIOUS CORRUPTION.

Profanation of His name, 6; pollution of His altar, 7-14; revelation of His will, 2:1-7; violation of His law, 2:8-9.

HYPOCRISY OF THE PEOPLE AND PRIESTS, 2:10-17. SOCIAL CORRUPTION.

Unholy marriages, 10-11; unlawful divorces, 12-13; unfaithful to Jehovah, 14-17.

PROPHECY OF JEHOVAH, 3:1-6. SPIRITUAL HOPE.

Unexpected advent, 1-3; unending pleasure, 4; an unchanging Lord, 6.

ROBBERY OF GOD'S TITHE, 3:8-12. MORAL CORRUPTION.

Principle of blessing, 10; and promise of deliverance, 11-12.

LETHARGY IN GOD'S SERVICE, 3:13-18. SHAMEFUL WORDS.

Corruption of the rebellious, 13-15; salvation for the remnant, 16-17.

REALITY OF GOD'S PROMISES. 4:1-6. PERSONAL CHALLENGE.

The coming day, 1,3; of burning and destruction. The coming Lord, 2; with healing and salvation. The challenging Law, 3; its authority and severity. The closing words, 4-6; the man and his ministry.

Suggestions for Study

Why are the phrases the "Lord of hosts" and "thus saith the Lord" so often repeated? Find the twenty-five occurrences.

Consider the statements of Israel introduced by "ye say".

Trace and learn the lessons of the oft-repeated "wherein".

What passages in this book may be called "Messianic"?

Is the portrait of a son of Levi applicable to leaders today? See 2:5-7.

Glimpses of Christ

Hosea, the Slighted Lover, 2:18-19; 11:1-4. Christ shall be the one Head, 1:11, the Restorer of the nations, 2:14-19, the coming King, 3:4-5, to whom regal honours will then be given, disowned though He was at Calvary. He will be their Representative, 11:1; Matt. 2:15, who will establish them in the land and bless them, 14:1-9.

Joel, the Sanctifying Teacher, 2:23,27; 3:17. Christ was the one whom Nicodemus acknowledged as sent by God, John 3:2. This Teacher saves, sanctifies and brings blessing to all flesh, 3:16-21. He shall be Judge of the living nations, 3:2; Matt. 25:31 ff.

Amos, the Shepherd Deliverer, 3:12; 9:11-15; cf. Isa. 53:4-6. Israel, once given as a prey to the adversary, will know the delivering grace and power of Christ as Shepherd. Then shall they seek Him and live, 5:4,6,14. Amos is himself a picture of the Lord as the great Intercessor, 7:2-6.

Obadiah, the Saviour of saviours, 21; Acts 5:31. Here we see the triumph of the kingdom of heaven over all opposition and the Lord delivering, sanctifying and enriching, cf. Rev. 11.

Jonah, the Sent Servant, 1:1; 3:1; Matt. 12:41. Jonah the great missionary to the heathen is a type of Christ, both in his sufferings and testimony, cf. 1:17 with Matt. 12:39-40; Luke 11:29-30. Christ was greater in His Person, in preaching and in patience, Luke 24:47.

Micah, the Source of Blessing, 4:1-4. Christ will be the glory of Israel, 1:15, and lead them to victory, 2:13. His birth is announced, 5:2, the place associated with sorrow, Gen. 35:16, indicating His lowly entrance into the world. Deity belongs to Him who chose to come into manhood of His own volition, 1 Tim. 3:16. The closing chapter manifests the Spirit of Christ in the prophet.

Nahum, the Strength of His People, 1:7. Nahum means "comfort" or "consoler" and how truly this describes our Lord, Isa. 32:2. In the day of judgment when His vengeance and wrath are experienced by Israel's enemies, the chosen of God will know His comfort. He still gives security to all who seek Him, Acts 2:39-40.

Habakkuk, the Sustainer in Trial, 3:18-19. This man's anxiety was allayed, and his fears stilled as he sought the Lord for help and guidance. The five "its" of chapter 2:3 become "he" in Hebrews 10:37. Christ is the Sun whose beams will illumine the wide creation of God, and it is for Him that every heart that loves His appearing waits. Then shall Israel sing like the writer, 3:18-19.

Zephaniah, the Security in the Storm, 2:3; 3:14-17; Isa. 35:4. When the great day of the Lord with its darkness and wrath, 1:14-18, destruction and misery comes upon the nations, Israel will be hid in the day of the Lord's anger, 2:3; see Col. 3:3; Psa. 46:1. The Lord in the midst shall not fail, but rejoice over them, rest in His love and joy over them with singing, 3:15-17.

Haggai, the Shaker of Kingdoms, 2:7,21; Heb. 12:25-29. This prophet whose name means "feast" must have been an inspiration to the nation of Israel. He was earnest and enthusiastic for the things of God, like the coming Messiah whom he portrayed. He always asserts the divine origin of his messages, "the word of the Lord came". In contrast our Lord could state, "I say unto you". He will bring in the desirable thing, peace and prosperity to the nations. He will shake the whole existing order of things and His kingdom will usher in the age of everlasting satisfaction, 2:23.

Zechariah, the Sufferer and the Sovereign, 13:7; 9:9-11. The Christ who came in lowliness, who was rejected and slain, is soon to return again in power and great glory. He minds the interest of the nation, ch. 1, measures the confines of the new Jerusalem, ch. 2, will be manifest as the Branch, ch. 3, and will be majestic in His kingship and mediatorial in His priesthood, ch. 6. The Saviour King will be the Shepherd Lover, chs. 9-11, the Sovereign Ruler, ch. 12. The Sanctified Victim of Calvary, ch. 13, will become the Sure Defender of Israel, ch. 14.

Malachi, the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, 4:2; 2 Pet. 1:16; Luke 1:76-78. As the morning rays of the sun dispense blessing, so Christ will bring to Israel liberty, ecstasy and victory, all of which shall be theirs through the Sun set amid the blood-red sky of Calvary.

NEW
TESTAMENT

Matthew 11

The value vs.1-6
The vindication vs.7-11
The vision of the Saviour vs.12-15
The view vs.16-19
The verdict of the Saviour vs.20-24
The victory vs.25-27
The voice vs.28-30

John	Perplexity and the loyal heart vs.1-5
The people	Unreasonable and careless vs.16-19
The cities	Impenitent vs.20-24
Babes	vs.25-30

John	He corrected and vindicated
The people	He committed to the judgment of the time
The cities	He cursed
The babes	He called to Himself for rest.

Matthew 11:29

His Yoke

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. The fellowship of it | Him and I |
| 2. The feel of it | Gracious, kind, and helpful |
| 3. The fruit of it | A character like His, service gladly rendered. |

Matthew 14:22-33

Mastery in the Storm

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Faith's Vision | 1. The Severity of the Storm
The conflict of materialism |
| | 2. The Serenity of the Saviour
Walking on water—undismayed, unafraid |

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Faith's Venture | 1. The mastery faith seeks to share
Drawn as a magnet, Christ's control and power |
| | 2. The authority faith needs to have
'Come' My grace is sufficient |

Faith's Victory**1. Its moments of Danger**

Peter was *distracted, distressed* and in *difficulty*

2. Its miracle of deliverance

'Jesus caught him'. Not now looking at the *waves*, or those *watching and wondering*.

Now looking at the Master.

Matthew 17:1-12**His Coming Kingdom**

Verse 28 of chapter 16 is explained in these verses in chapter 17. They had a glimpse of the Son of Man in His glory before they tasted death.

1. Its inauguration v.1 'after 6 days'

Speaking of the end of the Gentile rule, and man's failure.

The setting is the revelation of: *Christ* ch.16

Church ch.18

2. Its manifestation v.2 'transfigured before men'

The glorified Christ

The pattern and promise of glorified saints

In the case of Moses, it was a reflected glory

His brightness not derived. His is an inherent glory, with victorious humanity.

The glory of the *sovereign* King

The glory of the *servant* Prophet

The glory of the *suppliant* Priest

3. Its representation v.3 'Moses and Elijah'

Moses: his *death mysterious* no *shroud*

Elijah: his *departure miraculous* no *sepulchre*.—the O.T. saints.

Peter, James and John—the N.T. saints.

4. Its centralisation v.2 'before them'

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him v.5

5. Its conversation

Not the *thunderings* of Sinai

Not the *transaction* of Carmel

But the *triumph* of Calvary. Moses and Elijah both had mountain experiences.

They talked of decease that He should accomplish.
 Moses viewed the exodus as a *redemption*
 Elijah viewed the exodus as *restoration*
 Christ viewed the exodus (or His death) as the *realisation* of all things.
A new vision of the centrality of the cross

6. No comparison

As to beauty, ability, majesty, glory, none can compare with Him.
 Fairer than, Psalm 45:2
 Stronger than, Luke 11:32
 Greater than, Matthew 12:48
 Better than, Hebrews 1:4

7. Its claim unassailed v.5

God's estimation of His Son
 The vindication of His Sonship (after the lie of Satan in the mount of temptation). Not Moses, mighty in Word, or Elijah with his message, but Christ THE WORD.

8. Its consolation vs.6 and 7 'Arise, and be not afraid'.

*Reverential awe and worship, and
 Reassuring word from the Lord.*

9. Its Centre v.8 'they saw no man, save Jesus only'

See Him in His *Word*
 See Him in His *Wealth*
 See Him in His *Works*.

Matthew 18:20

1. The **smallest** number 'For where two or three'
2. The **simplest** gathering 'are gathered together in My name'
3. The **sweetest** fellowship 'there am I in the midst of them'

Matthew 28

1. The greetings of the radiant messenger vs.1 to 7

The women's *arrival* v.1 'they came'
 The angel's *activity* v.2 'descended from heaven . . . sat on stone'
 The angel's *appearance* v.3 'like lightning'
 The angel's *ability* v.4 'keepers did shake . . .'
 The angel's *assurance* v.5 'Fear not . . .'
 The angel's *announcement* v.6 'He is not here . . .'

2. **The glory of the risen Master** vs.8 to 10

His *welcome* v.9 'All hail'
 Their *worship* v.9 'worshipped Him'
 His *warmth* v.10 'be not afraid'
 His *will* v.10 'Go tell my brethren'

3. **The guile of the murderers** vs.11 to 15

The watch *conveyed* their story
 v.11 'shewed unto the chief priests'
 The chief priests *conspired* with the elders
 v.12 'assembled with the elders'
 The elders took *counsel*
 v.12 'had taken counsel'
 The soldiers *corrupted*
 v.13 'they gave large money unto them'
 The Jews *continued* the lie
 v.15 'commonly reported among the Jews until this day'

4. **The Gospel for the multitude** vs.16 to 20

The <i>might</i>	v.18 'All power is given unto me'
The <i>mission</i>	v.19 'Go'
The <i>men</i>	v.19 'ye' v.16 'the eleven disciples'
The <i>message</i>	v.20 'to observe all things whatsoever'
The <i>method</i>	v.19 'teach'

The Industrious Servant of Jehovah

Portrayed by Mark

Key words: ch.10:45; 12:6.

Introduction, 1:1-13; **HIS COMING**: Personality v.1; Promised vs.2,3; Prepared for vs.4,5; Accepted v.9; Approved vs.10,11; Attacked vs.12,13.

1. His glad service 1:14—6:6

THE CHARACTER OF HIS WORK

(a) *The Expression of His Interest*. 1:14—3:12.

(1) *Seen in His Activity* 1:14-35 *His Credentials*

Coming into Galilee 14,15; Calling His disciples 16-20; Curing Demoniac 21-28; Caring for diseased 29-34; Communion with God 35.

(2) *Seen in His Attraction* 1:36—2:12 *His Character*

Popularity 36-39; Pity and Power 41,42; Preaching 2:1,2; Perception 3-11.

(3) *Seen in His Authority* 2:13—3:12 *His Claims*

Calling 13-15; Condemning 16-25; Curing 3:1-12.

(b) *The Evidence of His Wisdom* 3:13—6:6.

The Choice of the Twelve 3:13-15; The Communication of Truth 4:1-34.

(1) *By Messages*

Its Declaration 1-9; Explanation 10-25; Application 26-34.

(2) *By Miracles* 4:35—5:43 *Demonstration by Power*

Stilling the Storm 35-41; Subduing Demons 5:1-20; Saving the Dying 25-34; Raising the Dead 35-43; Rejected 6:1-6.

2. His gracious sympathy 6:7—8:26

THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS WORK

(a) *The Extension of His Influence* 6:7—7:37

The Mission of the Apostles 6:7-13; The Murder of the Baptist 14-29; By Miracles 30-44; By Ministry 45-56; Meeting Opposition 7:1-23; By Manifestation of Power 24-37.

(b) *His Enriching Ministry*, 8:1-26

Exhaustless Resources 1-10; Exposure of Pharisees 11,12; Explanatory Precepts 13-21; Exhibition of Power 22-26.

3. His great sacrifice 8:27—15:47**THE COMPLETION OF HIS WORK**(a) *The Revelation of the Cross* 8:27—9:50.

Communication of Truth 8:27-33; Challenging Claims 34-38; The Coming Glory 9:1-13; Conquering the Demons 14-29; Commending Humility 30-39.

(b) *Regulations for Conduct* 10.

Facing the Moral, Social, Personal, Spiritual and Physical Problems of Life.

(c) *Reaching the City* 11.

Preparation 1-6; Procession 7-10; Prohibition 15-18; Power 19-33.

(d) *Rebuking the Critics* 12.

The Relationship of the Heir 1-6; The Rejection of the Husbandmen 7-12; Rebuking the Scribes and pharisees 13-40; Remarks on Giving 41-44.

(e) *Revealing the Future* 13.

Prediction 1-4; Tribulation 5-23; Explanation 24-32; Exhortation 33-37.

(f) *Road to Death* 14:1—15:15.

The Plotting of the Priests 1,2; The Pouring forth of the Ointment 3-9; The Plan to Betray 10,11; The Passover and the Supper 12-25; The Predicted Denial 26-31; The Pain of Gethsemane 32-42; In the Priest's Judgment Hall 33-72; Before Pilate 15:1-15.

(g) *Redeeming the World* 15:16-47.

His Suffering 16-25; His Sacrifice 26-38; His Sympathizers 39-41; His Saints 40-47.

4. His glorious supremacy 16:1-20**THE CONFIRMATION OF HIS WORK.**

The Resurrection Morn 1-4; The Refreshing Message 5-8; Revealed to Mary 9-11; Recognized by Two Disciples 12,13; Renewing the Commission 14-18; Received up into Heaven 19,20.

Mark 16

The morning test	vs.1 to 5
The mysterious tomb	vs.1 to 5
The melodious tidings	vs.6 and 7
The marvellous transformation	vs.8 to 14
The mighty task	vs.15 to 18
The majestic triumph	vs.19 and 20

Love's *pursuit*
proclamation
power
programme
provision

Luke 7:11-17

The Mercy of the Lord's Matchless Power

His miracles were parables in action, proofs of His power, symbols of Christian truth, parables of His work for souls, His triumph over misery and sin. He demonstrated His claim: 'Ye might have life' John 10:10, and 'I am the Resurrection and the Life' John 11:25.

- A. **The sympathizing one** vs.11-13 *Jesus understands us*
- B. **The living one** v.14 *Jesus undertakes for us*
- C. **The powerful one** v.15 *Jesus is unique The life-giver*

- A. **Compassion** *sees the need* v.13
 speaks the word v.14
 saves the life v.15

1. The tragedy observed by the Lord

The word 'Nain' means beautiful, and this is what God intended the world to be. Sin has brought sorrow and death. He saw her in her helplessness: it was once a happy home, but the 'intruder' came and took both the father and the son away.

A sorrowful past Jesus can alter the past, Luke 8:48

A bitter present Jesus can be with me today, Luke 24:15

A hopeless future Jesus assures the future, John 14:3

Her loneliness. Her only son was: her *hope* for the future
 the object of her *love*
 the source of her *living*
 the arm of her *strength*

2. The sympathy aroused in the Lord

A friend in need.

How deliberate His path

How delicate His feelings

How definite His purpose

Jesus came. Love brought Him.

Feeling with as well as feeling for.

How human. How divine!

One procession followed the king of death.

The other procession followed the Prince of Life.

Jesus can save from trials, from death, and from sin.

- B. The living One** *His gentle intrusion* to undertake
His gracious intention to give life, q.v. John 11:25
His observant eye saw her v.13
His sympathetic heart compassion on her, v.13
His comforting voice weep not, v.13
His arresting touch touched the bier, v.14

His aid, though unsought, was instantly forthcoming.

Sympathy in action. He grappled with death.

- C. The powerful One** Compassion that saves
 His ability; His glorious intervention. Mr D.L. Moody said:
 'Jesus spoiled every funeral He went to.'
 Death robbed of its power.
The response compassion gets
 They stood still.
 Never before in this town.
 His touch leads to triumph.
The result compassion brings
Restoration v.15
 Confirmation v.15 he spoke
 Reunion v.15
 Recognition v.16 they glorified God
 Rejoicing in God v.16.

The divine element in salvation pictured in the key words in the story:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Jesus <i>coming</i> vs.11 and 12 | to give life John 10:10 |
| 2. Had <i>compassion</i> v.13 | Jesus wept John 11:35 |
| 3. Jesus <i>comforting</i> v.13 | weep not John 11:24 to 26 |
| 4. Jesus <i>commanding</i> v.14 | come forth John 11:41 to 44 |
| 5. Things <i>changing</i> v.15 | death unto life 1 Cor. 15:22 |
| 6. Jesus <i>cheering</i> vs. 15 and 16 | blessing and hope 1 Thess. 4:17 and 18. |

Luke 15

The Way and Welcome of Christianity (or the pearl of parables)

1. The attractiveness of the Saviour v.1

Sinners are: *drawn to Him*
listen to Him
loved by Him

- a. He did not *denounce* them with *withering scorn*.
- b. He *drew* them with *winning sympathy*.

2. The attack on the Saviour v.2

a. *The testimony*: receives sinners.

This means: *forgiveness* 'receiveth'
friendship 'sinners'
fellowship 'eateth'

b. **The truth** He *did* receive sinners, He does today.

c. **The thrill** receives sinners promptly,
 tenderly,
 personally.

3. The answer of the Saviour v.4

Its appeal: 'What man of you' Man losing
 seeking
 finding
 rejoicing

4. The activity of the Saviour v.4

His compassion 'go after'
 continuance 'until'
 contact 'find it'

5. The ability of the Saviour

retrieving concern and care
 resting on His shoulders
 rejoicing nothing to compare with it

Luke 18:35-43

His sad condition v.35 'a certain blind man sat by the way side begging'

His sincere cry v.38 'Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me'

His sole concern v.41 'Lord, that I may receive my sight'

His sudden cure v.42 'Receive thy sight'

His shining conduct v.43 'followed Him, glorifying God'

Luke 24**A Bunch of Everlastings**

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is presented in the Gospels as a **FACT**;
 in the book of the Acts as an **EXPERIENCE** and in the Epistles as a
DOCTRINE.

“THE ABIDING VALUE OF TRUTH”—Outline of Chapter

(A) THE GRAND CONQUEST vs.1-12

“He is risen from the dead.”

- (1) **The Empty Tomb** vs.1-3. Loves devotion 1, discovery 2, disappointment 3.
- (2) **The Encouraging Tidings** vs.4-7. Manifestation—‘two men’, consternation—‘afraid’, interrogation—‘why’, affirmation—‘He is risen’, confirmation 5, exhortation—‘remember’.
- (3) **The Evidence Thrilling** vs.8-12. Good news proclaimed vs.9,10; general unbelief expressed 11, great enthusiasm shown 12.
Let us remember 8; return 9; report 10; and rejoice—“He is risen” 6.

(B) THE GOOD CONVERSATION vs.13-35

“He is revealed to His saints”

The value of this story is (i) **EVIDENTIAL**—a proof of His resurrection. (ii) **PREPARATORY**—for the transition between the old days of sight and the new days of faith. (iii) **SYMBOLIC**—He still draws near when hearts are troubled.

- (1) **Their Bereavement** v. 13-18. Their destination 13, discussion 14, difference 15, disadvantage 16, despondency 17, and distress 18.
- (2) **Their Bewilderment** vs.19-24. Their testimony 19, agony 20, perplexity 21a, story 21c, difficulty 22, certainty “alive” 23, tragedy “saw not” 24. There was a clear conception of Christ, yet a rejection of the Cross.
- (3) **Their Enlightenment** vs.25-31. His grace evidenced 25, His purpose explained 26, His passion expounded 27, His presence enjoyed vs.28,29 and His person unveiled, vs.30,31.
- (4) **Their Enjoyment** v. 32-35. Of companionship 32, of confidence 33, of communion and contentment vs.34,35.

(C) THE GLADDENED COMPANY vs.36-45

“Recognised in the Assembly”. The appearance of the Saviour 36, the amazement of the saints vs.37,38, the assurance to the saints vs.39,40, the attestation of Scripture, vs.42-45.

(D) THE GOSPEL COMMISSION vs.46-48

“Reminding them of their mission”. The purpose of God 46, the provision of grace 47, the plan outlined 48, the power promised and the patience exercised 49.

(E) THE GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION vs.49-53

“Received up in glory”. The glowing promise 49, the great leader 50a, the

gracious blessing 50b, the grand finale 51b, the glad disciples 52, the gratitude and worship 53. Amen.

ELEVEN ENCOURAGING "FORGET ME NOTS"

Alarm 3, assurance 6, apathy 11, a Divine act 16, awareness 18, anxiety 21, absence of person 24, arrangement 26, affection 32, association 39, amazement 41.

SEVEN "V" FOR VICTORY SIGNS—"FORGET ME NOTS"

The Victorious risen Lord 7, the Veritable refreshing presence vs.14,15,31,36, the Voice of a reliable Friend v. 17,19,25,36,38,39, the Valuable revealing Book vs.27,44, the Virtue of a redeeming message vs.46,47, the Vision of regions beyond vs.47-49, the Vital reception in Glory 51.

Luke 24:32-53

The Revelation of the Risen Christ

1. THE GLADNESS OF REVIVED CHRISTIANS vs.33 to 35

The returning saints vs.33 and 34

They rose v.33

They returned v.33

They rehearsed v.35

a. Enjoying a new assurance v.32

They had buoyant hearts

They did not remain silent.

They must tell others.

b. Rejoicing in good tidings

They were *cheered* v.34. The eleven hear the news.

They were *thrilled* v.34 by the resurrection

They were *touched* v.34 by the restoration of Peter

c. Seeking congenial company v.33

They were dispersed by His death, but reunited by His resurrection.

2. THE GLORY OF THE RISEN CHRIST vs.36 to 43

a. The wonder of His person mysterious, majestic in a celestial body.

b. The words of peace

A greeting with authority on His lips. An ordinary greeting becomes extraordinary.

Having *bought* peace by His blood (Col. 1:20), He has *brought* peace right into the upper room, right up to the threshold of their trembling hearts.

The *person*

The *place*

The *peace* v.36

They certainly needed peace, because they had passed through a period of awful despondency.

Alarming v.37. They thought they had seen a spirit. A wrong conception of Him.

Assuring vs.38 to 40 *dispelling* their fear
 dismissing their doubts
 displaying His hands
 defining the difference in a spirit

Assuring them by *identity* seeing Him
reality handle Me
company have ye any meat?
 He still wants us to know His *presence*
peace
person
participation

3. THE GREATNESS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION vs.44 to 49

His priestly instruction This section is a summary of the post-resurrection teaching of Christ.

a. The theme of Scripture v.44 'ME'

- i. *Things written and spoken* vs.44 and 45
- ii. *Things endured and fulfilled* vs.44 to 46
- iii. *Things learned and understood* v.45

b. The thrill of Scripture v.45

We need *illumination*
perception
instruction

c. The truth of Scripture v.46

The prophecy is clear
 The person is Christ
 The passion is cruel
 The perfection is certain

The priestly remission vs.44 to 49

Christ and the Scriptures *forthtelling*

Christ and the world *forgiving*

Christ and the disciples *facts*

Christ and the Father *fulness*

d. The tidings of Scripture vs.47 and 48

- i. *The substance of the message*
 Repentance man's *attitude*
 Remission God's *act*
- ii. *The sphere of their ministry* 'all nations'
 Universal and individual
- iii. *The start of the mission* 'beginning at Jerusalem'
 The mercy of God magnified.
 The efficacy of Grace illustrated.
 The principle of Witness established.
- iv. *The secret of the might* 'in His Name'
 The guilt of sin *pollutes*
 The power of sin *paralyses*

Man is under sin's *defilement* and *dominion* and needs *deliverance* from its *stain* and *chain*. *Repentance* brings *remission* of sins, and *restoration* to God.

The *resources* of grace *removed* the guilt, *reconcile* the offender, and *re-establish* man in the place of divine favour.

e. **The testimony of Scripture** v.48

The *men* 'ye'

The *ministry* 'witnesses'

The *matter* 'these things'

The knowledge of *facts* as *foundation*

f. **The trust in Scripture** v.49

i. The *promise* of the Father

ii. The *power* from on high *divine, dynamic, dignified*.

iii. The *patience* of the saints 'tarry ye'

4. **THE GRAND RETURN TO HEAVEN** vs.50 to 53

a. **The great Leader** v.50

His dignity 'He led them'

His direction 'as far as Bethany'

His disciples followed

b. **The gracious blessing** v.51 Provision

The *beautiful* attitude, standing on the mount

The *bestowed* blessing

c. **The glorious ascension** v.51 Parting

To *complete* His work

o *send* His Spirit

To *satisfy* their hearts

d. **The glad disciples** vs.52-53 Praise

They *worshipped*

They *returned*

They *rejoiced*

The ascended Christ is the same to us today:

working through us

empowering us by His Spirit

leading us to victory

interceding for us

blessing us

Summary

1. *Appearing* to garrison the *saints* vs.33 to 43

2. *Authorising* the *gospel story* vs.44 to 49

3. *Ascending* to *glory* in *state* vs.50 to 53

**FOCUS
ON
FUNDAMENTALS**

Why I believe the Bible

The Holy Scriptures are themselves the permanent and authoritative “form” of God-given revelation. This revelation has been recorded in the original writings by inspiration, both the writers and the writing being inspired, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21. Consider these ten reasons for confidence in the Bible, in the form of an acrostic on the word “Scriptures”.

Spoken by Jehovah

2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21. A great proportion of the Scriptures is definitely stated to consist of the very words of God. The first chapter of Genesis repeatedly states “God said”, Gen. 1:3,6,9,11,14,20, 24,26,29. Trace the expression “the Lord said” in Genesis and Exodus. “The Lord spake unto Moses” opens almost every chapter in Leviticus. These and similar words, declarations of the utterances of God, stamp the whole book with a divine impress. Dr. W. Evans has stated that in the pentateuch the list extends to nearly 700. In the historical books their number exceeds 400. “Thus saith the Lord God” and similar phrases occur some 150 times in Isaiah. The “Word of the Lord came unto me saying” and like statements are found almost 350 times in Ezekiel. Such expressions as denoted above occur altogether 3,800 times in the Old Testament so at least three-fifths of the whole of the Old Testament is *directly* declared to be the Word of God.

Confirmed by the Lord Himself

John 5:46-47; 7:42; Luke 24:25-27. The Lord’s witness to the historicity of the events and persons recorded in the Old Testament is indisputable. In Matthew’s record He refers to Moses, 8:4, David, 12:3-4; Jonah, 12:40-41; Solomon, 6:29; Isaiah 15:7-9; Daniel, 24:15; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, 8:11; the Queen of Sheba, 12:42; Noah, 24:37,38; Abel, 23:25; Sodom and Gomorrah, 10:15. The Lord’s appeal was always to Scripture, “Have ye not read”, 19:4; 22:31. “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures”, 22:29. Find similar confirmation in Mark, Luke and John. He appealed to the Word of God as the final authority, Matt. 19:4-5; Mark 7:9,13.

Revealed by the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:16; Heb. 3:7; 2 Pet. 1:21. David said, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me”, 2 Sam. 23:2. Elsewhere we read, “David himself said by the Holy Ghost”, Mark 12:36; compare Acts 4:25; 28:25.

The Lord ascribed the writing of a Psalm to the inspiration of the Holy

Spirit, Mark 12:36. The prophets were borne along by the Spirit of God, 2 Pet. 1:21; Heb. 10:15-17. Throughout the Pentateuch the Holy Spirit was pointing beyond the shadow to the substance, Heb. 9:8. In the New Testament He continues to speak to the churches, Rev. 3:6.

Information is Accurate

The words of the Lord are pure words, Psalms 12:6; 119:140, and true, Psalms 119:160, and perfect, Psalms 19:7. The Scriptures are an unerring guide, Proverbs 6:23; 2 Pet. 1:19. The Lord reminds us of the reality of Lot and his wife, Luke 17:29-32, of the manna, John 6:31,49,58, the brazen serpent, John 3:14, of Elijah and Elisha, Luke 4:25-27. This book is living and powerful, and a critic of thought and will, Hebrews 4:12. God preserved the writers from error, they made no mistake and set forth nothing which might mislead. "All thy commandments are truth", Psalms 119:151-152.

Proved by Experience

The Bible is the only living book, Hebrews 4:12. It is the instrument used for regenerating, James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; quickening, Psalms 119:50,93; converting, Psalms 19:7; making wise, 19:7, 2 Tim. 3:15; producing faith, John 20:31, Romans 10:17; cleansing the heart and ways, John 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Psalms 119:9. It is sure, Matthew 24:35; strengthening, 1 Pet. 2:2; sanctifying, John 17:17, Eph. 5:26; satisfying, Psalms 119:97; and if obeyed will bring success, Joshua 1:8. It is enduring in substance, 1 Pet. 1:23; emancipating in its ministry, John 8:32; and encouraging in its promise, 1 Kings 8:56.

Teaching is Instructive

Romans 15:4. The word of God is profitable both for doctrine and practice, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; full and sufficient, Luke 16:29,31. The true meaning of the Mosaic Law is found in Matthew chs.5 to 7 where its moral content is expounded and expanded, and summed up in the golden rule given in 7:12; compare 22:40. It is a storehouse of wisdom and gracious promises, the delight and rejoicing of the heart. Psalm 119 is the classical example of the power and influence of this indispensable book for holy living. Trace the synonyms for the Word of God in it, "statutes" 22 times; "way" 13 times; "testimonies" 23 times; "precepts" 24 times; "commandments" 22 times; "law" 25 times; "judgment" 23 times, "righteousness" and kindred terms, 12 times; "word" with two different meanings, one meaning "to reveal", "to bring to light", 19 times, the other meaning "to set in order", "to arrange", 23 times.

Unfolds a Divine Plan

Eph. 1:8-10; John 20:31. The Scriptures reveal the processes of redemption; how man fallen, corrupt and condemned can be reconciled, forgiven and restored in Christ.

In the Pentateuch the foundation principles of redemption are revealed; in the historical books the external historical development of redemption in the chosen nation, in the poetical books the internal spiritual development of redemption in individuals; in the prophetic books God's future purposes concerning the Kingdom. The New Testament follows on, dealing with the fulfilment of God's purposes in Christ and in His Church, a heavenly people. Dr. Griffiths Thomas puts it thus: "In the Pentateuch the revelation of God to His People. In the Gospels the revelation of Christ to His Church, and in Acts to Revelation the realization of Christ in His Church".

Reliable in its Prophecies

Luke 24:25-27; Psalms 2,22,40,110. The first general prophecy is found in Genesis 3:15, which is the seed of the Old Testament Messianic idea. Some other prophecies in Genesis are found in chapters 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 22:18; Compare these with Gal. 3:16,29. There are clear predictions of Christ's birth and birthplace, Isa. 7:14, Mic. 5:2, Matt. 1:21, 2:6; His flight into Egypt, Hos. 11:1, Matt. 2:15; His residence in Galilee, Isa. 9:1-2, Matt. 4:14-16. The Calvary Psalms are most impressive and instructive. Psalm 22 gives a detailed version of the whole scene of the crucifixion, at least ten New Testament counterparts are here. Study Psalm 31:5, and Luke 23:46; His condition on Calvary, Psa. 31:9-18 with 2 Cor. 5:21. Psalm 38 gives the cry of the suffering Saviour, v. 11 with Luke 23:49. Note in this Psalm verses 3,5,7 R.V., 10. Psalm 40 is an utterance of Christ, compare vs.6-8 with Heb. 10:5-7, and His passion is depicted in verses 12-17. Psalm 41:9 is referred to in John 13:18. Psalm 69 vividly portrays the Saviour, vs.4,9,21, and the New Testament fulfilment should be searched out. Psalm 88 predicts His cry of despair, vs.1-6, the approach of death and the wrath of God, vs.7,16,17, and His anguish vs.14,15. As we read these accounts our hearts bow in adoring worship.

Exposes Man's Failure and Sin

The ruin of humanity from Genesis 3 onwards is a dark depressing picture, see Gen. 6 and 7; Psa. 14; Isa. 53:3,6; Rom. 3:9-20; 5:6-7; Col. 1:21. Man stands condemned at the bar of God, a slave of sin in helpless and hopeless captivity to the law of sin and death, Eph. 2:1-3; 1 John 5:19 R.V.; Job 42:5-6; Isa. 6:1-5. The hope of humanity is in Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation. His death is referred to 175 times in the New Testament. His death and resurrection are the theme of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 15:1,3,4; Gal. 1:4; 2:20; 4:5; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2; Rom. 5:18 R.V.; Rev. 5:9-10 R.V.

Saves the Soul

Jas. 1:21-23; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2:2. It demands obedience, Deut. 17,19,20; supports life, Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:4; it comforts, Psa. 119:82, Rom. 15:4;

rejoices the heart, Psa. 19:8, 119:111. It should be believed, John 2:22; known, 2 Tim. 3:15; appealed to, 1 Pet. 1:16; read and searched, Isa. 34:16, John 5:39, 7:52, Acts 17:11. May we love it exceedingly, Psa. 119:97, 113, 159, 167; delight in it, Psa. 1:2.; hide it in our hearts, Psa. 119:11; and let it dwell richly in our hearts, Col. 3:16.

Throughout the Scriptures we are pointed to Christ and the things concerning Himself.

In the Pentateuch Christ *typified* or Christ *announced*.

In the Psalms Christ *vivified* or Christ *acknowledged*.

In the Prophets Christ *prophesied* or Christ *anticipated*.

In the Gospels Christ *crucified* or Christ *arrived* and *atoning*.

In the Acts Christ *glorified* or Christ *acclaimed*.

In the Epistles Christ *magnified* or Christ *alive* in the saints.

In the Revelation Christ *satisfied* or Christ *abiding* through all ages.

The Holy Trinity

We must approach all these subjects with reverential awe, and in utter dependence upon the Spirit of God, to reveal to us the mind of God on these matters. The Holy Scriptures are our only source of information, so ponder over all passages referred to in these studies.

The word “TRINITY” is not a Bible Term but it is Bible Truth and the interpretation of Bible Teaching. “It is derived from the Latin word “TRINITAS” which is derived from the adjective “TRINUS” meaning “THREE-FOLD” or “THREE IN ONE” or the One which is three, and the three which are One.”—A.A. Hodge.

Some fallacies

“ARIANISM” which contends that the Godhead consists of One Eternal Being, Who in the beginning created in His own image a super-angelic being, His only begotten Son, who thus became a kind of secondary God with the power to create. He was the beginning of the creation of God. The first and greatest creature created through the created Son was the Holy Ghost. This attack on the Deity of Christ is answered in John 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-17.

CHRISTADELPHIANISM says that God is One Power, the incarnate Father by whom all things have been created. Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, by whom He became Son of God. This system makes Christ a created being, and denies the personality of the Holy Spirit. See Prov. 8:22-31; John 1:18; 14:16-17.

MILLENNIAL DAWNISM makes Christ before His earth life a created and superior Angelic being, during His earth life a mere man, and after His earth life, God. See John 1:2; 8:28; 17:5; Rev. 1:8,17,18, for the eternal Being of the Son.

Scriptural facts

The Trinity expresses the Divine Mystery of three Persons in the unity of One Godhead. It can be expressed as One God without division in a Trinity of Persons, and Three Persons without confusion in a unity of essence. “His Eternal Power and Godhead” (Rom. 1:20). Dr. Handley Moule writes, “The One God stands in Scripture really and absolutely alone as the free personal cause, the Creator, of all material and spiritual existence; as its true

reason, not only of origin but of continuance in being; as its supreme and entirely Just Lord, Lawgiver and Judge."

The Deity of Scripture is One Being—the One sovereign, eternal, almighty; the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe. Gen. 1:1; Read Deut. 4:35,39 with Rom. 1:20; Exod. 15:11; Deut. 6:4; 1 Kings 8:60; Psalms 47:7; Isa. 40:12,13,18,28; 44:6; 45:22; Rom. 11:33-36; 16:26-27.

God alone exists in the form of God and this unity is insisted upon in Old and New Testaments, Deut. 32:39; 2 Kings 19:15; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4; Gal. 3:20; 1 Tim. 2:5; 6:15-16.

The Oneness of the Godhead is altogether unique, and implies a unity of the eternal Content ineffable, absolute, God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons nor separating the substance. While God is One, it is in another respect Three; three eternally harmonious Wills, Agents, Persons. Each has as His nature the entire Divine nature; each is truly God.

It has been set forth thus—"One God without division in a Trinity of Persons and Three Persons without confusion in a unity of essence." Author unknown.

There is One God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:3-6. Names of God prove plurality of persons, ELOHIM is a plural noun accompanied by a singular verb. e.g. "God is good." Sometimes it is the plural of majesty or to indicate that the living God comprises the totality of powers within Himself. Plural pronouns are used of God, proving plurality of Persons, Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8; Dan. 2:11; 4:8; 5:11; John 14:23; 17:11. Three self-acting persons—The Lord God, the Messiah and the Holy Spirit are referred to as anointing, blessing, sending and doing things for one another, Isa. 11:2; 42:1-7; 48:16,17; 59:21; 61:1,2; 63:1-14; Zech. 12:10.

The Theophanies of the O.T. in which are emphasised a distinction of persons in the Godhead, though the Person revealed is the second Person of the Godhead—the Eternal Son, John 1:18. e.g. Hagar in Gen. 16:7-10,13; here the Angel of the Lord is clearly identified with the Lord (Jehovah) in v.13. In Gen. 18:1,2,9,10,13,14,16, one of the three men clearly identifies himself with Jehovah. In 19:1 only two come to Sodom, One has remained behind v.27 with 18:22,33.

In Judg. 2:1-2 R.V. the "Angel of the Lord" distinctly says "I" did what Jehovah did. See also Judg. 6:11-14; 19-24 R.V. Consider other passages—Josh. 5:15; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalms 2:7; Isa. 48:16; Micah 5:2; Hag. 2:4-7. All these passages indicate a plurality in the unity of the Godhead; the unity of the infinite God in Trinity.

The whole of the Divine nature is in each Divine Person simultaneously and eternally. Think of the plural benediction Num. 6:24-26, and the threefold ascription of praise, Isa. 6:3.

Spiritual features

The co-ordination of the Trinity in the scheme of redemption as well as in creation is a fruitful study.

1. The *Form* of God's blessing is threefold, Num. 6:24-26.

2. *Intimation* of the Lord's anointing as Man for service in Isaiah. The voice of the Spirit 11:1-9; the voice of God in 42:1-4 and the voice of the Son in 61:1-3; find an answer in Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospel. See the Servant songs for similar teaching.

The Lord's character in ch.42 with Mark; His calling in ch.49 with Luke; His consistency in ch.50 with John; His credentials in ch.52 with Matthew.

3. *Identification* of the Son of God to John the Baptist, John 1:32-34 at the Lord's Baptism, Matt. 3:16,17.

4. *Redemption's Plan*. The Father elects and calls, the Son redeems by His Blood, and the Spirit sanctifies, 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:3,4,7,13,14.

5. *Redemption Accomplished*. God judges sin in the Saviour, Matt. 27:46. The Son of God gave Himself, Gal. 2:20 through the Eternal Spirit, Heb. 9:14; and acceptable to God, Eph. 5:2.

6. *Resurrection of Christ*. 1 Cor. 6:14; John 2:19; with 1 Pet. 3:18.

7. *Commission* of the disciples in Matt. 28:19-20. All believers were to be baptized in the Triune name (singular) and to observe the commands of the Lord.

8. *The Salvation of God* is a threefold work, 2 Thess. 2:13; Tit. 3:4-6; Eph. 1:13.

9. *The Coming of the Spirit*. The Father sends the Holy Spirit, John 14:16,17,26, in answer to the request of the Son. The Spirit is also sent by the Son, 15:26 with 20:22; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33.

10. *The Sanctification* of believers by God, Jude 1; by the Lord Jesus, Heb. 2:11, and by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 1:2.

11. *Source of Eternal Life*; from God, John 17:2; the gift of the Son, John 17:2; 10:28; Rom. 6:23, and from the Spirit, Gal. 6:8.

12. *Supplying Gifts* to the Church; from God, Rom. 12:3; the gift of Christ, Eph. 4:7; shared out by the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:11. They function in the Church under the three Persons of the Godhead, 1 Cor. 12:4-6.

13. *Spiritual Worship*, John 4:23,24; Phil. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:5; Gal. 4:6.

14. *Benediction* given in the name of the Trinity, 2 Cor. 13:14. There are other portions suggesting spiritual truth, 1 Cor. 6:19; Eph. 2:22; 3:17; 1 John 2:27.

Simple illustrations

In the O.T. we have the revelation of God, the Father—this takes away our infidelity.

In the Gospels we have the revelation of God, the Son—this takes away our sin.

In the Acts we have the revelation of God, the Spirit—this takes away our hardness of heart.

Man himself is a trinity—body, soul and spirit. Assailed by a trinity of evil, the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The Three Principal Jewish Feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles Lev. 23:34 is associated with God the Father, Rev. 21:3. The Feast of Passover Ex. 12:17, redemption by Blood—the Son, 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 7:19. The Feast of Pentecost Ex. 34:22, Lev. 23:34, reminding us of the Spirit, Acts 2:1-4.

May the boards of the Tabernacle help us to see the grace of the Lord Jesus—the silver sockets, the bars to the unifying Spirit, overlaid with gold—to the love of God, Exod. 26:15-29.

The Holiness of God

The Holiness of God signifies His absolute separation from evil. God is perfectly, absolutely, essentially and effectively holy.

In Scripture He is frequently styled “The Holy One;” holiness is the very excellency of the Divine nature, “He is glorious in holiness” Exod. 15:11.

God is called “The Holy One of Israel,” over twenty-five times in Isaiah and frequently in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

“God is Holy,” means “God is absolutely pure.” Trace the references to the word “holy” in your concordance and study its implications. The truth that God is holy is the fundamental truth of the Old and New Testament. The attribute of holiness gives glory and harmony to all God’s attributes.

Clearly declared

The Holiness of God is incomparable, Exod. 15:11. “There is none holy as the Lord” 1 Sam. 2:2. It makes Him as quite different and distinct from all His creatures, Ps. 99:3; 103:1; Isa. 6:3; 40:25; 1 John 1:5.

Declared plurally by the Father, by the Son and the Spirit. Read Isa. 6:3 with Isa. 63:10; John 17:11; 1 John 2:20; Acts 3:14; Eph. 1:13. The character of God is the standard of holiness Lev. 19:2, with Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:15,16. He calls us to be like Himself.

Declared prophetically “Sing unto the Lord” Isa. 12:5,6; 57:15; Habk. 1:12,13. The seraphim in Isa. 6:2, not only celebrated God’s holiness, but His plans for redeeming fallen man. God’s infinite holiness made Isaiah conscious of his deep sinfulness v.5. No man can see God without holiness, Heb. 12:14.

Declared plainly Lev. 11:45; 20:7,26; Psalms. 15:1; 60:6. His holiness is such that He cannot overlook wickedness and dishonesty, Micah 6:7-13. Holiness must punish wrong worship Lev. 10:1-3, and wrong practice 2 Chr. 26:16-21; Psalms. 5:4-6. Holiness is the rule of His actions Psalms. 145:17.

Declared prayerfully Psalms. 22:3; John 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:23.

Declared praisefully Psalms. 99:1-3; 99:5; 97:12; 108:7; 110:3; Rev. 4:8 with Isa. 6:3. Each seraph had six wings. Four of the six were used in reverent worship. What an endless theme for our worshipful adoration.

Constantly demonstrated

Seen in *Gos’s desire for saintliness* Lev. 10:3. God is to be served with fear Psalms. 2:11. Because God is holy the utmost reverence becomes our approaches unto Him Psalms. 89:7. “Worship at His footstool” Psalms. 99:5. Like God we should love righteousness Psalms. 11:7; Matt. 5:6; 1 Tim. 4:7,8. Yet

what His holiness demanded His grace has provided in His Son, Eph. 1:7.

His denunciation of sin Gen. 6:5-7; Psa. 5:4-6; Prov. 3:32,33; 15:26; "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord". "If Thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand" Psa. 130:3; 143:2; Habk. 2:12,15,16; Zeph. 1:2-12; Nahum 1:2; Titus 3:3; Rom. 8:7,8; 1 John 3:8,9.

His demand for separation Lev. 20:6,7; 1 Sam. 7:3,4; Psa. 19:8,9,13. Sin severs all communion with a holy God. A righteous life and a holy walk are essentials to fellowship with God, Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 6:11.

The positive side is in Luke 1:74,75. We need a new awareness of the presence of God, this brings an awareness of sin, Luke 5:8. We must serve God with reverence in character and conduct as becometh godliness Eph. 4:32—5:2; 2 Cor. 6:17,18; Titus 2:11,12. There must be separation from the wicked, Num. 16:21,26; Gal. 1:4.

In devoted service we should "go, tell, how great things the Lord hath done for thee" Mark 5:19. Those who know God best want to love and serve Him. The Lord is dishonoured and grieved by our failure to respond willingly to His call to service. "Yield yourselves unto God" Rom. 6:13; 12:1. Our lives should commend the Gospel to others 1 Thess. 2:10; 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:21,22; Titus 3:8.

Continually demanded

Beware of the sin of materialism Isa. 5:8; this is due to a wrong emphasis and evaluation of creature comforts. Instead of evaluating them in a proper relationship to God, the Giver of these blessings, we often place these benefits ahead of God. Jas. 2:14-16 warns against an empty religious profession. We are commanded to imitate holiness Lev. 11:44,45; and praise His holiness Psa. 30:4.

In Personal Life we should follow after holiness Heb. 12:14; and have fruit unto holiness Rom. 6:22. The new nature of God's creating, shows itself in a just and devout life, Eph. 4:23,24.

In Home Life. To Israel the words, "remember", "observe", "teach" are continually emphasized in relation to family life, Deut. 4:9,10; 6:4-9; Lev. 27:14.

In Social Life. Holiness is seen in loving our neighbour and walking honestly, Rom. 13:9-13; 14:16-18. Living like Christ and being renewed in our mind, Eph. 4:20-24.

In Prayer Life. We have an especial obligation to pray for all in authority, 1 Tim. 2:2,8, and do it from pure motives, and a clean heart, Psa. 139:23,24.

In Business Life, Prov. 11:1; Rom. 12:17; Mal. 2:10; Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-7. Industry, honesty and integrity are the hall marks of a Christian life. All moral uprightness has its source in an ethical and infinitely holy God. Secularism is that attitude of heart that ostracises God from everyday affairs of life.

In Assembly Life. Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 5:1-7,13. The Church needs to remember that she has a holy God in the midst.

The Power of God

The power of God is a truth that ought to give peace and joy to the heart of the believer and strike terror to the heart of the unbeliever. God's power is like Himself; infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; it can neither be restrained, nor frustrated by the creature. His power is self-existent and self-sustained.

"Power belongeth unto God" Psa. 62:11. "The thunder of His power who can understand" Job 26:14. God's power is the life and activity of all His other attributes.

The majesty of His power

It is absolute. Power belongs to God inherently. It is God's nature to be almighty. His power is not derivative, but creative and original. He gives power to His creatures, but derives none from them.

His limitless power is expressed in the title "Lord of Hosts" 1 Sam. 1:3; Rom. 9:29. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven—and none can stay His hand" Dan. 4:35.

It is great and glorious, Exod. 15:6; Psa. 79:11. He is Himself the great central Source and Originator of all power. His power in nature is extensive, Psa. 135:5-7. There is no power higher than God's Psa. 62:11.

It is everlasting and irresistible. "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" Isa. 26:4. His irresistible power is seen in creation Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:20; and in providence, none can stay His hand, Deut. 32:39.

IT IS INCOMPARABLE AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power" Exod. 15:6,11,12. "What God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy might?" Deut. 3:24; Job 40:9; ch.26. His omnipotent power humbles man in the dust, Psa. 18:13-15; 89:5-10.

There is infinitely more power in God than is expressed in all His works, Job. 26:14. "Hast thou an arm like God?" Job 40:9. All other attributes would be worthless without His power.

The manifestation of His power

His power in creation. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" Psa. 33:6. At God's word nothing began to be something. "He spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" Psa. 33:9.

'All things are possible with God' Matt. 19:26; Gen. 18:14. "For Thy pleasure they are and were created" Rev. 4:11. In establishing the

mountains, girding them with power, Psa. 65:6. His power has been marvellously exemplified in creation, Jer. 32:17. He walketh upon the wings of the wind, Psa. 104:3; Job 9:8; 22:14.

In sustentation and preservation "He upholds all things by the word of His power" Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17. It is the fiat of the Creator to bridle the raging waves Job 38:11. "Thou preserveth them all" Neh. 9:6, God gives breath and spirit to them that walk on the earth, Isa. 42:5.

God is the Preserver of "man and beast" Psa. 36:6. "In Him we live... and have our being" Acts 17:28. Everywhere in Creation we see marks of order and beneficent design. It all reveals something of the glory and majesty of Jehovah, Psa. 19:1.

In the ministration of Christ. The signs of John's Gospel clearly demonstrate the power of God resident in His Son and meeting every need of mankind, 2:11; 4:53; 5:9; 6:12-13; 11:43-45. Seen in His teaching, Matt. 7:28,29; 9:31-35; Luke 5:17,26.

The mercy of His power

Illustrated in the redemption of Israel Psa. 106:7-10. Saved from the slavery of sin and Egypt, they were brought out of Babylon Neh. 1:10 and delivered from the Philistines 1 Sam. 7:10-13.

Power in the resurrection of Christ. He could not be holden of death, John 2:22; Acts 2:30-36. His ascension into heaven Acts 1:10,11. By Divine power Christ was raised, exalted and glorified Eph. 1:19-22.

The regeneration of the sinner Eph. 2:1,5,6. In the proclamation of the Gospel, Matt. 28; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:24; 2 Cor. 4:6,7.

Think of our eternal salvation Heb. 7:25; the preservation of His saints 1 Pet. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18. Strength for living and service, Eph. 3:20; 6:10; Col. 1:11; Phil. 4:13; support in affliction 2 Cor. 6:7; 2 Tim. 1:8.

May the Spirit of God enable us to appreciate daily that the power of God, is saving in its operation 1 Thess. 1:5; spiritual in its nature Rom. 15:13,19; enabling in its strength, 2 Cor. 12:9; exceeding in its greatness Eph. 1:19; effectual in its working Eph. 1:20; moving in its service Col. 1:29; glorious in its achievement Col. 1:11; and witnessing in its testimony Acts 4:33.

Meditate on the future display of Divine power in the resurrection and rapture of the saints, and the judgment of men and nations Isa. 2:12,17,19; Rev. 6:17.

The Mercy of God

The contemplation of God's mercy fills our souls with humility and praise, two virtues acceptable in the sight of God. The word "mercy" and its synonyms occur over three hundred and forty times in the Bible.

Our God is rich in mercy; "it is everlasting," tender, plenteous, great and abundant. Read and meditate on Psalm 136; "for His mercy endureth for ever."

Mercy defined

Mercy is warm affection demonstrated to the needy, helpless and distressed. It is compassionate treatment of an enemy. It is that adorable perfection in God by which He pities and relieves the miserable. Mercy reminds us of our miserable condition as children of wrath, and we cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner" Luke 18:13,38.

Mercy described

Mercy is part of the character of God and is greatly to be praised Psa. 136:1; 59:16; 62:12. His mercy is great Numb. 14:18; 1 Kings 3:6; plenteous Psa. 86:5; 86:15; 103:8; tender Psa. 25:6; 103:4; Luke 1:78; high as the heaven Psa. 36:5; 103:11; manifold Neh. 9:27; Lam. 3:32; new every morning Lam. 3:23; sure Isa. 55:3; Micah 7:20; filling the earth Psa. 119:64; abundant 1 Pet. 1:3; rich Eph. 2:4; over all His works Psa. 145:9; and are everlasting Psa. 103:17. Well may we say with the Psalmist, "I will sing aloud of Thy mercy" 59:16.

Mercy distinguished

Wherein differs the "mercy" of God from His "grace"? Exod. 33:19. These words have much in common and yet there are shades of distinction between them. The mercy of God has its spring in the Divine goodness. Grace views man without merit; mercy views him as miserable.

This distinction is seen in the divine dealings with the unfallen angels. They are the objects of God's free and sovereign grace, but He has never exercised mercy toward them. Think of their election 1 Tim. 5:21; and of their preservation from apostacy, when Satan rebelled and dragged down many of the celestial host, Rev. 12:9. It was in grace that God made Christ their Head, Col. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:22. Think of the exalted position which has been assigned them, Dan. 7:10; and their honourable commissions from Him, Heb. 1:14. God has dealt with the holy angels in grace, for they have not merited His favours.

Mercy and love are distinguished. Love may be for an equal; mercy can only exist for an inferior. The GENERAL mercy of God is extended to the entire creation, Psa. 145:9; Acts 17:25.

God does show TEMPORAL mercy to the wicked but this is confined strictly to the present life, "for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good" Matt. 5:45. We rejoice in His SOVEREIGN mercy exercised through Christ and reserved for the heirs of salvation, it is regulated by His sovereign will Rom. 9:15.

Mercy demonstrated

It is manifested in God sending His Son as the dayspring from on high Luke 1:78. The Lord Jesus did not bring the mercy of God to us; it was the mercy of God that brought Christ to us. The Lord Jesus is the channel of mercy, but not the cause of mercy. The merits of Christ and His atoning work make it possible for God to righteously bestow mercy upon us, and save us Titus 3:5. Saul of Tarsus is a good example of the mercy of God in salvation 1 Tim. 1:12,13. Our regeneration is due to the mercy of God Eph. 2:1-4; 1 Pet. 1:3.

Even the punishment of the wicked is an act of mercy. It is an act of justice, vindicating the honour of God; an act of equity, they are made to suffer the due reward of their iniquities Psa. 143:12; 136:15; Rev. 19:1-3. The Lord Jesus is the true Mercy-Seat and we have fled to Him for mercy Rom. 3:25. His vicarious death was an absolute necessity John 12:24; 8:28.

Mercy delighted in

Let us rejoice in the spiritual mercies assured to us as the children of God. "He is plenteous in mercy and truth." Psa. 86:15. Is merciful to His people Deut. 32:43; to them that fear Him Psa. 103:17; Luke 1:50. By trusting in his God mercy shall compass him about Ps. 32:10.

Mercy is promised to the returning backslider Jer. 3:12; Hos. 14:4; Joel 2:13; to the afflicted Isa. 49:13; 54:7. It was shown to Jonah and Nineveh Jon. 4:2. Our God is the Father of mercies 2 Cor. 1:3, and showed mercy to Epaphroditus Phil. 2:27, and to Paul, 1 Tim. 1:13.

Daily we experience the preserving, pardoning and sustaining mercy of our God, Exod. 15:13; Psa. 21:7; 59:16. His mercy is M—manifold, E—everlasting, R—rich, C—cheering, and for Y—you.

The Grace of God

'GRACE' is a great word, an all-inclusive word, because it is the word most truly expressive of God's character and attitude in relation to man. Grace is found over 150 times in the New Testament and Paul refers to it 130 times directly or indirectly. Grace was the secret of his life and the key-note of his teaching. Trace the eleven references to "grace" in Ephesians.

It comes from two or three roots in the Hebrew and Greek. The root seems to mean 'to give pleasure', both to the Giver and to the receiver.

The meaning of grace

It is the free, spontaneous, unmerited love of God to sinful man. Grace is first, a quality of graciousness in the Giver, and then a quality of gratitude in the recipient which makes him gracious to others, e.g. 2 Sam. 9. Grace when applied to God, the Supreme Giver, has two aspects:

1. *It expresses the Divine Attitude* to man as guilty and condemned. Grace means God's favour and goodwill towards us. Luke 1:30; permanently favoured or graced Luke 1:28. Grace is eternal; planned before it was exercised, purposed before it was imparted 2 Tim. 1:9. It is sovereign, because God exercises it toward and bestows it upon whom He pleases—Rom. 5:21. It comes from the throne of grace, Heb. 4:16.

Being unmerited favour, it is exercised in a sovereign manner Exod. 33:19; Gen. 6:8. It is free (no conditions required) for none can purchase it—Rom. 3:24. It is spontaneous and generous and abiding. Paul was a grace-made man, 1 Cor. 15:10.

2. *It expresses Divine Action* to man as needy and helpless. Not only benevolence but benefaction; not solely good will, also good work, Phil. 1:6. It is God's free bounty; His spontaneous gift which causes pleasure and produces blessing, Rom. 5:15; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 4:7.

It is distinguished from mercy which is related to misery and to (negatively) non-deserving. Grace is related to redemption and to (positively) undeserving, Eph. 2:5,6 R.V.

The manifestation of grace

There is no grace in heathen religions. It comes from God through His Son, our Lord and Saviour, John 1:17; Acts 15:40; Acts 18:27; 20:24. God is the God of all grace 1 Peter 5:10; the giver of grace Ps. 84:11; Jas. 1:17. Grace was upon Christ Luke 2:40; John 3:34. He spoke with grace Ps. 45:2; Luke 4:22. He was full of grace John 1:14,17. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace

Heb. 10:29. The Father is the fountain of all grace, the Son is the channel of grace and the Holy Spirit is the administrator of grace.

The manifestation of grace commenced in God's purpose, 2 Tim. 1:9; is embodied in God's revelation in Christ Tit. 2:11; and declared in the Gospel Acts 20:24.

It is God's mercy pitying; e.g. Saul Acts 9:1; 1 Tim. 1:13; the Corinthians 1 Cor. 6:9-11. Grace is God's wisdom planning before the world began Eph. 1:4; from the foundation of the world Rev. 13:8. Among the Jews a Saviour was prepared for the world and among the Gentiles the world was prepared for the Saviour. It is fully manifested in God's love providing salvation John 3:16. When Christ appeared He was the revelation of the grace of God bringing, not sending, salvation, for His character was "full of grace and truth." In Christ it is saving grace, Matt. 1:21; Eph. 2:4-7; no merit, no effort and no payment Eph. 2:9. It is sanctifying grace, suggested by the word "Christ" which means 'Anointed'. We have fulness of grace in and from Christ John 1:16; Col. 2:10. Being 'Lord' His is Sovereign grace Rom. 5:17; 14:9. Grace reigns by Jesus Christ and He has power and resources to enable us to live for Him and serve Him Phil. 4:13.

The ministration of grace

There is the election of grace which is in opposition to works and worthiness Rom. 11:5,6; 2 Thess. 2:13. The latter text tells us why we are saved, and how we are saved. Like Paul we are called by grace Gal. 1:15; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9. Grace brings salvation Tit. 2:11, and effects justification Tit. 3:7; Rom. 3:24. It is linked with predestination Eph. 1:5,6. It is the source of faith Acts 18:27; of forgiveness Eph. 1:7; it secures acceptance Eph. 1:6,8; gives us a standing before God Rom. 5:2; and an inheritance in Christ Acts 20:32. It gives us consolation and hope 2 Thess. 3:16.

Grace, like the Good Samaritan, not only meets the present emergency, but provides for daily and future blessing. Available to us in time of need Heb. 4:16; establishment against error Heb. 13:9. It delivers us from the dominion of sin Rom. 6:14; it is necessary to the service of God Heb. 12:28; we should grow in grace 2 Pet. 3:18; and be strong 2 Tim. 2:1.

The measure of grace

It is described as great, Acts 4:33; sovereign Rom. 5:21; free Rom. 3:24; rich Eph. 1:7; 2:7; all sufficient 2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9; and is increased Jas. 4:6; 2 Peter 1:2. It is abundant Rom. 5:17,20; 2 Cor. 12:9.

"Grace," says Spurgeon, "is the morning and evening star of our experience. Grace puts us in the way, helps us by the way, and takes us all the way."

Misunderstanding of grace

(1) *Law*. This rule of life was revealed from God and accepted by Israel at Sinai. The law is held in contrast with the teachings of grace, John 1:17. Contrasting the Decalogue with Grace in 2 Cor. 3:3-16, seven things are contrasted; see also Gal. 5:18; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14.

False teachers who came to Galatia proclaimed a mingling of grace and law Gal. 1:6-8; 3:2,3. The law curses Gal. 3:10; grace redeems from that curse 3:13. Law says, do and thou shalt live, Luke 10:26,28; grace says, believe and live John 5:24. These are only a few contrasts, Rom. 6:14.

(2) *Works*. Salvation is by the grace of the Creator rather than by the works of the creature. Salvation by grace precludes the idea of any works either great or small, moral or ceremonial, Luke 18:10-14; Rom. 11:6 RV; Eph. 2:9.

(3) *Debt or Obligation*. Grace excludes the principle of debt or obligation. Salvation by grace means that God is not obligated to save Rom. 4:4,5. Salvation is always presented as a Gift, an uncompensated favour, a pure benefit from God, John 10:28; Rom. 6:23.

(4) *Ceremonialism*. The Jewish element in the early Church was slow to abandon the law and its ceremonies, a double standard is revealed in the first council of the Church in Jerusalem, Acts 15:1-2,5,7,19-21; 21:19-26.

(5) *Antinomianism*. There are two dangers concerning grace; one is the danger of frustrating it, the other of abusing it. We frustrate grace when we teach that righteousness comes by keeping the law Gal. 2:21. We abuse grace when we use it to justify a life of sin Rom. 6:1,2. Grace not only reaches us as sinners but teaches us what we should loathe, how we should live, and for whom we should look, Titus 2:11-13.

Our response to grace

Having received grace 2 Cor. 6:1, we should continue in it Acts 13:43; share it Phil. 1:7; be growing in it 2 Pet. 3:18; finding it at the throne Heb. 4:16; standing in it 1 Pet. 5:12; singing with it Col. 3:16; speech ruled by it Col. 4:6. We should be enjoying it 1 Pet. 3:7; and yet expecting it 1 Pet. 1:13; be liberal through it 2 Cor. 8:19; and witnessing to it Eph. 3:8; Acts 20:24 and be glad when we see it in others Acts 11:23.

Our life is to be a *Monument of Grace*. All that we are, have, do and become is of grace, and we are so to live that our lives are to be to the "glory of His grace" Eph. 1:6. It should be a power in our life 2:40; Acts 4:33.

Our lips are to be the *Mouthpieces of Grace*. We are to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God Acts 20:24; be proud of the Gospel Rom. 1:16. It should govern our speech Col. 4:6; and enable us to sing to God Col. 3:16.

Our love is to be a *Means of Grace*. There is no means of grace to compare with a Christ-like spirit. God's love is only made available for others through His saints. His love in our hearts will lead to the love of others, and all our

relationships will be sweetened, hallowed and transfigured. Grace will make us gracious in our dealings and enable us to avoid the spirit of hardness and severity, and manifest the spirit of forgiveness and patience.

Our labour is to be a *Messenger of Grace*. Like Paul this grace is our companion in labour and the Spirit of God endows us with the gifts of grace to minister to others 1 Cor. 15:10.

Our service is the outflow of the grace of God in the heart. Grace humbles pride, incites hope, inspires to service, and glorifies God.

“GRACE”—Gives us salvation Eph. 2:8; is revealed in Christ 2 Cor. 8:9; abundant 1 Tim. 1:14; comes from God our Father Eph. 1:2; enjoyed by all saints Phil. 4:23.

Oh, let Thy grace inspire
My soul with strength Divine!
May all my powers to Thee aspire,
And all my days be Thine!
Philip Doddridge.

The Love of God

It is good to remember in difficult days that “God is love” in spite of all appearances to the contrary; saying “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Look back over your own history as revealed to you by grace, and you will see one central fact growing large—God is love. Consider this revelation, the eternal fact that God is Love, not, God is loving.

“God is light” (1 John 1:5) is the splendour of His perfection, He is the sum of all excellency. “God is love” (1 John 4:8; 2 Cor. 13:11), is the sublimity of His nature. Love is not merely one of His attributes, but the very essence of His moral nature, He is the source of all love. Love is an exercise of the Divine Will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself (Deut. 7:7,8).

“Seven times in Deuteronomy God declared His love for Israel. His love is sovereign in its choice (4:37); selective in its objects (7:4); sacred in its remembrance (7:8); sanctifying in its outcome (10:15,16); supplying in its bestowment (10:18); strong in its determination (23:5); and singular in its benediction (33:3).” (Dr. F.E. Marsh).

Love described

The love of God is SOVEREIGN (Deut. 7:8; 10:15) for it is uninfluenced by anything in the creature. There was nothing in the objects of His love to call it into exercise. Because God is love, He loves whom He pleases (Rom. 9:13; Eph. 1:4,5).

It is GREAT (Eph. 2:4), both in its manifestation and in its ministry. It is indispensable and unbounded in its work (Rom. 5:6-8). It is UNFAILING (Isa. 49:15,16). A mother may cast her child away from her presence and forget to attend to its needs. God never does; His is Shepherd love (Isa. 63:9), and Father-love (John 14:21). Read Deut. 21 which unfolds the loving care of Jehovah for Israel. It is EVERLASTING (Jer. 31:3). As God Himself is eternal so His love is unending in its character for He has chosen us in love (Eph. 1:4,5). Love covers our past, present and future, and where we cannot comprehend we can bow in adoring worship.

It is INFINITE (Eph. 3:19). His love is without limit and without end. Who can scale the height or fathom its depth, its length and breadth defies measurement by our standard.

It is unknown in its fulness like the ocean, yet perfectly tender and responsive to its objects of mercy (Job 7:17; John 11:5).

It is SPONTANEOUS (Hosea 11:1,4); uncaused and free. Constraining

like a father teaching his child to walk inducing him by care and kindness. He loved us when we were loveless, quickened us and drew us to Himself.

It is IMMUTABLE (John 13:1; Song of Songs 8:6,7). We live in a world of hatred; we are "His Own" and enjoy His love all our life-time down here. Immutable in its unchangingness of character (1 John 4:16,17). As with God Himself there is no variableness (Jas. 1:17), so His love knows neither change nor diminution, nothing can stop its inexhaustible supply (Rom. 8:32,39).

Love displayed

Consider this revelation, the eternal fact that God is love in His very nature. Love can be known only from the action it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son (1 John 4:9,10). Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:14; Eph. 2:4; 3:19; 5:25).

Love displayed in the COMING OF CHRIST (2 Cor. 8:9; Mark 10:45; John 10:10,11). The sacrifice of Christ displays the measure of God's love (John 3:16). Love was the impulsive power of Christ's incarnation (1 John 4:9). Divine love is great, gracious and generous (Tit. 2:11-14; 3:4-7; Rom. 8:32). Genesis 22 illustrates the service and sacrifice of love. In Christ's coming into the world, love is revealed in its lowest stoop (1 John 4:9), and in its greatest sacrifice (1 John 3:16).

The foundation of God's love is holiness (Heb. 12:14). God's love must be the justification of His holiness. If God's nature is holy, His love must be a holy love. The fact of God's love is accepted by faith and is fully displayed in the reconciling work of Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-21). His love never conflicts with His holiness (1 John 1:5).

Love seen in the COMPASSION OF CHRIST (Matt. 9:36; 14:14). It reveals the tenderness of the heart of Christ and the power human grief has over Him. When He saw the scattered multitude (Matt. 9:36), toward the sick (Matt. 14:14), toward the starving (Matt. 15:32); when He met the blind men (Matt. 20:34); when He saw the sorrowing widow (Luke 7:13); the sorrowing sisters (John 11:33,35); and toward the sinful (Luke 19:41; John 8:11); the poor (Mark 8:2) and the needy (Heb. 5:2,7). Some people profess compassion but it does not move them.

Displayed at the CROSS OF CHRIST (Rom. 5:8; 8:32; Eph. 5:2,25).

In giving Himself for us (Gal. 2:20), in dying for us (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16; 4:9,10). These verses show that redemption is out of the Father's love. In the cross we see Divine mercy satisfying His law (Rom. 3:21-26). God Himself provided the sacred satisfaction (Rom. 8:32). The death of the Lord Jesus was a necessity to meet a need (John 3:14,15).

Displayed BY THE CHRISTIAN. The love of God is dominating in its power (2 Cor. 5:14) and dedicating in its influence (1 John 4:16); illustrated in Jonathan's love for David (1 Sam. 18:1-3).

The Lord Jesus is the object of our love (1 Pet. 1:8). It is manifested in

seeking Him (Song of Songs 3:4); in ministering to Him (Matt. 27:55; 28:40); in obeying Him (John 14:15,21,23). Our love to the Lord should be affectionate (Song of Songs 1:3,4); ardent (Song of Songs 2:5); unquenchable (Song of Songs 8:7); sincere (Eph. 6:24); and in appreciation of His forgiving mercy (Luke 7:47). It is a mark of discipleship (John 13:34,35; 15:12; 17:10) and should be growing (Phil. 1:9).

“Keep yourselves in the love of God” (Jude 21). Have we lost the import and warmth of God’s love? We are too introspective today, our feelings ebb and flow and we mourn. Drink deep and full of the love of God and you will not demand the impossible from earth’s loves, and the love of wife and child, of husband and friend, will be holier and healthier and simpler and grander. We know how to keep ourselves in health, how to keep ourselves in knowledge and so on; but to keep ourselves in the love of God is a big order and our minds are exercised to know what Jude means by this exhortation. “Keep” means work. Live in the spiritual sphere of the love of God by faith, live near Him, delight yourself in Him. It is not “keeping on loving God” but live in the ocean fulness of the love of God (Rom. 8:35,39).

The Essential Deity of Christ

The two titles “Son of God” and “The Word” ensure that we understand that the Lord Jesus was a manifestation of the Godhead in Person, and not merely an impersonal influence, and that He is on an equality with the Father of whose Person and glory He is an accurate expression. In Col. 2:9, we have a concise and profound statement: “In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Christ possessed the very nature, essence and being of God. He is “Our Great God and Saviour” (Tit. 2:13 R.V.; Isa. 7:14; 9:6 R.V.; Micah 5:2; Rom. 9:5).

Deity declared

In His Birth and His Name (Isa. 7:14, with Matt. 1:21). His Titles (Isa. 9:6 with Acts 10:36; Prov. 8:22,30 with John 1:1-2; 16:27,28).

Note the tremendous facts in John 1:1-4. *His Eternal Existence* “In the beginning was the Word.” This is eternity, transcending time. Not “came” but “was” already in existence before creation.

His Distinct Personality “Was WITH God.” Face to face with God, or at home with God. He partook of the Divine nature, distinct from the Father and equal to the Father.

His Essential Deity “was God.” Not became but was God (Col. 1:15). As the Word He was the expression of God. “Who is” (Col. 1:15); “Who being” (Phil. 2:6); declare the Personality of the Son as distinct from the Father; the pre-existence of the Son from all eternity; the full and proper Deity of the Son. “Is” the eternal present (Heb. 13:8).

His Eternal Personality “The same was in the beginning with God” (v.2). He is not merely a manifestation of the Deity in time. Christ is God, without beginning, supreme and transcendent. These verses 1 and 2 stress the Absolute Eternity of Christ, possessing all the attributes and essence of God. In Christ God becomes visible, and all things else become intelligible.

Verse one informs us of His precedence, position and personality. Verse two of His parity with God, not a manifestation of God. Verse three denotes the pre-existence of the Word before Creation. *His Creational Ability* (v.3). He is the originator of all things (Col. 1:16). Nothing came into being apart from His presence and power (Prov. 8:22-30). He is the uncreated and eternal Son of God. He is in a class by Himself. He is prior to, distinct from, and highly exalted above every creature (Psa. 89:27; Col. 1:16,17).

His Essential Vitality (v.4) The profound mystery of life which in its very nature must remain unsolved to the creature. He is the source of all natural

life, intellectual life and spiritual perception. It is His life which is imparted to all living creatures.

John speaks of His dignity and priority (1:15,27). The superlative is used, "before me and first of all." He is the Reservoir of Divine fulness and the Revealer of the Godhead (v.18).

Deity displayed

The activities of God are ascribed to the Son and displayed by Him. His omnipotence as Creator (John 1:3; 2:19,21; 10:18). His Omniscience—all knowledge (John 3:13; 14:23).

The signs of John's gospel demonstrate His Deity (20:30,31). The mighty works of the Father in creation and redemption, He claimed to be able to do (5:19). The validity of His claims cannot be denied, the "I AM" is the Divine Name of Jehovah. 'I am the light of the World' (8:12); "The Door" (10:9); "the Good Shepherd" (10:11); "the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25); "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (14:6); "I am the true Vine" (15:1). To His enemies He states His Deity emphatically (8:24,58). John ch.5 adds to these claims. Equality with the Father in activity (v.19); in knowledge (v.20); in raising the dead (v.21,28,29); in judging (v.22); in honour (v.23); in regenerating souls (v.24) and as the Self-Existing One (v.26).

Deity defended

He openly claimed to be the Messiah (John 4:25,26); His words are life (6:63); He knew His betrayer (6:64,70). John gives seven distinct testimonies to Him—Himself (5:31; 8:14); the Baptist (5:33); His miracles (5:36); the Father (5:37); Scripture (5:39-47); the Holy Spirit (15:26); and Believers (15:27). Others can be added, the authority of His teaching (3:11; 7:28-34,45,46; 9:4-7).

John identifies His glory with Jehovah of Hosts (John 12:41; Isa. 6:1-3). His holiness and resurrection prove His Deity (8:46; 2:19,22; 10:17,18).

Deity delighted in

By the Apostles (John 1:14; 20:28); the Baptist (1:27-35); Nathaniel (1:49); honoured by the people (12:13); Martha (11:27); and Thomas who cheered the heart of His Master by his adoration (20:28).

We have mainly looked at John's record of Christ. Study the witness of Paul, Peter and John in their epistles and the clear revelation of His Deity in Hebrews and Revelation.

Our response is, "He is Thy Lord, and worship thou Him" (Psa. 45:11).

The Pre-existence and Eternal Sonship of Christ

By eternal nature the Lord Jesus is the Son of God. He did not become God's Son at the Incarnation neither when He rose from the dead (Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:4), though by the latter event His Sonship was fully manifested. He is the "Only-Begotten" of the Father, of the same nature and with the same powers, to whom equal worship is due.

He is the Divine Logos, in the beginning with God, the full and final revelation of God, and Himself very God (John 1:1; Col. 1:15). If our Lord had no existence prior to His Incarnation at Bethlehem, the Christian claim that He came to be the living Revelation of God is at once invalidated and His claim to have revealed the Father is abrogated.

Claiming equality

The Lord's discourse on the Bread of Life is replete with proof of His pre-existence. He is the Antitype of the manna; He is the Living Bread out of Heaven (John 6:50,51); Christ in His Person is the Bread of Life (vs.35-50), here in verses 51-58 He is the spiritual food of the believers in the Redemptive work of His death. Verse 62 indicates a relationship prior to Bethlehem condescension (John 1:1). Before Abraham was "I AM" (8:58). He is Jehovah, the eternally self-existent One; the provider and sustainer of Divine life (6:35). The idea of "Sonship" is necessitated by a revelation of the "Fatherhood" of God in the sacred Trinity. John's Gospel clearly presents the Eternal nature of the Sonship of Christ (1:14,18; 3:16-18).

The expression "Only-Begotten," used of Christ points to something ABSOLUTE, but "Firstborn" expresses what is RELATIVE.

This title "Only-Begotten" is used five times in reference to Christ. The Lord ever did and ever will occupy this peculiar and unique place in the Father's thoughts and affections. It marks off His unique Sonship from the "sons of God" (v.12). The title "Son of Man" is used only by our Lord, never by His disciples. It does not refer to His origin from man, but His relationship to them, it links Him with earth (Psa. 8).

Combating heresy

The error taught at Colosse was undermining the Christian system, it was twofold; doctrinal and practical, theological and ethical. All the glories essential to Deity are the prerogatives of Christ, He is absolutely supreme. His identity as Son (1:13). His image, demonstrating the subsistence of

Deity (v.15). The invisible and unknowable God has revealed Himself fully and finally in and through His Son, who being His Father's "image" has manifested Him. His infinity is displayed in creatorship (v.16). "Who is" in v.15, and "He is" in v.17 declare His pre-existence. "HE" emphasizes His personality, and "IS" His pre-existence and self-existence. He is prior to creation, Firstborn of all creation, being Originator of all things, Controller of all things, and Perfecter of all things (vs.16,17).

Hebrews chapter one describes a Personality that precedes time, controlling and governing forces of all history. Everything Divine resides in Him, is manifested in Him and Divine titles are ascribed to Him. His eternal Sonship as Creator and Heir (vs.1,2); His Expressed Sonship (vs.2-4); His Exalted Sonship (v.5); His Exhibited Sonship (v.6).

Commending humility

Phil. 2:6 is not a discussion in technical theology, but a question of practical ethics. In John 8:58 we have His claim to pre-existence; in Col. 1:16, it is to priority, here in Phil. 2:6 it is His Divine personality, and His condescending stoop is an example of humility. His example is the sum and life of all morality. In v.6 the pre-existence of Christ in heaven; v.7,8 the incarnation of Christ. In v.6 we see the heights of glory, implying the Personality of the Son as distinct from the Father. The Pre-existence of the Son from all eternity; the full and proper Deity of the Son.

He eternally existed in the form of God (v.6). He essentially and eternally was and is, sharer of Divine Nature and bearer of Divine attributes, that is to say, God. He is supreme in Being. The word "Form" means literally that He outwardly manifested the inner reality of His being.

Christ's inner reality was Deity. The equality of Christ's Deity is stressed in the phrase, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He had it as His right. Yet He determined upon an infinite act of self-sacrifice for others and took upon Himself humanity (2 Cor. 8:9; John 1:14).

The Son's exercise of His own will in contemplation of human need, was to effect redemption. This is the humility of Deity. He is supreme in life—"obedient unto death." His death is an indisputable evidence of His divine life. He is supreme in glory for all eternity (Phil. 2:9-11). God wants Him to be supreme in our lives (v.5).

Conveying truth

To claim Messiahship was to claim Deity (Psa. 2:6-12; Psa. 24:7-10; Psa. 45:1-8; 110. In Psa. 2:6 God speaks of Him as "my King;" v.7 "my Son;" v.12 "the Son;" v.8 the Heir, and in v.9 the Conqueror. Peter applies Psalm 2 to the Lord (Acts 4:25-28). He is the King of Glory and Lord of Hosts in Psa. 24 with 1 Cor. 2:8; James 2:1.

These titles are given Him by God and remind us of His coming in glory.

God addresses Him as King, His throne is unchangeable (Psa. 45:6). He is the Eternal God and Creator in Psa. 102:25-27, with Heb. 1:8,10-12.

The Lord quotes Psa. 110:1, as written of Himself (Matt. 22:42-45), Psa. 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the N.T. always referring to the Lord Jesus. He is the Priest (Heb. 5:10); as Jehovah of Hosts (Isa. 6:1-3); His glory is revealed (John 12:41).

His eternal Sonship guarantees redemption, priesthood, kingship, headship and every blessing associated with these glorious titles of Christ.

The Incarnation of Christ

To deny the Virgin Birth of the Lord Jesus is to undermine His atoning work. Men belittle His Person, yet profess to follow His example and teaching, refusing to accept His miraculous birth and resurrection.

Religious infidelity call His miraculous birth a biological impossibility and a theological superfluity. True believers still bow in worship, for great is the mystery of godliness (1 Tim. 3:16).

There is much evidence to support the Incarnation and Virgin Birth of our Lord. Presented (1) Prophetically (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; 9:6,7; Micah 5:2). (2) Typically—Isaac's birth (Gen. 21), the Tabernacle with John 1:14. (3) Historically (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:31). (4) Doctrinally—the Holy One, His sinlessness (Luke 1:35). (5) Evangelically (1 Tim. 1:15; 2 Tim. 2:8).

The clear prophecies

The first statement to the Devil hints at the Advent of Christ in the flesh—"the Seed of the Woman" and His achievement at Calvary (Gen. 3:15). He is the "Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). This fulfilled the line of Abraham (Gen. 22:18); Isaac (Gen. 26:4); Jacob (Gen. 28:14); from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10); and of the House of David (Psa. 89).

Micah 5:2 emphasizes where He would be born. Come from Bethlehem as to His manifestation in flesh; "from of old" as to His dealings with Israel; "from everlasting," as to His place with God (John 1:1).

The pre-incarnate Christ is seen in relation to time, in relation to man, and in relation to eternity.

Isa. 7:14 tells us how He could come and who He was. The word translated "virgin" is "almah", used seven times in the O.T. and is clearly used of a woman who was a virgin. In v. 13 "the house of David" is addressed to assure Ahaz that neither house nor city would be exterminated nor destroyed. The prophecy foretold an incarnation, Immanuel, God with us, by a supernatural medium, the Virgin Birth. The two things are distinct "His incarnation is the FACT that He became Man. His virgin birth is the MEANS by which He became man". F.F. Bruce.

In Luke 2:34 the mother and the sign go together and the sign is twofold, a virgin birth and an incarnation (Luke 1:30-35).

Before this great miracle and mystery we believe and worship, it is not ours to explain, or explore.

The convincing presentation

In the two lists of genealogies we have confirmation or verification (Deut. 19:15; Job 33:14; Ps. 62:11). They reveal different standpoints, yet there is a meeting point of lineage, both of Joseph and of Mary who are akin.

Matthew is concerned with the kingship of Jesus, and Luke His humanity, both writers are one in their witness to the Virgin Birth and to the Deity of our Lord (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:32).

Matthew presents Jesus as the legal and royal heir to the promises and prophecies given to Abraham and David (ch. 1:1). Luke gives us the line of Mary, showing Jesus' physical descent (Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 1:3).

Both genealogies give the descent of Joseph—Matthew's the REAL, and Luke the LEGAL descent. Mary was of Davidic descent and was the daughter of Heli, though there is no mention of her name. Hence Christ was legally, regally and maternally "of the seed of David." The miracle was not in His birth but in His conception. The birth of the Redeemer was wrought entirely by the will and by the power of God (Luke 1:35).

He possessed two natures (Divine and Human) but one Personality. He was wholly Man and wholly God, not part God and part Man. Jesus received His human nature in a supernatural way. The mystery was accepted by Mary (Luke 1:38).

Our Lord's birth was an advent; He did not come from the human race; He came into it from above. He was born INTO this world not FROM it. He is God Incarnate, God coming into human flesh, coming into it from the outside (John 1:14).

Study the many names given to our Lord at His birth all stressing His deity, dignity and glory.

The cheering purpose

There are many reasons for the incarnation of Christ. His coming in flesh was a fundamental part of God's plan of salvation (Heb. 2:14; 10:5; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 4:4,5). Mighty movements in heaven above must have preceded the appearing of the Son of God on earth (Heb. 10:5-7). (1) To reveal God to men (John 1:18; 14:9; 1 Tim. 3:16). To manifest life in all its fulness (1 John 1:2), and the love of God (1 John 4:9). (2) As the Prophet of God (Deut. 18:15,18; Matt. 21:11; Acts 3:20,22; Luke 7:16). (3) As a Preacher (Psa. 40:7,9; Isa. 61:1; Matt. 4:17; Mark 2:2; Luke 8:1). (4) As a teacher (John 3:2; 8:2; 8:28; Mark 6:34; Matt. 26:55).

His ministry meant Preaching, proclaiming the Gospel; Teaching, the exposition of the Gospel; Healing, the illustration of the Gospel, with miracles as parables of grace. (5) To defeat the Devil and the power of death (Heb. 2:14,15; Phil. 2:8; 1 John 3:8). (6) To become a Priest for His people (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 5:10; 9:11). (7) The new and living way into God's presence (Heb. 10:20). (8) To be the King (Matt. 2:6; Psa. 45:72; Rev. 19:16). These are only some of the reasons for His incarnation. What is our response to

Him for coming into Manhood? Give God thanks (2 Cor. 9:15). The shepherds behold Him, proclaim Him, praise Him. He is worthy of our attention and adoration (Luke 2:15-20).

The continual praise

When Heaven's King came down to save, Heaven's choir came down to sing (Luke 2:13-15). In the account given of our Lord's birth there is a sevenfold witness through the mouths of believing souls.

Revelation brought rapture and a warm-hearted response. Zacharias praised God that He had visited men (Luke 1:68,76-79). The shepherds praised the Saviour (Luke 2:11,20); the wise men worshipped the King (Matt. 2:11); Simeon praised the Light of the world (Luke 2:30-32). The three women added their praise; Elizabeth was filled with holy joy (Luke 1:41-45); Mary celebrated the mercy of God and magnified the Lord (Luke 1:47-51) and Anna celebrated the redemption provided (Luke 2:38).

All who heard wondered, Mary pondered and the shepherds praised (Luke 2:18-20). May we follow their good example.

The Humanity of Christ

At the Incarnation our Lord took up humanity into His Deity. Deity is unchangeable. As the Image of the Invisible God, the Son was always the visible representation of the invisible God to all creation. "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). So from everlasting, He has been the Begotten from the Father, and never in all eternity was unbegotten, (John 1:18). Yet manhood in Him is equally real with His Deity (1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 5:20; John 1:14).

Past manifestation

The Lord Jesus claimed for Himself powers and attributes belonging only to God (John 8:58). He "came forth from the Father" (John 16:28). He came into the world as the Everlasting Father, the Ancient of Days (Isa. 9:6; 1 Tim. 1:17). The promised "Seed of the Woman" (Gen. 3:15); "the Sun of Righteousness" (Mal. 4:2). The pre-incarnate manifestations, the theophanies were designed to prepare the world for His coming in human flesh.

"The angel of the Lord", "the angel of the Covenant" (Gen. 22:15; 31:11,13; Mal. 3:1). Study the manifestations to Hagar (Gen. 16:7-14); to Abraham (Gen. 18:1-3; 22:11-13); to Isaac (Gen. 26:24,25); to Jacob (Gen. 28; 32:24-32; Hosea 12:4,5); to Moses (Exod. 3:2,6,14; 23:20,21; Acts 7:38); to Joshua (5:13-15); to Isaiah (Isa. 6:1; John 12:39-41); also Ezekiel and Zechariah.

Psalms 16 and 22, portray our Lord, Isaiah 7:14; 9:6 tell of His coming birth, and Leviticus 2 proclaims His perfections.

Proofs of His manhood

The Son of God took to Himself a human nature and gave it subsistence in the divine Nature. The assumption of the human nature involved no change as to the Person of the Eternal Son, it added nothing to it, He who always possessed Deity took also onto Himself humanity. He has become man forever.

The title Son of Man is used only by our Lord, never by His disciples. It always relates Him to the earth and establishes His absolute identification with mankind (Psa. 8:4; with Heb. 2:6). Our Lord used this designation over eighty times. The title speaks volumes to our heart concerning the sovereignty, sympathy and sufficiency vested in our strong Kinsman-Redeemer (Heb. 2:14,15).

He becomes complete and perfect man, possessing body, soul and spirit

(Heb. 5:5; Matt. 26:38; Luke 23:46). His growth was normal, developing in physique and in wisdom (Luke 2:52). He knew tiredness (John 4:6) and thirst (John 4:7; 19:28).

In His experiences all that was proper to true humanity befell Him, capable of surprise (Matt. 8:10); and tears (John 11:35; Heb. 5:7); affections (Mark 3:5; Luke 10:21; John 11:5). He endured bodily suffering (1 Pet. 3:18; 4:1). Like every other man, He hungered (Mark 11:12); He slept (Matt. 8:24); He craved human sympathy (Matt. 26:36,40). When addressing Thomas He appealed to the reality of His human body as basis of belief (John 20:27; Luke 24:39).

His human ancestry is mentioned, born of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:31); and of the seed of David according to the flesh (Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8). To some He was the Carpenter, the Son of Mary (Mark 6:3); the Son of David (Mark 10:47); That Man, the Man (Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5). To Mary, the Gardener (John 20:15); but to Thomas "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28).

The Lord Jesus was racially the Son of Abraham. Morally the Son of Mary; vocationally the Son of Joseph; regally the Son of David; administratively the Son of the Most High; terrestrially the Son of Man; but eternally and celestially the Son of God.

Moral perfections

The moral glories of Christ are the displayed excellencies of His character and conduct. The character of our Lord was perfectly symmetrical, without excess or deficiency. Our Lord had no strong points in His character because there were no weak points. He was without flaw because He was without sin. Every virtue was beautifully blended in Him. Mercy and justice were blended in all His actions and judgments. The perfection of His speech, "never man spake like this Man" (John 7:46; Psa. 45:2; Luke 4:22,36). He never had to recall a word, retrace a step, or regret a deed. He won the hearts of men by kindly sympathy and humanity. In Him was the unique combination of majesty and humility (John 13:3-5; Phil. 2:5-8; John 10:38,39).

Perfect in service illustrated in the devotion of the Hebrew bondman (Ex. 21:1-6; Psa. 40:6). "Mine ears hast thou opened (pierced) (Heb. 10:7; Mark 10:45). His service was marked by tenderness (Mark 1:30,31); by prayer (Mark 1:35); by humility (Mark 1:37,38); and always motivated by love (Mark 1:41; Luke 22:27). Perfect in suffering (Mark 14:36). His whole life was one of undeviating obedience to the Father. He ever acted as One who in virtue of His Manhood was dependent on, and in subjection to, the will of His Father (Heb. 5:8; Phil. 2:9). Perfection is seen in Gethsemane and at Calvary in His cries from the cross.

“All human beauties, all Divine
In my Beloved meet and shine
Thou brightest, sweetest, fairest One
That eyes have seen or angels known.”
—R. McClurkin.

In Him no fault is found (John 18:38); in Him no sin (John 14:30; 1 John 3:5).

Yes “He is altogether lovely.” In Him is every element of moral and spiritual beauty. Read of His perfection in the Song of Songs, 5:10-16.

The Sinlessness of Christ

This essential of Christianity is being blatantly denied, not only by ungodly critics but by Christians, in spite of the challenge of our Lord to His enemies, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin" (John 8:46).

His sinlessness is based on fact and confirmed by His disciples who lived closest to Him and were in the best position to know (1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

Sinlessness contested

Today we are confronted with the resurrection of an old heresy that teaches that it was possible for the humanity of Jesus to sin. Some assert that as Deity He could not sin but as Man He was capable of committing sin even though He did not sin. Some even draw a parallel between the creation of Adam and the incarnation of the Son of God.

The denial of the Virgin Birth nearly always goes with denial of the virgin life of Christ. The Manhood of Christ is to be studied not in the abstract, but in its actual, absolute, necessary harmony with His Deity, under His Divine Personality. Had the Manhood sinned, the Christ would have sinned in His Manhood; the highest moral impossibility. In the highest sense our Lord was incapable of sin, physically, morally and spiritually. All is in contrast when we look at Adam in Rom. 5:12-21; it is disobedience with obedience; sin and righteousness; condemnation and justification; death and life. Our Lord's humanity was holy. In 1 Cor. 15:45-50 the contrasts are clearly emphasized. The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the Second, a life-giving spirit. The first man was natural, the Second was spiritual, so supernatural. The first is of the earth, earthy, the Second is the Lord from heaven. Peccability implies weakness and this is no part of our Lord's humanity.

Sinlessness claimed

By the Lord Himself. His challenge still remains unanswered (John 8:46). Satan himself could proffer no charge against Him (John 14:30). It is contended that none of the four evangelists says categorically that He was sinless but they record nothing that tells us against this. They could not, for there was no wrong to relate. A study of His life reveals a consistent consciousness of immunity from sin. The fact that Jesus never confessed sin implies, in His case, that He never did sin. The testimony of His Father is final (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). His own testimony (John 8:29).

The Testimony of Scripture. Our Bible categorically affirms the sinlessness of our Saviour. Peter, the man of action, says He did NO sin (1 Peter 2:22). This is not merely Peter's own estimate, he was writing under the inspiration

of God's Spirit who caused him to make this sweeping remark. It relates to all the details of His life from Bethlehem to Calvary. He called the Saviour "the Holy One of God" (John 6:69). John, the man of contemplation, says "that in Him IS NO SIN" (1 John 3:5). The very principle was absent, the root of sin was not in Him. He was not able to sin having been born of God. He was able Not to sin. Never for so much as a moment did He touch a level lower than absolute moral perfection. He had a holy nature immune from sin.

Paul the man of knowledge says that Christ KNEW NO SIN (2 Cor. 5:21). He had no experimental knowledge of sin. Hebrews 7:26 states the holiness of His character:—"He was holy" (in His birth); "harmless" (in His life); "undefiled" (in His death); and in His resurrection "separated from sinners" R.V. and "made higher than the heavens" (in His exaltation). In birth, "That holy thing" (Luke 1:35). "He was tested in all points like as we are, yet He was without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

The testimony of friend and foe. Judas, "I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4). Pilate and his wife, "This just man" (Matt. 27:19,24). Demons confessed, "I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). He was marked by positive holiness: Peter "the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14). The malefactor, "This man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:41). The centurion impressed by the Lord's serenity and victory exclaimed, "this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39); "a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

His resurrection demonstrated the fact of His sinlessness. It proved His righteousness, because He had gone to the Father (John 16:10; Rom. 1:4). May we thank God daily for a sinless Saviour.

The above testimonies CONFIRM the sinlessness of our Lord. The new nature in the believer "CANNOT SIN" (1 John 3:9). Since that new nature is fashioned after the image of Christ, dare we say then that it was possible for Christ to sin? God forbid.

These testimonies from, John, Peter, Paul and the epistle to the Hebrews all emphasize the sinlessness of the humanity of Christ.

As it is impossible for God to lie, so it is impossible for God to sin. Our Lord was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16) and in His humanity, no sin was ever conceived, "He knew no sin;" no sin was ever committed, "He did no sin," and no sin was ever inherent "in Him was no sin."

Like man He walked, like God He talked,
His words were oracles, His deeds were miracles.
Of God the best expression, of man the finest specimen,
Full-orbed humanity, clothed with Deity,
No taint of iniquity, no trace of infirmity,
ECCE-HOMO—Behold the Man,
ECCE-DEUS—Behold thy God.

The Temptation of Christ

(Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12,13; Luke 4:1-13; Heb. 2:17,18; Heb. 4:15,16).

Temptation is not necessarily sin; we are bound to meet it as Christians. Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realisation of the highest at which we aim. The word "tempt" refers to trying, testing or proving (John 6:6; 2 Cor. 13:5; Heb. 11:17). God tests for man's good, desiring only his blessing, the devil tests, from an evil motive, desiring only man's hurt. Christ was tested but never enticed, because there was nothing in Him to respond to sin (John 14:30; 1 John 3:5; 2 Cor. 5:21). He was the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24; Acts 2:27 R.V.) Scripture teaches the absolute sinlessness of Christ. The impossibility of sin in Christ is exactly the same as the impossibility of falsehood in God (Tit. 1:2). To argue that His temptation was not meaningful if He could not sin is fallacious. The temptation demonstrated conclusively that He could not sin. The way steel or gold is tested is a good illustration of temptation. The test is no less valid because the gold is pure. Sin is not an essential element in humanity, it is a foreign intruder. Our Lord's humanity is perfect.

"Tempted in all points as we are," means that temptation assailed Him along every avenue through which it can reach human nature. The experiences proper to His holy manhood were His and His sinlessness augments His capacity for sympathy; for in every case He felt the full force of temptation. He understands us perfectly. "The limiting phrase 'without sin' is joined to 'after (our) likeness' not to 'in all points.' In so far as He is after our likeness, He was in all points tempted, but this likeness had one exception or limitation, it was without sin." H.C. Hewlett.

His temptation takes place as He enters His public ministry. "The subject reveals Him to us in three ways; first, as a perfect Man; secondly, as Man demonstrated perfect through testing; and finally, as Man victorious, and therefore fitted for supremacy" G.C. Morgan.

John does not record the temptation, his Gospel being essentially that of the Deity of Christ, and God cannot be tempted (Jas. 1:13).

The set time

"Then", "straightway", "and" (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1). Note the order; OWNED by the Father "This is my Son;" ANOINTED by the Spirit (Mark 1:10); TEMPTED by the Devil (Mark 1:13). The temptation must be understood in the light of the baptism, the Spirit leads Him into the wilderness to be tempted; this is part of His appointed probation. Temptation was continuous. After the approval of heaven comes the assault

of hell. God sets the seal of perfection upon the hidden years. "I am well pleased." The anointing Spirit had indicated His preparedness for the work of redemption. The voice of approval was the call for which Jesus had been waiting, the Spirit was the equipment for carrying out the work, and the sign of His Messiahship (John 1:33,34). During the thirty silent years He had triumphed over all the temptations incidental to private life. Now He was to triumph over the temptations relative to His public ministry and redeeming work. It came when He was alone, when He was hungry and physically weakened. These three special temptations only came at the end of forty days of testing. All His battles had to be fought alone (Luke 22:41; Matt. 27:46).

The scene

Perhaps it was what happened at the Baptism that caused the temptation. Led by the Spirit, Christ went out challenging Satan, on His own initiative, to expose and defeat the adversary of God and man. Not in a garden, but in a wilderness of barrenness, and poverty, and hunger for bread that perishes. Did the wild beasts recognise God's millennial man? (Mark 1:13; Isa. 1:3; 11:6).

Jesus now stands as the second Man, the last Adam. As such He is the Head of a new race and He is the last, because there will be no other federal headship and no other race.

His Messiahship and the forty days recall the history of the messianic people (Deut. 8:2). As pure gold He is tried in the refiners fire and comes through unscathed and undiminished.

The Seducer

Satan (Matt. 4:1). The Devil! Yes, a real highly intelligent and mighty personality. The Lord Jesus believed in Satan's existence and power (John 8:44). An evil power, ever the adversary of Christ, full of malignity—unseen yet real (Eph. 2:2; 6:12; Rev. 12:7-10 R.V.). "An angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14), he came to tempt our Lord.

The significance

In Matthew the order is historical, tested as Messiah with special reference to His work and the establishment of His Kingdom. In Luke, moral order tested as Man and as Representative of the redeemed. He emerged victorious His virtue unimpaired, purity tested and triumphant. Hebrews takes this line, as Man one with us. Our Lord was both not able to sin and able not to sin (Heb. 4:14). Like His Incarnation a mystery, before which we bow in adoring worship. He was led by the Spirit always.

The stages of the temptation

There were three temptations, each referring to a different aspect of our Lord's mission on earth; they were personal, national, universal, affecting

body, mind, spirit. Material, spiritual, vocational, bread, trust and purpose in life. There are three elements in human life to which Satan can appeal; appetite, pride and ambition (1 John 2:16,17). They are "not of the Father" and so far as they are sinful they do not, of course, apply to our Lord.

First temptation. This was to set up a Selfish Kingdom. This involved Christ's personal relation to His Father. "You are the Son of God, then command that these stones be made bread." Hunger is a bodily sensation applicable to humanity, needful for the sustenance of life, and in itself not sinful. This was a test of His loyalty to the Father. The circumstance of hunger was part of the Divine plan. The temptation was specious and is focused on our Lord's submission to the will of God. The physical side of life is temporal, material and transient and our Lord's reply was a clear rejection of anything materialistic. The enemy said, "If Thou be the Son of God," the Lord said, "Man" his responsibility. I am here as Man, and as a Man I meet thy temptation. Here is His submission to law and acceptance of God's will. The spiritual must have the first place in life, the physical last.

Second temptation. "Set up a Spectacular Kingdom". "Cast Thyself down, no harm will come to you." This involved Christ's official relation to His own nation, Israel. Use signs and wonders, stagger them by amazement and the world will be at your feet.

This was a test of His dependence upon the Word of God. He had absolute confidence in His Father, quiet perfect trust. There was to be no sensationalism, He had accepted the Divine programme for His Life, and God was not to be tempted presumptuously (Deut. 6:16). As Israel's Messiah He would keep spiritual laws and await the day of realization of God's plan (Psa. 2:8,9). He knew His spiritual responsibility and lived within the realm of His Father's will. This perfect Man demonstrated His trust in God and is victorious over evil by obeying the word of God.

Third temptation. "Establish a Socialistic Kingdom." The temptation to win and woo is the most subtle of all, but it would compromise the holiness of God. This satanic appeal to the soul tested the Lord's desire to achieve personal world dominion or to bring Worship to God. He will bring this in when He reigns in righteousness (Psa. 72:8,11,17,19).

The perfect Servant and the righteous King could not be lured from the pathway of service by giving to Satan the place that belongs to God alone.

World-empire will come to Him by way of suffering and death (Matt. 28:18); He would not take a short cut to the throne.

Lessons

(1) Our Lord had neither liability nor tendency to sin; but we through Adam's fall, have both, hence "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).

(2) If our Lord could have sinned, He could not have been our Redeemer.

If He could not have been tempted, He could not have been man, and therefore one with us (Heb. 2:16-18).

(3) Appreciate His Suffering (Heb. 2:18), for suffering was keener for His spotless purity (Heb. 7:26).

(4) Appropriate His Sympathy (Heb. 4:15). He is "touched" because "tempted," He suffers with us. Yes, He understands.

(5) Use His Sword (Eph. 6:17). Knowledge of God's word, in an experimental way, is always the secret of power (Psa. 119:11).

(6) Observe the references quoted from Deuteronomy are in the opposite order to the way in which they occur in the book. God's order is worship, trust, bread, the Devil's inverted order is bread, trust, worship.

The limit to temptation (1 Cor. 10:13); The comfort (1 Pet. 4:12,13).

The Character of Christ

The claims of Christ were exclusive; His character was unique. Jesus is not one of the group of the world's great. Jesus is apart, He is beyond our analyses, He stands in a moral category by Himself. We cannot talk of Jesus in comparative, or even superlative, terms. It is a question not of comparison, but of contrast. We do not class Him with others. He was without sin, He was supernatural.

"His character was more wonderful than the greatest miracle" Tennyson.

Jesus issued a challenge concerning Himself, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46). No one answered. When He invited them to accuse Him, He could stay and bear their scrutiny. He was without sin and lived a life of perfect obedience to His Father's will (John 8:29).

The study of the personality of the Lord Jesus surpasses almost everything in practical value.

Let us look at some features in His character which forbid His possible classification with men.

C—Compassion

As He looked on the multitude He was moved with compassion (Matt. 14:14). He felt for the diseased and healed them (Matt. 9:36). Compassion for the destitute (Matt. 15:32), they were fed. The defiled leper was cleansed (Mark 1:41). The distressed woman was comforted. He always had eyes for the broken-hearted (Luke 7:13). Like the Samaritan, He came where we were to heal, raise and elevate (Luke 10:33).

H—Humility

He was meek and lowly in heart (Matt. 11:29). He was ever clothed in humility (2 Cor. 10:1). This queen of graces was exhibited by Him in His life among men. Earth had only a manger for Him who was at once too high and too humble to be ranked among the great ones (Luke 2:4-7). Seen in the poverty He accepted (Luke 9:58; 2 Cor. 8:9). Exhibited in taking our nature (Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:10). This act suggests His lowliness and His Lordship, His oneness with humanity and His uniqueness in humanity.

He partook of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15; 5:7). He became a Servant (Matt. 20:28; Luke 22:27; Phil. 2:7). He combined lowliness as the Servant of Jehovah, with His Lordship as God's Vicegerent (Isa. 42:1-3; 52:13,15). View Him on His entry into Jerusalem (Zeph. 9:9 with Matt. 21:5,7). He submitted to sufferings (Matt. 26:37-39; Acts 8:32) and to death (John

10:15,17,18; 1 Pet. 2:23). Psalms 22 and 69 portray Him shamefully treated, despised and dishonoured, belittled and betrayed.

A—Actions

“Grace” and “truth” describe His personal character. Grace was manifest in everything that He was and did. In His life there was a beautiful harmony of virtues and yet a blending of contrasts. Mercy and justice were blended in all His actions and judgments, yet one never prevailed at the expense of the other. In Him was no weakness, no exaggeration or strain, no strong and weak points, as is the case with the rest of mankind. He displayed absolute perfection in every circumstance and relationship of life. Other men are notable for one conspicuous virtue—Abraham for faith, Moses for meekness, Job for patience, Daniel for comeliness and courage, Paul for humility—but in Jesus perfection, Godward and manward. Unique, complete, balanced, perfect. Boyhood and youth with its perfect innocence; the presence of power, integrity, sociability, courage and tenderness in manhood. “He is altogether lovely.” Study His activities in John chapter eleven, look upon the greatest Person who ever lived, “who went about doing good” (Acts 10:38). In Him majesty and humility uniquely combined (John 13:1,3,4,5)

R—Righteous

“My righteous servant” (Isa. 53:11); “the Righteous” (1 John 2:1; 2:29; 3:7); King of righteousness (Heb. 7:2). The Righteous One (Dan. 9:14). The Lord Jesus is the fountain, fulness and finality of the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel (Rom. 1:17). He is the righteous Branch (Jer. 23:5) and the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). In His hand a sceptre of Righteousness during His majestic reign (Heb. 1:8; Isa. 32:1). Christ is inherently and essentially righteous and righteousness is made available to us because of His redemptive work (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 3:23). He was the Preacher of righteousness in the great congregation (Psa. 90:9). Study the importance of righteous living in John’s first Epistle. We rejoice that the reign of grace is founded and grounded in righteousness (Rom. 5:21).

A—Abundant Mercy

The mercy of God is rich (Eph. 2:4) great (Isa. 84:7), plenteous (Psa. 86:5,15) and abundant (1 Pet. 1:3). Mercy was manifest in the sending of Christ (Luke 1:78) and in the salvation provided (Tit. 3:5).

The compassion of the Lord was an expression of His mercy. He cleansed the leper (Mark 1:41) was merciful when He saw the widow’s grief (Luke 7:13). He entered with true sympathy into the sorrows which passed on others hearts. The scattered multitude and sick knew His abundant mercy (Matt. 9:36; 14:14).

It is revealed in all its fulness as our merciful High Priest (Heb. 2:17). The characteristics of this Priest are both bountifully expressed and beautifully exhibited in the riches of His grace and the blessings of His mercy. We have such an high priest (Heb. 8:1). His ministry as priest after the Melchizedek pattern is both munificent in resource and magnificent in range. Always generous in His ministry and gracious in His mercy toward us.

C—Courage

“Truth” was a marked characteristic of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. His life was holy, His word was true. His whole character being the embodiment of truth called for courage. His integrity, the evident presence and power of manliness, is quite unlike what we find in any other life.

His courage is born of truth; it is dominated by righteousness, as to His character He was from above. From this world He derived nothing (John 8:23). See the bearing of the Master as He enters His Father’s house and finds it desecrated. His resolute step as He advances, the uplifted whip of cords as He casts out the unholy traffickers (John 2:13-17). His moral courage was tremendous. His denunciations in rebuking the hypocrisy of the ruling classes and religious leaders of His day (Matt. 23:13-16, 23-29, 33).

He was derided by the rulers (Luke 23:35); railed at by the thieves (Luke 23:39); betrayed by Judas (Luke 22:47); mocked by Herod (Luke 23:11); threatened by Pilate (John 18:20, 21, 33-37), yet never stooped to self-vindication but maintained a majestic silence.

T—Truth

He is the Truth (John 14:6, 7, 18). In Him the combination of grace and truth, a perfect blend of equally perfect proportions. Truth was precious to Him, “Delighting in the law of the Lord” (Psa. 1:2). Walking with God in an intimacy which not even an Enoch could know, Christ gave heed in all things to the Word (Psa. 40:7, 8; Matt. 3:15). It was precious to Him and governed His life (John 8:26, 29, 31, 32). Nothing marred His communion with God, it went on undiminished, He lived in the sunshine of the Father’s face. He spake the truth, He revealed God yet was rejected, (John 8:45-47). He was called “Faithful and True” (Rev. 19:11); no unrighteousness in Him (John 7:18). His enemies acknowledged His character and courage as true (Matt. 22:16). Truth came by Christ (John 1:17); He bore witness to the truth (John 18:37); and truth is in Him (Rom. 9:1). He was surrounded by ruthless hostility almost all through His earthly life, yet was entirely without sin. He was a moral miracle.

E—Essentially Holy

“Glorious in holiness” is true of Him (Exod. 15:11; Psa. 2:6; Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27). Our Lord is highest in holiness, grandest in goodness, purest in preciousness and repletest in righteousness. The Scriptures clearly teach

His absolute sinlessness. He stands alone in the stainless beauty of perfect manhood. His disciples who were most in His company and who knew Him best realized His sinlessness. Peter referred to Him as "the Holy One and the Just" and declared "He did no sin" (Acts 3:14; 1 Peter 2:22; 3:18). John emphatically affirms "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Paul writes, "Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). He did not claim to be good, but to be God. "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8:46).

Gabriel announced His coming birth as "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35). The prophecy of David "Thine holy One" (Psa. 16:10). He was essentially the Holy One (Acts 4:27 R.V.; Heb. 7:26); without spot (Heb. 9:14); "did nothing amiss" (Luke 22:41).

Listen to the seraphim as they praise His perfection, "Holy, Holy, Holy" (Isa. 6:3).

He was a perfectly Holy Man and declared His own holiness (John 14:30).

R—Renown

"All men seek for thee" (Mark 1:37). "They came to Him from every quarter" (Mark 1:21), they gathered around Him (Mark 2:2; Luke 4:42); they listened to Him (Luke 15:1). His name and His fame spread abroad through His life, miracles and teaching (Luke 4:31-34; 36-37; John 7:46).

How great is His beauty, how great is His power

His Person our Stronghold, His Presence a Tower,

How great is His goodness, how precious His grace

Surpassing all bound'ries, expansive as space.

—Author unknown.

The Teaching of Christ

The Lord Jesus proved that He was the Son of God sent to procure redemption by His death, by the Life He lived, the truth He taught and the works He wrought. Nicodemus said, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." His teaching and His miracles proved His authenticity. Forty five times in the gospels Jesus is described as Teacher and His followers were called disciples. He called Himself, "Teacher and Lord" (John 13:13).

The manner and the matter of His teaching is worthy of reverent consideration.

It was unique

"Never Man spake like this Man," the officers of the chief priests reported (John 7:46). He is the peerless Teacher of the ages. No wonder the Pharisees were baffled, frustrated, intrigued, and at times angry with Christ. They were utterly bewildered by His claims and teaching (John 8:27). He had been sent by God (v.26). His message is from God, with God's full authority (vs.26,28). In the O.T. the prophets introduced their teaching with the words, "Thus saith the Lord." Never once did Jesus use this phrase. He spoke as One who had authority (Matt. 7:28). His teaching made a deep impression on His hearers (Luke 4:14-15,32).

There was simplicity and depth, charming directness and yet profundity. His words and His works arise directly out of the possible relationship to the Father, and they therefore reveal the truth of God (John 8:26).

He claimed Divine companionship (v.29). He came to bring God to men and to bring men to God; this was the object of His teaching (John 14:6).

It was authoritative

In Christ revelation is complete—it is grace and truth. Unlike the prophets who claimed authority, He spake from personal knowledge, and His favourite formula was "Verily, verily I say unto you" (John 3:3; 5:24,25). There was no timidity, no hesitation as to what He felt to be the truth (John 7:46). When invited to preach at Nazareth Jesus took a most significant passage of Scripture (Isa. 61:1) and claimed that the things He was doing were a direct fulfilment of it (Luke 4:21). He spake out fearlessly on every occasion and could say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen" (John 3:11). Divine revelation was clear, "seen" and "speak". In Capernaum they were astonished at His authority (Luke 4:32) and amazed at His power (v.36). They were beginning to realize that God

Himself was speaking directly to men through Christ. The power of His teaching was deeply felt. Our Lord was able to turn every occurrence to a personal, spiritual purpose effectively, without professional moralising (Matt. 16:6-12; John 6:24-27). The Jewish leaders could assess His authority but were not prepared to recognise His claim to Messiahship.

It was powerful yet gracious

(Luke 24:22,32). They were astonished at the grace and love in His utterances. The spiritual force of His personality expressed in His utterances enthralled His hearers. When Christ spoke on any subject, there was nothing more to be said, such were His unique qualities as a Teacher.

His tenderness deeply impressed His hearers (Mk. 1:45—2:1,2; Luke 15:1). Truth was the foundational principle behind all Christ's utterances (John 18:37). He said what He believed without regard to consequences. He never flattered, nor disguised, nor concealed.

He spoke words of appreciation (Matt. 10:42; 25:37-40; Mk. 12:43,44). To others words of cheer (Luke 5:13,20; 7:13,22,28), fulfilling Isa. 50:4. Yet Christ never let slip statements which He had afterwards to modify or retract. Read Peter's tribute in John 6:68,69 and the description given of Peter's words in Acts 11:14. His words carried conviction even in the face of opposition. In quality and revealing power He is unsurpassable and final. The authority of His teaching was infallible and although He was denied and rejected, yet He could not be gainsaid.

It was vital

He spake to the conscience to arrest (Mk. 10:18; John 4:16); to the heart to comfort (Luke 7:12; John 20:15,16), and to the mind to instruct (John 3:5-14; chapters 14-16). He ever went to the heart of things. "He came preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14). He made clear the plan of redemption and the need of repentance. His sole concern was for truth and the delivery of His Father's message (John 6:29,44,54-58). Study the wide variety of spiritual truths clearly expressed in John 3:1-15.

John the Baptist appreciated His words (John 3:29). His sheep hear His voice (John 10:16,27). How true "Behold . . . who teacheth like Him" (Job 36:22).

It was complete

Both its substance and characteristics are noteworthy. Its reality, power and attractiveness is universal in its appeal. It touches life at every point, its moral ideals are challenging. His parables were vividly and lucidly expressed and called for repentance in relation to sin; trust in relation to God; love in relation to God and man.

In spite of all the progress of thought, not a single new ethical idea or ideal has been given to the world to match or reach the standards set by the life or teaching of Christ.

It was practical and ethical

The heart of God's word to man is the "Word of life" (1 John 1:1). The revelation of eternal life is a fact of history, a reality which has been "heard", "seen", and "touched". "Seen with our eyes" expresses the calm, intent, continuous contemplation of Christ. The teaching of Christ was meant to be transmuted into holy living (Acts 4:13). The Sermon on the Mount raised an ethical code never equalled before or since. Admired by men of character and ideals but alas not fully accepted or applied. The description of the kingdom's ideal citizen is that of the King. He lived out His teaching (Acts 1:1).

His word possesses a dynamic, a special power for making itself a force in the hearts of men (John 7:17). It introduces into morality an entirely new spirit, the filial spirit, the joyous response of a child to a Father. No hearer was left in doubt as to the person to whom the message applied. Their response was faith or rage. Great moral truths were enforced by impressive homely illustration as He taught by parables. His teaching about the kingdom of God is most instructive. Man ruled over by God, and thereby finding the full realisation of life; this is the essence of the idea of the Kingdom of God. Study Matthew ch.11 for the way the great Teacher asks and answers questions. How He honoured John the Baptist for his outstanding loyalty, humility, unselfishness and faithfulness.

Thus it is impossible to accept Christ's teaching without accepting Himself and acknowledging His claim. The sermon on the Mount (Matt. ch.5) sets out some basic principles. He endorses the supreme authority of the O.T. while at the same time penetrating the heart of its meaning. The illustrations He used from human life in the physical realm, the domestic realm, the agricultural realm, the social and religious realm are most profitable as well as practical.

Study His parabolic ministry (Matt.13); pastoral ministry in John 14-16; His practical ministry in Luke 10:30-37 and His prophetic ministry (Matt.24,25).

He forever remains the Peerless Preacher and the world's greatest Teacher.

May we daily "remember the words of the Lord Jesus" and listen attentively and respond to them wholeheartedly.

The Transfiguration of Christ

Read: Matt. 17:1-9; Mark 9:1-10; Luke 9:29-36; John 1:14 and 2 Pet. 1:16-18.

The Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus is significant and fundamental as a witness to His SUPREMACY, "was transfigured"; His SINLESSNESS, "raiment white as snow"; and His SONSHIP, "My beloved Son."

The location is unimportant, perhaps the slopes of Hermon rather than Tabor. The real value attaches to the event, it had a special splendour and a particular significance. For us today it has a threefold value; historical, dispensational, and practical.

Historical

In the splendour of the mount the two facts of the Messiahship and Saviourhood of Christ were confirmed. It also confirmed the necessity of the Cross of which the Lord had spoken. It was a turning point in our Lord's ministry. This glorious event happened midway between our Lord's Incarnation and His Ascension. The one represents the institution of our hope, the other its anticipation.

"After six days" There is no detailed record of them. Six days of silence, of sadness as the cross of shame loomed ahead. The glory and special splendour must have encouraged His heart, it emphasized His Sonship and established His Supremacy.

The perfection

The Glorified Christ, the pattern and promise of glorified humanity. The seven assembled persons: God the Creator of all things; Christ the Redeemer of the world, Moses and Elijah representing the O.T.; Peter, James and John the N.T. Moses represents the Law and Elijah Prophecy, and the others three aspects of Christianity.

In the different impressions made there is unity. Matthew stresses the beneficence of light; Mark, the purity of snow; Luke, the majesty of lightening. Peter says, "we were eye-witnesses of His majesty" (2 Pet. 1:16). The splendour of overwhelming beauty and glory.

The conversation

(Luke 9:31). His "exodus." It was most fitting that Moses and Elijah, the acknowledged representations of the Law and the Prophets, should be with Jesus in the Mount.

His journey through the waves of death to the song of resurrection (Ex. 14:22; 2 Kings 2:8; Psa. 22:22). The law and the prophets pointed alike to the sufferings and the triumph of the Crucified.

In His temptations, angels came and ministered unto Him; near the end when He faced death and its terrors, Moses and Elias came and ministered unto Him. This sympathy meant much to Jesus. He took up their imperfect work and finished it. "They departed from Him" (Luke 9:33). A greater than Moses and Elias was here, Jesus remained in unshared eminence. He was left supreme (Col. 1:18c).

The vindication

(Matt. 17:5). From the excellent glory came the voice of testimony to the superior glory of the Son. Three matters of importance are mentioned.

Divine identification

"This is my Beloved Son". The other two were but servants, this is the Son. The Father again confirmed to Him His divine Sonship. His essential Deity was manifested before these disciples and His mission interpreted.

Divine satisfaction

"In Whom I am well pleased." Our Lord is the joy of His Father's heart, and the light of His Father's face.

Spoken before at His baptism when His private life drew near to its close. Now when His public ministry was closing He has heaven's commendation.

Divine injunction

"Hear ye Him." No other voice is needed. He is the Eternal Word, not only speaking words of life, but being Himself the Word of life (1 John 1:1). The Father's testimony to his Son is derived from three parts of the O.T. Scripture (Psa. 2:7; Isa. 42:1; Deut. 18:15) teaching that Christ is the fulfilment of the Old, as He is the fulness of the New.

Dispensational

Peter's words "His Power and Coming (2 Peter 1:16) seem to recognise that in the Transfiguration there was a foreshadowing of the coming Kingdom glory. Moses and Elijah represent Israel. The presence-cloud, His Shekinah, overshadowed all the place. Of old in the tabernacle and in the temple had His cloud appeared, (Ex. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10). It will be seen when the King of glory shall come to reign (Isa. 4:5; Ezek. 10:4; 43:2,3; Rev. 10:1).

The kingdom will be that of the Son of Man (Matt. 16:28). It will be after the six days of this world's sorrow and mis-rule that the righteous reign of the Son of Man shall bring millennial rest. It will be the kingdom of God come with power (Mark 9:1). Luke says, "about an eight days after" (Luke

9:28). This may suggest its duration into the eighth day of eternal peace, into a new heaven and a new earth. The presence of Moses and Elijah illustrate those who, having died during the Great Tribulation, will be raised to enjoy the Millennial Reign. The three quotations from the Psalms, the Law and the Prophets would bear witness to the King of Glory (Psa. 24).

In Matthew we see the kingdom in prospect; in Mark in power; in Luke its pattern, ablaze with dazzling light. The supremacy, the moral purity and glory of His kingdom. The Apostles may represent the Church, but this being an earthly scene (Psa.24) the Church is not in view. The kingdom will be established on the basis of the accomplished work of Calvary, His unique sacrifice (Luke 9:31).

Practical

“There are two interesting things about the Greek verb translated “Transfigured.” The first is our English verb “metamorphose”, the second is that in the two other passages the verb is translated by the English word “transformed” (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).” Dr. Griffith Thomas.

Elevation with Christ v.1 “bringeth them up.” These three were privileged to be witnesses of Christ’s glory, later on of His sorrow. They bore adequate testimony to the glorification of our Lord’s humanity by His Deity. We are sealed in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 2:6) and should live in communion with Him and have communication from God through prayer—“apart”.

Transfiguration of Christ v.2. He is seen as the centre of heavenly glory, as expounded in Ephesians. It affected both His appearance and raiment. It transforms our character (2 Cor. 3:18). A vision of His glory (John 1:14). In the three descriptions we have the purity of snow, the majesty of lightning and the beneficence of light emanating from the Person of our Lord. The glory of Moses’ face was merely reflected glory, while that of our Lord was from within (Rev. 1:16). We should reverence the Person of Christ.

Conversation with Christ Luke 9:31. “His decease (or exodus) which He should accomplish.” Not only of His death but of His resurrection and its endless joy (Eph. 1:19-23). The very topic from which the disciples had been shrinking. That death would be the “end of the law” and the fulfilment of prophecy. This great transaction occupied the attention of heaven.

Like these disciples, we, too, need a new vision and a deeper appreciation of the value and centrality of His cross.

Commendation of Christ v.5. Out of the bright cloud—the symbol of Jehovah’s presence, the voice of God bears threefold witness to the glory of the Son. (1) His absolute Supremacy; He singles Him out from among all others. Christ is isolated in His authority. The Father had committed unto Him all authority and judgment and dominion (John 5:21-23).

(2) The Father’s unqualified delight in His Person.

(3) Fulness of revelation—“hear ye Him” (Heb. 1:2).

Separated by the Father to receive obedience and reverence and adoration. Christ is set above all principalities and powers. His dominion is undivided, His throne is unshared (Heb. 1:13).

Occupation with Christ v.8 "Jesus only." Moses and Elias would not be detained, they were at once withdrawn and were seen no more. A greater than Moses and Elias was here. The startled eyes of the disciples behold the glorified, majestic form of their Lord. It removed their fear, "Jesus came and touched them." It brought them comfort.

In Him all fulness dwells, and therefore inexhaustible supply for our every need. He remains the same, unchanging, unfailing resource of every saint today (Heb. 13:8). Revealing the future (Matt. 16:28), "The Son of Man coming in His glory." The vision of the holy mount is the pledge of future glory for Christ and His own (Col. 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:16b).

The need of the hour is our complete obedience to the word of the Lord (John 13:17; Phil. 2:12). Concentrated attention on His revelation, and continual adoration of His glorious Person (John 20:28; Psa. 45:11b).

The Death of Christ

THE WONDER OF IT

The heart of Christianity is the Bible, the heart of the Bible is the Cross, and the heart of the Cross is the very heart of God; a heart full of tenderest compassion for sinful man. The death of Christ is the fact of the Gospel, and the factor of all blessing. From the shadows of Old Testament typology to the blazing sunshine of New Testament theology, redemption is the grandest theme to captivate our hearts. Meditate on the Word of the Cross (1 Cor. 1:18); the Death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8); the blood of the Cross (Col. 1:20); the purposes of the Cross (Gal. 1:4; 3:13,14; 1 Pet. 3:18; Titus 2:14; Rom. 14:9; the triumph of the Cross (Col. 2:15).

(1) Viewed typically in the Pentateuch

Its substitutionary aspect is clear (Lev. 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:19,20). The angel (Gen. 48:16); the arm (Ex. 6:6); the animal (Ex. 12:12) all speak of redemption. The Atonement runs like a scarlet line of sacrificial death from Abel to Christ. (Heb. 12:24). The acceptable sacrifice of Gen. 8:20 is answered in Eph. 5:1. Isaac on the altar portrays Phil. 2:8. The passover lamb (Ex. 12), has its counterpart in 1 Cor. 5:7. The Levitical offerings (chs.1-7) tell of the immeasurable worth of the death of Christ. The day of atonement (Lev.16), finds its answer in 1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 9:14. The red heifer (Num.19) is fulfilled in Heb. 13:12; the brazen serpent Num. 21, is confirmed by the Lord (John 3:14).

(2) Vividly in the Psalms

Here we are given an insight into our Lord's inner feelings, and His sufferings for us, as nowhere else. They are full of Christ and the Jews are unanimous in applying a Messianic interpretation to those Psalms which are generally accepted as such by Christians. A suffering Messiah destined to reign (Psa. 22) "A Psalm of sobs." Note the tenfold use of the pronoun "MY". His loneliness vs.1,2; humiliation vs.6-8; the publicity and violence of His death vs.12-18—not the atoning aspect as in Is. 53. Psa. 40 His devotion to the will of God. Psa. 69 pictures the crucifixion with its reproach, the offence of the Cross in all its awful solemnity. In Psa. 86:6, He is bereft of lover, friend, and acquaintance. Psa. 102:7 as a sparrow alone upon a housetop in rejection.

(3) Prophetically in the prophets

In Isaiah 42 our Lord is the Ideal Servant. In chapter 50 He is the Ideal

Sufferer endowed and equipped for His ministry which entailed suffering in obedience to His Father's will. Chapter 52:13-53:12 is vicarious suffering, the One for the many. It opens with a presentation of suffering and triumph. Its unexpected sequel is His royal exaltation (52:14; John 12:24,32,33). The great prince of Daniel as in Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:15, is linked with seven great events in relation to Israel, during the period of "seventy weeks" (Zech. 13:1; Dan. 9:24,25 with Rev. 1:5,6). The smitten shepherd with the sheep scattered is a clear revelation of Christ both in His Divine and human nature (Zech. 13:7). There is the "blood of the Covenant" (with Matt. 26:38 R.V.).

(4) Historically in the Gospels

In the Gospels only the briefest account is given of our Lord's life and ministry, yet His death is described in detail by each Evangelist. In Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45 the Lord speaks of the very purpose of His coming to earth, "to give His life a ransom for many" His vicarious death for our sins. "For" is "instead of" and "ransom" is *lutron* the ransom price paid for our deliverance. Here our Lord condenses in a single phrase His atoning death. It was absolutely necessary (Luke 22:37; 24:7; John 3:14). He went out of this world voluntarily (John 10:18; 18:11; 19:30). John wrote his Gospel, "that by believing men might have life through His Name" (20:31).

(5) Doctrinally in the Epistles

Here the Spirit explains the meaning and purpose of the death of Christ (Eph. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:20-24 with Acts 2:23). In Rom. 3:25 He is the "Mercy Seat" and God is "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Justified by His blood shed for us, saved by His life in heaven, the blood sprinkled (Rom. 5:9,10; Heb. 9:22). In 1 Cor. 1:18, His death saves, the theme of the Gospel (15:3). In 2 Cor. 5:19, we are reconciled and made righteous (v.21). In Gal. 1:4, emancipation from the character of this age. In 6:14, the symbol of separation from the world. Redemption through His blood (Eph. 1:7), and brought nigh to God (2:13) because of His acceptable sacrifice (5:1). His devotion and obedience unto death will bring universal subjugation (Phil. 2:9,10). Our Lord triumphed over the powers of darkness (Col. 2:15).

(6) Eternally in the Revelation

How true, "The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's Land." John wept because no man was found worthy to open the scroll. Tears flooded his eyes, tears of concern and compassion over an inheritance unredeemed (5:4). He was consoled by one of the elders who assured him that One was present to open the sealed scroll. He beheld the Kinsman-Redeemer in His Sovereignty—"the Lion of the tribe of Judah," and in His Centrality—in the midst (v.5). There He stands, the Lion and the Lamb, the One who is both Sovereign and Saviour. He is referred to as the Lamb twenty-eight

times in this book. Not the usual word for lamb, but a word which literally means "a little Lamb." Revelation places a new and unique emphasis on Christ as the Lamb. Slain (5:6) redeeming (v.9), and worshipped (v.12).

The wrath of the Lamb, a dreadful day of terror (6:16,17). His Blood brings purity, privilege and provision (7:9-17). Victory by the blood of the Lamb (12:11). Followers (14:4) victory (17:14) and apostles (21:14). The marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper are separate events (19:7-9). The bride, the Lamb's wife (21:9) and the Lamb's book of life (v.29), should fill our hearts with wonder and worship. The blood is the centre of heaven's throne (5:6) and the theme of heaven's song (v.9). The worth and the work of the Lamb will provide us with an inexhaustible subject for eternal praise in heaven.

THE WEALTH OF IT

The wonder of the death of Christ emphasises the glorious power of His blood as the only means of redemption. The wealth of His death is seen in the words "That He Might," revealing the glorious purpose of God, Christ died as a "sin-bearer." Paul, Peter and John link His death with our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 3:5).

(1) **A new destiny** 1 Pet. 3:18. In relation to God.

The Cross is the pivotal event in history. In spite of its mystery there is meaning. Peter learned to accept the necessity of Christ's sufferings (Acts 3:18). He urges the saints to bear suffering patiently, and refers them to the cross for their inspiration and example.

Christ's sufferings are unique both in character and in consequence. He achieved our reconciliation to God. The sin offering aspect is in view here. (Lev. 10:17; 16:22; Isa. 53:12). This verse 1 Peter 3:18 gives us salvation in its fullness:—Expiation, substitution, crucifixion and resurrection, vindication and coronation (v.22). Christ's death is atoning—"for our sins," substitutionary—on our behalf (Mark 14:24; 1 Tim. 2:6); final—"once for all" (Heb. 9:26; 10:10,12); effective—"to bring us to God." On the cross the Saviour made there a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for "the sins of the world." (John 1:29). There is salvation through His suffering; pardon through His pain, and life through His death.

(2) **A new deliverance** Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8. In relation to Satan.

Two of the purposes of Christ's Incarnation are the destruction of the Devil (v.14) and our representation in heaven as High Priest (vs.17,18). It is for the help of men, and not of angels, that Christ came (14-16 R.V.). The success of His work has two aspects, the devil's destruction, and our deliverance.

IDENTIFICATION (v.14a) a body of flesh and blood. "Took part"—the humanity was self-assumed. He took, He did not inherit or receive a

body. Existing in His divine nature, He took part in our nature, sin apart. He was made like unto His brethren in every respect. He assumed true and perfect manhood.

DESTRUCTION (v.14b). Destruction here means the loss of well-being rather than loss of being. It means to nullify or to bring to nought. For the believer Satan's power has been made void, He received a death wound at Calvary, He is a defeated foe and his doom is sure (Rev. 20:10).

EMANCIPATION (v.15) from fear, for Christ is our Kinsman (v.14a) Redeemer (v.14b), Avenger (v.15). Our risen Lord now has "the keys of Death and Hades" (Rev. 1:18), complete authority over them. For the believer the fear produced, namely, death as penal and bondage, has been abolished by our Lord. There is now no uncertainty, horror and gloom for Christ brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel (2 Tim. 1:10).

(3) **A new discovery** Gal. 1:4,5. In relation to the world.

Here is the Gospel, guilt—"our sins," grace—"He gave Himself," gratitude—for deliverance, and glory to God and the Lord Jesus. The profound utterance in verse four is the foundation on which the truth of this Epistle rests.

AN ACKNOWLEDGED SAVIOUR (v.3b). His full title is a splendid argument for the Deity of Christ, who, in this salutation is made one with the Father; He is Sovereign, Saviour and Sanctifier.

AN ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE (v.4). The value of the blood shed on Calvary rests upon the nature of the One who gave it. Christ was both the Priest who offered the sacrifice and the Sacrifice that was offered (Heb. 10:12).

OUR ABHORRENT SINS. He left His glory—lit. throne, to die for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). He gave Himself *FOR* my sins to save me *FROM* my sins, a ransom so immeasurable to rescue us. "Our," Christianity lies in the personal pronouns. His death was *Voluntary*; it was for our sins and, therefore, *Vicarious*. And as it was to deliver us from evil, it was also *Ethical*; and being according to the will of God, it was *Effectual*, and victorious. Yet all too many Christians are more absorbed in being conformed to the world than in being transformed by the Lord (Rom. 12:2).

ADORATION OF HEART (v.5) As the apostle contemplates the wonder of God's redeeming love in Christ, his overflowing heart bursts forth in a doxology, a song of praise to God.

(4) **A new dynamic** Gal. 3:24,25. In relation to the Spirit

In this chapter Paul champions the truth that Justification is by faith in Christ alone. We need redemption from the curse of the Law that is upon us all. Christ is *our Redeemer* (v.14). These saints have turned their eyes from the Saviour to a sorcerer (v.1). They had received the Holy Spirit (v.2), yet were trying to be perfect by the flesh instead of by faith (v.3). The Lord Jesus

enters life's arena as our champion to do battle for us. We have been brought back from slavery at the tremendous cost of Christ being made a curse for us (v. 13; 2 Cor. 5:21). He paid the debt to set us free. *Our Benefactor* (v. 15), two gracious purposes of His death are here, (1) the extension of blessing to the Gentiles as well as to Jews; and (2) the outpouring of the Spirit upon all who trust Christ.

"The blessing of Abraham" is justification by faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:20—5:11). We have a new standing with God, and a new dynamic in our life. A totally new indwelling life-principle. The Law has been satisfied and we are justified by faith (v. 13, 14), and sanctified by the Spirit, with His gifts and graces as promised through faith.

(5) A new dignity before God, Gal. 4:5, 6. In relation to the Father.

The theme of this chapter is faith and freedom. The word for bondage, or slavery, appears twelve times. Trace the word for freedom used here. The application of the teaching—"even so". It is *Ethical* (v. 3). Before Christ came the world was in its nonage, and in bondage to rudimentary things. Christ is the answer to this problem.

HISTORICAL (vs. 4, 5). Where can we find a clearer statement of the fact that Christ was both divine and human? He was possessed of perfect deity and perfect humanity. "Made of a woman" brings Christ into relation with the human race, "under the law," brings Him into relation with the Jewish nation. Christ was sent not only to reveal God but to redeem man.

SPIRITUAL (vs. 6, 7). Adoption is "son-placing" by the actual impartation of Divine life. Faith in Christ brings us into the Family. The privilege of sonship (v. 6) and heirship, for Sonship involves Heirship. Our relation to God is no longer servile but filial. From the penalty of sins to the legacy of sons—what an amazing transition! Redeemed, related and made rich, sonship comes to us from the Three Persons of the Godhead.

(6) A new direction Titus 2:24. In relation to lawlessness.

Grace is viewed here dynamically. Its revelation in Christ (v. 11), leads to a definite act of renunciation made effective by daily self-denial. Redemption and sanctification are ours through our Saviour's self-sacrifice. We are His own possession. Our expectation is the coming Lord and His claims will be vindicated at His manifestation in glory.

A DEFINITE DESCRIPTION OF DEITY, "the great God" an expression unique in the N.T. This is an assertion of His equality in glory with the Father. Our salvation proceeds from none less than God Himself. The designation of Christ as God is in harmony with other Scripture (John 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:1).

THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION (v. 14) viewed both negatively and positively. Its price—the setting free from slavery or a death sentence by the payment of a price, "the ransom" (1 Tim. 2:6). We are rescued from the

power of sin, bondage in iniquity, His death was a definite voluntary act. It was an exhaustive act—"Himself." His whole unique personality, not merely His blood. It was substitutionary, "for us," (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). Positively—"to purify." Not only freed from the consequences and power of sin, but the dignity of being His own possession. By character and conduct we are to reveal that we belong wholly to Him.

(7) **A new dominion** Rom. 14:9 R.V. In relation to Christian living.

Believers belong to Christ because they have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). He wants to be "Lord" of every department of life (vs.7-9). The resurrection of Christ is seen to be the basis of His Lordship over His people. The Lordship of Christ is true, not only of the subjects here mentioned, but also of the whole of the believer's life. The recognition of His Lordship will enable us to tolerate differences so long as they do not involve disobedience to the Word of God. It will enable us to become large-hearted Christians, emphasizing unity in things essential and liberty in things non-essential. Christ's right of possession is founded upon His death and resurrection. Lordship belongs to the sphere of redemptive accomplishment. As the triumphant Mediator He has been invested with absolute sovereignty over both the dead and the living. As God, He hath a universal dominion over all; but as Mediator, He hath a more special dominion over all the Father gave to Him in resurrection (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 2:9,10).

He is designated Lord (Acts 2:36). He deserves to be Lord (Rom. 14:9). It ought to act as one of the strongest deterrents for not breaking the bonds of fellowship (Rom. 14:1-12). "He is thy Lord" (Psa. 45:11). "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Meditate on "The Cross in Galatians." A means of rescue and emancipation (1:4); of removal and identification (2:20); of restoration and inspiration (3:1); of redemption and introduction (3:13); of relationship and inheritance (4:4-7); of reproach and persecution (5:11); of reproduction and separation (5:24) and of rejoicing or exultation (6:14).

The Atonement

Atonement by the sacrificial death of Christ is the central truth of the Bible. The Epistles explain the doctrine of atonement, the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement (Lev.16) portrays the absolute necessity of the shedding of the blood of the sin offerings. The type is fulfilled by our Lord Jesus (Gal. 3:13; Heb. 13:12; John 3:14).

The word "atonement" is only found in the Old Testament, Leviticus ch.16 is central in describing the procedure of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement in Israel. The one occurrence of the word in the N.T. is a mistranslation (Rom. 5:11). The Bible margin shows "reconciliation" as the alternative reading and this, without question, is the right translation (see also 2 Cor. 5:18,19).

Hebrews ch.9 is largely the exposition and application to us of the day of atonement.

The Meaning

The first time a word occurs explains its meaning in other places. The word atonement occurs in Gen. 6:14 and is rendered "pitch", it means to "cover over." The Hebrew word is Keph-phar, to cover and the noun "kopher" signifies a covering. Adam had a divine, complete covering and this illustrates the work of Christ in His death for sin, (Heb. 2:17; 9:12,14,22). "Mercy-seat" is another word so called because it was the covering or lid of the ark of the covenant (Exod. 25:17,21). It also means "to appease," "to make satisfaction" (Gen. 32:17-20). The present of cattle was designed to cover Jacob from Esau's wrath, as the sacrifice of Christ covers the repentant sinner from God's righteous indignation against sin. "I will appease" and then appear, "and he will accept" (v.20). The simplest statement of this truth is perhaps found in the words, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24). The Person who suffered on the cross is the Son of God, the Lord of life and glory.

The Necessity

The awful fact of sin, its nature and effect. Sin has affected man's relationship to God and also his own nature. "Sin is lawlessness," expressed in actual transgression. It brings man into a state of guilt before God, and issues in man's entire separation from God (Gen. 3). Sin also affects all the powers of man's nature. It darkens the intellect, deadens the conscience,

defiles the heart and distorts the will. God's broken law must be honoured, His righteous character vindicated, and this great need is involved and expressed in the thought of atonement (Rom. 3:21-24).

Study the "musts" in the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus. The word is used by Christ Himself on eleven occasions. Here are a few: (Matt. 26:59; Mark 8:31; Luke 2:49; 13:32,33; 22:37; 24:26,44; John 3:14; 9:3,4; 12:34). These indicate and unfold to us the vicarious atonement of His sacrificial death, and that nothing else will meet God's claims or our needs.

The Provision

Only a Divine Person could offer perfect obedience and fulfil God's will. This obedience must be perfect in thought, intent and motive, as well as in word and action (John 6:38-40; Heb. 10:7). Christ is the Daysman (Job 9:33), the Mediator who is both God and Man, and who is also free from sin (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 3:5). Nothing short of the death of Christ could suffice (2 Cor. 5:21). Three prepositions used emphasise that Christ died "on behalf of" (1 Cor. 15:3); "with reference to" (Matt. 26:28); and "instead of" us (Matt. 26:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

The Means

By blood shed (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). The mercy-seat in Israel's tabernacle was God's earthly throne but it typified His throne in the heavens. The animal blood that was sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat, spoke of the blood of His own dear Son (Rom. 5:9,10. Read Lev. 10:17; 16:10,11; 17:11). The blood shed indicates the life given, and speaks of the adequacy and sufficiency of the work of Christ (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:12). The preciousness of His blood can only be estimated by the dignity and purity of Him who shed it. In His Cross, and there alone, every Divine attribute was harmonized as regards its dealings with sin (Psa. 85:10). The Scripture knows of no atonement apart from shed blood (Deut. 12:23; Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:12).

Christ is the satisfying atonement (Job 33:29; Psa. 89:19). Spurgeon says "Christ is our Adornment and our Atonement." Study the various aspects of "the blood" in Heb. chs.9 and 10, twelve references. Also the word "once."

To Whom Made. "It is before the Lord" (Lev. 14:18,31; 15:15; 15:30; 16:10). The Lord alone can estimate the sinfulness of sin, therefore atonement must be in Him. Atonement is a work done for us by the death of Christ. It expresses what Christ has given to God on our behalf. God is the One who is propitiated. It was God who required the Atonement and God who provided it.

What His justice demanded His love provided (John 3:16). He now can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:26). Reconciliation in the N.T. seems to emphasize man's side (2 Cor. 5:20), but this presupposes an already existing reconciliation of God to man by the

death of Christ; this Propitiation being the sacrificial offering of the death of Christ (1 John 2:2); (Job 33:24 margin).

Only the priest could make an atonement (Lev. 16:6,10,11,16,17,18,20, etc.). The priest acted in a twofold capacity: he represented God to the people and he represented the people to God. Our Lord did the same (Heb. 2:17; 9:14).

Unique and Voluntary

The death of Christ was the deliberate will and plan of God (Acts 2:23). In Scripture it stands in a place mysteriously unique, being sacrificial and propitiatory. Before the world was founded God the Father determined that His Son should fulfil the function of a Saviour for sinners (1 Pet. 1:20).

The Father and the Son entered into a compact and a covenant; the Son was to accomplish the work assigned to Him (John 12:27; 17:2,4). It was the will of God to bruise Him (Isa. 53:10). The design of the whole plan of expiating sin by Christ's sacrificial death was the Father's (Rom. 3:25). Christ willingly died upon the Cross (John 10:11,18; Isa. 50:4-6; Heb. 10:5-10). He poured out His soul unto death (Isa. 53:12). He gave Himself up as an offering and a sacrifice.

Its Dignity and Sufficiency

This is expressed in the terms used:—a "redemption," or deliverance by ransom (Matt. 20:28); "purchase," as by a price (1 Cor. 6:20); "covering," as by an interposition (Rom. 4:7); "under-taking of responsibility" as by a surety (Heb. 7:22); "bearing," in the sense of endurance of penalty (Lev. 24:15; Heb. 9:28); "acceptance" as of a propitiatory sacrifice by an offended God (1 John 2:2,3). "Deliverance from the death-sentence of a Law, by virtue of one who has borne it (Gal. 3:13)" Dr. H.C.G. Moule. We cannot over-emphasize either the worth or the eternal character of Christ's sacrifice (Heb. 9:13,14). His sacrifice was final—once for all—and utterly sufficient for all time (Heb. 9:26; 10:11,14; 1 Pet. 3:18).

The vicarious aspect of atonement is the manward side of the cross (Heb. 9:28). "Satisfaction" expresses the quality and effect of His work of suffering, obedience even unto death regarded as a suffering of the penalty, in order to release His people therefrom.

Blessings

Some of these are found in Lev. 16 (see Outline Studies in the Pentateuch). In v.30 we have the key to the whole chapter, there is the work, the worker, the time and the purpose. That day was one of humiliation (v.4) and affliction (v.29), requiring sacrifice for the priest (v.3), the people (v.5) and his family (vs.17,33).

(1) The sprinkled blood brought forgiveness through imputation (vs.21,22; 1 Pet. 2:24).

(2) Cleansing (vs.16,30; John 13:8; 1 John 1:7,9; Rev. 1:5).

(3) Perfect rest (v.29; 23:27-29). No work to be done foreshadowing the fundamental principle (Eph. 2:9; Tit. 3:5).

(4) Nearness to God (vs.12-15; for the veil was opened. Christ's death removed this last barrier (Luke 23:45). We have complete acceptance, the way into the holiest is now manifest (Heb. 9:8). We have access (Heb. 10:19-21).

The Resurrection of Christ

ITS CERTAINTY

The Resurrection is essential to Christianity, for by it alone can Christianity be confirmed. It is the Essential of the essentials of the Christian faith. 1 Cor. 15 is the great resurrection chapter, in the opening verses of which Paul plainly declares the Gospel (vs.1-4).

The chapter shows that the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus was a literal, bodily resurrection, and an indisputable fact. In the New Testament this fact is mentioned over one hundred times and the Lord Jesus was seen by over five hundred witnesses. If the resurrection can be disproved, the Lord Jesus is for ever discredited as Redeemer and Son of God (Matt. 12:39,40; John 2:20,22; Acts 25:19). Let us consider the following clear and definite evidences.

Intimated by the Lord Himself

Before He died, He said that on the third day after His death He would rise again (Matt. 12:39,40; 16:21; 17:9; 20:18,19; 26:32; Mark 9:31; John 2:18-22; 20:19-29; Rev. 1:18). If He did not rise, He was an imposter, a deceiver, a liar (Matt. 27:63,64). To disbelieve the bodily resurrection of Christ is to reject His own testimony. His same body rose from the tomb, a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), a body that could be fed and handled (Matt. 28:9; John 20:27).

Indicated in the four gospels

Many have attempted to discredit the accuracy of these records, but no one has ever succeeded. Lord Lyttleton was keen to expose as pure fabrication the Resurrection of Christ. "I was forced to the conclusion that Jesus Christ really rose from the dead. I got down on my knees and asked that risen Saviour to save me and He has done it."

"Him that Liveth" (margin Luke 24:5). He lives as He said He would (Luke 24:8). He had a purpose in dying (Heb. 9:26). He said He would die and rise again, and He kept His word. He lives in spite of death (Acts 2:24). The linen clothes attest His Resurrection (Luke 24:12). Our Lord passed through the swathing without disturbing them. The resurrection was a miracle and the most important fact of history. It has a personal value (John 20:8-18); an evidential value (vs.26-29); an evangelistic value (John 20:30,31; Matt. 28:20); and an eschatological value, the glorious consummation of His coming (John 21:22). Our Lord's veracity is verified by His resurrection.

Interest of angels

(Matt. 28:2-7). The fact was declared by angels. The arrival and activity (v.2); appearance (v.3); assurance (vs.5-7). A message that calmed the minds of the women, assuring them of a crucified Saviour risen from the dead. The significance of the empty tomb, this fact was never questioned.

The body was never removed by Joseph, the disciples or the soldiers. The angels directed the women assuring them of seeing the Lord (vs.7,9). The minute details given are authentic accounts as seen by eye witnesses.

Impressed upon the disciples

(Matt. 28:7). There were at least fourteen groups who saw the Lord alive after His death. (1) John 20:14-18; (2) Matt. 28:8-10; (3) Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5; (4) Luke 24:13-31; (5) Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-24; (6) John 20:24-29; (7) John 21:1-23; (8) 1 Cor. 15:6; (9) 1 Cor. 15:7; (10) Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-20; Acts 1:3-12; (11) Acts 9:3-6; 1 Cor. 15:8; (12) Acts 22:17-21; 23:11; (13) Acts 7:55; (14) Rev. 1:18.

These prove the centrality of the resurrection in the life of the disciples.

Insisted upon in apostolic preaching

Note the transformation of the disciples and their radiant witness which was bold and courageous (Acts 4:13). "This Jesus did God raise up" (Acts 2:32). Raised by Divine power (Acts 3:15; 10:40; 13:33-37; Rom. 4:24,25). The Scriptures were verified (Acts 2:25-28; 4:11; 10:42,43). The Saviour was vindicated; His Sonship declared (Rom. 1:4); His claims vindicated and His Deity proved (Mark 14:61-64). They preached Jesus and the Resurrection (Acts 3:15; 13:30-40; 2 Tim. 2:8). Belief in the Resurrection of the Lord brings salvation (Rom. 10:9) and confession of the Lord proves salvation (Rom. 10:9). Rather than deny their Risen Lord, they were willing to be persecuted, imprisoned and even martyred (Acts 5:41; 7:54-60; 12:2). Paul's personal witness to the Resurrection in a simple definite statement, "But God raised Him from the dead," (Acts 13:30). It produced in him a personal change and his experience of Christ claims the Resurrection of Christ as fact (1 Cor. 15:8-10,20).

Important for faith

(1 Cor. 15:12-20). Paul attributed his conversion to his meeting with the living Christ (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8). Without the Resurrection the gospel would be null and void (v.14); no hope of forgiveness (v.17); utterly lost with no possibility of salvation (v.19). It provides a solid basis for faith, it gives our faith substance (Acts 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:21; Rom. 10:9,10; 1 Cor. 15:17). We have a living hope (1 Cor. 15:20,23; 2 Cor. 4:14; Phil. 3:21; Tit. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3). Resurrection is the public declaration of victory over death and the grave. Our bodies will bear the image of Christ, the heavenly Man (1 Cor. 15:47-57). The Resurrection was the foundation truth of the apostolic gospel.

It is the Gibraltar of Christian evidences, the Waterloo of infidelity. "The real historical evidence for the resurrection is the fact that it was believed, preached, propagated and produced its fruit and effect in the new phenomenon of the Christian Church, long before any of our Gospels was written." Ed. Denny.

Message, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." (Col. 3:1).

ITS VALIDITY

(1) **The confirmation**

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is vital, fundamental and essential. The Evangelists record the resurrection as the completion of the picture drawn of their Master, whose life and character had been unique.

Christ rose as the supreme attestation of His own truth and victory, and of the certainty of His eternal triumph. (John 2:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:24,25; 1 Thess. 4:14). He became the Last Adam in Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45-47).

His resurrection is the predominating theme of the witness in the Acts. The opening verses affirm it (1:3); Matthias bore witness to it, a proof of apostleship (1:23); the Old Testament scriptures embodied the fact of it, emphasized it as the work of God (2:24; Ps. 16:11). He was exalted by God (v.33); acknowledged by God (v.33); and honoured by God (vs.34-36). The healed man was an evidence of resurrection power (3:15,16). The declaration of resurrection brought persecution (4:2,10,33,29). It was the theme of Peter's preaching (5:29-32; 10:39-41). Paul revelled in this transforming truth (13:30-38; 17:31; 23:6-10; 26:23). Here is historical confirmation of its reality.

(2) **The implication**

The Roman epistle gives us aspects of the doctrine of resurrection.

The Declaration of His Deity (1:4). The Father patently marked Christ out as His Son. It manifested that He was the Son in power in a special sense. It is the designation that He is the Son of God in possession of power that He is ready to bestow upon all who should receive Him (Eph. 1:19). It is "the resurrection of dead persons," looking back to the Gospel records and forward to the resurrection of saints (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and finally sinners (Rev. 10:11-15).

Justification Effected (4:24,25). The preposition 'for' means 'on account of' our justification. It is the proof of our acceptance, is the receipt, the full discharge of the debt. Faith is concentrated on Him who once was dead and is now alive for evermore (Rev. 1:18). Thus we have peace with God (5:1).

Union Proved (6:4,9). Partnership with Christ means sanctification by faith in the Risen Lord. When Christ died, believers died in Him. This involves absolute severance from sin and continuance in it no more (v.1). A

dead man is discharged from sin and emancipated from it (v.7). We are released from the power of sin. We are united with Christ in resurrection and should be living unto God (vs.9,11). Christ for us means deliverance from sin's penalty; our union with Christ means deliverance from its power.

Production of Fruit (7:4). The second husband is the union between the believer and Christ. The claim of the first husband is cancelled. The old union is impossible because of our union with Christ. The new Bridegroom claims our heart as He betroths us to Himself for ever. Fruit is the expression of life and indicates character rather than conduct (Gal. 5:22). The assurance of salvation should be a mighty incentive to devotion. What God has wrought for us must be wrought in us.

Participation in Resurrection (8:11). Death is defeated for we have been quickened at regeneration. The Spirit through whom God raised Jesus from the dead dwells in our hearts. All rests on two foundational facts:—(1) the resurrection of Christ, (2) the indwelling Spirit of God. This becomes effective at the second coming of Christ for His saints. "Raising Christ Jesus" (R.V.), as the Messiah in His representative capacity. His resurrection must repeat itself in that of others.

Condemnation Gone (8:34). When Christ died it was our condemnation He bore, and there can be no condemnation for those that are in Him. He was raised from the dead, to prove the efficacy of His death. With such a Saviour—crucified, raised, exalted, interceding on our behalf, there is therefore now no condemnation. It is the whole of Christ's work not His death only, that saves men to the uttermost. His session denotes His Power to save us; His intercession, His Will to do it. We have the projection of His death, His resurrection, His ascension and intercession, which in the power of His endless life saves us to the uttermost (Heb. 7:24,25).

Confession Confirmed (10:9). The simplicity of the earliest Christian confession of faith. "Jesus is Lord." Here Paul places confession of faith before belief and then inverts them in the next verse to show the order of experience.

In this identification of the historical Jesus with His subsequent exaltation to supreme lordship and universal dominion, all the facts of the Gospel are presupposed. "The want of courage to confess, is decisive evidence of the want of heart to believe." (Hodge).

Dominion Owned (14:9 R.V.). Here is the explanation of "we are the Lord's" (v.8). As the triumphant Mediator He has been invested with absolute sovereignty over both the dead and the living. His Lordship belongs to the sphere of redemptive accomplishment. He has a special dominion over all the Father gave to Him. Here His resurrection is seen to be the basis of His Lordship over His people. The Lord's pre-eminence in resurrection is set forth in three aspects. Priority in time (Acts 26:23). Priority in rank (Col. 1:18). Thus He acquired a new inheritance and a new

sovereignty in respect to all who should share His victory over death. He has priority also of fruitfulness (1 Cor. 15:20).

Is His resurrection valid? It is the backbone of Christian testimony (Acts 2:24; 3:15; 10:38-40). The keystone of Christian doctrine (1 Cor. 15). The foundation of Christian conduct (Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1,2; Heb. 13:20,21). The manifestation of the power of God (Eph. 1:19,20). The vindication of Christ (Acts 2:32-36; 3:15). Vital to our justification (Rom. 4:25). The pledge of our resurrection and glorification (1 Thess. 4:14-18). "The Lord is risen indeed" (Luke 24:34). Has He appeared to you today? (John 21:1; 14:21).

ITS SUFFICIENCY

The Lord Jesus spoke of His own resurrection quite plainly and whenever He mentioned His death He added—"must be raised the third day." Find the twelve references in the Gospels.

The triumph

His resurrection is not to be regarded as an isolated event, a fact in the history of Christ separated from all else—the estimate of His character, the fact of the empty grave and the disappearance of the body. His friends could not have taken His body in the face of the stone, the seal, and the guard.

"The silence of the Jews is as significant as the speech of Christians." *Fairbairn*. The Lord Jesus rose in triumph over death and every power in earth or hell. He is alive for evermore, and able to save to the uttermost of time, of eternity, and the uttermost of experience and need. This is one of the central and fundamental affirmations of the Christian Gospel. He has abolished death, (2 Tim. 1:10); that is, cancelled it out as a tyrannical force and power over human life and experience. Christ is risen! is the victorious cry of the gospel, it is invincible.

The transformation

The transformation of the disciples is another proof that death has been conquered. It is the most authentic and best attested event in the history of salvation. At the crucifixion they were hopeless; on the first day of the week their hearts glowed with certainty and hope, "I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

Mary knew the tenderness of the Lord (John 20:16). The women, the thoughtfulness of the Lord (Matt. 28:9,10). Peter, the forgiveness of the Lord (Luke 24:34; John 21:15). The two disciples enjoyed fellowship with the Lord (Luke 24:31,32). Those in the upper room experienced His peace (John 20:19,21). Thomas the grace of the Lord (John 20:27). The fishermen knew His power and provision (John 21:6,12). James the love and sympathy of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:7); and Paul the supremacy of the Lord (Acts 9:5,6).

The Apostolic Church is the result of a belief in the resurrection of Jesus

Christ. In reality there was nothing vague or intangible about the testimony borne by the Apostles and other members of the Church. All Gospel preachers need to study the messages recorded in the Acts and feel the throbbings of eternal life. To listen to some preachers today and look at their faces you would get the impression that they believe Jesus is dead.

The faith of the Apostles was re-established by the bodily resurrection of the Lord and His subsequent appearances as the Risen One (1 Pet. 1:21).

Paul offers four proofs of the resurrection of Christians, and adduces Christ's resurrection as his greatest proof. (1) The proof of experience. The Corinthians were saved through believing the message that Christ was risen (1 Cor. 15:3,4); (2) The proof from Scripture (1 Cor. 15:3,4); (3) The proof of witnesses, over *five* hundred had personally seen the Lord after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:5-12); (4) The proof of the saving effects of redemption (1 Cor. 15:13-19).

The teaching

Indissolubility belongs to Christ. He is our High Priest "after the power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16). It signifies the life is incapable of being extinguished by any power; death or otherwise. Livingness characterises Christ. "He is alive" (Luke 24:23); "He shewed Himself alive" (Acts 1:3). Paul "affirmed He was alive" (Acts 25:19). John was assured by the Lord, "I am alive" (Rev. 1:18; 2:8).

Godward, it was the display of God's power (Eph. 1:19:20). Christward it demonstrates His Sonship (Rom. 1:4); His Lordship (Rom. 14:9); His Headship to the Church (Eph. 1:22,23). Satanward it was defeat in his own realm. (Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18). The resurrection is the seal of His Kingship (Acts 13:34); He is the universal Judge (Acts 17:31); the acknowledged Priest (Heb. 4:14; 5:5,6; 7:24-26). He is the Exalted Mediator and Surety (Heb. 8:6; 7:22), who makes salvation available to us. Paul's teaching in the Church Epistles centres in the expression "in Christ" found over 100 times, requires a Risen Saviour (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:18; 3:1). We are justified in Christ (Gal. 2:16,17); made alive in Him (Eph. 2:5); seated in Christ (Eph. 2:6); unified in Him (2:19-22). He was "justified in the Spirit and received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the guarantee of our resurrection (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:55-57; 1 Thess. 4:14-17).

The Millennial Kingdom is based entirely on the resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus (Psalm 110:1; Acts 13:34; Ps. 72; Isa. 11:2,3,4; Zech. 6:13).

The Ascension of Christ

The Death of the Lord Jesus is the wonder of wonders, and the glory of glories, yet, this is not the end. Beyond that great transaction is the Resurrection, Ascension and Exaltation of our glorious Lord. Because of the prominence given in the Acts, Epistles and Revelation to the resurrection of Christ and His presence now in heaven, it is not needful to say much about His Ascension.

Where it is not definitely affirmed in the N.T. it is always assumed. In John's Gospel there are ten references to this prospective event (John 6:62; 7:33; 12:32; 14:12,28; 16:5,10,17,28; 20:17).

The necessity of it

There is no lack of evidence that the Ascension was an essential part of the work of the Lord Jesus. (Luke 24:51; John 3:14; 6:62; 7:33,39). (1) It was a vital link in a chain of fulfilled prophecy (Psa. 16:10,11; 110:1; Acts 2:32-36). (2) The claims of God all settled (Heb. 1:3; 9:26-28; 10:12; 1 Pet. 3:22). (3) The character and claims of Christ vindicated (John 6:62). The estimation of men was then reversed. Once despised and abhorred by men (Isa. 49:7; 53:4; Psa. 22:6,7), He was welcomed in heaven (Acts 2:36; 4:11; Heb. 1:13). (4) It was the necessary completion of Christ's death and resurrection; it proved the full acceptance by God of His single sacrifice for sins for all time (Heb. 10:12). As the Resurrection marked Him out as Son of God (Rom. 1:8; Phil. 2:9-11); the Ascension marked Him out as Lord (Acts 2:34-36; Rom. 14:9). (5) He had fulfilled all the requirements of His Father for His earthly life, and God's presence symbolised in the cloud, waited to usher Him back into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17:5). (6) He entered Heaven and keeps the door open for redeemed humanity. It gives Him the right to bestow eternal life to every believer (John 17:2). (7) Why did He not ascend to Heaven immediately after His resurrection? It is twofold—firstly, He had to open the disciples understanding to the meaning of His work (Luke 24:45-48); secondly, He gradually taught them to realize that His presence with them did not depend on their seeing Him. This was an indispensable preliminary to their reception of the Spirit (Acts 1:4,8). (8) He entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf (Heb. 9:24; 6:19,20).

The reality of it

The event is plainly declared in the opening of the Acts; it took place forty days after the Resurrection (ch.1:3). It took place at the Mount of Olives

(Luke 24:50; see Mark 11:1; Acts 1:12). The manner of His going is variously stated, and the words employed are full of significance, indicating the Departure, the Journey, and the Arrival. First, "He went up" (Acts 1:10), and that "He ascended" (Eph. 4:8,9), affirming His Departure from Mount Olivet in the presence of His disciples, after He had talked with them (Mark 16:19). His personal power as well as the glory of the Father effected this, He was "taken up" by Divine power (Acts 1:9), and "He was carried up" (Luke 24:51), that is the Journey. Lastly, we read "He was received up in glory" (1 Tim. 3:16) and welcomed in heaven, which points to His Arrival. This great event was, then, in three stages, He left the earth (Luke 24:51); He "passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14 R.V.) and He reached the throne (Heb. 8:1). Thus did the Son of Man ascend to the Father's right hand (1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 4:10 RV).

As He ascended, our Lord stretched out His hands, the last the disciples saw of Him was His pierced hand, lifted up in blessing (Luke 24:50; Num. 6:23-26).

The sufficiency of it

The redeeming purpose and process of God as unfolded in history become universally operative by the Ascension of Christ. He became the possessor of all power in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). It was an act of God's power (Eph. 1:19-22). It vouchsafed to His disciples His universal presence (Matt. 28:20). He entered upon His work as Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5,6). The Mediator of a better covenant (Heb. 8:6); "surety of a better covenant" (Heb. 7:22). Our Captain (Heb. 2:10; 6:20); Advocate (1 John 2:1); the Conqueror to receive the gifts promised Him for His Church (Eph. 4:8; Psa. 68:18). He ascended to send forth the Holy Spirit (John 7:39; 16:7; Acts 2:33). He has absolute authority over angels, authorities and powers in heaven and on earth (1 Pet. 3:22; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:16). He is the Intercessor not before the throne but IS SEATED on it (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; Isa. 53:12). He has Kingly dignity, honour for what He was, and reward for what He did (Heb. 1:3; 2:9; 10:12). He exercises on our behalf His High Priestly ministry (Heb. 4:14-5:10). He ascended to prepare a place for us in heaven (John 14:2,3). By grace we share through faith, the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ (Eph. 2:6). His Ascension in power is the prelude to His coming in power as the divine Judge (Dan. 7:13,14; Matt. 26:64; Acts 10:42; 2 Thess. 1:6-10).

Message

Set your affections on things above (Col. 3:1); Give Him your allegiance, yea your all (2 Cor. 8:5); abound in the work of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

The Exaltation and Enthronement of Christ

Stephen said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). David was transported through many centuries and caught the greeting with which the Glorified One was hailed in the presence-chamber of the Eternal Majesty (Psa. 110:1). This is the enthronement of Christ by Jehovah. The New Testament citations and allusions to this are very full and rich. There are over twenty references to the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God in the N.T. We shall only look at three aspects of His Enthronement.

Exaltation to headship (Eph. 1:19-22). *His Sovereignty Over All.*

Paul prays for enlightening the eyes of the heart. Only the Spirit can give us an insight into hope, glory and power. Thus vitally are devotion and doctrine related. Here are three momentous truths, the Resurrection of Christ, the Exaltation of Christ and the Dominion of Christ. There were two steps in His Exaltation—from Hades to Life on Earth, and from Earth to Life in Heaven (Acts 1:3,9,11).

The ascension was only a means to an end, and that end was Christ's Enthronement (Eph. 1:20). Jesus anticipated this (Luke 22:69); and Stephen was empowered by it (Acts 7:56). Paul never loses sight of this great fact (Rom. 8:34). We need wisdom to realize His power in our present experience.

Its meaning

The sweep and substance of that power is apprehended as we ponder the seven words:—"power", "greatness", "exceeding", "power", "mighty", "working", "wrought". See "Vine's Dictionary of N.T. Words" for their meaning. Here is power which is inherently His as God; a power of surpassing, incalculable greatness which reveals the full strength of His might.

Its manifestation

Look at the only Life in which the power had been at work perfectly and without hindrance. God's inherent power is that MIGHT which overcomes all resistance. It raised Christ from the dead (v.20). It is a power tested and proven in Christ.

Its measure

This is seen in what He wrought in Christ. It is foursquare and is summed up in four words: resurrection, exaltation, lordship and headship.

Resurrection (v.20)

Christ died—Christ raised. He was under the power of death, buried in a tomb, but God's mighty power broke the bonds of death. He raised Jesus to an altogether new life, immortal and glorious. He was raised as the representative Man who became the Head of a new race of men.

Exaltation (v.21)

Exalted to the place of greatest honour and power in relation to the throne. This sharing of God's throne at once demonstrates the divine dignity of Christ and proclaims His universal lordship (Heb. 1:13; 1 Pet. 3:22). "Far above" affirms the supremacy of Christ.

Lordship (v.22)

Crowned Lord of all, having become victor over all human, angelic and satanic power. It suggests Dominion, Dignity and Despotism. All belong to Him (Psa. 89:27).

Headship

All things are under His control. He has absolute Sovereignty. Here the Church is described as the fulness of Christ. Presently it is growing up towards that completeness. His universal lordship is exercised for the benefit of the Church.

Recognition of Lordship (Phil. 2:9-11). *His Supremacy Over All.*

Christ is the Ruler of the whole Universe (Psa. 8:5,6; Heb. 2:8,9). He has been made highly high (Isa. 52:13).

The victory of Christ

Exalted above His foes (Col. 2:15); above His fellows (Heb. 1:9); and forever (Heb. 10:12,13).

The dignity of Christ

"The Name" not a name. This name may be Lord. Name here means dignity, fame and honour. It is reputation not appellation that towers in Paul's mind. The Lord Jesus is Master and Owner of all life; the King of kings and Lord of emperors.

The vindication of Christ (v.10)

"Every knee shall bow." Bow in submission (Isa. 45:23); in worship (Rev. 7:9-17); in prayer (Eph. 3:14). His supremacy will be acknowledged in

heaven and on earth by all authorities, whether present or future, whether submissive or hostile (1 Pet. 3:22).

The recognition of Christ

"Every tongue confess." Here is an open avowal of praise. The open confession of a new allegiance and it centres in the Lordship of Christ. There will be total subjection to Christ and total acknowledgement of Christ.

The acclamation of Christ

"All to God's glory." The world is coming to absolute vindication of Christ. "Jesus Christ is Lord." His dominion will be celestial, terrestrial and infernal (v.10). The supremacy of Christ means my knee subjected to Him now, my tongue confessing Him every day, and my lip should vindicate Him as "my Lord."

The satisfaction of Christ

"To the glory of God." This was the object of the life and death of Christ—not His own glory but the glory of God His Father, (John 17:4,22). This will be completely fulfilled when Christ returns to set up His millennial kingdom (Eph. 1:10). Is Christ Lord of my life? (Phil. 3:8); is He supreme in my life today? (Psa. 45:11b).

Vindication of Sonship. In Hebrews, *His sufficiency for all His accomplishment as sin purger* (1:3).

Note the superiority of His Revelation "in Son," absolutely, personally and finally. The Splendour of His Person—"image;" the Skilfulness of His hands—"made the ages;" the Set Heir of all things; The Sufficiency of His work—"purged our sins;" His Seat in glory—set down;" the Sovereignty of His power—as King (vs.5-10); the Stability of His nature (vs.10-12). Christ's sacrifice for sin is final, sufficient and efficacious is attested by the fact of his enthronement. The work was done personally, perfectly and permanently.

His acknowledgement as victor (1:13)

This is a proof of Christ's Deity, and the crown of the argument of this chapter; He is superior to angels in His work as Creator, (vs.10-12), and Redeemer and Administrator (vs.13,14). No angel was ever addressed in this fashion (v.13). They have a much lower status (v.14); delegated and sent out in subordinate service. God addresses the Son as God to show that creatorship and unchangeableness are Christ's powers and attributes. Now He occupies a place to which it is unthinkable that the creatures could be exalted. This was His exalted position after ascension. His expected Sovereignty—"enemies thy footstool." He will exercise universal dominion as the enthroned Priest-King.

His acceptance as priest (8:1)

He occupies a throne in kingly power. He is also a priest, combining these two offices in Himself on behalf of His people. He completely supersedes the Levitical priesthood. He is infinitely above all other priests, exercising His priesthood in heaven, not earth (10:12). The Levitical high priests only stood for a brief space before the symbol of God's throne; but Jesus sits on the throne of the Divine Majesty. This is the guarantee that His people will be supported and brought through. The interests of His people are His care in the high place of His exaltation.

His atonement by sacrifice (10:12)

The suitability of the priest—"this man," contrasted with all Levitical priests, the sinless, spotless Son of God gave Himself a sacrifice of unspeakable value. The validity of His work—"one sacrifice for sins." He dealt with sin to God's glory, answering every claim against us and securing blessing for us. The finality of His work—"one sacrifice," never to be repeated (vs.10,14). We are perfectly sanctified, positionally.

His dignity in glory—"sat down." The completeness of His work was signified by His having, "sat down." This is the guarantee that His enemies will be vanquished and His rule established universally.

His assurance as leader (12:2)

The Christian life is a race and as athletes we must discipline ourselves. Discard every encumbrance to progress and run with endurance; stamina is vital if we are to be successful. There is every encouragement given (v.2), "Looking unto Jesus," is the secret of perseverance, we must fix our gaze upon Him the great object of faith. He alone had perfect faith and was the perfect example of it. In dependence on His God He endured, He resolutely put shame behind Him and won through, glory is His portion. The constant consideration of Christ in His sufferings is the best means to keep up faith in all times of trial. Let us accord Him in our hearts the place given Him by God—the Throne (1 Pet. 3:22).

The Priesthood of Christ

Teaching concerning the Priesthood and the priestly work of the Lord Jesus is confined to the Hebrew Epistle. This is pictured for us in John 17 and the Resurrection ministry of our Lord. The Hebrews teaches the finality of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is God's last word to the world. He has fulfilled all the O.T. foreshadowings, and there is nothing more to follow. This book is an exposition of the final supremacy of the priesthood, sacrifice and covenant of Jesus Christ. Never had priest been known, nor had intercession been made before by One radiant with the majesty of the everlasting throne (ch.1:3; 4:14; 8:1; 10:12).

HIS SUITABILITY FOR PRIESTHOOD

The Incarnation of Christ is linked with redemption in Gal. 4:4,5; and in Hebrews with priesthood. His conformity to His brethren in "all things," sin excepted (ch.4:15), was necessary so that He might become their High Priest (ch.2:17; 5:1,2). Whenever the source of priesthood is described to us in Scripture it is always a matter of sonship. "Thou art my Son" (5:5); "Thou art a priest for ever" (5:6).

Identification

Christ took on Himself the seed of Abraham, and in manifestation lived His life environed by the splendours of the supernatural, the qualities of heavenly virtue and the dignity of holy associations. He passed by angels, partook of flesh and blood at the incarnation, to become "a merciful and faithful high priest." Two features of His work are mentioned: (1) "make propitiation," the day of atonement in Lev. 16; (2) "to succour them that are tempted" (2:17,18). He shared in man's sufferings and temptations. He cares (Luke 22:31,32).

Qualification (Heb. 5:1-10)

The first qualification of the Aaronic priest was that he had to be chosen, to be a man himself. The second, appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God (v.4). Christ's priesthood, though similar to Aaron's in its Divine appointment, was utterly superior, being of a higher and different order. His priesthood like Melchizedek's combines kingship with priesthood (7:1).

Christ, the Son, supplants and supersedes the virtue and vocation of priestly service. The Priest must resemble man, and be human; he must reveal God, and be holy (v.6).

Our Lord qualified by incarnation (2:17); by identification (5:1) and by compassion (5:2). Chapter one unfolds His Deity (5:6); chapter two unveils His Humanity (5:1).

He was divinely chosen by God His Father (5:5); and divinely appointed to be a Priest (5:6). He had compassion (v.2), and v.4 dignity. He is majestic and merciful, glorious and gracious. The office could not be held apart from Divine approval, Divine appointment, and Divine anointing. Two quotations from the Psalms confirm this. In Ps.2 He is heralded as Son at the Incarnation, while Ps. 110 declares He was honoured as Priest at the Ascension. His devotion in suffering (v.7). He knew the agony of suffering and the anguish of death. His education through suffering (v.7b,8); His full abandonment to obedience (v.8), and His full acceptance by God (v.10). Thus He was made perfect in His office as our Saviour. Having returned to Heaven, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (5:9). As He was made Man, so He was made a High Priest (v.10).

HIS SYMPATHY AS A PRIEST

See ch.4:14-16. In ch.5 we see the excellency of His Priesthood; in 4:14-16, we find its encouragement for tried saints today. This stresses His preserving ministry as we journey home.

His relation to us

“Having then a great high priest (v.14 RV). This glorious Person is replete in resource-fulness and possessed of royal dignity. He is merciful in the tender sympathy of His heart and faithful in its outflow of intercession and grace.

(a) *A real priest—His name* “*Jesus*” the name of intimacy that charms and captivates, assuring us of salvation from sins, and sympathy above in the heavens. It is a conquering name (2:14) for the Devil is robbed of his power and prey. “SON OF GOD” is the title of Infinity in sovereignty of will, in glorious majesty victorious over all our foes, He is crowned our own High Priest. He is divine, His deity from God’s viewpoint, His absolute equality with God the Father.

(b) *A reliable priest—His nature* (v.5). He sympathizes with our weakness because He was tested in all particulars as we are, sin excepted. He was the absolutely Sinless One, Perfect Man.

What He is (v.14a)

No insignificant person. He is “great” in His Person, and “high” in His office. The old types are now completely obsolete and redundant.

Where He is

“Passed through the heavens” (v.14b). This tells of His victory and superiority, developed in ch.8:1; 9:24. This gives us convincing proof that

His sacrifice was acceptable to God (ch. 1:3). Now in the immediate presence of God, He is available and accessible to all His saints. As Son of God He has authority from God and capacity to understand us.

Our relation to Him (vs. 14, 15, 16)

The writer deals with the practical value of His priesthood. Here is a strong affirmation of His sympathy and help; He fully shared their infirmities. His exaltation leads us to confession (v. 14). We must at all times maintain our confidence in Jesus the Son of God and never be ashamed to confess His name. His experience gives us confidence (vs. 15b, 16). His sufferings make Him tender-hearted, for He experienced every form of trial and affliction. The truth is, He not only can be touched, but cannot but be touched! His example brings us courage for He provides us with the means of victory—"the throne of grace."

His assurance brings comfort. "Mercy" is the love that helps the wretched, "grace" the love that pardons the guilty. No infirmity mars His work and no inability weakens His service. He is invincible. Help can be ours before we are overwhelmed by temptation. Think on all "He is able" to do for us.

HIS SUPERIORITY AS A PRIEST (Heb. 7:1-10)

Chapter two deals with His nature; ch. 4, His character; ch. 5, His appointment by God; ch. 7 the glory of His Person; chs. 9 and 10 the greatness of His work as a Priest. The first personal instituted type of Christ was a priest; this was Melchisedec. He is presented historically in Gen. 14; prophetically in Psa. 110; and in this chapter doctrinally. He is a *Royal Priest* v. 1

Its dignity (vs. 1-3)

Under the Mosaic system a priest could not be a king, nor a king act as a priest (Isa. 6:1). Under the Melchisedec order it was otherwise: and Christ is both kingly and priestly in His administration (7:1, 14). This new order of priesthood is:

Special—"this," the first in the Bible. *Royal*—"king of Salem," he has majesty and authority. "Both the personal name Melchisedec, and Salem were chosen in order that, as king of righteousness and peace, he might set forth anticipatively the character of the sovereign power of Christ" W.E. Vine.

Helpful "He blessed Abraham" (v. 1) He came with regal authority and acted in priestly ministry. He brought abundant joy and abiding peace.

Spiritual—"priest of the Most High God." It expresses union and communion being made between heaven and earth. Melchisedec made Abraham independent of anything the world had to offer.

Peaceful—"king of peace" (Psa. 85:10; Isa. 32:17). This will be fulfilled in Millennial blessing (Psa. 72; Jer. 23:6; Zech. 6:13).

Immortal (v.3). The Levitical priesthood must have a genealogy but no details are given regarding Melchisedec. All is omitted for this king-priest was “made like unto the Son of God.” This makes clear the eternal existence of our Lord Jesus (John 1:1,2). The former is introduced suddenly and presented symbolically, so no genealogy is mentioned. His priesthood like our Lord’s is ageless, deathless and timeless.

Its superiority (ch.7:4-10)

It is viewed in its relation to the *Levitical* order. Melchisedec in his sacred character was superior to any priest under the legal economy.

Better by **BENEFACTION** (v.4). Abraham acknowledged the progenitor, he did homage to Melchisedec. Better by **ASSOCIATION** (v.5). Tithes presented in voluntary recognition of the pre-eminence of Melchisedec. Better in **DISTINCTION** (v.6) and by **COMPARISON** (v.7), “the less is blessed of the better.” There are many other contrasts: The nature of Aaron and his sons was not *royal*, the office held was not *perpetual*, the sacrifice presented was not *spiritual*, the offerings made were not *effectual*, the redemption effected was not *eternal* and the sanctuary entered was not *celestial*.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD (Hebrews 7:25-28)

The writer has shown the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood, it was temporary and provisional (vs.18,19); the new order will be unchangeable and uninterrupted by death (vs.20-25). Christ’s priesthood will be perpetual, marked by endless life and a perfect salvation (vs.24,25).

This Priest could not have had a predecessor and most certainly can never have a successor.

His powerful provision (v.25a)

He is not only a continuing priest (v.24); but a capable priest (v.25). He has ability because “He lives for evermore” (Rev. 1:18). He is able to sympathize (4:15); able to succour (2:18); and able to save (7:25). This truth is given great prominence in the N.T. (See Rom. 14:4; 16:25; 2 Cor. 9:8; Acts 20:32; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 3:21; 2 Tim. 1:12; and Jude 24). May we be occupied daily with Divine Ability, His Activity is not only continuous but, it is a complete salvation, “to the uttermost.”

His perpetual intercession (v.25c)

This gives us assurance. He saved and keeps. Priesthood is preventative, Advocacy is restorative (ch.9:24; 1 John 2:2). Three functions are linked with His priesthood—offering, intercession and blessing. Of these the first was completed at the Cross, the second shall be finished when all need for it

is passed, but the third shall never cease. We can approach God through Him (John 14:6), "Them that draw near" is another theme in this book (4:16; 7:25; 10:1; 10:22; 11:6; 12:18,22).

His peerless person (v.26)

Here is the purity of the priest. These are the personal characteristics of Christ: "*Holy*"—Godward. Holiness of character and reverence toward God. He is the most suitable, acceptable and admirable person to officiate in the presence of God for us. "*Guileless*"—manward. Seeking not their hurt, but only their salvation. He is blameless and guileless and unstained is His dealings with men. "*Undefiled*"—inward. Free from all moral impurity or defilement. In Him beauty is combined with purity. His life was one of essential and unblemished purity, free from all taint, impossible of contracting defilement. "*Separate from sinners*"—upward. By the wonder of His character in life, and in death and in ascension. His moral excellence makes Him utterly unique. "*Made higher than the heavens*"—Godward. His moral glory is attested by God and He has been received to God's throne as entirely worthy of His place there. His life is endless (v.25); His intercession ceaseless (v.25); and His character sinless (v.26).

His perfect sacrifice (v.27)

Their sacrifices were frequent, His was final; they offered animals, He offered Himself; they were sinners, He was sinless. His all-sufficient sacrifice required no repetition, but dealt with sins once for all (10:11,12). Christ on the Cross guarantees peace of conscience, while Christ on the Throne gives peace of heart.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD (8:1-3)

This consecrated Priest is now in the place of Majesty (v.1), and the place of ministry (vs.2-5). His heavenly enthronement is in contrast to the earthly sanctuary. A Priest not of the material and the transient, but of the spiritual and the eternal, all is heavenly and divine.

His supremacy as priest in a position of status and honour—"right hand" (v.1). His sanctuary is heavenly in character and construction (v.2). The More Excellent Ministry is bound up with the new Covenant of Love (v.6). (a) *The Ground of it*—based on His better ministry, His better covenant, His better promises.

(b) *The Graces of it*—God deals with Israel mercifully.

(c) *The Gifts of it*—set forth in v.10-12, in quoting Jer. 31:31-34. These are the receipt of His pardon, the sweetness of His pity, the fellowship with His Person, the communion of His presence, and the delight in His precepts.

THE SATISFACTION OF HIS WORK (chapter 10)

In chapter nine we have a better sanctuary (vs.1-12); then the better sacrifice (9:13-10:10). The shortcomings of the Old Order (vs.1-4). It was Divinely made; but it fell far short of God's full and final purpose. It was a temporal arrangement (v.3). It was a partial arrangement (vs.1,4). Under the New Order, love offers a voluntary sacrifice which forever takes away sin (vs.12,14). The Lord Jesus came with the prepared body (v.5), the sovereign will (vs.7,9), the old promise (v.7), the full and final offering (v.10). Thus the sinner is "purged" (v.2), "sanctified" (v.10), and perfected (v.14). The witness of the Spirit confirms all (vs.15-18), these secure the way into the Holiest (vs.17-25), where the worship of the saint is accepted.

The Lordship of Christ

“Jesus Christ is Lord” was the simplest creed of the early Church. The first time that Lord (*Kurios*) occurs in the N.T. is Matt. 1:20 “the angel of the Lord appeared.” In the Acts and the Epistles the testimonies to the Godhead of Jesus Christ are clear and unmistakable. In the Acts He is always “the Lord.” There are three prominent thoughts found in all references to Christ as Lord, and these are “Ownership,” especially where the title is used in the possessive case as the “Lord’s Table” (1 Cor. 10:21); “Authority” as in Acts 9:5,6; and “Power” as the “hand of the Lord was with them” (Acts 11:21). The practical aspect is “that He might be Lord” (Rom. 14:9) of our lives, Master of our entire existence. We must settle it once for all and then realize it continuously, “we are the Lord’s” (Rom. 14:8).

The Greek word “Lord” is the N.T. equivalent of the Hebrew “Jehovah” (Rom. 1:4; 14:9; Phil. 2:9-11). Christ’s exaltation to the Father’s right hand and His being given a name—“Lord” is that of “Yahweh” (Isa. 45:23). The title Lord, is rank and honour beyond all others. His supreme exaltation, His enthronement in and over the universe (Eph. 1:19-23). In the N.T. the Greek word *Kurios* occurs over 700 times, rendered “Lord”; “Master”; “Owner”; and “Sir.” Study the expressions in the Acts, “the name”; “the word” and the “way of the Lord.” The quotation from Psa. 110:1 “Sovereign Lord” and its ten references in the N.T. affirm the Deity of Christ. Study the references to “Lord” in the Corinthian Epistles, around 60 times, and in Ephesians 25 times, in its practical application. His Lordship in our lives brings fulfilment and freedom NOT oppression and frustration. We shall look at two portions in the N.T. namely John 21 and Acts 9 for its message for us today.

“IT IS THE LORD” John 21, verses 7,15,16,17,20,21.

The revelation of His Lordship (vs.1-6)

Here is the Lord remembering His Own, visiting them, and caring for them. In these disciples we see unity, variety, and activity, yet “that night they caught nothing” (v.3). Over much of our service the Lord writes night and nothing. In spite of their failure the Lord had in store something better than their best (v.3).

Lord of my service which He directs (v.6,7). They own their failure and He prepares them for success. To lose ourselves in submission to Him, is to find ourselves. This develops our personality and leads to maturity. He is “over”

us as Lord, and we are “under” Him as servants. Obedience to His authority always brings success (v.6). “If Christ is not Lord of all He is not Lord at all.”

The recognition of His Lordship (vs.7-14)

Peter and his companions know that this mysterious Person is the Lord (v.12).

Lord of my need which He supplies. Now they are His guests, and He, their Host, serves them (v.12,13). They found a Friend they never expected; a fire they never kindled and food they never prepared. In Luke 24:43 they fed Him, now He feeds them. What amazing love and care, He still ministers to us (Phil. 4:19).

The requirements of His Lordship (vs.15-17)

Here is the Lord as Love Appealing.

Lord of my love which He desires. The play upon two words translated “love” *agapeo*, and *phileo*. The former speaks of love as “principle”, and the latter of love as a “feeling.” The former is God’s love to us, the latter of our love to one another. When the Lord used Peter’s word (v.17) it was that which grieved the Apostle. May we answer the challenge “Do you really love me?”

Lord of my will which He controls (vs.18-19). The Lord Jesus expects us not only to believe His teaching but also to obey His commands (John 14:15,21). True freedom is to obey the Lord, not to disobey Him. Here Peter’s past is described—“young;” his future is disclosed—“shalt be old,” and his present declared—“follow Me.” His will was surrendered to His Lord. We need to recover the neglected aspect of our discipleship—obedience to the Lord.

The response to His Lordship (vs.20-25)

The believer and the Church as a whole are largely ineffective as spiritual forces in the world for the lack of loyalty to the Lord. He is worthy of our trust (vs.1-14); our love which should be sacrificed, (vs.15-17); to live and witness for our Lord calls for courage (vs.18,19) and patience (vs.20-23). “He is thy Lord” (Ps. 45:11b).

Acts 9. “PAUL AND HIS LORD” “The term ‘Lord’ has become one of the most lifeless words in the Christian vocabulary. To enter into its meaning and give it practical effect would be to re-create the atmosphere of the Apostolic age.” H.A. Kennedy. Acts 9 opens with opposition to the Lord (v.1) and closes with “many believed in the Lord” (v.42) Saul’s Christian life began with:

Submission to the Lord (v.5). He learned of the Humanity of the Lord “Jesus,” His Sympathy—“persecute Me,” and His Sovereignty over all things (vs.5,6).

Salvation in the Lord (vs.35,42). The miracle of healing the sick (vs.32-35), and the raising of one from the dead (vs.37,42), led some to believe in the Lord, (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9). There follows:

Service for the Lord (v.6). Shall we say with Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" With my thoughts? (2 Cor. 10:5c); with my talents? (Matt. 25:20,24); with my time? (Eph. 5:16); and with my goods? (Acts 4:34,35). Have we lost our sense of duty and direction? May we hear the call to arise and to action—"Go into the city," and to allegiance (v.8).

Service begins with vision (v.17). He was shut up to God for three days (v.9). This sobered his thinking and stimulated his service (v.28).

Service sustained by direction (vs.10-21). A readiness to hear the Lord (v.10), a willingness to obey the Lord (v.18), and faithfulness to the Word of God (vs.11,17,18).

Governed by commission (v.15). His sphere of service was the "Gentiles," "Kings" was a special sphere of testimony when in bondage before Agrippa and later in Rome, His character would be moulded by suffering (v.16).

Sustained by the Lord (vs.19-27). He was strengthened by good food and a genuine friend in Barnabas (v.27). Fellowship is always the proper thing to seek if you want to grow in grace. The local Church received Saul on the commendation of Barnabas, he possessed special knowledge regarding Saul and his testimony for the Lord in Damascus (v.27). Saul had friends in time of trial and of testing (vs.25,27).

Sanctified by the Lord (v.31)

This Church had a breathing spell when Saul was converted. They made progress spiritually and materially, intensively and extensively. They had peace from external difficulties, we need peace from internal dissensions (Phil. 2:3,4; 4:2,3). They made progress—they were edified and multiplied; gathering in of souls for Christ. Marked by power—walking in the fear of the Lord, and they received daily encouragement. Like healthy plants they were growing in the sunshine of God's love. Some saints want entertainment and wonder at their stunted growth. Edification produces character, spirituality and growth in grace. Make Jesus Lord of your life. There are eighteen references to "Lord" in this chapter.

The Headship of Christ

Read: 1 Cor. 11:3-16; Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18; 2:10.

Headship is a matter of Divine appointment for the maintenance of harmony in relationships established by God. Connected with headship are relationship, representation, responsibility and rule. Headship is associated with the entrance of sin into the world. Headship is an ordinance of God and must be acknowledged and accepted by both parties who should be in agreement. Because of Eve's disobedience, a new order of relationship is seen, "He shall rule over thee"—this is Headship. The Lordship of Christ affects us individually but Headship is concerned with the collective position, especially in relation to the Church. The Headship of Christ over Creation, Man and the Church is absolute.

Headship—Christ and Man

In 1 Cor. 11:3 is the principle of headship. Three great principles are enunciated here and applied to local conditions in Corinth. It is applied to the relation between Christ and every man in the Church. This is a divine decree and unalterable, all must acknowledge His supremacy. The conduct of these saints (1:12,13) was a denial of headship and a grief and a burden to the Apostle.

The Lord Jesus has a threefold claim to headship over man:—Creatorially (Gen. 2:7), Redemptively (1 Tim. 2:6); and Judicially (Acts 17:31; Phil. 2:11,12). This principle is inflexible for Christ has authority, supremacy and direction over the individual.

Quite independent of the marriage bond, man is the head of the woman and is to bear rule (v.3). This is the second principle and does not mean husband and wife relationship as in Eph. 5:22,23. Man was designed to be the representative of the Creator. He is not only a visible representation of God, but is also in himself a manifestation of God's greatness and majesty (v.7). For this reason the man's head should not be covered, for thereby he would dishonour his head, that is Christ. His headship is all embracing from man's birth into eternity.

Headship—Christ and God

The third principle of verse 3 is mentioned to add authority to the first two headships. This does not imply any unequal partnership in the Godhead but is indicative of the subjection of the Lord in His humanity. He is viewed as a man in subjection to His Father as God. He took the place of the Servant

(Isa. 42:1), in a path of obedience, and delighted to do the will of God (John 5:30; Heb. 10:9; Rom. 15:3; Matt. 26:39). The implication is that if Christ accepted the Headship of God, it is expected that men will accept Christ's, and the woman the man's (vs.8,9). In life and in death the Lord exhibited His subjection in unquestioning obedience to God (John 10:17; 13:31; 17:4).

Headship—Christ and the Church

In Eph. 1:22,23 His place of authority in relationship to the Church, is the Body aspect. He is the "Supreme Head," literally Head over all things "to" or "for" the Church. His universal Lordship is exercised for the benefit of the Church (5:23). He is the sole source of its life and strength, so that it receives from Him the nourishment which promotes the growth of the whole body (4:15,16). Through His sovereign Person and exalted position the Church takes her orders.

This is the inward union of the Church, as an organism which owes its life to Christ, derives its sustenance from Him. He governs, He directs, He administers, and is above all other authorities (v.21).

The Church is the body of Christ and the fulness of Christ. God intends the Church should be the full expression of Jesus Christ. Colossians sets forth the same truth with certain differences in viewpoint. Ephesians stresses the Church as the fulness of Christ, who Himself, is Head. Colossians speaks of Christ's own fulness (1:19). In Ephesians the Body is seen as the complement of the Head; in Colossians the Body is seen to be complete in the Head (2:10). Applied locally He is Head over every member and servant, in every exercise and at every meeting.

Headship—Husband and Wife

In Eph. 5:22-24 dealing with marriage Paul enjoins the kind of submission that is required in certain relationships. The teaching is practical and if obeyed will prove profitable. Christian standards of marriage must not be lowered. As partners we are "joint heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). Headship makes man the ruling partner in the marriage relation, it is established by creation and now endorsed in redemption. Both partners are reminded of their duties and not their rights. The subjection of the wife to her own husband is personal and practical, and the ideal is "as unto the Lord" (v.22). The responsibility of leadership is that of the husband and father, and his authority must be accepted (v.24; 6:1-2). The analogy likens a husband's headship over his wife to Christ's headship over the Church (1:22; 5:24).

The husband is given to the wife to be a saviour to her, in maintaining, protecting and defending her. This makes the obedience of the wife a matter of devotion. She must never be treated as a servant. The husband's love must be completely unselfish, sacrificial and self-giving like Christ (v.25). My love like Christ's should give and give and give. The word love here is not

“*phileo*, ” affection for a person, but “*agapao*, ” love that is totally unselfish, that seeks the highest good of the one loved.

The Head of Principality and Power

Col. 2:10 is the headship of Christ in relation to angelic beings, (Eph. 1:20,21). This is the vindication of His rights as their Creator (Col. 1:16), and as a reward in virtue of His work by which He glorified the Father (Heb. 2:9). There are two kinds of angels, good and evil. Both are subject to the supreme Lordship of Christ. How vast and comprehensive is His Headship. Christ's death on the Cross was a decisive triumph over all the demonic powers of evil. He disarmed Satan's host of their power to retain the spoils (Luke 11:22). In defeating the Devil by death He overcame all our malicious foes (Eph. 6:12; Col. 2:15). The paradox of the crucifixion is—triumph in helplessness, and glory in shame.

The victory is ours, hostile angels cannot separate us from God (Rom. 8:38,39). The angelic host are subject to Him as their Creator, the evil ones subject to Him as their Conqueror (Col. 2:15). Because of His victory the Colossian saints are not to capitulate to false teachers (2:18).

The purpose of God for Christ is given in Eph. 1:10, “to head up all things in Christ.” He will carry out His perfect plan—the whole universe will be one. All divisions and disorders caused by sin will be removed and man brought back to God through Christ (Col. 1:20), into unity and fellowship among themselves. What God planned in Christ will attain its full fruition when the time is ripe. The Lord Jesus was ever conscious that the Father's love for Him, “gave ALL THINGS into His hand” (John 3:35; 13:3). He alone is worthy (Heb. 3:3; Rev. 5:12).

He hell in hell laid low;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew:
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.

The Deity and Personality of the Holy Spirit

The basis of the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus is His proper and essential Deity. This is equally true of the Holy Spirit. All the dignity, efficacy and glory of His office, and various operations, spring from His Divine Personality. It is sad to think that today we must emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not just an influence or a thing or an idea, but a Person—as much a Person as God the Father; as much a Person as God the Son. Never ‘IT,’ a Person please, ‘HE.’ He speaks, He prays, He teaches, He guides. He is God, just as much as the Father and the Son are God, for our God is a Triune God—three Persons in one God. The teachings of the Bible on this vital subject are all too little understood and too little studied. When last did your Assembly have a series on the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the ultimate fact of Revelation and the unique force in Redemption.

We are living under the dispensation of the Spirit; in that character God now reveals Himself to His people. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of all truth and the Active Agent in the Church and in the Christian.

His Personality

Because of His union with the Godhead, we ascribe to Him DEITY; and because of His personal properties and acts, we ascribe to Him PERSONALITY. There are three passages in which the Spirit is spoken of as a PERSON, and distinguished from an ATTRIBUTE (Acts 10:38; Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:4). From these passages we understand that the Spirit is a distinct and intelligent Agent and is never to be confounded with the Divine attributes. (See Matt. 12:31,32). The inference here is that blasphemy is committed against God Himself. John’s Gospel stresses the Personality of the Spirit, but Paul in his writings is concerned with His work.

In speaking of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus uses the masculine not the neuter pronoun (John 14:16,17,16; 15:26; 16:7-8,13,14,15). Note the personal pronoun used twelve times in four verses in John 16. “I will send Him” (v.7); “He is come”, “He will reprove” (v.8); “He, the Spirit of Truth” (v.13). “He will guide”, “He shall not speak of Himself”, “He shall hear”, “that shall He speak”, “He will shew you” (v.13). “He shall glorify me”, “He shall receive” (v.14). These are all acts of a Person, not merely an influence.

The Spirit is not the Father or the Son, but is distinct from both. He is an Agent possessed of intelligence and will, power and wisdom. The masculine pronoun applied to Him, and the nature of the mission on which He is sent attest a Person.

The Essential Attributes of Personality

“SPEAKING” (See Mark 13:11). “Separate me Barnabas and Paul” (Acts 13:2); concerning Paul (Acts 21:11); apostasy (1 Tim. 4:1); speaking to the Churches (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22).

REVEALING (Luke 2:26; John 16:14b). Will (1 Cor. 12:11). A Witness (Acts 5:32; Rom. 8:16). Knowledge (1 Cor. 2:10,11,13). Spiritual Life (John 6:63; 1 Pet. 3:18). Sending forth Apostles (Acts 13:4). Goodness (Neh. 9:20). Appointment to a work (Acts 20:28). Interceding (Rom. 8:26). Exercising His own pleasure (Acts 15:28; 1 Cor. 12:11). He can be Grieved (Eph. 4:30). Lied to (Acts 5:4). Resisted (Acts 7:51). He Loves (Rom. 15:30).

These are all acts of a living Person, and evidences in favour of the distinct personality of the Spirit. Does He speak? then I must listen. Does He teach? then I must be willing to learn. He sends, are we willing to go? (Isa. 6:8-10). He is a personal Helper (John 14:16); Friend (John 14:17); Ambassador (John 15:26); Guide (John 16:13); Revealer (John 16:13) and the Glorifier of Christ (John 16:14).

His Deity

Divine Titles are ascribed to Him. My Spirit (Gen. 6:3). The Spirit of God (2 Chron. 15:1; 1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Pet. 4:14). The Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11:2; Acts 5:9). The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9); of His Son (Gal. 4:6); The Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18). These reveal the nature of the Spirit.

His other names demonstrate His qualities. Note seven of these in Isa. 11:2.—The Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13); Spirit of Grace (Heb. 10:29); Spirit of Wisdom (Eph. 1:17); of Life (Rom. 8:2); Adoption (Rom. 8:15); of Love, of Might (2 Tim. 1:7); of Power (Eph. 3:20); of Grace (1 Pet. 4:14). There are many others you can find using a concordance.

Divine attributes are His

Omnipotence (Job 33:4; Psalms 104:30; Zechariah 4:6; Romans 8:11; 15:18,19). Omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10,11; 14). Eternity (Hebrews 9:14). Omnipresence (Psalms 139:7; 1 Cor. 12:13 RV). Sovereignty (1 Cor. 12:11). This right belongs to God alone. Holiness (Luke 11:13). He is called the Holy Spirit over 80 times.

Divine works ascribed to Him

Creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalms 33:6). Inspiration of Scriptures (Acts 1:16; 1 Pet. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:21). Regeneration of souls (John 3:6; Titus 3:5). Sanctification of saints (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2). The Revelation of truth (Eph. 1:17,18). Statements which in the O.T. distinctly name the Lord, God or Jehovah, as their subject are applied to the Holy Spirit in the N.T. (Ex. 16:7; Psalms 95:8-11, with Hebrews 3:7-9). The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person FROM, yet co-essential, co-equal and co-eternal WITH the Father and the Son. He is the Author of a supernatural work—the work of God in our souls.

The Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Gen. 1:1; 6:3; Exod. 31:1-4; Num. 27:18; Jud. 3:10; 2 Sam. 23:2; Ezek. 37.

The work of the Spirit in the O.T. is different from Pentecost in extent, duration, content and purpose. We can only touch the fringe of this fascinating subject in this article.

The Spirit of God operates in the Creation of the material universe.

His Omnipotence in Creation

(Gen. 1:2,3; Job 26:13). "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens." They are adorned, made beautiful. The Spirit of God "moved", brooding over it, as a fowl does, when hatching eggs (Deut. 32:11). The beauty and splendour of the heavens is the work of the Trinity. What is "OF" the Father and "THROUGH" the Son, is "BY" the Spirit. Creation reveals the skill and omnipotence of the Spirit. He is the Operator and Executor in giving and sustaining life (Job 33:4; Psa. 104:30; Zech. 4:6). The New Creation is illustrated from the Old in 2 Cor. 4:6. Restoration follows ruin, illumination replaces the darkness, separation through light, the reconstruction of the earth for the habitation of man (Gen. 1:2-31) with 2 Cor. 5:17, we are recreated.

His Operation in Conviction

(Gen. 6:3). In the days of Noah Divine interest was shown "strove," but Divine influence was rejected. The Spirit still convicts, the world is "sinful," the Lord Jesus proved holy and righteous, and Satan conquered and judged (John 16:8-11). The days of Noah are with us (Luke 17:26,27).

For Administration

(Gen. 41:38; Dan. 4:9; 6:3). Joseph and Daniel were given understanding; perception to see, ability to discern, authority to guide and legislate above the great men of their day. Spirit taught and enabled for the most difficult tasks.

Inspiration of the Scriptures

(2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16,17). Inspiration speaks of the divine authorship and perfection of the Word of God. All Scripture is of divine origin, it is inspired. Not the writers only, but the writings themselves, were inspired by God (2 Pet. 1:21). Verbal inspiration is proved by internal evidence (2 Sam.

23:2; Jer. 1:7,9; Neh. 9:30; Ezek. 2:7; Zech. 7:12). The authority of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:44,47; Matt. 5:18; John 10:35). The Scriptures are the voice of God, the Word of God, no matter what the dispensation or instrument (Heb. 1:12). The very words of the original Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God. The passage quoted in Heb. 3:7, is taken from Psa. 95:7-11, the Author is the Holy Spirit. The expressions, "thus saith the Lord"; "Jehovah hath spoken," occur over 2,600 times in the O.T. The Scriptures are Divine in their source (2 Sam. 23:1); dynamic in their operation (Heb. 1:2,3); definite in their claim (Acts 3:21) and distinct in their prophecy, for Christ is the key (Luke 24:44,47).

His Association with Men

(Exod. 31:1-4; Judg. 3:10; Neh. 9:20). In the construction of the Tabernacle we have a picture in Bezaleel of the Holy Spirit at work. Here is His educative activity preparing for all kinds of handiwork (Exod. 28:3; 31:3-5). God selects the individual that He requires for His particular purpose. True of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2). Equipped for service, engaged and energised by the Spirit (Exod. 31:2). The Spirit is concerned with our intellectual powers (Eph. 1:16); with executive ability as seen in Joshua (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9). As the Spirit filled those servants to work for God, so then we should be filled by Him (Eph. 5:18).

The Revelation of Truth

(Neh. 9:20,30). Nehemiah and David were instructed by the Spirit. David owning the Lordship of Christ (Psa. 110:1; Matt. 22:43,44). "God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets" (Luke 1:70). The book of Psalms shows how unconstrained were the instruments used by the Spirit. Every conceivable experience of the child of God is met here. Sorrow, trial, gratitude, joy and worship; the Spirit of God is breathing through it all. The voice of the Spirit giving instruction is heard with authority and clarity.

Preparation for Service

(Ezek. 2:2). Here is a man possessed by the Spirit, enlightened and established for a special task. He had revelation from God; controlled "taken up," in communion, "heard a voice," and used as God's instrument. He fed so thoroughly on the roll that it found its way into the bloodstream of his life and the fibre of his being. His will was nerved and his mind was fed by a divinely prescribed diet of apparently unpalatable truth, it became sweetness (v.3). One day the Lord released the tongue of His prophet (6:2; 37:4-7). The ruined state of Israel will be changed. The covenant made with Abraham will be honoured and God will restore Israel as a nation to national and spiritual blessing by His Spirit. Study the "I wills" of Gen. 17:2-8, with the "shall's" of Ezek. 37. In a future day there will be the vindication of the divine purpose and programme for Israel.

His Presentation of Christ

(Isa. 11). All prophecy centres in Christ for the “testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). Isaiah 11 brings out the fact that everything radiates around Christ and finds its centre in Him. A glorious picture of the coming of the original Creator (vs.1-5); the restoration of the animal creation (vs.6-9); and the blessing of the personal creature (vs.10-16).

The Disposer of All Things

The Spirit was necessary for the creation of the universe, for conviction of sin, controlling God’s servants who contributed in building, conquering the flesh and the world, communicating of holy truth to Israel, their conversion after the Church has gone, and coming upon all flesh (Joël 2:15-32).

Like Micah we need to be full of power to warn and witness. (Micah 3:8—4:2). The Spirit now works in the Church as the Spirit of holiness, equipping for service (1 Cor. 12:4-11) and using us as His instruments.

The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus

The ministry of the Spirit is to glorify the blessed Son of God (John 16:14). He is the Holy Messenger and Co-operator of the Saviour and as the Stream from Him, the Fountain. He is as freely said to be “sent” by the Son as by the Father (John 16:7; 14:26). Called “the Spirit of the Son”; “the Spirit of Christ”; “the Spirit of the Father” (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Luke 24:49). There is a deep connection revealed in Scripture between the Holy Spirit and the Son of Man.

Our Lord’s humanity was due to the power of God through the Holy Spirit. He was the immediate Agent in the conception of “that holy Thing” (Luke 1:35). The Son in Divine will, willed to assume our nature, and the blessed Spirit wrought the process whereby that will was carried out (Matt. 1:20). It is for this reason that He is at the same time Man and God. Never indeed, not for one moment from the first, was that Manhood dissociated from the Godhead of the Son. The Manhood He took was begun and maintained in its perfect holiness and power by the Holy Spirit.

His Ministry

Thirty years later, the Spirit descended upon the Lord at His baptism (Matt. 3:16). He was anointed with the Holy Spirit for His ministry (Luke 4:18); confirmed by Acts 10:38. In the “power of the Spirit” He went forth, first to temptation, and then to ministry (Matt. 4:1; Luke 4:1; John 3:34). The Old Testament clearly announced that the Messiah would be clothed with the Holy Spirit (Isa. 42:1; 66:1) and anointed (Psa. 45:7).

Everything our Lord did as Man was in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:28). He was sealed by the Spirit, a mark of His heavenly origin and the proof of His divine Sonship (John 10:38; 14:11; Eph. 2:22; 3:16).

His Sacrificial Work

Through the Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. The assistance of the Spirit was necessary to Him in His voluntary humiliation and atoning work, accomplishing the will of God (Heb. 9:14; 10:8-10).

His Resurrection

The Spirit was the Agent in His resurrection, He was declared to be the Son of God (1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 1:4; 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18). By the self-same Spirit we have been quickened (Eph. 2:1) and “born again” (John 3:8); by the vivifying seed of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:21). After His resurrection by the Holy Spirit He “gave commandment to the Apostles” (Acts 1:2). In the

Revelation the glorified Saviour speaks to the seven Churches, the voices of the Lord and of the Spirit are as one (Rev. 2:1-7). We owe our saving faith to the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 4:13). Every step we take in life is by the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). All the virtues mentioned in Gal. 5:22 were only perfectly possessed and expressed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 10:21). In some degree these experiences can be ours "by the Spirit" (Rom. 8:13; Eph. 5:18; Jude 20). We wait for the hope of righteousness through the Spirit (Gal. 5:5). The cry of the Spirit and the assurance of the Lord should produce this response, "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:17,20).

Glimpses of the Spirit in John

There are over eighteen references in John's gospel to the Holy Spirit. The first is by John the Baptist, he bore witness to Jesus when the people kept asking him questions about himself. He pointed men to the greater than he, "for He was before me" (1:15). From chapter three we have pictures of the progress of doctrine which ought to find its counterpart in personal experience. Most of the references have to do directly with the approaching departure of Christ. The Lord dispels their fear of a threatening future without Him in their company (ch.14-16). The dependence of the believer on the Spirit by no means ceases in conversion. The work thus commenced shall be carried forward to a final and glorious completion.

The Anointer

(Ch.1:32-34). John saw the Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove, and remaining on Him (v.32) a detail not in the other Gospels. The Spirit a permanent endowment to Christ. The descent of the Spirit brought conviction and John knew that this One was the Messiah (Psa. 2:2; Isa. 42:1-4). The Spirit bestowed upon Him power for service (Acts 10:38). Everything He did, from first to last, He did in the power of the indwelling Spirit (John 3:34). It gave Him power in His personal conflict with Satan. He was "filled by the Spirit," and "led by the Spirit" (Luke 4:1-2; 14).

The Spirit gave Him His power in His personal ministry (Luke 4:18). His word was with power (Luke 4:36). It gave Him power for personal sacrifice (Heb. 9:14). The Lord Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). The figure of baptism stresses abundant supply.

The Regenerator

(Ch.3:5-8). Only the Spirit of God can radically change men. John records this experience as nothing less than a totally new birth. This is the Spirit's first gracious and Divine act—the breathing of spiritual life in the soul. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (6:63). The Spirit's work as a Quickener must ever precede His work as Sanctifier and Comforter.

Those upon whom the Spirit comes are "born from above" and "anew" (3:3,5-8). Two levels of living are open to man; the natural level, and that which is above nature, though not alien to it; "flesh" and "spirit." The Lord suggested to the cultured Nicodemus, that which is born of human nature remains by nature human (v.6).

Man born of the Spirit is a new creation. Only that which is born of the

Spirit can see or enter the realm that is above nature, and live by supernatural energies in the kingdom of God.

John has nothing to say about "gifts" and "signs" and "miracles" of the Spirit, except the greatest miracle of all, a man reborn, (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; 1 Pet. 1:23; Titus 3:5).

Regeneration is a work standing alone and distinct from all the other operations of the Spirit. Do not confuse it with conversion, adoption, justification and sanctification. Yet it forms the basis of them all. Only those who are Heaven born, are Heaven bound.

The Indweller

(Ch.4:14). The Scriptures indicate clearly that the Holy Spirit is given to all believers immediately and unconditionally (Gal. 3:2-3; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14; 1 Cor. 3:16). The Lord made contact with this woman to give her living water. What a revelation of God and His grace, and the Holy Spirit the living source of refreshment for the heart. Here is a divine source of joy, a spring, a continual source of supply. The Spirit is the power of eternal life. The personality of the Spirit comes later in chs. 14-16. Along with the gift of eternal life the Holy Spirit Himself is given to us. The heart satisfied with Christ expresses itself in worship which is truly spiritual. The "true worshippers" cannot worship except with the innermost occupation of their heart (Phil. 3:3). The word used here is *Pneuma*, without the article, it is not the Holy Spirit who is meant. Christian worship is not formal but it is not the less real because it is spiritual. The principles of worship—in spirit and in truth.

The Refresher

(Ch.7:37). Jesus invited all those whom the formal feast did not satisfy; the thirsty ones are invited to drink. Not until Jesus was glorified historically, was the Spirit given. Jesus was clearly identifying Himself with the messianic fulfilment of the prophetic ritual (Isa. 44:3; 55:1; Zech. 13:1).

The refreshment and renewal is by the inflowing Spirit. John may have Ezek. 47 in view, a pictorial forecast of the fulness of millennial blessing. We are meant to be a source of renewal and refreshment to others. It was only after Calvary (v.39), that the Spirit could come upon the church and thereafter enter the heart of each believer (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:16; Eph. 1:13). We are meant to be rivers of blessing, not channels, to saved and unsaved. The Spirit is given, He waits for us to use Him in holy living, in active service, in living worship, and in life-long service. When He is in control blessing will flow through us.

The Counsellor

(Ch.14:15-18,25-27). The Lord prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit. He spoke of Him as the "*parakletos*," which R.S.V. translates as

Counsellor. It has a legal application and points to the Spirit as our Friend, especially our Friend at court. He is a Helper who takes the place of the Lord Jesus; "with them" as their Guide and Comforter, but also "in them" as the Indweller.

In having the Spirit they will continue to have Christ in them. It was natural that Barnabas, being full of the Spirit, should be called by his colleagues "son of paraclesis" (son of encouragement, or son of exhortation) (Acts 4:36).

The three prepositions used in vs.16,17, among, alongside and in you, mark a change of dispensation, pointing to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As a Teacher

(Ch.14:26). Being the Holy Spirit His work would be in harmony with the holiness of God. Coming in Christ's name, He would be His Representative. As such He would act in harmony with the teaching and purpose of Christ. He would "teach them all things"—the Epistles, "and bring all things to their remembrance"—the gospels, "shew you things to come" (16:13)—the Revelation. The Holy Spirit is the Inspirer, and also the Interpreter and Illuminator of the Word.

There are no authoritative writings for the Christian after the New Testament.

The Convicter

(Ch.16:4-11). This fourth promise elaborates the Spirit's ministry towards the world. An intellectual ministry of conviction, a reproving, exposing ministry. The world's great sin is unbelief. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4 R.V.). Unbelief is the rejection of the Son of God who came in Grace, who came unto His own (Israel) (John 1:11). They cast Him out of the Vineyard (Matt. 21:33-46).

Of Righteousness

Proved by Scripture, "none righteous" (Rom. 3:10). They crucified the Righteous One (Acts 3:14), but God raised Him, and Heaven received Him (3:21). Righteousness the world rejected is now enthroned. Christ is absent, Righteousness is gone. Thus the Spirit vindicates the character, claims and conquest of Christ. He defeated the Prince of this world at Calvary (John 16:11). The Cross judges all sinners because of their association with the world and its prince.

The Glorifier of Christ

(Ch.16:13-14). As the Spirit of Truth it is clearly stated, He will not speak on His own authority, but what He hears that will He speak. Here is the

Spirit's firm relation to Christ. He will not glorify Himself, but exalt Christ, encourage saints and explain the Scriptures to us.

He is an Ambassador to represent (v.7); a Reprover to convict (v.8); a Guide to direct (v.13); a Servant to help (v.13); a Teacher to instruct (v.14), and a Friend to reveal Christ to us (v.15).

The Spirit continually unfolds the meaning of what Christ has said and done.

The Equipper for Service

(Ch.20:21-23). The gift of the Spirit here is in the context of the departure of Christ. This time the disciples are to share His own commission, received from the Father.

Peace for their personal enjoyment (v.19), now peace as the introduction to their mission (v.21). Verses 22 and 23 are difficult. First the commission then the power to carry it out, "receive ye the Holy Ghost." This gift is the power of the new life proceeding from the Person of the Risen Christ. In creation man, and man alone, enjoyed the breath of the Lord God. Only in this Gospel does the Lord Jesus stand before us as the Risen Man and Lord God (v.28).

He is the life-giving spirit, He breathes on the disciples. Now they have life more abundantly. The Lord as Head of a new family confers resurrection life upon the members of it (Gal. 2:20b). The Spirit of God always accompanies the life that Christ gives. The commission is for the whole Church and not to Apostles only. After Pentecost the remission of sins comes to believing souls through the Gospel (Acts 2:38). What does the ministry of the Spirit of God bring to my heart today? He is the Companion of the lonely; the Guide of the anxious; the Instructor of the learner; the Comforter of the bereaved and the Witness of the commissioned servant. As the SPIRIT—He **S**earches; **P**resents Christ; **I**nspires the Scriptures; **R**eveals truth; **I**nstructs the mind; **T**hrills the soul with power and joy.

Some Emblems of the Holy Spirit

The Bible is a book of Symbols, Types, Parables, Metaphors, Allegories and Emblems. There are a host of figurative representations of the Spirit, and each emblem sets forth graphic aspects of the identity, nature and ministry of the Holy Spirit. We shall look at seven emblems:

1. **The Dove** Gen. 8:8-12; Song of Songs 4:1; 6:9; Matt. 3:16.

The Beauty of His Character. The gentleness, cleanliness, swiftness and sharpness of sight, of the dove, makes it a telling emblem of the Spirit.

The first reference to the Holy Spirit in the Bible represents Him as “moving” (brooding), generating warmth (Gen. 1:2). The same word is rendered “fluttereth” in Deut. 32:11. The two thoughts suggest the Spirit’s action in bringing into life and caring for the life which He produced.

The dove in Gen. 8:9-12 came after the terrible judgment upon sin. The Spirit came after Calvary (John 7). Only after the waters of wrath had abated did the dove find a resting place (Matt. 3:16; John 1:32,33; 3:34). If there had been no Calvary of redemption there would have been no Pentecost of blessing.

The dove gentle in manner, clean in nature, particular in food, constant in love, swift of wing, and beautiful in plumage, speaks of the Perfection of the Spirit (Matt. 10:16; Songs 6:9; 5:16; Ps. 55:6; 68:13).

The Spirit’s mission is all about Christ, it centres in Him, points to Him, enhances and glorifies Him and unfolds Him (see previous study, the Spirit in John).

2. **Oil** Ex. 30:22-33; Num. 4:16; Zech. 4:1-7; 1 John 2:27 RV.

Spirit’s Sufficiency for Testimony. The practice of anointing with oil, or with oil intermingled with certain perfumes, were both common and sacred. It suggests the qualifying work of the Spirit. In the O.T. the anointing with oil was for the service of God, either a service rendered by a priest, prophet or a king (Lev. 8:2,10,12; 1 Sam. 10:1,6; 16:13; Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18,19). The holy anointing oil made sacred the vessels of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons were anointed to minister before God (Ex. 40:9-15). The Holy Spirit applies the indispensable preparation for the ministry (Acts 1:8).

We are anointed or “commissioned” for service (2 Cor. 1:21) and given an insight into Divine truth (1 John 2:27). This takes place at conversion. We need this anointing for the tasks we undertake in the service of God, and for truths we must understand of the ways of God.

The four ingredients of the anointing oil speak of the excellencies of Christ as the Son of Man (Ex. 30:34-37). The holy oil alone continually lighted the Tabernacle where God was worshipped and where the Person and work of Christ were wholly symbolized (Ex. 27:20,21). We need the constant renewal and light of the divine "oil" for service Godward and manward (Zech. 4:2-5). For every fresh task in the will of God may we share the Psalmist's experience, "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" (Ps. 92:10).

3. **Fire** Ex. 13:21; Isa. 4:4; Mal. 3:2,3; Acts 2:3-4; Rev. 4:5.

Spirit's Penetrating Quality and Purifying Work. This astonishing element consumes, melts, warms, and energises. It has the power to change all materials into its own nature. It suggests the Spirit's purifying action, which judges and consumes all impurity. His purging work aims to consume from the heart everything that is out of harmony with His Divine nature (Mal. 3:2,3).

The "flame of fire" in Ex. 3:2 and the bush not consumed is a picture of what Moses was to become, the fire of life and power and zeal is kept, continually alight. When he turned aside he received a revelation of the purpose of God (vs.6-8). The "pillar of cloud" is a symbol of the Spirit's presence in our hearts and His company on the journey of life (Rom. 8:14).

He gives us light through the Word of God. The pillar and the cloud were never taken away (John 14:16). The Spirit's ministry of liberation (2 Cor. 3:17); consecration (Isa. 6:5-7); dedication (Isa. 44:4,5); illumination (Psa. 78:14; John 16:13); activation (Ps. 104:12-15; Acts 1:8) and assimilation (Ezek. 1:13; Eph. 4:3). The Baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11,12) is one of judgment. It is not mentioned by John to his disciples (John 1:33), nor by our Lord to His Apostles (Acts 1:3). Our Lord as Saviour baptizes us in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33; 1 Cor. 12:13). Later as Judge a baptism of fire (2 Thess. 1:8,9).

4. **Wind** Job 33:4; Ezek. 37:7-10; John 3:3-8.

The Sovereignty of His Activities. The symbol speaks eloquently of the invisibility, the invaluableity and the irresistibility of the Holy Spirit. Invisible in essence yet its effect is substantial (John 3:8). His activity is effecting the new birth. Like the wind which is always blowing so the Spirit is ceaselessly on the move seeking an entrance into hearts and lives so that they may be regenerated and renewed. The action of the Spirit is heavenly, it is sovereign and infinitely above man "where it listeth."

When the Spirit is received, He is perceived. To know Him is to be led by His hand, swayed by His truth and cheered by His promises. Wind is powerful in its movements "rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2:2). "The Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). In Christian experience we must accept the sovereignty of the Spirit. We want to confine Him and seek to control Him

but that is not God's way. The Holy Spirit comes as wind and we cannot tell what issues may arise when we yield to His control.

In the final regathering of Israel a spiritual resurrection will be brought about by the agency of the Spirit of God (Ezek. 37:9,10).

5. **Seal** Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22.

The Finality of His Work. Sealing is the immediate accompaniment of trusting the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1:13,14). Ephesus and Corinth were cities that had considerable commerce in timber in Paul's day. When a merchant purchased timber he put his special mark upon the logs, and later he could identify the property by the seal he had put upon it. Seal is a mark of ownership (Hag. 2:23). Among the Jews, the seal was a token of the completion of a transaction, the price was paid and the seal placed on the contract making it definite (Jer. 32:9-10).

The seal is a mark of ownership, as when a farmer brands his cattle (Hag. 2:23). It indicates authority (1 Kings 21:8; S. of S. 4:12). It speaks of secrecy (Dan. 12:9). The seal is the Holy Spirit, marking us out for holiness of life (Eph. 1:13,14). These Ephesians heard the Gospel, believed the message and were sealed. The evidence of the finished transaction of Calvary, was the importation of the Holy Spirit who attested it. A past act—were sealed, a future event—a pledge and foretaste of the inheritance. The sealed cannot be lost (Eph. 4:30), for we were part of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12). A seal was placed on important documents (Esth. 8:8-10). The tomb was sealed to satisfy the chief priests (Matt. 27:62-66).

It marks off tribulation saints (Rev. 7:1-8); the abyss in (Rev. 20:1-3). Daniel's prison was sealed (Dan. 6:17). These speak of authority and security.

6. **Water** Isa. 44:1-5; Jer. 50:4,5; Zech. 12:10

Refreshing and Productive Power of The Spirit. "Behold, he smote the Rock, that the waters gushed out" (Psa. 78:20; 1 Cor. 10:4). The smitten Rock, the supplying stream overflowing. From the wounded Saviour, by the Spirit, there comes to the saint blessings which satisfy (John 7:37). Water is indispensable for life. If it is so essential in the physical realm, it is yet more so in the spiritual (Job 14:7-9; Isa. 44:1-5), here God promised to His people refreshment and reviving in their future recovery. On their restoration this promise will have its complete fulfilment. There will be fresh signs of life as they are revived. They will not be ashamed to own their identification with the Lord through the sovereign grace of God (Isa. 35:7).

The Lord Jesus may have had these portions and Ezek. 47:1 in mind when He uttered the words recorded in John 7:37-39. Here the Spirit is represented as the unfailing inner source of streams of service and testimony. This will have a literal fulfilment in the Kingdom.

Note that Jesus stood, cried, and assured as He invited all to come and be satisfied. In verse 37 He proclaimed salvation, in v.38 He spoke of the Spirit's blessing, and in v.39 He speaks of the Spirit's coming.

Christ in glory, the Risen and Exalted Saviour gives the Holy Spirit—as waters of blessing, yea rivers of living water. This is our portion today. Waters vivify (Ez. 47); they fructify (Ps. 1:3); and gladly satisfy (Ps. 46:4). Caleb gave his daughter the upper and nether springs (Josh. 15:19; Judg. 1:15). Some see in this a double blessing of the Spirit given to us by our Lord. The “nether” blessing of His enduring power.

7. Dew Psalm 133:3; Hosea 14:5,6.

The Reality of His Ministry. The descent of the dew in a calm atmosphere is a symbol of the refreshing power of the Spirit (Ex. 16:13,14). (a) Dew is one of the gifts of God, so the Spirit is the perfect gift of His grace. Just as sunshine and dew are inseparable in the natural realm, so Christ and the Spirit are inseparable in the spiritual realm (John 14:16; 15:26). God delights to bestow upon us the dew of the Spirit.

(b) Dew is beneficial in its service (Psa. 133:3 RV.). The copiousness of the dew of Hermon is well known. The vapour, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain, is rapidly congealed, later in the form of dew it penetrates everywhere and saturates everything. The foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of marvellous fertility. Dwelling together in unity is likened to the precious ointment running down from the head of Aaron to the skirt of his garments, and to the dew from Hermon. Oneness of spirit is to keep the unity of the Spirit.

(c) Rich in its contents (Deut. 33:2). God's Word drops into the heart and imparts its nature in those who allow it to work. If Christ is in the heart He will by the Spirit be a purifier and sanctifier.

The dew moistens everything where it falls; it leaves no leaf unvisited. Such is the refreshing, renewing and reviving work of the Spirit (Hos. 14:5). Israel in a coming day will make confession, will desire cleansing and will know healing. They will be marked by beauty and stability. We today can experience strength by the Spirit (Eph. 3:16).

The Manna fell upon the dew (Ex. 16:13,14). It was a mystery to the Israelites as is the sinless humanity of the Son of God (1 Tim. 3:16).

The practical application of these emblems is important. We are to be harmless as doves (Acts 10:38; Heb. 7:26). Like the anointing oil—consecrated to Christ (Acts 13:2; 15:26). The fire—our hearts should burn with devotion to Christ (Luke 24:32). As wind, energised by the Spirit in service for the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58). The seal reminds us that we belong to the Lord (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 6:20). The overflowing river, a blessing to all we come in contact with (John 7:38). Like the dew, refreshing others by a ministry of Christ (Philemon 7).

The Baptism in the Spirit

The Baptism **in** the Spirit is mentioned in the Scriptures only seven times. In the four Gospels it is viewed **PROPHETICALLY**, as being yet in prospect. (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). In Acts 1:5, it is viewed as imminent. These passages have a future point of time in view.

In Acts 2:1-4; 11:15-17, the baptism is viewed **HISTORICALLY**. The sole reference in the Epistles in 1 Cor. 12:13 views the baptism as **DOCTRINAL** and points backwards to Pentecost. Pentecost was the necessary complement of Calvary. This Baptism was an historical act, never to be repeated. Some confuse the words “baptism” and “filling,” they are opposite in meaning. It has been said, “The baptism is the historical event; the filling is the human experience.” It is fitting that the Spirit came to Jerusalem, the place of the Lord’s rejection and crucifixion. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the feast of first fruits (Lev. 23:15-19), and refers to believers in relation to the Risen Lord. The Church was being formed as the Body of Christ upon earth—the Day of the Spirit had begun.

The descent of the Spirit in Acts 2 is heavenly in origin, divine in character, powerful in manifestation, and wonderful in effect. This event is **HISTORICAL** (Acts 2:1). It is as historical as Bethlehem when Christ was born, and as Calvary when He died. The Day of Pentecost must follow fifty days after “Christ our passover was sacrificed for us.” See the type in Lev. 23:15,16. So we look back to Jerusalem and the day of Pentecost when the Spirit came and formed the Church.

It is **UNIQUE**. It never happened before and has never occurred again. Believers were baptized in the element of the Spirit by the Risen Lord Himself. Thus the Church was inaugurated as the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

It is **COLLECTIVE** or **CORPORATE** (1 Cor. 12:13 R.V.). It is not individual or to be prayed for, as Pentecostalist error suggests. Paul states clearly that this is the baptism by the Lord in the Spirit into the mystical body of Christ, into one body. Both are in the past tense and the collective sense. Not one Christian is left out; all who are called by God’s grace are brought into the membership of this body, immersed in the Spirit.

At Pentecost God’s sovereign purpose and man’s essential preparation came to maturity, and immediately there followed a spontaneous Divine intervention (Acts 2:2).

It is **UNIVERSAL**. Paul is referring to an initial and a universal experience in which every Christian has shared. This is illustrated in relation

to sin in Rom. 5:12, the solidarity of the human race in sin, for ALL have sinned in Adam. In 1 Cor. 10 all of Israel was baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Both were historical and never repeated. The baptism unto Moses as leader was corporate and national. The "baptism in the Spirit" is the doctrinal explanation of Acts 1:5.

It is SUDDEN AND FINAL. The suddenness of the coming of the Spirit (v.2) was a corporate experience, "the rushing mighty wind." It was visible (v.3 "like fire" and audible—"sound of wind." In verse 2 it is general, in verse 3 special. It has to do with our position in Christ before God and NOT our moral or spiritual condition like the Corinthians.

The distinction between the "baptism" and "filling" is of vital importance. By the baptism we are put into the element, we are in the Spirit. By the filling, the element is put into us, the Spirit is in us. Immediately a man becomes a Christian the Holy Spirit takes up residence within him (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19). This is the indwelling of the Spirit and is permanent.

The filling with the Spirit is repeated and in Eph. 5:18-20, is associated with "psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and thanks." Today, we have the abiding significance of the Spirit's presence and power: (a) the abundance of the Spirit's gifts (Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12:5-11); (b) the admittance and enjoyment of the Spirit's blessings (Eph. 1:3); (c) the assurance of the Spirit's help (1:8; Rom. 8:26). These are the inheritance of every saint.

At Pentecost heavenly power was given (Acts 2:1-3), received (vs.3-5), used and manifested (vs.5-11). What a transformation was wrought in these disciples—they were Spirit-controlled men. They received entirely new insight into the significance of O.T. Scriptures (2:11). The verses in Joel 2:28-32 do not refer to the Church, but to the future of judgment, these are the sixth seal of Rev. 6:12,13.

Speaking in Tongues

There is much confusion in the minds of many believers regarding speaking with tongues.

The Pentecostal group of churches holds that speaking with tongues is the necessary accompaniment and evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

There are only four passages in the N.T. where this is found and it is significant that three of these are in the Acts: 2:1-4; 10:44-46; 19:1-7 and 1 Cor. 12:10 and chapter 14. In each incident the "sign" character of the gift of tongues is emphasized (1 Cor. 14:22; Heb. 2:4).

(1) Notice that the gift on the day of Pentecost was characterised by intelligibility (Acts 2:7,8); whereas in 1 Cor. 14:2, the characteristic was unintelligibility.

The languages these disciples spoke were not "unknown" tongues. They were existing languages understood by the people who gathered, no

interpreter was needed. The Greek word translated “tongue” is *dialektos*,” the same as our word “dialect,” translated “language” in verse 6.

This gift was given to convince the crowds that they were in the presence of the supernatural. Neither the disciples nor Peter preached the evangel in other tongues. Peter preached in his own language with which the majority present would be familiar. Tongues were evidential of the wonderful works of God, rather than evangelistic in purpose.

(2) Caesarea has Gentiles in view. The gift of tongues was rendered necessary by the reluctance of Peter to take the Gospel to Gentiles (v.45,47).

God demonstrated to Peter that the SAME Spirit had been given to the Gentiles as to Jewish believers at Pentecost in Acts 2. Note Peter’s words in Acts 11:15-17. There are no “tarrying meetings.” The Spirit was neither prayed for nor sought. It was bestowed on the assembled company here, and in Ephesus, NOT on selected or specially prepared individuals.

(3) At Ephesus the Jewish disciples of John had heard nothing of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 19:1-11). Here is an indication of the progressive nature in God’s ways with His people. The old, once in order, is now replaced and superseded by the dispensation of the Spirit.

There are significant omissions of tongue-speaking in the book of Acts. There is no mention of the 3,000 converted at Pentecost; nor the 5,000 later; nor of the great company of priests.

The majority of those converted did not speak in tongues.

(4) The gift of tongues dispensed by the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:10 is discouraged in chapter 14 unless interpretation follows, vs.4,5,9,27,28.

The bestowal of the gift is temporary and selective, only certain spoke with tongues. They were for a sign to them that believe not (v.22), it could bring reproach and shame (v.23).

Tongues and prophecies edified in an interim period, and were discontinued when the holy canon of Scripture was complete (1 Cor. 13:8,9).

I have met many godly, gifted missionaries to whom this gift would have been most useful on the foreign field. Some spent years in learning the language of the people.

Any gift that produces confusion rather than order, is evidence that it is spurious, for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

The Holy Spirit in Acts

The title of the book of Acts could equally well read “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” He is the principal actor in the drama of the expanding Church. No great figure in the Church either spoke or acted other than under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The immense task of the early Church was a world-wide programme of evangelism. The single answer to all the problems encountered by the Church was—the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Spirit is to make us **USEFUL**. The Spirit was given not for the disciples’ enjoyment or excitement, but to enable them to witness to the outside world (1:7,8; 8:5-8). Pentecost was a miracle of communication (2:6-11). All the great figures in Acts were men of the Spirit—Peter (4:8); the seven men of ch.6:3; Stephen (6:5); Philip (8:29); Paul (9:17; 13:8) and Barnabas (11:24).

The Authority of the Spirit

This is seen in a variety of ways. Prophesying concerning Judas (1:16). His coming upon the disciples implies more than mere testimony but to be useful for God (1:8). True only in the measure our hearts are renewed, possessed and transformed. He spake and separated Paul and Barnabas to the Lord’s work. He called, equipped, qualified and empowered them (13:2). Seen guarding the believer in his walk of any hindrance to holiness. Restraining His servants from going where they will. He has the right to command and the power to forbid (16:6,7). Warning Paul of danger and persecution in the pathway of service (20:23). Through Agabus predicting the trial and persecution Paul would suffer from the Jews (21:11). Reminding of the condition of an apostate nation (28:25-28).

We must listen to His voice, accept His guidance, keep ourselves pure, accept His restraining power, and be strengthened to suffer in spreading the Gospel.

The Activity of the Spirit

The Spirit gave the disciples power to communicate and witness by giving them utterance (1:8; 2:4,17,18). Power to Peter to speak boldly under divine compulsion with convicting power which impressed the city authorities (4:13). The disciples entered into a new-found courage and boldly proclaimed the message of the Gospel; they were filled (4:31,32). Here indeed is a complete revolution. Once marked by fear, now they have courage to face the world undaunted and unafraid.

They had power for office and service (6:3,5). Guidance in reaching a soul

with the Gospel (8:29). The Spirit illuminated Scripture for them, until the Scripture spoke of Jesus Christ (8:23-35).

At Samaria, the signs and miracles were evidence of the presence and power of the Spirit (8:13). The Spirit confirmed the new converts in their incipient faith (8:15,17; 10:44-46). Stephen was enabled to see Jesus standing on the right hand of God (7:55); Saul was endured with power (9:17); the Church was comforted (9:31), and directed in service (10:19).

God selects His servants (6:3), seven deacons who were to help the apostles and to take over the administration of tables. God also directs His servants (8:26,28; 16:6-10). The authority to send is vested in Christ (Matt. 28:18), the energy for going is in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). The Spirit's confirmation by judgment on those who resist is illustrated in the temporary blindness of Elymas the magician (13:9,12). The Spirit gave the apostles the boldness to confront men, the eloquence to persuade, and the language in which to be understood.

The fellowship of the Spirit is a prominent theme in the Acts (2:46,47; 8:15,17). The acceptance of Cornelius was plain to Peter (10:44-48). Later Paul's mission to the Gentiles and their admittance to the Church proves the community of the Spirit (15:28). The superintendence of the Spirit within the Church is seen at Antioch (11:23-28; 13:1,2).

The saints were unified in mind and spirit by a glowing experience and by the over-ruling, governing direction of the Spirit. They were able to withstand great pressure from without, and to expand their outreach far beyond Palestine.

The early church had a tremendous consciousness of being divinely led. The leaders were conscious that they were never left to take decisions alone. Office-bearers would take their office more seriously, and perform it more diligently, if they remembered they are responsible to none other than the Holy Spirit (20:38).

Trace the Holy Spirit in connection with prayer, preaching, fasting, baptism and laying on of hands in the Acts. There is no book in the N.T. in which the Holy Spirit becomes so personally viewed as He does in the book of Acts. There are over fifty references to His Person and Work.

Trace the references to "the Spirit"; "Holy Spirit", "the Holy Spirit," and "Spirit." The Greek prepositions used in connection with the Holy Spirit is both a fascinating and rewarding study. Bishop Westcott says, "the Greek preposition for "IN"—"EN" is found more than 2,700 times in the New Testament." *Some* of these are "DIA"—means through, throughout (Acts 1:2; 11:28; 21:4). "EIS" means into, as when a bird flies into its nest. (Matt. 28:19; Acts 13:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). "EK" means out of (Matt. 1:18,20; John 3:34; Gal. 6:8; 1 John 3:24). "EPI" means upon, resting upon (Matt. 3:16; 12:18; John 1:32,33; Acts 1:8; 2:3,17,18; 10:44). "META" means with, to be associated with a person (John 14:16; 2 Cor. 13:14). "APO" means

from. The Spirit coming in His Authority from God to us (John 16:13; Acts 2:17,18; 1 Pet. 1:12). Paul naturally gifted beyond most men and advanced (Gal. 1:14) needs no less that same filling of the Spirit if he is to become leader and spokesman of the Spirit-filled Church, as the “uneducated common men” of Acts 4:13.

We need to remember today that while God can make use of cleverness and expertise, cleverness and expertise CAN NEVER make use of God. In the early Church the Spirit’s presence made the saints faithful. Though scattered abroad by persecution they preached the Word everywhere (8:4). They were Spirit-filled men. Trace the Spirit guiding and directing the life and activity of Paul (16:6-7,19-21; 20:22).

It is true that the founders of the Christian church were granted unique endowments for their task. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God to every sinner who has trusted Christ for salvation (2:30). But the Holy Spirit can be grieved by us (Eph. 4:30). How can I relate to the Spirit’s activities? I must be willing to listen to Him, to learn from Him, to be led and guided by Him, I must follow and obey, unhesitatingly.

We need to pray daily for Spirit-filled men who can minister to the Church with apostolic zeal, with prophetic insight, with evangelistic fervour, with the compassion of Christ and a passion to see souls blessed and saved. Shall we pray with the Psalmist, “Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in Thee” (Ps. 85:6).

Young believer, remember there is no command in the Bible for anyone to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Potentially, the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place for all believers at Pentecost. Experimentally—that is as far as your experience and mine are concerned as believers—the baptism took place the moment we trusted Christ. It is not a SPECIAL experience of emotion because, like justification, it is a positional work, an objective work of God, not something that can be seen or felt by us.

The Holy Spirit in Romans

This “Law Court Drama” is logically profound and is without question a most important production from the pen of the Apostle Paul. Every Christian who desires to become firmly grounded in the faith must read this book carefully and prayerfully to understand the Gospel of God.

It gives to us a systematic presentation of two major doctrines—sin and salvation. The first eight chapters constitute a unit in themselves. There are Three logical divisions—Condemnation for sin (1:18–3:20): Justification by Faith (3:21–5:21): Sanctification of Life (6:1–8:39). It is in the third division we meet the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The word for Spirit is PNEUMA; sometimes it refers to the new nature of *which God is the Creator* (2 Cor. 5:17), as in ch.8:9. In 8:16 it is the Holy Spirit who is spoken of as the One who is the Giver of the new nature and witnesses with and through it. (See also 8:23,26,27).

The Spirit and Christ (1:3,4,8,9-11)

The early verses describe the Person of the Gospel in His Incarnation, Deity, Sinlessness, Death and Resurrection. The Son who is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, is the One who became Jesus to save His people, and was designated Christ for that purpose, is now Lord in His sovereign authority. He was designated and decisively demonstrated Son of God by the splendour of Resurrection. “According to the flesh”—Incarnation and Humiliation. “According to the Spirit”—Resurrection and Exaltation. Paul declares both positively and negatively, that all who are Christ’s are indwelt by the “Spirit of Christ” who is also described as the “Spirit of God” (8:9-11).

The Spirit and Salvation (5:5)

One of the results of justification is the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in connection with the work of God in the believer, in this Epistle. The abundance of God’s provision is indicated by the words “poured out.” Here is one of the gifts that the Great Giver the Holy Spirit gives (Gal. 5:22). He brings to us all the benefits of the death of Christ (v.8). All our hopes rest upon the assurance of the love of God.

The Spirit and Sanctification (ch.8)

“Newness of Spirit” (7:6) is spiritual service of which the Holy Spirit is the author. It is inward for it proceeds from a renewed heart.

Liberation (8:2). The law of the Spirit is the way of deliverance from the prison-house of sin. We have passed from the state of law into the state of grace by our union with Christ. This new law operates in the renewed spirit producing experimental righteousness. The overmastering rule of the Spirit of life transforms us. We have new moral dynamic (v.4).

Reorientation of mental life (v.5). Things "fleshly," material, sensual and sinful end in death (v.6a). The flesh is hostile to God and cannot please God. The "things of the Spirit" which He teaches and imparts cultivates daily behaviour well pleasing to God. The life is pure and refreshed and peace is enjoyed (v.6b). The secret of spiritual life is to draw constantly upon the life available for us in Christ and be occupied with spiritual things.

Motivation (vs.9,10). We cannot be in the Spirit unless the Spirit is in us. Paul declares positively and negatively that all who are Christ's are indwelt by the Spirit. This vital union with Christ arises from the indwelling Spirit. Because of the righteousness found through faith, the believer's spirit knows life, the Spirit makes him live (v.10).

Resurrection (v.11). This is one of the best passages in the N.T. involving the doctrine of the Trinity. Our spiritual resurrection is the guarantee of our participation in the resurrection of the body. The name "Jesus" refers to His human nature, but "Christ Jesus" (R.V.) is the Messiah in His representative capacity. His resurrection must repeat itself in that of others.

Obligation (vs.12-14). Destinations govern obligations. We are duty bound to live for Christ. We yield to the government of the Spirit in our lives. Matthew Henry says, "We cannot do it without the Spirit working it in us, and the Spirit will not do it without us doing our endeavour."

We need to walk in the practical and experimental power of the Spirit of life. The guidance of the Spirit is the proof that we are the sons of God (v.14).

Recognition and Confirmation (vs.15-17). The Holy Spirit coming into our hearts should banish the spirit of slavery so we need not fear. We should enter into the full blessedness of our filial relationship with God. We recognise our status and cry "Abba Father." We have both relationship as children, and family likeness as sons. "Adoption" is an act of transfer from an alien family into the family of God Himself. Haldane says, "Adoption confers the NAME of sons, and a TITLE to the inheritance; regeneration confers the NATURE of sons, and a MEETNESS for the inheritance." (John 1:12,13).

The Spirit delivers from the past and sustains in the present, also nourishes hope and expectation of immortality and glory.

Inspiration and Intercession (vs.26,27). We are inspired to pray by the Paraclete called alongside to help us in our weakness. He joins His help to our weakness. He will pray for us, and will quicken our minds and hearts. We who walk after the Spirit are led by the Spirit. He enables us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to pray according to the will of God.

The Spirit and Service

Under the Spirit's direction Paul expresses his true patriotism and deep concern for his own people. (chs.9-11). He calls God to witness the genuineness of what he says (9:1). His good conscience was the result of the Holy Spirit's operation. The Holy Spirit is the power of evangelism. Note the results in Acts 2:37-42. The depth of grief and intensity of sorrow reveal Paul's passion for souls (9:1-3). Fervent in spirit describes the manner in which the Lord is to be served (12:11). In our communal life the Spirit produces love for "righteousness, peace and joy" (14:17-18). These are the subjective experience of the objective salvation expounded in the earlier chapters (3-8).

The benediction (15:13,14), reveals God as the Giver and Object of all true hope, bringing joy and power through the agency of the Spirit for maintaining peace in the Church.

Power for missionary labours comes from the Spirit, and all Gentile believers are sanctified by the Holy Spirit who has come to dwell within them (15:16).

Paul fulfilled his apostolic commission by the assistance of the Spirit of God. This proves he was a divinely appointed minister of Christ (15:19). We should be very careful to glory not in what we do for the Lord, as in what He does through us. Paul beseeches the believers at Rome to wrestle together in prayer for him. The Spirit's power should promote interest in prayer for all evangelical work (15:31).

The Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians

The behaviour of the Corinthian saints indicates it is possible for a believer to have the Holy Spirit and not be spiritual (3:1). They were still carnal believers. A carnal believer is one who allows the flesh to have a definite sway in his life. He walks in the flesh, follows its leading, responding to its desires and yielding to its lusts. The carnal man in Romans 8:6-9, is an unbeliever. The chief problems within the fellowship were those typical of emotional immaturity. From the nineteen references to the Spirit in the Epistle we learn that the cure to rivalry and squabbling is to be endowed and superintended by the one Spirit of unity.

In Preaching the Gospel (2:4)

Paul was not moved to preach, nor was his mode of preaching determined, by any superiority of speech, for, to human wisdom, a crucified Saviour was ridiculous. The controlling factor in preaching the Gospel is not with human wisdom or in eloquence of human words, but in "demonstration of the Spirit." This proof compensated for lack of persuasive words of wisdom (1:17). Mere human wisdom is powerless to save. Had Paul persuaded the Corinthians by clever reasonings, and grounded Christianity upon their philosophy, his work would have perished with the wisdom of the age. Note his bearing (1), theme (2), manner (3), method (4) and aim (5).

The Revelation and Understanding of Divine Truth (2:9-16)

The Holy Spirit is the revealer and worker in operation and manifestation (vs.9,10). The profound and eternal truths of our salvation, are not discernable by human ingenuity, they are revealed through the Spirit (v.9). (a) He searches everything, even the depths of God (v.10). The secret thoughts of God are disclosed to us. This capacity is dependent upon the presence and activity of the Spirit of God (vs.12,13). (b) Man with his human spirit is totally incapable of understanding the thoughts of God. The gifts of the Spirit of God are folly to him, out of reach and beyond understanding (2:14).

All saints receive the gift, the Spirit from God (v.10). One makes use of His presence and grows in knowledge, grace and power, while the other, neglecting and grieving the indwelling Spirit, remains a carnal believer. To which class do you belong?

Note three kinds of men are mentioned (1) The Natural Man: man in his unregenerate state (v.14). (2) The Spiritual Man; he is indwelt by and

controlled by the Spirit (v.15). (3) The Carnal Man is the believer under the dominance of the flesh and therefore unable to digest strong food (3:1-2; Heb. 5:12-14).

The Sanctity and Stability of the Assembly (3:16,17)

It is by the Spirit that God indwells the Church making it a shrine (3:16). The Local Church is called by various names in this chapter. (1) God's Husbandry or Vineyard (v.9). "What then is Apollos?" (v.5 RV). The ministry of these servants was complementary and there was complete harmony between them, as God's fellow-labourers (v.9). (2) God's Building (v.9), The one building which God alone indwells and which the various workmen must be careful how they build (v.10). (3) Temple of the Holy Spirit (v.16). He makes it a shrine. It is by the Spirit that the various members come together to form one body. Trace the expression "KNOW YE NOT" ten times in this Epistle. "Temple," is the word for the holiest of all, the inner sanctuary.

What the Corinthians professed to believe was not matched by their practice. To desecrate the Divine sanctuary is a capital offence. Building in destructible matter is "corrupting the Temple." To defile the sanctuary by wrong doctrine, as in 15:12, will come under the disciplinary hand of the Lord.

Personal Purity (6:19)

Some of these saints needed to be warned against taking "the members of Christ" and making them "members of a prostitute" (6:15). They claimed "all things are lawful for me" justifying immorality as a demonstration of Christian freedom. May we flee these things. The individual believer's body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The body is for the Lord who bought it with a price, therefore "glorify God in your body." Personal purity and corporal sanctity are inseparable.

Sanctification and Inspiration (7:34,40)

This was another question asked by the Assembly (7:25). As there is no recorded teaching of the Lord to appeal to, Paul gives his judgment, refusing to speak with apostolic authority. There is no sin attached to marrying even if one is called to special service (v.28). The reference to the Second Advent calls for concentration of the minds of believers upon the Lord and how best to please Him. Married, or unmarried, life should be days of undivided interest in the Lord, holy in body and spirit (vs.34,35). He had the gift of inspiration, his teaching was by the Spirit of God (v.40b).

Distribution of Gifts (ch.12)

Here are some features of a Spirit-controlled Assembly. The social setting of a pagan, excitable community, accustomed to extravagant and showy

forms of worship, must be remembered. The Spirit of Christ is emphatically the Spirit of *Unity*; His action and power are never divisive.

Today, there must be:

(a) *Recognition of Lordship* (v.3). Verse 2 probably refers to ecstatic utterances of heathen oracles. Hence the simple test of v.3, which eliminated heathen oracle and Jewish blasphemer alike. It is only through the gracious ministry of the Spirit that any man can say that "Jesus is LORD" R.V., for such a confession of faith requires nothing less than a supernatural revelation of its truth (Matt. 16:16,17). Not every ecstatic utterance is motivated by the Holy Spirit i.e. "Jesus is accursed."

The Lord exercises His supreme authority in controlling His Assembly.

(b) *Distribution of Gifts* (vs.4-7). Paul endeavours to show that the operation of the Holy Spirit is creative and unspectacular, seen rather in gifts of character and spiritual endowment than in the supernatural manifestations so esteemed by them. They are derived from a Divine source (v.4). There is diversity in their action (v.5). Different in their assignments (v.4); activities (v.5), and effects (vs.6,7). The aim is "profit" and "unity" through the Spirit (see Eph. 4:7-16).

(c) *Manifestations of the Spirit* (vs.8-12). The gifts are different, but the purpose of each gift is the edification of the Assembly. The gifts are listed in a descending order of value, the more valuable are mentioned first. They are listed in order of their importance (vs.28-30). Note the word "ALL" in v.13, and v.30. While all were included in the baptism in the Spirit (v.13) all did not speak with tongues (v.30).

(d) *Unity of the Body* (vs.12-27). The analogy of the Body is asserted and justified. Variety, unity and dependence are enjoined (vs.12-14). The body can be neither all eye, ear or nose (v.17). Every faculty necessary is supplied (vs.17,18), all animated by one Spirit (vs.19,20). There are unseen members (the heart) which are vital "comely" parts (the face) which have honour beyond necessity (vs.21,22). Care is bestowed on weaker members (vs.24,25), and harmony is encouraged. Sympathy experienced in prosperity or in adversity (v.26).

The service of all gifts is to glorify God (vs.27-31). Chapter 13 indicates the manner in which these gifts should operate.

The Operation of Gifts (ch.14)

The trouble at Corinth lay in an embarrassment of spiritual gifts (1:7a; 14:1). Two gifts are singled out and compared and contrasted as to their relative values. What are the lessons for us today? There are neither prophets nor the gift of tongues today but the principles of prophecy abide (v.3). The

purpose of all ministry is to reach the mind, conscience and heart (v.3). The personal aim in ministry (v.6) “profit you”. The language used should be easy to understand (v.9). All ministry given should edify the church (v.12). The message must be understood by the speaker (v.19). In spiritual understanding we are not to be small children, but men (v.20). The truth itself will convince and judge an unbeliever, if present (v.24). “Let all things be done unto edifying” (v.26). Ministering brethren should be under divine control and consider each other (v.29). The ministry given is judged by competent men who have spiritual discernment (v.30). Proper order will give every gifted man a turn (v.31). All ministers should exercise complete self-control (v.32). Sisters must not speak in the church (v.34). The women at Corinth were a special problem (11:2-16). Sisters must not engage in any public ministry in the Assembly. To do so is rebellious (v.34) and shameful (v.35). Elders who allow or encourage this practice are denying the principle of verse 40. All must be controlled by the commandments of the Lord embodied in verses 26-40. The value of Spirit-given ministry—expresses love, edifies others, glorifies Christ, transforms character and wins outsiders.

The Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians

In this Epistle Paul answered his detractors who questioned his apostleship and criticised his ministry and his motives. It is one of the most personal of Paul's Epistles. Bishop Handley Moule says, "Reading this epistle we feel as if we can see his face, touch his hand, catch the accent of his voice and detect the tears in his tired eyes."

Paul opened his heart to his readers and revealed the price he had paid, the sufferings he endured, and the comfort he experienced from the Holy Spirit.

Confirmation (1:22)

Paul uses four precious words to underline God's attitude toward us:—establish, anoint, seal, earnest.

(1) *Established into Christ* (RV). God has placed us on the Rock (Psa. 40:2; 1 Cor. 3:11). We are being daily confirmed in our union with Christ. This is a continuing process following our conversion. Confirmed in the faith (Col. 2:7) and in grace (Heb. 13:9). Being settled and assured in Christ we should be faithful.

(2) *Anointed*. By the Holy Spirit God has consecrated us to His service and makes us like Christ (Luke 4:18,19; 1 John 2:20,27).

The Holy Spirit should direct our service and He enables us to obey the will of God (Acts 16:6,7,10).

(3) *God seals what He anoints* (Eph. 1:13; 4:20). It is a mark of Divine ownership. The Holy Spirit marks those in whom He dwells as belonging to God. It brings certainty and signifies security (Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66). (4) **Earnest**. The "deposit or pledge" is the foretaste of our interest in the heavenly inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14). It is a down payment given in advance. The future is therefore certain. It is the pledge of resurrection life in all its glory (5:5). The Holy Spirit indwelling ratifies the promise of God to fulfil every good thing. May we be faithful to God.

Recommendation (3:3)

Epistles of Christ written with the Spirit (v.8). The contrast is drawn between the writing of the Law on the tables of stone, and the "writing of the Gospel" on the hearts of men. The validity of Paul's ministry is judged by the quality of his work. "You are our letter of recommendation." He appeals to their changed lives. They were a letter from Christ and written by the Spirit. The Spirit had done the work, it was not done by Paul (vs.4-6). Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: "The crown of literature is soul-literature (3:3).

Think of the **AUTHOR** of it—God; the **MATERIAL**—human hearts; the **INSTRUMENTS**—Christians; the **MANNER OF WRITING**—by the Spirit; the **THING WRITTEN**—the mind of Christ; the **PUBLICATION** of it—consistent Christian living; the **READERS**—all men.”

Are we capable of being understood as representing and reproducing Christ?

Transformation (3:18)

The ministry of the Holy Spirit brings life (v.6), gives liberty (v.17), and produces likeness to Christ (v.18). The testimony about Christ is illustrated by radiant reflections, we become mirrors. We unveil Christ most effectively by reproducing His glory in Christlike lives. This is very practical.

(a) *Contemplation*. “We mirror the glory of the Lord” (Weymouth). Paul saw a vivid contrast here between Moses (v.13) who veiled his face, and the Christian who gazes at the Lord with unveiled face and is being changed (4:4). Beholding, we catch the light and reflect the glory of the Lord. “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.” Gaze long and often.

(b) *Reflection*. A mirror can reflect only what it sees and what it receives. Some see the mirror as Christ, and God’s Word. We behold in silent contemplation. Others in the context contrast the permanent glory reflected in the saints with the transient glory seen in the face of Moses.

(c) *Continuation* “from one degree of glory to another” (RSV). It will be a progressive daily transformation.

(d) *Transformation*. Becoming more and more like the Lord Himself (Acts 4:13). “It all comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (RSV), emphasizing the personality and deity of the Spirit. This is a lifelong, glorious experience and will be perfected one day (Phil. 3:21).

Commendation (6:6,7)

The chapter deals with the character of the minister. An appeal for consistency (vs.1-10) and for consecration (vs.11-7:1). In verses 3-10 there are twenty-eight ways specified in which we may commend ourselves as God’s servants. Here is a catalogue of what Paul endured in the spread of the Gospel (v.1). He shows that in normal situations the grace of God can be displayed in our lives. In vs.6,7 we see how Paul met and overcame affliction in service.

Endurance is possible by “power from on high” (v.7). The sterling qualities he exhibited under trials, in serving the Lord, are within the reach of every child of God. “Purity”—singleness of purpose, sincerity of motive. “Knowledge”—insight which comes through communion with God. “Longsuffering”—in relationship to people who may be stubborn. “Kindness”—an attitude towards others which is thoughtful and considerate. “Love”—an unaffected and genuine concern for others. “By the Holy Spirit” enabled to overcome; a message which is true, and the

power of God which can convict and convert others. These are the only effective means of daily victory over Satan, sin and self.

Correction (11:4)

This does not refer to the Holy Spirit. False teachers sought to change the truth taught to, and held by, the Corinthians. Note the word, "another," used in different senses. "Another Jesus," that is "*allos*," another of the same kind. "Another spirit" and "another gospel" is "*heteros*" another of a different kind. They listened to false teaching, but questioned that of the Apostle.

They were being seduced by false teachers who presented a defective Christology, and had made a great impression at Corinth. They were dispensers of a different spirit, one of bondage (Gal. 5:1-4). They tolerated men who by a spurious gospel were undermining the work of God in their souls.

Any doctrine which contradicts the fundamental truths of the Gospel should be firmly withstood (Jude 3:1; 1 John 4:1-6). We need today a faith that is exclusively resting in and centred upon the Lord Jesus alone. We should be absolutely separated and devoted to the claims of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9:6; 1 Pet. 3:15a).

Communion of the Holy Spirit (13:14)

What a lovely benediction comes at the end of this severe letter. Truly, "his heart is enlarged" (6:10). His love embraced them all and he desires the richest blessing to be experienced by "all". His detractors, critics, and the unrepentant need the blessing of the Triune God.

The order is experimental, for it is only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we come to know the love of God and the benefits of redemption brought to us by the Holy Spirit.

Note the full title sets forth the majesty of our Mediator. "Lord"—His essential Deity, "Jesus"—His true humanity, "Christ"—the Messiah who brought us redemption. The love of God, traces the channel to its source, and the participation of the Holy Spirit is the inward result of grace and love, the means by which they become practically known to us. Here is God with us, God for us, and God in us for daily living.

The Holy Spirit is the common possession of all the children of God, uniting all in one. It is upon His gracious work that the individual and corporate spiritual life of believers entirely depends. May we daily enjoy the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Holy Spirit in Galatians

Galatians is an exposition of Paul's great watchword:—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17). When Paul wrote this letter both he and his gospel were under attack. Here is Christ the Liberator and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. There is freedom from the curse of the Law (3:10-14). Freedom from its endless regulations, from external obligations to internal discipline (5:16,17). Freedom from the flesh (2:20; 5:24); spiritual freedom from the present evil eye (1:4; 4:3,9; 6:14). Liberated from the fear and flattery of men (1:10-12; 5:1-7,10-12).

The Promise Realised (3:2,14)

These saints seemed like those hypnotized by some malignant spell. Christ crucified was the grand object set forth to their view at the first. Paul preached Christ crucified so vividly that it seemed to these Galatians as though the whole thing had been enacted before their eyes. Justification by faith in Christ alone is proved by their past experience. By faith they had received the Holy Spirit (v.2). They had become children of God through the miracle of the new birth and the reception of the Spirit (v.21).

The Law had been satisfied, its claims met in the death of Christ (v.13). The purpose of God was the extension of blessing to Gentiles, and the giving of the Spirit to those who embraced the Saviour. The Law given could not set at nought or nullify the Promise (vs.15,16). The promise of the Spirit means a totally new indwelling life-principle.

The Provision of the Spirit Enjoyed (3:3-5)

They had become children of God through the new birth and the reception of the Holy Spirit (vs.2,3). Sanctification, no less than regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit, conditioned by faith. What has been implanted by the Spirit must be unfolded in the Spirit. Spiritual life that came to them through the Spirit's gift will only reach maturity through the Spirit's continued giving. The Spirit is the great giver and worker in Christian experience. Nothing can be achieved by the Judaizing doctrine of works. The Holy Spirit never came by the preaching of circumcision, of sacraments and ceremonies and efforts and fastings. He came by the hearing of faith (v.3c). The tragedy of the Galatians was that, having begun well, they were now going so badly wrong. That can still happen.

The Presence of the Spirit Expressed (4:6)

With the coming of the Lord through the Spirit into their lives all is

changed. We pass from religious bondage to Christian liberty (5:1). A great price has been paid for our freedom (v.5). Our relation to God is no longer servile but FILIAL. No longer sinners crying for mercy (Luke 18:13). We have boldness of access with confidence, we draw near in full assurance of faith (Rom. 8:15).

We are "begotten of God" because we have a new nature, which owns God as its source and responds to Him as its Father (John 1:12,13; 1 John 5:12,13).

What a privilege we have, brought into the family circle of God as sons (v.6). We have been given this status by adoption (v.5).

It is the Spirit who cries, a sharp, piercing and overcoming cry (Rom. 8:26). "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Being sons and daughters entitles us to the inheritance. This is the legacy of sons (v.7).

The Prospect that Energizes (5:5)

While the righteousness obtained through justification by faith is a present possession, its future fruition is an object of energizing and directive hope (Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 1:3).

Faith is in the understanding; hope in the affections and will. Hope then desires and expects. The hope begun here will be completed hereafter (Tit. 2:13). The Christian's faith is founded on a Person; its dynamic is not obedience to any law, but love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the link between our faith and the Spirit who prompts our hope.

The Power of the Spirit Exhibited (5:16,17)

Here in sharp contrast are the two natures in the believer. There is continual strife going on, conflict in the believer's heart (v.17). The old nature is not eradicated.

We must follow the leading of the Spirit and fight the lusts of the flesh; this remedy must be applied (v.16). The Spirit is the counter-agent to overcome sinful lusts. The Christian's life is under the Spirit, the atmosphere he breathes is spiritual. The struggle of the two natures is the common experience of all saints. To walk in the Spirit implies power of choice on our part, it is a voluntary matter.

The Product of the Spirit Exemplified (5:22,23)

The total harvest of the Spirit-filled life is described in nine of the loveliest graces of Christian living. How refreshing just to contrast these Christian graces with the vices of the flesh. The word "fruit" is singular as against "works." Fruit is an outward expression of inward life and power. The fruit is ninefold, not separate fruits. They hold together like the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11). They should ALL be seen on ALL Christians at ALL times. These virtues, three Godward, three manward, and three selfward found their perfect expression in the Man Christ Jesus. Our freedom in the Spirit who

indwells us produces the kind of christian qualities we could never generate. Fruitage in the Spirit requires rootage in the Spirit. There are three clusters in the ninefold fruit, with three in each.

(1) *My Personal Life-Godward*. "Love"—not "eros," nor "philia," but "agape"—unconquerable benevolence. An outgoing concern for the highest welfare of others. "Joy"—which flows from a deep, rich and sweet communion with our Lord (Phil. 1:25-31). "Peace"—the mark of the Spirit's presence. The inward calm of those who are "guarded by the peace of God" (Phil. 4:7).

(2) *My Public Life-Manward*. "Longsuffering"—endurance of wrong, slow to anger, being patient, putting up with people. "Gentleness"—graciousness or kindness. Mellowing all that would otherwise be harsh and austere. "Goodness" is active beneficence. Generosity in things material and things spiritual.

(3) *My Private Life-Selfward*. "Faithfulness" or dependability in dealings with men. Loyalty and trustfulness as opposed to unreliability. "Meekness"—a self-effacing humility. A sense of quiet submissiveness to God, mild equanimity. "Temperance"—self-control in the broadest and fullest sense of the term. Holding all the passions and all the appetites in perfect control. It has been said that these are varied expressions of Love. "Joy, is love exulting; Peace, is love resting; Longsuffering is love reacting patiently; Gentleness is love in society; Goodness is love in action; Faith is love being steadfast, consistent; Meekness is love at school and temperance is love in discipline and training." Author unknown.

"Against such there is no law." While law must condemn the works of the flesh, all these graces are condemned by no law.

The Prescribed Course for Unity (5:25)

Positionally we died to sin with Christ on the Cross (v.24; 2:20). The word "walk" means "to march in rank, or keep in step with." If we walk in the Spirit, no Assembly disharmony will be possible (5:15). There must be compliance with the will of the Spirit as well as reliance on the grace of the Spirit. The subjugation of our sinful nature is possible as we allow the Spirit to govern all our actions. The Spirit of life refreshes through the Word (Psa. 1:3).

The Practical Expression of Sympathy (6:1)

The spiritual man is one led by the Holy Spirit and only such can qualify for this delicate work. The word "restore" means to "set in joint," as a dislocated bone. A moral slip-up does not always mean a deliberate sin. The best of men slip up. We are exhorted to deal gently, meekly and delicately with the erring brother (v.1). Just as an injured limb is sensitive to the touch of another, so the erring brother is difficult to deal with.

We should remember if our brother fell today, we may fall tomorrow. (1 Cor. 10:12).

A Principle to Remember (6:8b)

What a blessed contrast, "shall reap life everlasting" (Rom. 8:11). Sowing to the Spirit is following His guidance and working out His purposes in our lives. In this verse Paul teaches that the consequences of actions and therefore their moral worth are determined by their aim.

We should continue witnessing, working, praying and giving (v.9). The harvest will come just as certainly as the Lord Himself shall come (Rev. 22:12).

The Holy Spirit in Ephesians

When Paul came to Ephesus he found a company of people who did not know that the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost (Acts 19:2).

They believed on Christ and were baptized. Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. They spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6). No reference is made to these events in this letter. The one great aim of the letter is to reveal the amazing purpose of God in His Son Jesus Christ, and how He is working out that purpose in His Church. There are 102 references to the Lord Jesus, and twelve to the Holy Spirit.

Claimed (1:13)

We see more of the spiritual blessings God has given us through the Gospel. These blessings belong equally to Jewish and Gentile believers, “we”, “you also” (vs.12,13). This anticipates the reconciliation of both in Christ at the Cross (2:14-16). Every believer is sealed by the incoming and indwelling Spirit at the moment of believing the Gospel message. The “seal” is received as a Divine attestation of our union with the Lord. The seal is a mark of genuineness (2 Cor. 3:3). The proof and presence of Divine faith in the recipient, and the mark of Divine ownership over him (John 10:14; Rom. 8:9). It is also the mark of security (v.14). The Holy Spirit shows us God’s will and enables us to do it.

Enriched (1:14)

The “seal” is God’s claim upon us; the “earnest” is our claim upon God. The word “earnest” denotes a down payment, or a pledge that an agreement will be kept. This was a regular feature of the Greek business world. Part of the purchase price of anything paid in advance as a guarantee that the rest of the price would in due time be paid. The Spirit is the guarantee of a fruition of fulness yet to be enjoyed (2 Cor. 1:22). God has given us enough to whet our appetites for more, and enough to make us certain that someday He will give us all. We are His acquisition intended for His personal property (1 Pet. 2:9).

Our future inheritance of glory is assured (1 Pet. 1:4,5).

Enlightened (1:19)

Paul desires for them that heavenly wisdom and revelation which is imparted by the Holy Spirit. Revelation is the key to all knowledge. (John 14:26; 16:12-15). He reveals the meaning of all truth, whether historical or

prophetical. Solomon prayed for an understanding mind and God fully answered his prayer (1 Kings 3). The "eye of your heart," the inner man, including the emotion and the will, it is the whole self.

"Revelation" cannot just come by our searching and study, but only as God in His grace shows His glorious truth to us. W.W.Fereday said, "If you can get the saints to think, you have accomplished something for God."

God wants us to be a thinking people (Phil. 4:8).

Privileged (2:18)

Access to God as Father is one of the great privileges of this Church age. Neither man's religion or church gives him access to God. Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant and only "through Him" can there be access to the Father (John 14:6). Now the believing Gentile and Jew have equal access to the Father, through the Son by the Spirit. The fact of the Trinity, and the equality and individuality of the Persons therein is emphasized.

It is the Spirit who enables us to have access to and audience with the Father. It is the one way still, for young and old, for educated and uneducated, for the mighty and the lowly (Acts 26:29; Rom. 1:13,14). In communion with the Father the great goal of reconciliation is reached. Through the one Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), we enjoy the same access in one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), to one Father (4:6). What a precious priceless privilege, may we use it DAILY.

Possessed (2:22)

There is now the intimate association of family life. We are constituted one holy temple, realised in the Spirit. A holy temple is being reared. We are God's dwelling place on earth. The people of God the family of God, the building of God, the temple of God, the place of God's presence, built for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. During this age of grace God takes up His residence in the Church and in the Christian (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16).

It is an inner sanctuary, an inhabited dwelling for the glory of God, a holy community in virtue of their union with the Lord. When all is completed grace will triumph and the glory of God will be seen.

Instructed (3:5)

The Spirit communicated in apostolic days the mystery of the Church. "Mystery" in the N.T. usually refers to a secret which has NOW been revealed, made plain. The mystery was (a) hidden for ages (v.5); (b) heralded by Paul (v.3); (c) is here explained (v.6). The Holy Spirit possessed the apostles that He might inform them. In Col. 1:27, the mystery is the personal indwelling of Christ in every believer. Here it is the corporate dimensions of the mystery. Christ is the Head of the Church in which Jew and Gentile are united as fellow-members of the same body. They are now fellow heirs of the

same blessing, fellow-members of the same body, and fellow-partakers of the same promise. No Old Testament saints knew what God purposed and planned, in creating this “new man” out of Jew and Gentile, thus constituting them one body (2:15). It has come to us through the gospel we believed (3:1,2).

Empowered (3:16)

Paul’s first prayer was for revelation (1:15-23). This prayer is for realization (3:14-18). Study the eight contrasts between them. God wants us to go in for spiritual APPROPRIATION of the riches of His grace. It is not enough merely to “know;” we must “be.” The fruit of divine knowledge is the expression of divine life.

We need to know the strength of God (1:19; 6:10), by the power of the Spirit. God’s purpose is to establish Christ’s presence in possession of us; to enhance Christ’s preciousness to us and to ensure the plenitude of Christ’s life in us. Do not connect the “four dimensions” with love in v.19. It draws attention to the immensity of God’s Plan for the Universe (see 1:6-10; 2:11-22). Love introduces a new idea. Paul is not thinking of the vastness of Christ’s love but the expansiveness of God’s plan. The Holy Spirit enables us to know something of the unknowable and to comprehend something of the incomprehensible.

The Doxology (vs.20,21) also harps back to (1:19; 1:22), think on that.

Unity Formed (4:3)

The Holy Spirit brings all believers into one body with certain fundamental beliefs that dare not be denied. The four expressions of 1 Cor. 12:13 are here. One Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Baptism. Our Christian walk preserves Unity (4:1-6). There are four qualities of personal life (v.2), then qualities of life in the fellowship. We need them to live worthily of God’s call and to maintain unity (v.3). So with all our strength we are urged to keep the unity of the Spirit when we recognize in every true believer a member of the body of Christ. Preservation of an ecclesiastical or organized unity is not implied. It does not apply to any ecumenical movement in church history, past or present. The basis of spiritual unity in the Church is sevenfold (vs.4-6).

Authority Acknowledged (4:4)

“One Spirit.” The Spirit in His Sovereignty. One in equality with the Father and Son. He is One in the fellowship of the co-operation of the Godhead in all things. Think of His many titles discussed in an earlier paper. He is the Agent in regeneration (John 3:5). He unites each regenerate individual to the Head, and as Sanctifier, maintains that union. We are to demonstrate that the unity formed is a true and glorious reality.

Exhorted (4:30)

"Grieve not the Spirit." Remember the sensitiveness of the Spirit. There are at least eight things that can grieve Him (vs.17-31). We are to walk consistently and in separation from all that marked us as unregenerate men (4:17-32). Treat other people as God has treated you (v.32).

Controlled (5:18)

We must walk carefully (5:15—6:9). Careful in the use of time and of wine. The latter is a command. The filling of the Spirit is not optional, but obligatory, the prerogative of every saint. Being "filled" means that the Holy Spirit has complete control of the whole being. He is directed only by the Word of God. It will be seen in singing, giving thanks, humble service, submission to one another, sacrificial love, obedience to Christ, to parents and masters (5:19—6:8). The "filling of the Spirit" produces moral NOT miraculous signs in our lives.

Enabled (6:17)

Here is a call to arms. There is a war on and you are engaged in it. You have empowerment—"be strong" (v.10), and the Lord's equipment (vs.13,16,17). The Devil is a supernatural power out to defeat us. His wiles even trick us (Gal. 3:1), turn us away from truth and holy living (1 Cor. 5). He would trample us down in spiritual conflict (Eph. 6:12,13). The "whole armour of God" is a necessity, not a luxury (v.13). The Christian's weapon is the Word of God used by the Spirit of God.

Communion (6:18)

Never ever lose touch with the living God. Only thus can we be victorious, prayer connects us with our unconquerable Lord.

"Keep alert," see that other things do not rob you of communion with the Lord. You will need perseverance as well as purpose in prayer.

Dependence on the Spirit will bring victory. We are already there, give God thanks now (1 Cor. 15:57).

The Second Coming of Christ

The Fact of His Coming

The Bible reveals the Second Coming of Christ as the most majestic and stupendous event towards which all the ages move. His first Advent is now a matter of history, and the second still a matter of prophecy.

We are to “take heed” in our hearts to the prophetic Word (2 Pet. 1:19). God’s word deals with three classes, namely, the Jew, the Gentile and the Church (1 Cor. 10:32). The latter are taken out of Israel and the Nations (Acts 15:14). The Church “which is his body” has a unique place in the ways of God (Eph. 1:22,23). The doctrine of the body of Christ is N.T. teaching and peculiar to the apostle Paul; no other Bible writer mentions it (Rom. 16,25,26; Eph. 3:4,8-11).

The truth of the coming again of our Lord is revealed and unchangeable. Our theories of the fact are NOT inspired, and we should endeavour to adopt an objective approach. Pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten our minds and encourage our hearts. Our consideration of this great theme demands modesty, humility and abundant charity. It is essential to distinguish between the TWO STAGES of the Lord’s second coming.

(1) His coming to the AIR, to catch up the Church, called the RAPTURE (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:51,52).

(2) His coming to the earth, called the REVELATION (1 Cor. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:8; Matt. 24:30).

The first is His coming as the Son of God, the second as the Son of Man, a title always linked with the earth (Zech. 14:1-3).

(a) **Prophesied in the Old Testament.** Most of the references are associated with “that day”—“the day of the Lord.” The Lord Jesus is the promised King (Gen. 49:10; Isa. 32:1; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 37:22; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 19:16). Compare references to “THE BRANCH” (Isa. 4:2; 11:1-9; Zech. 3:8; 6:12,13). These mean that Jesus will reign as King over the whole earth. He is coming to set up a Kingdom (Dan. 2:34,44,45; 7:13,14; Psalms 2,24,72). His Kingdom will fill the whole earth. The prophetic word will be verified.

(b) **Promised by the Lord Himself.** (i) In plain language (John 14:1-3; Matt. 16:27; 24:27-31; 25:31-34; 26:64).

(ii) In parables (Matt. 24:30-35; 25:1-13; 25:14-30 with Luke 19:11-27). All these refer to His coming as the Son of Man to earth except John 14:1-3. His promises are sure (John 14:2; 2 Cor. 1:18-20).

(c) **Proclaimed by Angels.** (Acts 1:10-11; Rev. 11:15-17). Acts 1:11 is clear. He is coming as He went—literal, personal, visible, in the clouds of heaven. Coming to the same spot (Zech. 14:4). Coming in glory and power.

(d) **Preached by the Apostles.** PETER in Acts 3:19-21, the hope of Israel. Until the restoration (v.21). Meditate on these “UNTIL’S” (Isa. 6:11-13; Dan. 7:22-25 RV; 9:27 RV; Jer. 30:24 RV; Ezek. 21:27; Luke 21:24; Rom. 11:25 RV). In 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Pet. 1:16,21; 3:1-15, a subject for scoffers in the last days.

By Paul He writes about baptism 13 times, but about the return of Christ, 50 times (1 Cor. 15:51,52; Phil. 3:20,21; 1 Thess. 1:10; 2:19; 3:13; 4:13,18). The second Coming of the Lord is the one hope of the Christian, and the sure hope of the Church (Eph. 5:25-32; Col. 1:22).

Study the passages on “the Day of Christ,” a subject of New Testament revelation.

By John (See 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Rev. 3:11; 19:11-16; 22:7,12,20).

(e) **Published by Others.** In James 5:7,8 patience in service. Jude 14 the “day of the Lord.” A subject of O.T. prophecy, it is a time of judgment (Joel 2:18-32 RV). In Hebrews 9:24-28 we see three positions in which we behold the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, viewed as a man. His three appearances. In verse 26 a Propitiating Saviour, with Titus 3:4. In v.24 a Priestly Saviour, to save us from the presence of sin, with Titus 2:13. R.A. Torrey writes, “The second coming of the Lord is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament.” In all the Gospels, the Acts, every epistle of Paul (except Galatians and Philemon), James, Peter, Jude, John (except his two minor epistles; yet hinted at in 2 John 8); and the Revelation.

Are we living in the light of this glorious event? May we worship anticipatively (1 Cor. 11:26); walk consistently and circumspectively (Rom. 13:12,13); witness carefully (1 Cor. 9:24-27); weep hopefully (1 Cor. 15:24; 1 Thess. 4:13); warn faithfully (1 Cor. 16:22); and wait expectantly (1 Thess. 1:10).

He is coming, PERHAPS TODAY. These precious words ought to thrill our hearts. May our response be, “Even so come Lord Jesus.”

Signs of His Imminent Return

Many signs of the times certainly indicate the near end. We can surely see anarchy in the world, apostasy in Christendom, and apathy in the Church. Iniquity is advancing by leaps and bounds, and there is no power to effectively check it. We should not look FOR signs nor need them as a stimulus to faith. Yet signs may be looked AT. Faith does not rest on any number of signs, but on God’s Word. We do not know the actual date of our Lord’s return, for that is a secret locked in the bosom of the Father (Matt.

24:36; Acts 1:7). The coincidence of certain signs intimate that His coming is at hand.

The Political Sign—"Wars and rumours of wars" (Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7). Nations have always been hostile to other nations whom they have envied or feared. We live in a militaristic atmosphere never before experienced by mankind, and fear is gripping the hearts of men. War has always plagued the world in spite of what men say (1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 9:17).

The Social Sign—Days of violence, lawlessness and immorality (Matt. 24:37-39; 2 Tim. 3:1). Contempt of authority, parental and magisterial, is prevalent and a growing evil. The Lord portrayed the moral state of the world immediately prior to His coming in glory—conditions just like the days of Noah. People today are living just as if there was no God and nothing after death (Psa. 14:1; 1 Cor. 15:32c). The spirit of combination is rife. Soon men will be denied the right to live and labour for their daily bread unless adherents of the Beast (Rev. 13:16,17).

The Natural Sign—"plagues and famines" (Luke 21:11). Think of the undernourished in many places. The spectre of famine and thousands dying every week in appalling conditions. The battle to feed humanity is a real problem of our time, and all the efforts of UNO is only touching the fringe, it will never be solved.

The Moral Signs (2 Tim. 3:1-7). A picture of the dreadful corruption of the last days. These are the marks of Christendom today.

"Perilous" only occurs again in Matt. 8:28, translated "fierce." Self is stamped upon every term used. Corruption in personal life (3:2); in family life (vs.2c,3a); in business life (v.2b); in national life (vs.3a,4a); in social life (v.4c); and in religious life (v.5). There are thirty characteristics of wicked men in (vs.2-13). There is an upsurge of Satan-worship.

Religious Sign—There is widespread apostasy and departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:5-9; 2 Thess. 2:3). Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons are rife. Apostasy is a falling away, an abandonment of faith, a desertion and forsaking of God (Matt. 24:10-13; Jude 4-19).

We are in the Laodicean condition of Christendom, a condition out of which there is no corporate recovery (Rev. chs.2 and 3). Seven distinctive states are seen, ending with Christ outside, standing, knocking and pleading (Rev. 3:20). He appeals to the individual, recovery is not CORPORATE. Heresies and apostasies have distressed the Church from the earliest times. They will reach their climax in the great apostasy which will prepare the way for the rule of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3-12).

The Economic Sign—Stored up treasure (James 5:3). In the economic world there is no panacea for the financial woes of our day. The radio and Daily Press continually speak of “depression”; “inflation”; “recession” and “devaluation.” Bankruptcy is common, commercial systems are heading for total collapse as predicted in Rev. 18:14-18. “The merchants of the earth shall weep” (Rev. 18:11). The religious system is symbolized in Rev. 18 as the Babylonian monster. Both will be destroyed because of their sins.

The Jewish Sign—(Matt. 24:32; Luke 21:20,21). The fig tree is symbolic of Israel as a nation, soon it will begin to bud and blossom. In Luke 21 and Matt. 21:19, the Lord blasts the fig tree, Israel was utterly rejected. This prophecy was accurately fulfilled when Titus laid waste the city in AD 70.

God will have fresh dealings with Israel, the fig tree puts forth her leaves (Matt. 24:32). Her summer is nigh, a time of restoration (Acts 3:19-21 RV). They will be vivified (Ezek. 37), because of His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:2-8). They are back in Palestine in unbelief, enjoying a measure of national independence. Truly, the Lord is at hand, “the time is at hand” (Rev. 1:3; 22:10). We can see the end of ‘the times of the Gentiles,’ is very near. These signs indicate there is no reason why the Lord should not come for His Church at any time. We should be waiting (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10); looking (Titus 2:13 RV); holding fast (Rev. 3:3); and occupying, doing business till He comes (Luke 19:13). May we pray like John Wilkinson:

“Oh gather soon the ‘remnant’ in,
 To realise forgiven sins
 Through Jesus’ precious blood;
 Arouse Thy Church to work and pray,
 To show Thy scattered ones the way
 Back home through Christ to God.”

The Judgment Seat of Christ

The great event that will terminate the present period of grace is the Rapture of the Church at the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ. After this event and our reception to the Father's House, the Judgment Seat of Christ will be set up.

Time

Between the Rapture and the second Advent (Luke 14:14). Prior to the Lord's coming with His saints to inaugurate His glorious kingdom on earth. Judgment-seat or "Bema" was applied to a Roman magistrate Tribunal. The time is the day of Christ (Phil. 1:10; 1:6; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13).

Place

In heaven (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). It is a tribunal before which all believers will stand and be made manifest.

Object

There are four main accounts of the Judgment Seat (Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:9,10). We shall consider these later. Some objects are:— (a) To give a personal account of how we treated our brethren (Rom. 14:12,13). (b) To reward or rebuke us for our ministry, and to test our motives (1 Cor. 3:13,14; 4:5). (c) Accountability and assessment of character (2 Cor. 5:10). (d) To rectify things we failed to put right down here. To ensure that we move into the Marriage Supper (Rev. 19:7,8). (e) To determine the place we shall occupy in the Kingdom; the place we have then is being merited now. This is illustrated in the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11-26. We are to trade for gain with the deposit given to us. The cities referred to speak of administration. The outcome is determined by the success of trading in the absence of the Master (vs.16,17). The measure of present gain is the measure of future government (Luke 19:17,19).

The Judge

"The Lord, the righteous Judge" (2 Tim. 4:8; John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The Persons Judged

All believers—"we all", "every one of us", "every man" (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12; 1 Cor. 4:5; Gal. 6:8; Col. 3:24).

The Quality Tested

(1) *Its Individuality*—Rom. 14:10-12. The main truth here is accountability.

God will hold me accountable how I treat my brother (vs.13,15). You are not the "weak" brother's master; it is to Christ that he "standeth," in approbation, or "falleth," in displeasure. Why all this clashing and contradicting and censuring among Christians? "We shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (v.10). Two sobering thoughts: "for whom Christ died", "the work of God" (vs.15,20). Do we appreciate the brother offended is Christ's, and a part of His purchase? and is the work of God in grace. We are all the Lord's (v.9), depending on Him and devoted to Him. We must acknowledge His absolute sovereignty and dominion. He is the universal monarch, Lord of all (Acts 10:36).

(2) *Its Scrutiny* of materials used by the teacher (1 Cor. 3:11-13). The severity of the test of all ministry—"tried by fire." The Corinthians formed opinions concerning the relative merits of teachers. We still do that. We are builders in an assembly employed for industry. The foundation is Christ (v.11) and Paul laid it at Corinth. He now instructs would-be teachers, who are building the superstructure. Our materials must be carefully selected. We are to take heed how we build (v.10). The materials employed can be interpreted of doctrine, of character and example of the teacher. Here it is the work that is judged rather than the person. It is our contribution to the local assembly. What we have built shall be tested by fire (v.13). What will matter then will not be the size but the sort of our work; not its bulk, but its quality. In that day there will be a fair assessment, never one more accurate. What stands the test will be rewarded; what fails will be disproved. Oh, terrible, eternal loss!

(3) *The Qualities* of the teacher (1 Cor. 4:1-5). Ministers should not be regarded as sources of truth; they belong to the Church, and not it to them (1 Cor. 3:21-23). They are stewards (under-rowers) of Christ and must show faithfulness. Every man is estimated in four ways:—(a) by his friends "you" (v.3a); (b) by the world—"man's judgment" (v.3b); (c) by himself—"mine own self" (v.3c); (d) by the Lord (vs.3-4). Only the last of these "judgments" is perfectly true. Only the Lord knows our motives, and only what He thinks really matters. He will bring to light the things done secretly, both bad and good. We should neither place too high a value on teachers, nor belittle the work they do. God will give praise to every man (v.5).

(4) *Its Solemnity* (2 Cor. 5:9,10). There will be a very searching judgment. Study the four different words used; "made manifest"; "declared"; "revealed"; "tried", prove (RV). Accountability, assessment, then rewards. Paul wants to be well-pleasing to the Lord (v.9). In that day character will be seen—"things done in the body." All believers will be made manifest. All pretence will be gone. Christian living will be tested. Our faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Christ will be judged, and rewarded accordingly. Our resolution should be, "I will live NOW for THEN, and HERE for THERE."

(5) *Its Possibility* of rewards. Sharing the joy of the Lord (Matt. 25:21);

knowing one's work was not in vain (Phil. 2:16); seeing fruit for God (1 Thess. 2:19); praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5) and many crowns; for elders (Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 5:4); for faithful service (2 Tim. 4:8) and for enduring trials (Jam. 1:12). May we live today in the light of that day—Amen.

Sin—The Fall of Man

Sin is “missing the mark,” failing to hit the target and deviation from the divine will (Rom. 3:23). Sin is as old as man but it originated in the mind of Satan before the creation of man (Isa. 14:12-14).

It is still vitally important to preach ruin by the Fall, redemption by the blood of Christ and regeneration by the Spirit of God. The fall of man came by the disobedience of Adam (Gen. 3:6,11,12; Rom. 5:12,15,19). It came through the temptation by Satan (Gen. 3:1-5; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14). “God made man upright” (Ecc. 7:29), and not only innocent, but positively good. As a free moral agent he was tested in a triple form (Gen. 2:16,17) and failed. God permitted Satan to test Adam; he transgressed and disobeyed God (1 Tim. 2:14).

Its Entrance (Rom. 5:12-14)

Sin was brought in by the serpent, by his subtle approach to the woman. His temptation was cowardly—she was alone; it was cunning—he questioned what God had said; and it was cruel—he suggested God was unkind.

Satan appealed to the Body—“the lust of the flesh”—“it was good for food”; to the Soul—“the lust of the eye”—“pleasant to the eyes”; and to the Spirit—“the pride of life”—“desired to make one wise” (1 John 2:16). The serpent cast doubt upon God’s word (Gen. 3:1), then he distorted it (v.3) and denied it (v.4). This led to disobedience and discovery (vs.6,7). Eve made three great mistakes. She parleyed with the devil, she tampered with God’s word, she disobeyed, being deceived (1 Tim. 2:14). Dr. C.I. Schofield summarises transgression thus—“(1) It is an ACT, the violation of, or want of obedience to the revealed Word of God. (2) It is a STATE, the absence of righteousness. (3) It is a NATURE, enmity toward God.”

Sin is the denial of the divine right to command. It is rebellion and issues in chaos and disaster. Sin is rampant, but not reckoned (Rom. 5:13), and reigns through death (5:14).

Its Evil Exposed

What is sin to one is not sin to another, yet no matter how we try to camouflage sin, it is still SIN. The word for “evil” or “wicked,” means the ruin of a soul by breaking it in pieces. Psalm 32:1,2 uses three words which are aspects of sin. “TRANSGRESSION” “passing over a boundary,” going beyond assigned limits which have been laid by an existing authority.

(Gen. 2:17; 3:11; James 2:9). A common sign on prohibited land, “Trespassers will be prosecuted.” INIQUITY is lawlessness, or spiritual anarchy (1 Tim. 1:9). It is a total disregard for what is legal and just (1 John 3:4 RV). A perverse crooked thing (Isa. 64:6). Sin perverts man’s thoughts of God and His law. Sin not only perverts, but pollutes (Psa. 51:5,8,9). GUILE—cunningness or craftiness in deluding people (Heb. 3:13). Sin is very deceptive, it is a lie, and has its origin in the father of lies, even Satan (John 8:44).

Sin is separation from God, it brings alienation, degradation and condemnation (Gen. 3:10-19:24; Isa. 59:2). True here and now, and if man dies in sin he is eternally separated from God (2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8).

Sin is of the devil (1 John 3:8; John 8:44). Man is the child of the devil (Matt. 13:38; 1 John 3:8,10). Man is a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3); blinded in heart (Eph. 4:18). Sin is darkness (1 John 1:5,6). Man lives in darkness, and loves darkness (John 3:19,20), his end is darkness forever (Jude 13). Man is born in sin (Job 25:4; Psa. 51:5; Isa. 48:8; John 3:6). Sin defiles the soul (Prov. 30:12), the body (Isa. 1:6), makes him unclean (Isa. 6:5; 59:3). Sin defiles the conscience (Titus 1:15; Heb. 10:22). It corrupts the ways of men (Gen. 6:12; Psa. 10:5,7-9; Rom. 3:12-16).

Its Effects

It brought to Adam self-consciousness—“they knew” (Gen. 3:7). They hid themselves (v.8). God’s saving provision is intimated in verse 15. Illustrated in the covering provided through the shedding of blood in verse 21. It was consummated at Calvary (1 John 1:7b).

Adam was alienated from God (Gen. 3:23,24). The effects were immediate, far-reaching, and devastating (Gen. 3:16-19; Ps. 58:3; Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). Man is in bondage to sin (Rom. 6:19; 7:5,23); in bondage to Satan (2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 2:14,15). Thus sin blinds, deludes, deceives, defiles and then destroys (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 5:17; 6:23; Heb. 9:27; Jas. 1:15). We cannot set aside the Genesis record as allegory. If man never fell, why did he hide from God? Why did his firstborn become a murderer? Such was the violence and corruption of the world that God had to judge it with the Deluge (Gen. 6:11-13).

The Divine Remedy

“Where sin abounded grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). Study the five “much mores” in this chapter. Of redemption (v.9); reconciliation (v.10); representation (v.15); recognition (v.17) and repletion (v.20).

God in wondrous love freely gave His Son for us, and He died for us. (Rom. 8:32-34). He bore our curse at Calvary. He became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13). The sevenfold glory of God’s plan of salvation is seen in Romans 3:21-26. The Lord Jesus willingly became the propitiation for our sins

(Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). He died “for us” (Gal. 2:20), and “instead of us” (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5,6). He has brought us redemption, and brought us to God (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 3:18). We are reconciled to God (Col. 1:21,22). We are brought nigh and made righteous (Eph. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Give God thanks (2 Cor. 9:15; Psa. 92:1).

Reader—Please read Scriptures quoted.

Repentance

There are eight original words used for repentance in the Bible. We mention five of these; the first three are Hebrew words and the others are Greek words. (1) NACHAM—to sigh, breathe strongly, to be sorry (Gen. 6:6; Ex. 13:17; Job 42:6; Jonah 3:10). (2) NICHUM—compassion (Hos. 11:8); (3) NOCHAM—regret (Hos. 13:14). (4) METANEO—to change the mind for the better, morally, to change the attitude toward sin (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19). Occurs over 30 times in the N.T. (5) METANOIA—a real change of mind and attitude toward sin and its cause, not merely the consequences of it (Matt. 3:8; 3:11; 9:13; Luke 24:47). It appears over 20 times in the N.T.

Commanded by God (Acts 17:30)

Paul was not a tourist, but a missionary preaching the gospel (v. 17). It was not the SIGHTS in Athens, but the SOULS that attracted Paul (v. 16). He delivered one of the greatest messages of his ministry as he stood on Mars' Hill (vs. 22-31). Study it, then preach it. Verses 30, 31 are the application of the message. Repentance involves self-judgment and self-loathing. It has to do with our attitude to God. Christ as Judge (v. 31), the day, the standard and the certainty of judgment are clear.

I have heard only one message on repentance in the last 28 years. The response to Paul's message was: "some mocked, some procrastinated, and some believed" (vs. 32, 34). Is not that always the result of gospel preaching?

Preached by the Baptist (Matt. 3:3-12)

Perhaps the greatest preacher of repentance the world has ever known. He was the last of the O.T. prophets. Many of his day did not like his "style," but that was because it had teeth as well as tongue, a sting as well as a hiss. John was "a voice," not a gramophone; and this voice heralded the WORD. His message was ETHICAL rather than EVANGELICAL. His words and phrases were from the mouth like swords; "generation of vipers", "wrath to come", "axe", "cast into the fire." All classes felt the sting of his words. He told proud, corrupt people, the truth about themselves.

We need men like him today. The plough of conviction is never driven deep into the human soil (Jer. 4:3). We have shallow results because of shallow repentance preached. Repentance is the first step in the soul's return to God. It is summed up clearly in Ps. 119:59, 60. The whole human family

high and low, religious and pagan, is by nature in rebellion against God, in a condition of alienation from God. We must awaken the conscience to the reality of sin (Luke 13:2-4). Men need to be delivered from the authority of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13).

Preached by the Lord (Mark 1:15)

The Lord's first command was "repent ye, and believe the gospel." His message was clear to all. Turn—"repent ye"; trust—"believe," and testimony—"the gospel." The kingdom of heaven speaks of authority and submission. We are changed from one sphere of rule to another. This was Paul's mission (Acts 26:18). The blessings of repentance are in Rom. 14:17,18; righteousness is exchanged for guilt; peace for strife; joy for gloom. Ethically these affect us, manward, Godward and selfward (vs.17,18). Repentance is our responsibility and indispensable to salvation (Luke 13:3).

Significance

In the N.T. the word occurs 61 times and means a change as to who shall rule over us, Satan or the Lord Jesus Christ. *Why do we need the change?* (1) Rebellion against the Supremacy of God (Gen. 3). (2) Rejection of the Scriptures of truth (Heb. 3:7-10; 2 Tim. 3:8). (3) Refusal of God's Son (Matt. 21:38; Luke 23:18,21). (4) Disregard of God's salvation (Heb. 2:3). *What is repentance?* (a) Repentance is an intellectual experience. It means an after-thought, to think again and "think aright" about God, about the Lord Jesus, about sin and about ourselves (Psa. 51:3; Matt. 21:29; Luke 15:18). The prodigal son illustrates this (Luke 15:17). "He came to himself"; "I have sinned against heaven and before thee." He readily acknowledges his rebellion and confesses his willingness to return home. The people of Nineveh repented and took the place of subjection to God (Jonah 3:8). (b) An emotional experience, a change of feeling. Expressed by David (Psa. 38:8), "I will be sorry for my sin." The Publican (Luke 18:13), smote upon his breast in penitence and confession. "Peter went out and wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:62). (c) A volitional experience—a change of purpose, for the will is involved. Repentance involves determination to do what is right (Luke 15:18,20; John 5:6d; Psa. 119:59; Isa. 55:7). (d) A moral experience—a change of conduct. It demands action (Matt. 3:8; Luke 15:20; 19:6; Acts 9:5,6).

What a different world this would be if the repentance of Nineveh could be repeated today (Jonah 3:5-10). *What causes repentance?* The goodness of God (Rom. 2:4). The long-suffering of God (2 Pet. 3:9). Godly sorrow works repentance (2 Cor. 7:10).

It is the gift of the Risen Lord (Acts 5:31) and of God (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). It is always connected with faith in the Lord Jesus (Acts 20:21). Repentance and faith are inseparable (Luke 24:47; Acts 11:18).

False Repentance

Repentance is not the mere presence of tears, some weep over their own misery but never over their sinful condition before God. Superficial tears are of no avail. Saul feigned repentance, confessed his sin but only to save face before the people (1 Sam. 15:24-30). Ahab rent his clothes but not his heart (1 Kings 21:25-27). Solemn vows and good resolutions are no substitute for repentance. There must be deep humiliation, contrition and confession of sin (Ezra 9:9; Luke 18:13).

Herod thought well of the Baptist and listened to his preaching, but never repented. He murdered John and lived on in sin (Matt. 14:10). Reformation is not repentance, it is a counterfeit, and sometimes leads to degeneration in another direction. Judas has remorse but not repentance. (Matt. 27:3-5). Too many are sorry simply because their sin has been discovered; the shame of exposure hurts their pride. Few realise the vileness of sin in the sight of God. (Job 42:5,6). A broken spirit because of the heinousness of sin is always pleasing to God (Ps. 51:17).

Repentance of Saints

We need to be saved from our sins (Matt. 1:21). Peter was truly repentant (Luke 22:61,62). The failing Corinthian Assembly repented (2 Cor. 7:8-11). The churches in Revelation 2 and 3 were exhorted to repent (2:5,16,21; 3:3,19). The sins of leaving their first love, sensuality, fornication and sacrilege, a name to live, but dead, and materialism must be repented of. We neglect to repent over sin, the polluted source of the tainted stream. Failure to repent brings discipline in this life (1 Cor. 11:31,32).

The repentance of sinners is connected with relationship to God (Acts 1:18; 26:20; 1 Thess. 1:9,10). Repentance of the saint is connected with fellowship with the Lord. It can be restored on confession of sin (1 John 1:9; Jam. 5:16).

Consequences of Neglect

Some averse to it (Jer. 8:6; Matt. 21:32). Danger of neglect (Matt. 11:20-22). Followed by swift judgment (Rev. 2:5,16; 9:18,21). All shall perish (Luke 13:3; Heb. 9:26).

Redemption

Redemption is a most comprehensive term, it is a chief among the doctrines of grace, it permeates most of them. It is associated with justification, sanctification, adoption, and resurrection. It covers the entire work of God in Christ for the salvation of man.

The following ideas are contained in Redemption. A ransom price paid for freeing a captive. This is done by a kinsman, or near relative (Ruth 4:1,2). To buy out of the possession of another, restoration of freedom and blessing. This glorious truth has its origin in the O.T. and its blessed results mainly in the N.T. covering our past (Eph. 1:7); the present practical results (Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18), and the prospect we await (Rom. 8:22,23; Eph. 1:14; Phil. 3:20,21).

The Divine Plan

Eph. 1:3-7; 1 Pet. 1:18-20. Away back in the dateless past God's love planned our redemption. True of Israel and of saints now (Isa. 50:2; 63:9). Our adoption as children and our acceptance before God is part of this plan. The Lord Jesus came as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Our redemption is described as precious (Psa. 49:8), plenteous (Psa. 130:7) and eternal (Heb. 9:12).

The Demanded Price

Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rev. 5:9. It is the blood of Christ. He paid the price to redeem out of the market (Gal 3:13). He has set us free from the curse of the law and from its bondage (Gal. 4:5). Blood shed and sprinkled is the purchase price of access to God (Lev. 17:11; 16:14,15,18,19). Exodus gives to us the first unfoldings of redemption (Ex. 6:7; 12:7,13). By the blood of the Lamb, and in chapter 14 by the power of God, celebrated in Israel's first song in Exodus 15. The ass could only live if redeemed by a lamb, the lamb instead of the ass (Ex. 13:13).

There is a distinction between purchase and redemption. Purchase implies a change of masters (Acts 20:28; 2 Pet. 2:1). The false teachers were bought by the Lord but NOT redeemed, their judgment will be all the more sure and severe. Redemption is a change of state and condition, deliverance from the state of slavery (Gal. 3:13; 4:5). It brings a change of position from Adam to Christ. We have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23), and should live holy lives. Creation has been purchased, but its redemption is still future (Rom. 8:19,20).

REDEMPTION

The Defined Place

Ruth 4:1-4; Luke 23:33; Heb. 2:14,15. In Ruth 4:1, the purchase price is paid at the gate for the possessions of the deceased, this included Ruth, the bride. What Boaz the kinsman redeemer promised Ruth was effected in the morning at the gate. The Lord Jesus assumed manhood and became our Redeemer at Calvary and saved us from being disinherited forever (Lev. 25:48; Heb. 2:14,15). "He suffered without the gate" and in love we identify ourselves with Him (Heb. 13:12,13). The ransom must come from above (Job 33:24) and the Lord Jesus came down to be the Deliverer (2 Cor. 1:10).

The Delightful Purpose

Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Titus 2:14. These Scriptures mention some of the purposes of God for us. It brings justification by grace through redemption wrought for us at Calvary (Rom. 3:24). We are redeemed from the curse and bondage of the law. (Gal. 3:13; 4:5). It imparts the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). It makes possible the gift of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:14). It prepares for the adoption of sons (Rom. 8:23; Gal. 4:4,5); from the power of sin (Rom. 6:18,22); from every form of lawlessness, making us zealous of good works (Titus 2:14); the influence of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4).

It makes us the property of God, we live to glorify Him (1 Cor. 6:19,20). We are redeemed from vain behaviour (1 Pet. 1:18). It will be our song of praise in Heaven (Rev. 5:9). Israel will sing of forgiveness and redemption in a future day (Isa. 44:22,23).

We wait the final part of the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:22,23; 1 Cor. 15:52; Phil. 3:20,21). In the new heavens and new earth, all creation will be redeemed from the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21).

May we unite in praising God for the blessings of redemption (Psa. 71:22,23). We must never be ashamed to testify to the wonders of redeeming grace; the joy of forgiveness, as Israel will do when "sorrow and sighing shall flee away." The glory of the Lord will be seen in that day (Isa. 35:1,2,8-10). With the help of W.E. Vine's dictionary study some of the Greek words he explains:—*agorazo*, *exagorazo*, *lutroo*, and *lutron*.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation! What a theme for the Gospel preacher; what a glorious truth for meditation. Propitiation is the work of Christ Godward. It has in view the satisfying of the demands of divine righteousness and divine holiness. God's wrath must be appeased. It must be propitiated before God can bestow His favour and blessing (Luke 18:13; Rom. 5:10). Reconciliation is the work of Christ manward (1 John 2:2). It is for the whole world. Propitiation makes this possible (Heb. 2:17; Rom. 5:10). Reconciliation was not necessary from God's side. Man has ever been the offender and enemy (Eph. 2:15,16; Col. 1:21,22).

The Meaning

In the N.T. the word is derived from three different Greek words. The verb form means "to change from enmity to friendship." Fausset says, "the changing of places, coming over from one to the other side." The reconciling of man to God (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18,19,20). The noun form has four occurrences (Rom. 5:11 (RV); 11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18,19). The word "reconcile" carries with it the idea of the removal of hostilities and the establishment of a peaceful relationship (Col. 1:20,21). The word means to reconcile completely (Eph. 2:16). Man was originally in fellowship with his Creator. With the invasion of sin into his life, man was separated from God. Through the work of His Son, God provided a way for man to be brought back to his Creator in a redeeming relationship. He can be restored to full communion, fellowship, and relationship with God (Rom. 5:10).

The Means of it

(Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:13). The Lord Jesus is the One in whom all is accomplished. The result of His work—"having made peace" (Col. 1:20). Christ has done what was necessary to accomplish reconciliation. The little preposition "THROUGH" occurs three times in this verse. It designates Christ as the Agent of reconciliation. God's holy demands are satisfied in the atonement for sin. It necessitated the personal agency of Christ at Calvary to effect our reconciliation (Heb. 9:22).

The cost involved—"the blood of His cross." His blood shed on Calvary—that bridged the gap between God and man and provided the means to bring man back into a right relationship with God.

"Unto Himself." God was not reconciled to man, man went wrong and was separated from God (Eph. 2:13). Reconciliation is a work of God for

man and not a work of man for himself. By faith I rest on the work of Christ. He did it all for me at Calvary.

The Magnitude of it

Just as salvation is viewed in the N.T. in three tenses, so reconciliation by itself is presented in that way too. (a) The past provision was made by Christ in His death at Calvary (Col. 1:20). Reconciliation stands completed as a historical fact. (b) The present possession, its present acquisition, not some remotely future experience but a present reality. Distance and displacement are gone forever (v.21). This is the reach of reconciliation—"and YOU" (v.21; Rom. 5:1). (c) The prophetic announcement of eternity future—"reconcile all things." What a prospect, a reconciled earth when the Lord Jesus will be the Centre of the glory in the millennial age. These verses give us a sweeping panorama of the purpose of God for this world. The whole universe will undergo a process of re-orientation (Isa. 11; Rom. 8:19). We shall be "holy"—free from every trace and tint of sin, all defilement gone. "Unblameable" separated from former weaknesses and sinful tendencies. We shall be "unreprovable"; that is, no one, Satan, sinners, other saints—will be able to successfully hurl accusations against us (Rom. 8:33).

The Ministry of it

One of the major themes of 2 Cor. is that of ministry, chapter 5 particularly deals with this subject. The word translated "ministry" is the word "deacon," service on behalf of others. It means mundane work on behalf of others. (a) The reason for this ministry (2 Cor. 5:19). The work of Christ on our behalf is the foundation for our ministry to others. Reconciliation accomplished, the experience is to be proclaimed to others. We should be willing to obey the Lord and engage in this dignified ministry (v.19). (b) The recipients of this ministry. We are the chosen vessels through whom the Lord carries out this ministry to others. We are to beseech men to change their attitude and accept the provision God has made for them in Christ. (c) Our responsibility. It is "given" to us (2 Cor. 5:18). This is a decisive act; God has given us this responsibility and privilege of ministry.

The Message of it

This is described in verses 19,20. This is our stewardship—"committed to us." It is really His ministry and we are but stewards. (1) The announcement "God was in Christ." The sinless Saviour (v.21). His sinlessness qualified Him to be the Agent of reconciliation. The stupendous sacrifice—"sin for us." He was made sin on our behalf. The sin question was settled once for all (Rom. 4:25-5:11). The splendid standing—"made righteous"—justified freely by His grace. (2) The ambassadors (v.20). We are the personal representatives on earth of the glorified Christ in Heaven. That is why we can herald this message with authority. (3) The appeal—"we beseech you." We beg or pray. Our appeal is urgent. As faithful ministers we should be earnest and sincere in our proclamation of the message. Through us it reaches others. The reconciliation of Joseph and his brethren in Gen. 45 vs. 1-11, is a good illustration of *this lesson*.

Salvation

Salvation is possibly the greatest evangelical theme in the Bible. It is of infinite proportions, the most inclusive word of all. It gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes—as redemption, propitiation, grace, forgiveness, justification, sanctification and glorification. It is described as great (Heb. 2:3), common (Jude 3), eternal (Heb. 5:9; Isa. 45:17; 51:6), with eternal glory (2 Tim. 1:10). Salvation of God (Jonah 2:9), ascribed to God (Isa. 12:2), and the supreme mission of the Lord Jesus (Luke 19:10).

Introduction

Taking a telescopic view of this subject we note the following:

Pre-eminently thought by God as to its origination (Jonah 2:9; Acts 28:28). *Peered into* by prophets in their investigation (1 Peter 1:10). *Plainly taught* in man's ruination (Gen. 3:6,8; Tit. 3:3-8). *Patiently sought* in man's reformation (Gen. 3:7; Tit. 3:5). *Purposely taught* in Christ's Incarnation (Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15). *Perfectly wrought* by Christ's propitiation (Rom. 3:24,25; 1 John 2:2). *Persistently fought* by Satan's opposition (Mk. 4:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Thess. 2:18). *Precisely brought* by grace in its manifestation (Tit. 2:11). *Personally possessed* by faith's appropriation (Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8). Eternal in its duration (Isa. 45:17; Heb. 5:9) and permanently ends in glorification (Phil. 3:20,21).

Ruin—The Why of Salvation

Man is domineered by the Devil (Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19), is an enemy, ungodly, and a sinner (Rom. 5:10,6,8). He is far off, and in darkness (Eph. 2:13; 4:18; 5:8). Man is ruined spiritually; he is dead (Eph. 2:1). He is ruined mentally; in the dark, blinded by the god of this age (2 Cor. 4:4), needing the light of the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:5). Ruined morally, he is degraded (Eph. 2:3; Tit. 3:3), he needs emancipation (Col. 1:13). Ruined totally (Rom. 5:6; 1 Cor. 5:9,10) he needs deliverance (Heb. 2:14,15). Ruined eternally, he is doomed unless he trusts Christ for salvation (Rom. 5:8,9; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 2 Thess. 2:8,9). Luke 15 portrays man's lost condition. Like the "sheep"—naturally lost (vs.3-7), iniquity or the inherent tendency of the heart. The "silver" helplessly lost (vs.8-10), sin missing the mark. The lost "son" wilfully lost (vs.11-24), transgression, disobedience to law.

Ransom—The Work of Salvation

Job 33:24; 1 Tim. 2:6. This great salvation is the greatest manifestation of

God's power to deliver (Acts 26:18; Eph. 1:19,20). It was planned by God before the world began (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20. It was purposed in the coming Christ; Jesus is His saving name (Matt. 1:21; 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:6; 2 Tim. 2:10). Provided by the blood, the death of Christ (Matt. 20:28; Acts 20:28). He gave His life a ransom for us in order to save us (Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:19). We have been purchased by His precious blood (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:20).

Procured by the Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:31,32; Rom. 4:24,25; 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:3,4). Salvation is not something but Someone (Psa. 27:1; 62:2; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:30).

Repentance—The Way of Salvation

Mark 1:4,15. This was presented clearly by the Saviour (Matt. 4:17; Mk. 1:15; Luke 13:3,5). It was preached continually by the Apostles (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 20:21). Repentance is indispensable to salvation. It is commanded by God (Acts 17:30). It is the first step in the soul's return to God. (e.g. Manasseh a proud, godless, wicked man repented 2 Chron. 33:1-20.

Relation—The Wonders of Salvation

Salvation is not confined to what takes place at conversion. God's salvation covers the past, includes the present, and embraces the future (2 Cor. 1:9b,10).

The Past—Saved from the Guilt and Penalty of Sin

Luke 7:50. The tidings of salvation (Acts 13:26). It is universal in its offer, irrespective of nationality, position or condition (Mk. 16:15; John 3:16; Acts 10:34; 20:21; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:24; 2 Tim. 1:9).

The truth of salvation, an eternal salvation (Eph. 3:11). A common salvation, meaning it is for all, none are excluded (Jude 3). A powerful salvation (Luke 1:69,77,78; Col. 1:13,14). The terms of salvation, faith in the Saviour (John 1:12; 3:36; 5:24; Acts 4:12; Eph. 2:8,9). The time of salvation (Luke 19:9; 2 Cor. 6:2) "Now is the day of salvation." This very moment. It is a present and personal salvation. It brings deliverance from sin, wrath, the Devil and eternal death (1 John 3:5; Rom. 5:9; Heb. 2:14; John 3:36).

The Present—Saved from the Power of Sin

Rom. 5:10—Through the present life of Christ in Heaven (Rom. 6:6; 7:14). Saved daily by the intercession of Christ (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24,25,). Saved from sin's government as well as its guilt (Rom. 6:18,22). Saved instrumentally by the Scriptures (Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:2; John 17:17,19; Psa. 119:9). Experimentally by waiting on God (Psa. 27:4,5; 37:7; 40:1; Prov. 20:22). Saved by the contemplation of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18).

The Future—Saved from the Presence of Sin

Rom. 13:11; Phil. 3:20,21. The Lord Jesus is the Captain of our salvation, bringing us to glory (Heb. 2:10). The Author of an eternal salvation, we can never be lost (Heb. 5:9). When He comes to the air for us, He will save us from sin within, and from the presence of sin around us. This is announced to us “nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11). It is appointed for us, and will be realised when we meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 5:9).

Later He will restore the preserved of Israel (Isa. 49:6). The redemption of the body is anticipated by us (Phil 3:20,21; Rom. 8:18-23). As to the past, we are saved by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:26). Presently we are saved by His intercession in heaven (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24). Any moment now the last aspect of salvation will be completed (Heb. 9:28; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:51-54).

Numbers 21:1-9 is a good illustration of salvation, verses 8,9 being the turning point. Any one who looked upon the serpent on the pole, lived. Their salvation was SIMPLE—only a look; EFFECTIVE—when he looked he lived; it was IMMEDIATE—when he looked, it was EXCLUSIVE—no other remedy; INCLUSIVE—for everyone who looked, and it was PERSONAL—it was when HE looked. All this was TYPICAL—(John 3:14,15), and CERTAIN (Acts 4:12).

Justification

Justification is a most important subject as it has to do with a right relationship with God. It is one of the great cardinal truths of the Gospel. It was the age-old question of Job 25:4, "How then can man be justified with God?" There appeared to be no answer to this problem for God declared Himself to be "One that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:7).

Taking a broad view of the subject the following facts may be noted. We are justified judicially by God (Rom. 3:26; 8:33); meritoriously by blood (Rom. 5:9); freely by His grace (Rom. 3:24); effectually by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:11); assuredly by His resurrection (Rom. 4:25); instrumentally by faith (Rom. 5:1), and evidentially by works (Jas. 2:14-16).

The scriptural meaning of it

The act of God declaring men free from guilt, acceptable to Him and counting them righteous (Rom. 3:25,26; 5:18). A change in a man's relation to God, or standing before God. Some have described it, "just as if I have never sinned". It sounds good but has no Scripture basis, it is bad theology. The noun form "OIKAIOSIS" means to pronounce righteous or acquitted. On believing one is acquitted of his sin and accounted righteous. This is the PREROGATIVE of God. He has done this for us in Christ (Rom. 5:16,17). We are just in His sight eternally.

Its two-fold nature

(1) It is a removal—the negative side. Saved from the anger of a holy God (Rom. 5:15). The accusations of conscience are silenced (Heb. 9:14; 10:2). From the consequences of sin (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27).

(2) It is a restoration—the positive side. We are cleared from all guilt (Rom. 5:16; 8:33), and constituted righteous (Rom. 3:22; 4:3-9; Gal. 3:6). As in the burnt offering the death of the victim procured acceptance before God (Lev. 1:4; Eph. 5:2).

The sinner needs justification

All men are unrighteous (Rom. 3:10), unruly (Rom. 3:16,17), unclean (Isa. 64:6), unprofitable (Rom. 3:12), ungodly (Rom. 5:6) and unable to please God (Rom. 8:8; Heb. 11:6).

Some mistakes about justification

People think that by good living, charity, law-keeping, and religion they can obtain favour with God. This is not so (Job 9:1,2,20; Psa. 130:3; 143:2).

It is not possible by keeping the law (Gal. 3:10,11). Some taught that circumcision must be added to faith (Gal. 3:2,3; Rom. 4:1,2). The law gives the knowledge of sin, it cannot justify (Rom. 3:20). It guides us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:24).

The marvel of justification

We are justified by God (Isa. 50:8; Rom. 8:29). He is righteous in all His ways and judgments in accordance with His character (Rom. 3:4,30). Verse 21 is important "Now" shows the unique character of this day of grace. "Sins that are past" (v.25), remind us of God's forbearance in passing over sins prior to Calvary. The death of Christ declares God righteous in thus acting. He is a Just God. We are justified by the grace of God, the spring of it (Rom. 3:24). In grace God bestows the blessing, "Freely" means "without a cause" or "for nought" (John 15:25; 2 Thess. 3:8). Justification is the gift of God (Rom. 5:16,18). All is bestowed freely because of the blood shed sacrificially at Calvary (Rom. 5:9), and the Saviour's obedience on Calvary (Rom. 5:9,10).

The means of justification

"By His blood" Rom. 5:9. This is the only basis. It is procured by and in Christ (Gal. 2:17). The sinner on believing in Jesus possesses justification "NOW" (Rom. 5:9a). By the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4:25; 8:34). His death is the ground of justification. His resurrection is the guarantee, that it is judicially, and legally acceptable. This is illustrated in Abraham before the law (Rom. 4:1-4,9-25), and David under the law (Rom. 5:1; 3:28). It is faith in the Person and work of Christ (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6). The faith of the sinner is reckoned for righteousness, as in the case of Abraham and David (Rom. 4:5-9). It is entirely of faith (Gal. 2:20).

The message of justification

Clearly declared by Paul (Acts 13:38,39). The condition of blessing "all that believe", the extent of the blessing—"from all things. Illustrated in the prayer of the publican (Luke 18:13,14). He was acquitted and accepted. Both Peter and Paul proclaimed Christ as the only means of salvation (Acts 4:12; 13:38,39).

The measure of justification

No charge can be laid against us (Rom. 8:33). We are cleared from all things (Acts 13:39). We are changed eternally (1 Cor. 6:11). Our conscience has peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Communion with God is ours daily (Rom. 5:2). We are confirmed as heirs (Tit. 3:7), and certain to be glorified (Rom. 8:30). There is no disagreement between Paul and James regarding this great truth. The quotation in Rom. 4:2,3 is from Gen. 15:6 and refers to Abraham's justification by faith. James 2:21 is from Gen. 22, dealing with

consecration. This took place some thirty years afterwards and was conclusive proof of the genuineness of his faith. Rahab is mentioned because her act (Jas. 2:25) was a work of faith. Both confirmed that faith is always seen by its actions. God saw their faith by what they did in a crisis. Two features of Christianity are expressed in these two characters—a higher affinity in relationship and a nobler association in fellowship. To Abraham was given the seal of circumcision for assurance, to Rahab was given the scarlet cord of acceptance. James reminds us that a faith that never moves a limb is a corpse, movement is that test of life (Jas. 2:20). Others take a different view, Paul's teaching is positional—the principle of faith; James' teaching is practical—the practice in the life. Only God could assess the reality of these two great characters and He blessed them accordingly. A good illustration of justification is found in the "Cities of Refuge" in Joshua ch.20. Meditate on this and see how it works.

Regeneration or the New Birth

John 3:10,14; Matt. 19:28; Titus 3:5

Regeneration is God's act in the soul and the introduction of a new life. The word only occurs in Matt. 19:28, and Titus 3:5. The latter is the spiritual rebirth of the individual, the washing that needs no repetition. Matt. 19:28 refers to the new condition of things brought in with the millennium. The "renewing" is a continuous process which will go on during our life time.

Regeneration is an objective state or condition and can only be witnessed by the eye of God as it indicates an internal condition. Regeneration is an inward experience, the divine side. Conversion is the outward expression, the individual turning to God (1 Thess. 1:9).

The Need of the New Birth—John 3:1-3

Man is dead in trespasses and in sins, therefore reformation is of no avail (Eph. 2:1). The corruption of human nature requires it (John 3:6; Rom. 5:7,8; Titus 3:3). We learn from John 3:1,3, that human religion, learning, natural talent and ability can avail nothing in this experience. Nicodemus was, politically—a ruler, a member of the Sanhedrin; religiously—a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5d); academically—the Teacher in Israel (v.10). Socially, he was a wealthy man (John 19:39,40), yet totally ignorant of spiritual truth (v.10; Ezek. 36:25-27). He acknowledged the Lord had wisdom, power and divine approval. He is taught by this new Teacher that he "must be born again" (v.3). This is not merely another birth, but another **KIND** of birth, "born from above" (v.7 RV. Margin). The Lord Jesus is the instructor of supernatural knowledge (vs.1-13).

The Way of the New Birth—John 3:4-9

In this dialogue the Lord explains to a man of great intellectual capacity that he is still unsuitable for the Kingdom of God (v.3). His sinful nature disqualified him for the communion of a heavenly society. Spiritual life cannot be evolved—it is imparted by the Spirit of God (vs.5,6). It's important—"I say unto you"; the instrument—"the Spirit". Man is incapable of it (v.6a) and it is imperative and indispensable—"ye must be born again". Nicodemus immediately associated it with the earth (v.4), later he showed prejudice rather than misunderstanding (v.9).

The negative side of the new birth is seen in John 1:13.

(1) It is not inherited—"not of blood" RV; not self-effort or self-determination, no one can give to himself this new life.

(2) “Nor of the will of man”, no human influence can produce the new birth. It cannot be imparted for it is of divine origin, and is a free gift from God (Rom. 6:23).

On the positive side it is all of God (John 1:13c). The three Persons of the Godhead are involved. Effected by God, He quickens a person who exercises faith in Christ (1 Pet. 1:3; John 1:12,13; Eph. 2:1); through the work of the Lord Jesus (John 3:14,15); by the Spirit; He is the active Agent in regeneration (John 3:6,8; Titus 3:5). The Spirit convicts of sin, cleanses, quickens, renews. It comes through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23). Through the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3). We are begotten through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). Just as Ezekiel preached to the dead bodies (Ezek. 37:9,10), so the Spirit breathes into us new life from above. The new birth is all God’s work (Ezek. 36:36,37).

How Described

As a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). “All things are become new”. This radical change is the impartation of a new disposition. Our former standing, “old things are gone for ever”. We have become “alive from the dead” (Rom. 6:13); a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13; 3:1), and “the washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5).

Enjoyment

The reception of a new life and nature, the putting on of the new man (John 3:15; 2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 4:24). We become children of God (John 2:23; Gal. 3:36). God becomes our Father (Gal. 4:6), and all saints our fellow-citizens (Eph. 2:22). We have a new mind (Rom. 8:6b) and can live victoriously by the power of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,18; 1 John 4:4; 5:4).

These are to be manifest in our daily life (1 John 3:14). These are the evidences that we are “born of God”. Trace the nine references in 1st John. We should live righteous lives (1 John 2:29); love one another (1 John 4:7); have a hatred of sin (1 John 3:9,10; 5:18). We delight in God’s law (Rom. 7:22), have a desire for the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2,3) and enjoy the fellowship of saints (Heb. 10:25).

Assurance

The assurance of salvation is plainly written over the pages of the New Testament. The Epistles abound with the truth that we know we possess salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8). This assurance rests upon the Word of God (Jn. 20:31); the work of Christ (Heb. 10:14); and the witness of the Holy Spirit in us (Gal. 4:6).

The Strong Foundation

(Isa. 32:17; Psa. 27:1-3; 46:1-3). Years ago preachers often said, "The blood of Christ makes us safe; the Word of God makes us sure" (Ex. 12:13). Full assurance is built upon a scriptural foundation. The faithfulness of God and the promises of Christ are unassailable. The word in Isa. 32:17 is clear, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever". The Abrahamic Covenant as formed in Gen. 12:1-4 is confirmed in chs. 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8; the "I will's" of promises have been fulfilled temporally and spiritually and all will be realised.

Faith sounds out its confidence and challenge—the Lord is Light, Salvation, and Fortress. There is therefore no need to fear or tremble. This covers the past (v.2), and reaches into the future (v.3), and so embraces all life (Psa. 27:1-3). In Psa. 46:1-3 God is the Refuge of His people (vs.1-3). His strength and help (vs.1,5); His presence (v.5) and His power (v.8), make all the difference between defeat and victory. What confidence is expressed in the words, "We will not fear—though—though—though" (vs.2,3). It is the O.T. counterpart of Paul's great utterance in Rom. 8:38,39. Our God is faithful (1 Cor. 1:9,30).

The Saviour's Affirmation

This is most assuring. "We will never perish" (John 10:28); "never thirst", "never cast out" (John 6:35,37). "We have everlasting life"; "we are free" (John 6:54; 8:36). We rest on Him who completed the atoning work (John 19:30; Heb. 1:3; 10:14). Saved by His intercessory work (Rom. 5:10; Heb. 7:25). "He is able to succour", "to save"; "to keep" (Heb. 2:18; 7:25; 2 Tim. 1:12). "He is our Life" (Col. 3:1). With the man of John 9:25, and Paul, we can say, "I know" (2 Tim. 1:12). Everything depends not on what we are, nor on what we do, but on Christ (1 Cor. 3:11,23; 1 Peter 2:4,6).

The Servant's Confirmation

John's first Epistle is the book of assurance. He wrote his Gospel that we

might believe and be saved (John 20:31). The purpose of the Epistle is that we may know that we possess life eternal (5:13). Seven times in chapter five we have the assuring words, "we know". The words, "know, knoweth, known and knew" are mentioned 38 times in this Epistle. The word "know" in 5:13 is the Greek word "oida" meaning fulness of knowledge, or to know perfectly. Christianity is a religion of certainties. Ours is a saving faith, and a knowing faith. It is not an intellectual faith, but a present active faith "unto you that believe".

Paul in Romans 5:1-11 reminds us that none of God's blessings stand alone. Ours is a full salvation (vs.1-11) and a free salvation (vs.12-21). We have peace with God, access to God in prayer, rejoice in hope of glory, the love of God, the Holy Spirit and the assurance that Christ died for us and intercedes for us. Study the five "much mores" in this chapter. We have adoption, are joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:14-17). The unfailing love of God (Rom. 8:38,39). Union with Christ (1 Cor. 6:15; 2 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 5:30). Others tell of full assurance of hope and of faith (Heb. 6:11; 10:22). We have a mental grasp of all spiritual privileges (Col. 2:2). Our prayers will be answered (1 John 3:22; 5:14,15). We ought, like Abraham, to be fully persuaded that what God has promised He is able also to perform (Rom. 4:21).

Peace

Peace is one of the thrilling notes of the Gospel, “preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36). He is “the Lord of Peace” (2 Thess. 3:10). Job reminds us that peace comes through submission to the will of God (Job 22:21). In this restless age men and nations yearn for universal peace.

There are many aspects of peace in the N.T. and the three Persons in the Godhead are united in providing perfect peace for every believing soul. The Father is the God of Peace (1 Thess. 5:23); the Lord Jesus is the Prince and Personification of peace (Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:14), and the Holy Spirit provides the Fruit of peace (Gal. 5:22).

Reconciliation Col. 1:20,21

This is our need as sinners. The work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary secures our peace. The claims of God’s holy justice have been fully met, and blood-brought peace is the portion of the believer in Christ (Rom. 5:1). The work on the Cross reconciles the sinner to God (2 Cor. 5:19,20; 1 Pet. 3:18). Peace is proclaimed in the Gospel (Acts 10:36).

Unification Eph. 2:14-16

The divine work accomplished a change for both Jew and Gentile. Now the believing Jews and Gentiles would be mutually at peace and at unity. The Jews and Gentiles were separated in unbelief by “the middle wall of partition”. The barrier was removed by Christ. The ceremonial law has been annulled or rendered inoperative. “One body” has been made from believers extracted from the two opposing parties, a living unity with Christ as Head (Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:18). He procured peace (v.16), preached peace through His apostles (v.17), and is our Peace (v.14). He is also our peace in Resurrection (John 20:21).

We have been brought into all the wealth of a covenanted privilege. We are brought into the fellowship of the church as the body of Christ (v.19). The church, as a spiritual entity, is precious as seen by God (vs.21,22).

Justification Rom. 5:1

We are free from any charge of guilt, and have a righteous standing before God. The righteous act of the Lord at Calvary (v.18), has procured our acquittal from guilt (vs.15,16). This all comes to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This justification is perfect and permanent. There are no degrees in justification. All is ours freely by grace (Rom. 3:24);

instrumentally by faith (Rom. 5:1). Study the blessings of justification in verses 1-11.

Sanctification Phil. 4:7

We need peace of heart within us as well as peace of conscience (Rom. 5:1). Not all saints enjoy peace within. We fail to enjoy our inheritance in Christ. Peace comes through sobriety—gentleness (Phil. 4:5). “The Lord is at hand”, beholding us, as well as upholding us, enabling us to be tolerant and considerate when troubles assail us.

The secret of serenity depends upon three conditions (v.6). Be careful for nothing, be prayerful in everything, and be thankful for anything. Praise, prayer and peace are good friends. Tranquility is ours for Peace will stand as a garrison round our heart. Peace as a sentinel guards us as a sentry guards a palace—the God of Peace in His presence and defence (vs.7,9). Is this experimentally true of us each day?

Arbitration Col. 3:15

The “peace of Christ” RV. Let this peace govern there, as an umpire deciding all matters of difference among you. Peace with God is our privilege, peace with our brethren is our duty. This peace must regulate our relations one with another in the local company. Where this peace arbitrates, and the Word of Christ permeates, there will be acclamation of the Person of Christ and everything done in the Name of Christ.

Perfection Isa. 26:3

This chapter looks on to a restored and converted Israel. What assurance—“Thou wilt keep him”—what abundance “in perfect peace”. Nothing to disturb it, invade or destroy it. It passes all understanding. The mind may enjoy peace as it is stayed on Him. Our attitude “stayed on Thee, trusteth in Thee”. This is the secret of tranquility in any storm that might upset us. As we hearken to God’s word we can have “peace like a river” (Isa. 48:18).

Affection Psa. 119:165

This great peace is the fruit of faith, and the motive of obedience. The practical influence of faith is wholehearted obedience (v.166). The highway to happiness is love of God’s Word (Ps. 119:16,47,97). Our communion is sweet and our confidence assured. This is a law of obedience, as we walk in the light we will go on to the full enjoyment of peace. This peace is an incalculable blessing (Isa. 54:13). “nothing shall offend them” is translated, “to them is no stumbling block”. There are many things to stumble us; fiery trials, daily cross-bearing and temptations all around us. This is the consolation to the faithful lover of God’s word, “The work of righteousness shall be peace” (Isa. 32:17).

Benediction Heb. 13:20,21

This prayer is frequently and appropriately used as a benediction. Here is a word of cheer for persecuted saints. For my troubled heart—"the God of peace", for my trembling soul—the power of God in "raising our Lord from among the dead". This great act guarantees our peace for time and eternity. My tendency to wander—the pastoral care of "that Great Shepherd". For my tender conscience—"the blood of the everlasting covenant". We are eternally secure and have eternal life.

The God of purpose—"to adjust thoroughly"; I need this for my daily life, equipped "to do His will", how necessary (Col. 4:12; 1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 6:6).

We can bring pleasure to God in all that we do (Col. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 John 3:22). All God's work is "through Jesus Christ", He is the Lord of glory, may we daily glorify Him and magnify Him in our bodies (Phil. 1:20). Amen.

Substitution

Substitution is not a scriptural expression, but has been deduced from the phraseology found there. Substitution means “one man taking the place of another, and answering for him”.

The death of the Lord Jesus was not only redemptive (Eph. 1:7) and thus delivering (Rom. 4:15 RV), but reconciling (Col. 1:21,22 RV) and substitutionary (1 Tim. 2:6). Christ died on “BEHALF” of all, making salvation available for all mankind (Heb. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:15), and for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4). We proclaim this in the Gospel to the unsaved.

We do not proclaim that Christ died “INSTEAD” of all, because this would at once cancel all individual decision and the response of faith. On the two occasions the Lord spoke of the substitutionary aspect of His death it was to His disciples (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). “A ransom FOR many” in both passages, the preposition “ANTI” is used and expresses the idea of substitution. Its meaning is “in exchange for” as the equivalent of “instead of”. This can only apply to those who accept the Lord Jesus as Saviour. He is the Substitute of the believer, and becomes the sinners Substitute once He is received as Saviour.

Illustrations

The earliest record is Genesis 22, where Abraham is tested by God and told to offer his only son on Mount Moriah. A ram was provided in his stead. This foreshadowed Calvary (John 8:56). Peter’s message contains this truth (1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18). In Exodus 13:13 the firstborn of an ass was redeemed with a lamb.

The Israelites of old were taught the truth of substitution in the Levitical offerings. “It shall be accepted for him” (in his stead); to make an atonement for him” (Lev. 1:4). The offering was accepted for the offerer (v.4). He was accepted in his representative and so are we (Eph. 1:6). The day of atonement (Lev. 16) impresses this truth upon us. Two goats were presented before the Lord, the one was Jehovah’s but the other was for the people. The goat that was killed and its blood sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat makes propitiation before the eyes of God (v.15). The transference of the sins to the head of the scapegoat illustrates substitution (vs.21,22).

Isaiah ch.53 is one of the clearest portions on substitution where the Lord Jesus is the suffering Substitute (Acts 8:32-35). The language used is very impressive, “wounded, bruised”, our iniquities upon Him, silent in suffering, “an offering for sin”. “He bare the sin of many”, and “numbered with the transgressors”.

Importance

Substitution in relation to other aspects of the death of Christ holds a prominent place in N.T. teaching. Apostolic teaching stresses this aspect of His death. It is attested in the preaching of Peter and Paul. The glory of the Gospel is that Christ died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3). He was made sin for us (instead of us) (2 Cor. 5:21).

Philip made clear to the Eunuch the meaning of the death of Christ (Acts 8:32,37). Substitution is the actual bearing of the sins of all who believe (1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 1:4; Heb. 10:12). Paul taught it was for all (2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:6). The Hebrew letter similarly (ch.2:9,14,15). He was the substitute for all believers (Rom. 5:8; Gal. 2:20). He bore the judgment due to our sins (Rom. 3:25; 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:7).

Think of some of the many blessings procured for us because He is our Substitute "Justified from all things" (Acts 13:38,39), "redemption" and "the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7). An eternal redemption and inheritance (Heb. 9:12,15). His priestly work in Heaven for us (Heb. 2:17; 4:14-16; 7:26; 8:2; 9:24). We have access to God (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19,20). A living hope and an inheritance (1 Peter 1:3,4).

Thus we preach propitiation to sinners (Rom. 3:25) and TEACH substitution to believers (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20).

Blest morning! whose first dawning rays
Beheld the Son of God
Arise triumphant from the grave,
And leave His dark abode
Wrapt in the silence of the tomb
The great Redeemer lay,
Till the revolving skies had brought
The third, the appointed day.
Hell and the grave combined their force
To hold our Lord, in vain
Sudden the Conqueror arose,
And burst their feeble chain.

Isaac Watts

Sanctification

Well might we ask the question, What is sanctification? The first mention in the O.T. is Gen. 2:3, and means “being set apart”; “to separate from a common, ordinary purpose, to some higher use, or other purpose”. It is used of both persons or things. A sanctified day (Gen. 2:3); of people (Exod. 13:2); the altar (Exod. 40:10); of a person (Lev. 8:30); of the Levites (Num. 8:14). The same is true in the N.T.; the unbelieving husband is set apart by a believing wife (1 Cor. 7:14,15). The gold is sanctified by the temple and the gift is sanctified by the altar (Matt. 23:17,19).

Introduction

We are sanctified prospectively by God the Father (Jude 1); positionally in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:2); positively by the offering of Christ (Heb. 10:10); meritoriously by the blood of Christ (Heb. 13:12); powerfully by the Holy Spirit, He is the agent (1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2) and progressively by obedience (2 Tim. 2:21).

Spurious Teaching

Some holiness movements teach sinless perfection —the eradication of the old fallen nature when we are born again. Sin does not die within the believer, he dies to sin (Rom. 6:11,12). In claiming sinlessness “we deceive ourselves”—but no one else (1 John 1:8). The new nature implanted in the soul is holy; it cannot sin because it is the divine nature of God (1 John 3:9). The old nature will remain with us until death or until the Lord’s return to the air for His saints.

Sanctimoniousness is not sanctification, neither is it a moral virtue or mere religious practice. It is not the condition of our souls. It is a work wrought by the Holy Spirit within our souls by which we are made partakers of the divine nature and set apart to God. Others teach it is a gradual improvement of the old nature in the believer, bringing him into full harmony with God. The old nature cannot be improved (John 3:7; Rom. 7:14-16), it must be crucified (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 5:24).

Positional or Perfect Sanctification

This is the divine provision, the act of God in setting us apart for Himself (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2). True of Israel in the O.T. of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:30), and the nation (Lev. 20:8).

True of every believer in the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 6:11). It is a once-for-all

act on the part of God. This is absolute and complete. Without this we have no standing before God, or relationship with God (Heb. 10:10).

Purposed in the Will of God Heb. 10:10

God of His own sovereign will has sanctified, set apart to Himself through the sacrifice of His Son, every believer in Christ. Believers are called saints and holy, regardless of their moral or spiritual condition or walk (1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 3:1). This is an abiding work.

Procured by the Death of Christ Heb. 9:14; 10:10; 13:12

We are made holy as to our standing before God in Christ. Our standing in holiness is perfect, as perfect as the sacrifice of Christ, as perfect as Christ is, "as He is so are we" (1 John 4:17). Christ is made unto us sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30 RV).

We have perfect union with Christ (Heb. 13:10). He died for our sanctification (Titus 2:14).

Powerful by the Spirit of God 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11

This is a supernatural work of which Christ is the MEDIUM and the Holy Spirit is the active AGENT (2 Thess. 2:13). God chose us in His sovereignty and the Holy Spirit sanctified us and separated us to believe the truth. A divinely provided sanctification covers our whole being (1 Thess. 5:23). This is a permanent work, there can be no improvement or progress (1 Cor. 6:11). It takes place by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Practical or Progressive Sanctification 1 Thess. 4:3,7

It is the will of God that every believer sanctify himself. This work is taken up by the Spirit, through the Word of God (John 17:17). Our Lord set Himself apart for the work of salvation and prayed that we, by the word of God, set ourselves apart from evil. The Scriptures enlighten the mind and cleanse the heart (Ps. 119:9).

The word of God convicts us (Heb. 4:12); converts us (Ps. 19:7); cleanses us (Ps. 119:9); and completes us (2 Tim. 3:16,17). The Scriptures function as a mirror and a laver (Jas. 1:23,24; Eph. 5:26). We are to cleanse ourselves "from all filthiness of the flesh" (2 Cor. 7:1), and pursue holiness daily in order to be like Christ (Heb. 12:14). Thus we grow in grace and knowledge and are sanctified unto obedience and holiness (1 Pet. 1:15,16). We must allow the word of God to search us, and give heed to it (Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:16). Meditate much on the areas of practical sanctification in 1 Thess. 4:1-12. The teaching is solemn and searching and vitally important in these days of lax morals.

Chastening is another means God uses for sanctification, help to fashion us into His image (Heb. 12:7,10). Practical sanctification involves separation from all evil (2 Cor. 6:14-18). There must be separation from false teachers

and their doctrines (2 Tim. 2:21). “A great house” is not a local Assembly. It is merely an illustration of the great houses having various vessels for a particular use. The instruction is not dealing with keeping communion pure, but describes the Sovereign Lord making choice of suitable vessels for His service. Both aspects of sanctification are seen in v.19. The vessel to honour is to be separated from uncleanness and sanctified to God. The stress is on moral purity, for it is character that makes us useful, serviceable and honourable in the Master’s field. The application is to the false teachers with their vain babblings, vessels of dishonour (vs.17,18). We must not only leave sin, but LOATHE it (Psa. 119:104). The fruit of yielding ourselves wholly to God is practical holiness (Rom. 6:11-13; 12:1).

We must not interpret the Scriptures by our experience, BUT interpret our experience by the Scriptures.

We must be imitators of the Lord and follow in His footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21).

Obedience to the word of God is the key to practical sanctification (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:22).