

The Two Natures in the Child of God

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All Roman numerals were converted to easier to read English numbering, thus, vii:3 becomes 7:3.

This article and work of Dr. Bullinger is duplicated in full. It is pristine in its message about these two natures, the one of flesh and the one of spirit, the one received at our physical birth and the other at our selection and calling by God (the Father) when we respond to His beckon.

PREFACE

The experience of the child of God is described, in Galatians 5:17, the following words: "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

In everything but this the mere professor can imitate the true child of God: and it is this which distinguishes the merely religious person from the real Christian. Every true child of God always has an abiding experience of conflict within, as described in Galatians 5:17. But not every child of God understands the doctrine concerning it. To have the experience without knowing the doctrine is the fruitful source of confusion, disquietude, and discouragement. To know the doctrine and not to have the experience is fatal, and means eternal disaster. The only remedy for this is to learn, direct from the Word of God, all that is there taught concerning the nature inherited through generation by Adam, and the nature bestowed through re-generation by God. This alone can give the believer the true knowledge concerning "God's workmanship"; and the key to his experiences which are otherwise inexplicable to him. When the doctrine of the two natures is clearly understood, then, that which before was the cause of doubt is not only removed, but it becomes the ground of assurance; and is, indeed, the best assurance that one can ever have that he is God's workmanship, and that God has actually begun in him that good work which He Himself will perfect and complete (Phil. 1:6).

The object of the following pages is to give the knowledge of this doctrine, so that the experience, which produces doubt and fear, may become the source of peace and joy.

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INTRODUCTORY

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6.

We hear much in the present day about what is called "the teaching of Jesus"; and an attempt is made to set it above and against the teaching of Paul, overlooking the fact that both Gospels and Epistles are given by the Inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. Men talk thus, not because they desire to know or to obey the teaching of the Lord Jesus, but because they wish to lower the authority of the teaching of God by Paul, and to get rid of

what they call Pauline Theology. Bring them face to face with the actual teaching of the Lord Jesus, and they will have none of it. They will turn back, and walk no more with Him (John 6:66); or they will be "filled with wrath", and seek to do away with Him (Luke 4:28, 29). In John 3:6, we have the teaching of the Lord Jesus on a fundamental doctrine. It states an eternal truth. But it is the one truth which the natural man will not have. It declares that, by nature, we are descended from fallen Adam; are begotten in his likeness (Gen. 5:3); and are partakers of his fallen nature. Born of the flesh, we possess the nature of the begetter, and are flesh. This flesh, "the teaching of Jesus" declares, "profiteth nothing" (John 6:63); and in it "dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). But, as we have said, this is the teaching which man will not receive. Pulpit, platform, and press, with one voice proclaim the opposite; and declare that there is some good thing in man, and that all we have to do is to discover and improve it.

It is against this lie of the devil that the axe of Divine truth is laid when the Lord Jesus declares that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" that "The flesh profiteth nothing"; and that in it dwelleth "No good thing". If any good thing is to be found in man, it must be first put in by God. It must be "born of the Spirit": and, when that "good thing" is thus born and found in a man, then it is seen to partake of the nature of the begetter. It is spirit. It is Divine. Now these two natures are so opposite in their origin: nature; and character, that they each have several names; and each name reveals some fresh trait and some additional truth. Let us first look at the names by which man, by nature, is spoken of.

Chapter I

THE NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLD NATURE

1.) The Flesh; as we have it in John 3:6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." It comes by birth as generated by a fallen begetter. Concerning this Flesh, we are told: it "cannot please God." (Rom. 8:8); it "profiteth nothing" (John 6:63); there is in it "no good thing:" (Rom. 7:18).

Now this is vital and fundamental truth. The question is: Do we believe it? Do we believe God or Man? If we believe God, we shall see that the great bulk of what goes by the name of "public worship" is vanity. True worship must be wholly that of the spirit, or the new nature. We must be able to say with Mary: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

It is only as saved ones that we can truly worship. If the flesh of itself "profiteth nothing", then it is clear that we cannot worship God with any of the senses (which all pertain to the flesh). We cannot worship with our eyes by gazing at a sacrament. We cannot worship with our noses by the smelling of incense. We cannot worship with our ears by listening to music; no, nor can we worship with our throats by singing. All that comes from the flesh "profiteth nothing". God has "no respect to it", and it is labour in vain. Protestant Christians will agree with us in what we say about gazing on sacraments, or the smelling of incense; but what about the other senses of the flesh? What about the ears and the throats? The churches all seem to be "music mad"; and, what with choirs "1,000 strong", and "string bands", "solos", and "choruses", and "anthems", and the new "Gospel of Song", we have come upon a time when the "flesh" seems to hold universal sway in what still retains the name of worship.

But alas for it all! it "profiteth nothing". This flood is advancing side by side with another, of which the cry is "Be filled with the Spirit." But the "Word of truth" is *wrongly* divided. For a full stop is put after the word Spirit: and thus it is not noticed that, if we are filled by the Spirit, it will be seen in the effect: viz., "Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts (not in your throats merely: and this, not to any audience or congregation, but) to the Lord." It is not an "ear for music" that is wanted, but a heart for music. From this title of the old nature we learn that "the flesh profiteth nothing". This solemn truth is fundamental to Christianity: while the opposite is fundamental to religion. Religion has to do with the flesh: Christianity has to do with Christ and the new nature (which is *pneuma-Christou* or Christ-spirit). But we shall have more to say on this later. This old nature is further called

2.) "The Natural Man." And we are told that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he get to know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor.2:14).

In the structure of this portion of 1 Corinthians, verse 14 stands in correspondence with verse 8; which tells us that "none of the princes of this world knew the wisdom of God", i.e., the great Secret—the Mystery—for it was "hidden" in God (Eph. 3:9), and no eye had ever seen it, or ear heard it. And even when now it is "revealed" (1 Cor. 2:10), the natural man cannot get to know it, because it is only discerned by the spirit, or the new nature within us, created and enlightened by the Holy Ghost. This is conclusive as to the character, power, inclination and condition of "the natural man"; which means man by nature, as he is born into the world. Then further, he is called

3.) "The Old Man." And what about him? He, we are told "is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22). The old man is full of desires or lusts. These lusts are deceitful and deceiving. They are in all things contrary to God, contrary to His Spirit, and His Word; and to the new nature, the spirit, when it is once implanted within us. In this connection, it is called

4.) "The Outward Man"; as being that which is seen, and that which actually perishes (2 Cor. 4:16), and this is "day by day". This tells us that as long as we are in the flesh, we must suffer this "burden": and that no ordinance connected with that which perishes, can be of any avail in that domain where all is, and must be spiritual; i.e., of the Spirit.

5.) "The Heart" i.e., the natural heart, which is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9), so deceitful that it constantly deceives and betrays us: so deceitful that none but God can really know it. The Lord Jesus has some "teaching about the heart" of the natural man in Matthew 15:19. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."

The churches may talk about "a change of heart"; but, it is never changed. A "new heart" must be given. They may talk about improving man's heart (or nature): but the old heart cannot be improved; and the new heart needs no improvement. Spiritists and Theosophists may talk about "the divine in man"; and show how this "old thought of the East, the cradle of all philosophy, is permeating the religions of the West". This is too true, as a fact: but it is Satan's lie, against which we oppose God's truth. Even man at

times is compelled to confess it; and to own that all his efforts to improve "the heart" of man end in failure. Another name given to the old nature in the Word of God is

6.) "The Carnal Mind." This aspect of the old nature is even more serious than the others. They relate rather to acts, and conditions, and character; but this relates to thoughts; to the mental activities, and reasonings and imaginations of the natural man (Rom. 8:7). That these are the opposite of God's thoughts was manifested of old. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). And God has declared, even of this mind of the flesh, that "My thoughts are, not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways (Isa 55:8). "The carnal mind" means, as is shown in the margin Romans 8:7, "the mind of the flesh" (*phronema sarkas*), as it is called in the ninth Article of the Church of England, which declares that "Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *phranema sarkas* which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection; some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God . . . The Article thus agrees with the categorical declarations of the Word of God, which declares (Rom. 8:7, 8) that this "*mind of the flesh*" is "Enmity against God." "Not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And "cannot please God."

The "mind" is the source of the thoughts: and thoughts are the source of actions. "The mind of the flesh", therefore, is that part of the flesh which thinks—and its thoughts are always contrary to God, and have, as the concluding words of the Article (quoted above) declare, "the nature of sin".

7.) This brings us to the last of the names given to the old nature in Scripture, "Sin". We must distinguish between "sin", and "sins". "Sin" is the root; "sins" are the fruit. In Romans, from 1:16 to chapter 5:11, it is "sins", considered as the outcome of the old nature, which are dealt with; and we are shown how they are put away, and how God can be just, and yet be Justifier of the sinner who is saved on faith-principle instead of law-principle. From Romans 5:12 to 8:39, it is "Sin" that is dealt with: the old nature. For, though the sinner is justified in Christ, he still feeds the working of the old nature and experiences the conflict between that, and the new nature. The object of this section is to teach us that though we still see the fruits, we are to regard the old tree as though it had died, and to reckon that we died in Christ's death. No change has taken place. The root still remains. The change is in our standing before God. We now stand on a different plane: "we walk by faith"; and by faith we reckon that, though the flesh is in us, we are "not in the flesh"; and, in spite of the fruits which we see from time to time, we believe God when He tells us that the tree, in His sight, is condemned. A new graft has been put in; which can only produce "fruit unto God"; while all that is produced from the old stock (below the graft) is worthless, and is cut away as such by the great Gardener's hand. We are His "husbandry". He grafts in us the new nature; and we believe Him when He tells us of all the wonders of the work which He hath wrought.

CHAPTER II THE CHARACTER AND END OF THE OLD NATURE

Having considered the various names given to the old nature in Scripture, we come now to see what is said about the nature itself, and its end. The first thing we learn is :

1.) It Cannot Be Changed. "That which is born (or, begotten) of the flesh is flesh", and remains flesh. No know power can turn it into spirit. Men talk about a change of nature; but it is only talk. It does not alter the fact. Men are never weary in their efforts to improve it; but they are constantly receiving bitter disappointments: they are continually exhibiting the fact that neither education nor religion can alter the old nature, or impart a new one. The flesh can be highly cultivated. There are the refined "desires of the mind", as well as the coarse "lusts of the flesh" (Eph. 2:3): but they are equally "far off" (5:13) from God; and alike under His "wrath" (5:3). The flesh can be made very religious. Indeed, these two go well together: for religion consists of ordinances, rites and ceremonies. It stands in meats and drinks. It thrives on vows, and pledges, and badges. All these are outward, and are for the flesh. All these are within the powers of the flesh. It can observe days, and feasts, and fasts (Col 2: 16, 20, 21; Rom. 14:5, 6). It revels in "Rules for daily living". It delights in "ordinances". All these minister to the flesh: and, religious flesh "takes to" these, just as irreligious flesh "takes to" vice. Hence the danger of any so-called religious service in which there is anything that ministers to the flesh, or where provision is made for it. Ravishing music, heart-breaking anecdotes, fervent appeals, all these can make what may be called "converts": but cannot keep them when made. This is why such deep concern is manifested as to how many of such "converts" may "stand". They may stand for weeks, or months, or years; but they will never stand for eternity.

All these outward things "perish with the using" (Col. 2:22). They are born of the flesh. Only "that which is born (or, begotten) of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). " whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccl. 3:14); and: "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). These words were spoken by the Lord to those whose religion was of the flesh, and consisted in washings and making long prayers; to those who honoured God with their lips, and supposed that man was defiled by "that which goeth into the mouth" (5:11). They were spoken concerning the "Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem", the place of religious observances (5:1): and they are spoken today to all who "teach for doctrines the commandments of men" (5:9): who make men religious by working on the feedings of the flesh: and seek to make them holy by saying "Touch not, taste not, handle not" (Col. 2:21): and who make of more account "that which goeth into the mouth" (Matt. 15:11), than "that which cometh out of the heart"; as though the one possessed a supernatural power which could influence the other. No! the nature of the old man cannot be changed. "It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This for ever settles the matter for all who are subject to the Word of God in Romans 8:7.

When once this fact is realized, it becomes impossible for us to pray "Make clean our hearts within us"; for, the question naturally arises, which "heart"? The old one, or the new one? If the old, it cannot be cleansed. If the new, it needs no cleansing. David could say, "Create in me a clean heart, O God": but that is a very different thing. A newly

created heart is the very opposite of making the old heart clean. This simple fact and truth of God's Word is an axe laid at the root of all the modern "clean heart" teaching of those who, though justified by grace, are seeking to be sanctified by works. All such come under the reproof of Galatians 3:3, "Are ye so senseless (i.e., unintelligent)? having begun in spirit (or the new nature!), are ye being made perfect (or, perfecting yourselves) in [the] flesh? It is the great doctrine of the two natures in the child of God which corrects all this teaching of the present day, which leads so many into soul-trouble. Instead of seeing, in the conflict they mourn over, the very ground of all assurance, they are seeking to get rid of it altogether by attempting to accomplish that which is absolutely impossible, by cleansing and improving the old nature. Over all such teaching, and all such efforts, the death knell tolls out the solemn sentence

"NEITHER INDEED CAN BE."

The second thing we learn is that it has only one end:

2.) Its End Is Death. The flesh, and all that pertains to it, its religion and its ungodliness, its virtue and its vice, all end in death. All is for time, and not for eternity. "In Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22). "The mind of the flesh is death" (Rom. 8:6). Being connected with the body, it is called "this body of (or appointed for) death" (Rom. 7:24). Nothing but death can be the end of all that is of the flesh. It is born of the flesh. The "first Adam" was made of the dust of the earth, and to dust all his descendants "return" (Gen. 3:19).

3.) The third fact flows from the second: "He That Soweth To His Flesh Shall Of The Flesh Reap Corruption" (Gal. 6:8). All efforts to improve the flesh, all provision made for the flesh, all ordinances connected with the flesh, all end in corruption and death: all "perish with the using" (Col. 2:22). But our subject has a happier and more blessed side. There is such a thing as the new nature, as we shall see in our next chapter.

CHAPTER III THE NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW NATURE

It is a great and blessed fact that there is something Divine as well as human; something begotten by God as well as by man. There is "spirit" as well as "flesh". "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). This new nature has, like the old, several names. These stand in contrast and opposition the one to the other.

1.) It is called "Spirit". This is in contrast with, and opposition to, the "flesh", as the title of the old nature: and it is so called because it is born or begotten of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6). As "flesh" partakes of the nature of Adam, as being descended from him, spirit partakes of the nature of the Holy Spirit: as born *ek tou pneumatos*.

2.) Hence this new nature, being divine in its origin, is called *theia phusis*, Divine Nature (2 Pet. 1:4). This is why it is said to be "perfect", and unable to commit sin. I John 3:9, "Every one that has been begotten of God does not produce sin [as his fruit], because His seed [the new nature] abideth in him: and he [the new man] cannot sin because of God he (or, it) has been begotten." I John 18, 19, "We know that everyone that has been begotten¹ of God does not sin; but he (i.e. the new man) that was begotten of God⁸

keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not. We know [as a matter of fact] that we are, of God;⁹ and, the whole world lieth in [the power of] the evil one. The new nature is personified and spoken of in the masculine gender. It cannot refer to the believer as a whole; for, if we say that "we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (I John 1:10): and our sins are provided for in I John 2:1, 2. But the new nature is born of God and does not sin, and does not lie in [the power of] the evil one. The new nature, therefore, being "spirit", and being begotten or produced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, is Divine. Hence it is called

3.) The New Man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). This is in contrast with "the old man", which, as we have seen, is one of the titles of the old nature. This, being entirely new, is called "a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). And is said to be "according to the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10). Nothing short of this avails in God's sight. However men may "make a fair show in the flesh", "it profiteth nothing" [John 4:63]; "for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 4:15; Col. 3:10, 11). In this connection the new nature is called

4.) "The Inward Man" (Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 3:16). This is contrast with "the outward man" which perishes day by day, while this "inward man is renewed day by day". In Ephesians 3:16, it is rendered "the inner man", but the Greek, and the meaning are the same. Instead of perishing, it is constantly being nourished and replenished day by day with grace and strength by the Holy Spirit; so that Christ thus dwells in the heart by faith [Eph. 3:16]; and we get to know something of His love which passeth knowledge, and are filled with all the fulness of God (5:19). This explains Ephesians 1:23; and shows how the church, which is the body of Christ, is "the fulness of Him that filleth all [the members of His body] with all [needed spiritual grace and strength]". The inward man delights in the law of God (Rom. 7:22). The other "is not subject to the law of God" (Rom 8:7). Hence, the conflict between them, which must go on till death ends the struggle. This is what caused the Apostle Paul (and all who have like precious faith) to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death", or, as in the margin this body of death. The genitive, "of death", is probably the genitive of relation, as in Romans 8:36, where the Greek "sheep of slaughter" means, and is rendered "sheep for the (i.e., appointed for) slaughter". So here, "the body of death" is the "body appointed to death" (Rom. 5:12; Heb. 9:27): and the cry is, "who shall deliver me from this?" and the triumphant answer is, "I thank God [He will deliver me] through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24). The next verse furnishes us with another title.

5.) The Mind (Rom. 7:23, 25). The word here used for "the mind" is *nous* and denotes the new nature, as it does also in chapter 7:23, 25. It is used in contrast with "flesh" (as "spirit" is), because it denotes that which is inward and invisible. This "mind" serves the law of God (Rom. 7:25) and delights in it (5:22). Hence, "the law of the mind" is put for "the law of God" in verse 23.

6.) Another title is *pneuma-Christou* Christ's spirit, or Christ-spirit (Rom. 8:9). There is no article in the Greek. This is not another name for the Holy Spirit. Neither is it a separate spirit distinct from the Holy Spirit, for the "spirit of Christ", as man, was psychological; and was, as such, commended to the Father at his death (Luke 23:46). There is no other spirit of Christ. But this *pneuma-Christou* is the new nature which

makes us "sons of God" as He is "the Son of God". In Galatians we have further instruction concerning Romans teaching; and in Galatians 4:6 we have the explanation of Romans 8: "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the *pneuma* of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, i.e., my Father". *Pneuma-Christou* is therefore another name for the "son-ship spirit" which we have in Romans 8:15: not "the spirit of adoption", as in A.V., but "a sonship-spirit", *pneuma whyothesias*. Thus, the new creation within us is called *pneuma-Christou*, because "the Holy Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit (or new nature) that we are children of God; and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17). Hence it can be truly said: "Now if any man have not *pneuma-Christou* (or the new nature) he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). For Christ the Son of God, and all the sons of God possess the precious gift or a "sonship spirit". That is why it is called *pneuma-Christou*, or Christ-Spirit. Being sons of God: with Christ, we are then "heirs also; not only God's heirs, but Christ's joint-heirs; if so be that we suffer together, that we may be glorified together also" (Rom. 8:17). This is the precious truth conveyed by this name which is given to the new nature. It is called *pneuma-Christou*; because it is the sign and token that it is Christ-spirit, and therefore a sonship-spirit; because "whom he foreknew he predestinated also [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be Firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29). Oh! what a blessed portion is ours as "sons of God". Do we realize that *pneuma-Christou* (or the new nature) marks our right to this high title? That we are not merely servants, but sons? not merely the people of God, but the "sons of God"? Sharing in all the blessings of His beloved Son? Yes, Sharers in His sonship (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-3). His perfect righteousness (Phil. 3:9). His holiness (1 Cor. 1:30). His peace (Phil. 4:7). His Father's secret purposes (Eph. 1:9). His Father's love (1 John 3:1). His glorious resurrection body [Phil. 3:21). His coming glory (Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:4; 1 John 3:2). Himself (1 Thess. 4:17).

**"So dear, so very dear to God, Dearer we cannot be; For in the Person of His Son
We are as dear as He."**

And all this because God has created within us a new nature, which He calls *pneuma-Christou*. But, meanwhile, here on earth, it is our privilege to share His rejection. "The world knoweth us not because it knew Him not" (1 John 3:1). Let us not repine or be downcast about this. Let us rather rejoice that we are counted worthy of so high a portion. It is exactly in connection with this very fact that the reckoning of faith and hope and love come in. "For I reckon that not worthy are the sufferings of this present time [to be compared with] the glory about-to-be-revealed unto us" (Rom. 8:18). This order of the Greek words shows us where the emphasis is to be placed, though the English of the A.V. reads more smoothly. The fact of our rejection by a religious world, and by a worldly church, must be to us the blessed token that we are God's sons, and therefore partakers of the Christ-spirit, or the new nature, which is God's gift.

It is in this same verse (Rom. 8:9), and in connection with this name for the new nature, that another name is given to it. It is called:

7.) *Pneuma-Theou*, or Divine spirit (Rom. 8:9, 14). The Greek is literally "spirit of God". Not "the Spirit" (for there is no article), but "God's spirit"; or, as we may render it, Divine spirit. The two occurrences of this expression in this chapter tell us all we can know about this aspect of the new nature. It is so called because, the thought thus

connected with it is that, it comes from God. God is the Creator and Giver of the new nature.

It is "new" in contrast with the old. It is "spirit" because it is in opposition to the "flesh". It is "inward" in contrast with the "outward". It is "mind" in contrast with the body. It is *pneuma-Christou* or sonship-spirit, in opposition to a bondage spirit. And it is *pneuma Theou* or Divine spirit, because it is from above, from God; and is begotten "not of blood" nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13).

Those, who are so begotten, are, and have the right to be called, "sons of God". The two verses in Romans 8, in which this title of the new nature is used (9 and 14), tell us all that we can learn of this aspect of it: Verse 9, "Ye are not in flesh, but in *pneuma*, if indeed, *pneuma Theou* dwells in you." Verse 14, "As many as are led by *pneuma Theou*, they are sons of God" (as in John 1:12, 13). This completes the titles of the new nature; and from them we learn the precious truths revealed in them. Each title has its own aspect, and brings out some special teaching connected with it. As we first gave the titles and characteristics of the old man, and then its character and end; so we have now given the titles and characteristics of the new nature, and reserve our remarks on its character and end for our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV THE CHARACTER AND END OF THE NEW NATURE

We are now in a position to consider what we are taught as to the new nature itself. We have looked at its various tides and characteristics; and now we wish to learn what is said about its character and end.

1.) It Cannot be Changed. In this respect it is like the old nature: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit", and remains spirit (John 3:6). No known power can ever change it into flesh; or alter its character. It is divine in its origin, and perfect in its nature (I John 3:9, 18). Its origin is the Spirit of God (John 6:63). Its instrument is the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:22, 23; John 6:63). It is not altered or affected by any of the frailties, infirmities, or sins of the flesh. By it we are made the sons of God; and it is the token to us that God is our Father. The gift of this new nature, or spirit, is called our "sealing", which is ours on believing (Eph. 1:13). Once we really learn and believe this blessed fact it becomes difficult, if not impossible, for us to pray: "take not" Thy Holy Spirit from us." No! God will never take away from His children that new spirit which He has put within them: for "the gifts and calling of God are without change of mind", (Rom. 11:29). If Israel, though cast off (not cast away) for a season, is "beloved for the fathers' sakes" (Rom. 11:28), the sons of God are beloved for His own sake. For, as it is written in Romans 8:30 "Whom He did predestinate [to be conformed to the image of His Son, 5:29] them He called also: and whom He called, them He justified also: and whom He justified, them He glorified also." Grace ensures glory: for "the Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. 84:11). If He gives the grace it is the pledge that He will give the glory. It must be so. He will not make us "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28) and then adjudge us imperfect. He will not make Christ to be our righteousness and holiness (1 Cor. 1:30) and then unmake His own work.

If we are once "complete" in Christ (Co1. 2:10) we cannot become incomplete. He will not deny or forsake the work of His own hands (Ps. 138:8). This mystery or secret was "ordained by God before the world": and this is specially declared to have been "with a view to our glory" (1 Cor.2:7). We may be perfectly sure therefore that His purpose cannot and will not fail; and that it will end in "our glory". The new nature, given by the pure grace of God, will necessarily end in the eternal glory of God. It came from God, and must return to God. This new nature cannot be forfeited—No, not even by sin: for even this contingency is provided for in I John 2:1, 2, "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is [and remains] the propitiation for our sins." It is this connection, with sinning, that we are reminded that God is still our "Father" and that we are still His children: that our relationship has not been broken. "If any man sin"; What then? In that contingency we are not told what we are, but what Christ is. We are not reminded of what we have done, but what He has done. We are not turned upon ourselves and our confession, but we are directed upward to Christ and His position. Our thoughts are not occupied with our humiliation, but with Christ's "propitiation": that is always before the Father; for Christ is there, and we are there in Him. Our confession was made once for all when we, by grace, took the place of the lost sinner (1 John 1:9); and when we laid our hand, by faith, on Christ as the sin-offering, and there owned ourselves as lost sinners. Then we were "sealed" (on this believing); and our position and standing before God was secured and assured by the gift of the new nature. So secure is our standing in Christ that two Advocates, or Comforters, are provided. The word is *Parakletos* and means, one called to one's side for help, comfort, advocacy or for whatever one may need. It occurs only in John's writings, and is translated "Comforter" in his Gospel, and "Advocate" in his Epistle.

But the fact remains that Christ tells us in the Gospel that we have one Advocate (the Holy Spirit) with us, that we may not sin: and the Holy Spirit tells us in the Epistle that we have another Advocate (Jesus Christ the righteous One) with the Father, if we do sin. So that all is foreknown, foreseen, and provided for; and nothing can forfeit this wondrous gift of God. Nor will God ever recall His gift, or take from us that spirit, or new nature, which He implanted in us, His sons, when He thus sealed us as His children.

2.) The new nature is "Life and Peace" (Rom. 8:6). The body is dead (i.e., reckoned as having died on account of sin, but the spirit (or new nature) is life on account of righteousness. The gift of the new nature, to those who, having died with Christ, are henceforth righteous in His righteousness, is "eternal life". This is the very reason why the Lord Jesus says, "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28). This is said because of their having received the gift of eternal Life. As the end of the old nature is "death", so the end of the new nature is "life",—"eternal life" that has no end. Hence, it is written, "he that soweth unto his own flesh (the old nature), from the flesh he shall reap corruption: but he that soweth unto the *pneuma* (or new nature), from the *pneuma* he shall reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:8). It is this that involves a third truth, and fact, as to the end of the new nature, which will be to the greatest and most blessed result of possessing this priceless gift, viz.:

3.) The issue and end of the new nature will be Rapture and Resurrection (Rom. 8:11). For, the *pneuma* (i.e., the gift of the spirit, or new nature) of Him that raised up Jesus

from among [the] dead dwelleth in you, He that raised up Christ from among [the] dead shall make alive again your mortal bodies also on account of His *pneuma* (or spirit: i.e., the new nature) that dwells in you."

Note that, twice over in this one verse, the resurrection of the Lord is mentioned: first, the fact of His own resurrection, as "Jesus" (the lowly one, humbled in death); then, the doctrine that He was raised as "Christ" the glorified One, the Head of the Body (1 Cor. 12:12); thus necessitating the resurrection of all the members of that Body. It is because these members possess "Divine spirit", or *pneuma-Christou* (Rom. 8:9), that they are reckoned as having risen, when He, the Head of the body, rose. This is knowing "the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:10). This is very different from knowing that which is taught by tradition in the present day. The possession of this new nature, if we only understand it aright, is the sure and certain pledge that we shall be actually made alive again; and that these mortal bodies of our humiliation shall be made like the glorious body of that risen Christ (Phil. 3:21). No wonder that those who do not understand the doctrine of the two natures, do not understand the doctrine of the resurrection. No wonder that they are misled by false hopes, both as to this life and the next. In this life they are possessed by the false hope of improving that which can never be improved: and as to the next life they possess the false hope of glory apart from resurrection, which can never be realized. The one is a fruitless task; and the other a groundless hope. Together, they make void the sure and certain words of Scripture: for, it is when we are "clothed upon with our house (or spiritual body) which is from heaven, that mortality shall be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:2-4). And, it is in resurrection, not till then, and therefore not at death, that "this corruptible [body] shall put on incorruption, and this mortal [body] shall put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:54).

Traditionalists subvert this precious truth; and assure us that all this takes place at death. They thus deprive the doctrine concerning the new nature of its glorious crown, which is the blessed hope that He who raised up Christ from the dead shall make alive again our mortal bodies also on account of His Divine nature which dwells in us (Rom. 8:11). It is thus that the blessed hope both of rapture and resurrection is done away with by practically saying "that the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. 2:18). Instead of Scripture language being sufficient for the purposes of modern teachers, recourse is had to the language of pagans and spiritualists. Their terminology is adopted instead of the sure and certain words of God.

Thus, man's word "passing" is put for the Scripture "falling asleep". "No death" is put instead of God's word "death". And a present "transition" is put for future "translation".

"There is no death, What seems so is transition."

These false expressions are borrowed from spiritualism, and the quotation is made from the Unitarian platonic poet; and both are in flat contradiction to the language of the Word of God. It is what Scripture calls "handling the Word of God deceitfully" (2 Cor. 4:2). The text is used "he was not, for God took him". But, these words are used in Scripture of Enoch, who never died at all, and therefore could never need a resurrection. Enoch was "translated that he should not see death" (Heb. 9:5); and this (in Gen. 5:24) is put in other words "he was not, for God took him". But these words are used, today, of

one who actually died. What is this but to say that the deceased obtained by death what Enoch obtained only by translation? What is this but to deny the resurrection altogether? and practically to say that (for the deceased at least) "the resurrection is past already?" (2 Tim. 2:18). What is this but the teaching of those whose "word doth eat as doth a canker . . . who concerning the truth have erred . . . and overthrow the faith", not of some, but of many ?

An eminent American physiologist once made a statement as to the "article of death"—a brief criticism in a religious weekly of it ended thus: "A soul awake to itself must find in death either the moment for reckoning with a judge, or the moment for speeding to a Saviour. This may be old-fashioned, but it is a true doctrine." Yes, this is "old": as old as Genesis 3:4; but it is not "true". It may be "doctrine", and it may be "theology", but it is not "Scripture". Scripture assures us (of one of these two classes at any rate) that "we which are alive and remain [to the coming of the Lord] shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:15 RV). But, according to the above "old-fashioned doctrine", we shall precede them; for that, without resurrection, and without rapture, we shall "speed to a Saviour"; but according to this teaching, it will be by dying, and not by being alive and remaining till the coming of the Lord. According to the above "doctrine", 1 Thessalonians 4:15 ought to have been written: "we who are alive and remain . . . shall follow them which have preceded us".

But, it is not so written. And those who are content with the words of God will continue to hold fast "that blessed hope" and to "wait for God's Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:10). We will not exchange "that blessed hope", which God has given us in His Word, for this false and groundless hope; which was conceived by the great enemy of that truth; born in Babylon; nursed in tradition; and held by religionists of all kinds. A false hope which is common to the Heathen, to Spiritists, and to every great false system of Religion: but which is unknown to the sure Word of God. Well did the Saviour say of this very doctrine of Resurrection, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). No! we, like the Apostle Paul, would not be "unclothed" in death (2 Cor. 5:4), but would wait for our Rapture, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven". If we are called to fall asleep, we shall do so in the sure and certain hope of resurrection, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (or body) which is from heaven (5:2), that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4): and we, in our resurrection bodies made like the Lord's own glorious body (Phil. 3:21), shall be for ever "present (or at home) with the Lord".

This is the conclusion, in 2 Corinthians 5:1-9 (which commences with the word "for"), of the statement which commenced in 2 Corinthians 4:14 with the words: "Knowing that He Who raised up the Lord Jesus, will raise up us also with Jesus and will present us with you."

This is the glorious end of the new nature. As the old nature ends in death and corruption, so the new nature will end in rapture or resurrection. For "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 4:23). The one is God's judgment; the other is God's grace. The one is sins "wages"; the other is grace's "gift". This gift is possessed, and will be enjoyed, only by those to whom it is "given". The Lord Jesus in His last prayer declared that the Father had given Him power

"that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 24). Therefore it is written: "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). These words state a Divine universal truth; and they are true not only of the Church, but of all to whom this "gift" shall be "given". Specially true, therefore, are they of those who are, "in Christ", sons of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ.

CHAPTER V THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO NATURES

Having learnt so much, separately, about the characteristics of the two natures, from Romans 6—8, we have now to learn the experience and the doctrine about them as existing together in the one personality. This doctrine is taught chiefly in Romans 7. Every child of God has the experience, but not every such child knows the doctrine. This means nothing but trouble, confusion, doubt and anxiety. No rest can be known, no peace can be enjoyed unless we learn for ourselves from the Word of God, what His own explanation is concerning the conflict between the two natures. The experience of that conflict is trouble and unrest; and nothing but the knowledge of the true doctrine concerning it can remove that trouble; and, not only does it remove it, but at the same time it provides us with the greatest assurance we can possibly have on earth that we are the children of God. The experience of this conflict is the one thing in which the true child of God differs from the mere religious professor. The latter knows nothing of or of the abiding sense of inward corruption which this experience always creates. The very fact, therefore, of this experience of the conflict, is the best, and indeed, the only real assurance we can have that we are "born of God" (I John 3:9); that we are "His workmanship" (Eph 2:10); and that He has begun in us that good work which He will carry on, carry out, complete, and perfect concerning us (Phil. 1:6). The right understanding of the doctrine concerning this experience can bring only peace and comfort to us: and without it all must be trouble, unrest, and confusion.

It is this which forms the subject of Romans 8. Let us note how it stands in the general structure of the Epistle. It forms part of a larger member which begins at chapter 5:12, and goes on to the end of the eighth chapter (8:39). The subject is sin (or, the old sinful nature).

THE STRUCTURE OF ROMANS 5:12, 8:39.

A| 5:12-21. Condemnation to death of many, through the disobedience of one: but life and righteousness through the obedience
of one—Jesus Christ,

B| 6:1, 7:6 We not in sin, having died in Christ.

B| 7:7--25. Sin in us, though we risen with Christ.

A| 8:1-39. Condemnation of sin in the flesh: but no condemnation to them which have life and righteousness in Christ Jesus.

From the structure of this passage we see that the conflict arises through sin (i.e., the old sinful nature) being in us, though we are risen with Christ. This is the subject of chapter 7 from the seventh verse: (not of the whole chapter). The first six verses of chapter 7 belong to chapter 6; and the object in the member B (ch. 6:1 - 7:6), is to show how we are not in, or no longer reckoned as being under, the condemnation of sin, inasmuch as we died in Christ.

The object of chapter 7:1-6 is to show how the Lordship of the Law can be exercised only during life (5:1). Death releases us from its claim against us (5:2). This is illustrated by the case of a married woman who may lawfully marry again if her husband be dead (5:3). The conclusion is that we who have died with Christ (5:4) are therefore free from the law and can be united to Christ in a new sphere, or plane, altogether—in resurrection life (5:4); and, having died with Christ, are altogether free from the authority, and power, and claims of the law.

This last paragraph may be set out to the eye in the following structure: Romans 7:1-6.

C| 7:1. The Lordship of the Law during life.

D a| 2. Death releases the wife from its claims.

b| 3. Result--Union with another husband.

D a| 4. Our death in Christ releases us from its claims.

b| 4. Result--Union with Christ.

C| 5, 6. Deliverance from Lordship of the Law by death.

The way is now clear for the teaching that, though we are no longer in our sins, sin is in us; and, from that moment that the new nature is implanted in us it reveals the presence of the old nature; and the conflict between them begins. "These are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). The two natures thus dwell side by side in one personality. Like the graft of a rose on a briar, or an apple on a crab-apple, it is one tree; but all that is brought forth above the graft is a new kind fruit, while all that is brought forth from the old stem, below the graft, is of the nature of the old tree, and is carefully and continually cut off with the pruning-knife. The experience is so interlaced that it is difficult for man's word to describe it, or explain it. Only "the Word of God" can do that, nothing else. "It is able to divide what is of [the] soul" (i.e., soulical or natural, the old nature), and what is "of [the] spirit" (i.e., the new nature); and is able to judge [yes, and to condemn the] thoughts and intents of the heart (i.e., the old nature) (Heb. 4:12).

It is out of the heart (or, old nature) that all evil thoughts come forth (Matt. 15:18-20). The Word of God is "able to judge" these "thoughts and intents" and enables us to judge and condemn them; yea, and enables us to discern and divide between what belongs to the old, and what belongs to the new nature.

As the two natures are in the one person, so the "I" in Romans 5 relates sometimes to one and sometimes to the other. Hence we read (5:18) "For I know (as a matter of fact from God's Word) that there dwells not in me, that is, in my flesh (my old nature) any good thing. For the will [to do good] is present with me, but the working out of [that] good [will] I find not. (19) For the good [thing] which I will [to do] I do not practice; but the evil which I do not will, this I do. (20) But if, what I do not will, I practice, it is no longer I who work it out, but sin which [is] dwelling within me. (21) I find then this law in me who will to practice the good, that the evil is present with me. (22) For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man (the new nature): (23) but, I see a different law in my members, carrying on war against the law of my mind (or new nature), and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." Here we have the very explicit declaration that the new nature (called the "inward man" and the "mind") delights in God's law; while there is, at the same time, the old nature (called "the flesh") which delights in obeying its own law, and carries on a constant war against the new nature. The result of this unceasing warfare is the wretchedness which leads the ego in the next verse to cry out, in broken gasps: "O wretched—I—man!" which is translated, "O wretched man [that] I [am] who shall deliver me out of this body [appointed to] death ? I thank God, [He shall deliver me] through Jesus Christ our Lord." Yes, He will deliver all who have this conflict, in the only possible way; either by Death, Rapture, or Resurrection. Only in Rapture or Resurrection will death be "swallowed up in victory". Then shall we cry, no longer, "O wretched man". But "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" That will be the end of this warfare. Well may such an one cry "I thank God [He will deliver me] through Jesus Christ". This is our present cry of patience and of faith. But the moment is coming when we shall actually cry, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

In view of this blessed hope, well may this revelation end with the exhortation: "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Be not moved by the varying episodes and experiences of the conflict. Rejoice in the present assurance of grace as to our perfection in Christ Jesus; Rejoice in the promise of future victory, when we shall be made like His own body in glory. So shall we be free to engage in the work of the Lord, yea, to "abound" in it. No longer striving to exterminate the enemy, or to have any temporary victory which we may gain over it; but looking forward to that great final victory which He has promised to "give".

A certain class of modern holiness teaching in this sphere of truth robs it of all its beauty and its power. It realizes the fact of the conflict within us, but would have us engage in the hopeless task of improving or eradicating the old nature. It would thus, at the best, occupy us with ourselves, and would have us ignore the emphatic assurances from God's Word that the old nature, or the flesh, can never be changed into spirit. And, supposing it could be eradicated, where is it to go? What is to become of it? It is "flesh"; and nothing can end the burden of the "flesh" but death and resurrection, or rapture. No amount of surrendering, or believing, can get rid of "the flesh". It is born of the flesh, and is flesh. It is so many stones in weight. How can this be eradicated? And eradicated from what? It is confusion like this that we get into, the moment we use non-Scriptural terms; but, in this case, the term "eradication" is not only non-Scriptural, but is un-Scriptural. The Scripture word is "deliverance" and "victory", and this, not victory over "sins" as

such, but over "sin" itself, over this death-appointed body. This "deliverance" will be experienced only in rapture or resurrection. We are delivered from our "sins" here, and now. Our salvation by, and in, Christ assures us of this. It is for these He was delivered (Rom. 6:25). These God has remitted (Rom. 3:25). These are all forgiven and covered (Rom. 4:7.; Col. 2:13). We are not any longer in our trespasses and sins. We were once in them, as it is written in Ephesians 2:1—3: "and you [did He quicken] when ye were dead in [your] trespasses and sins, wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the authority of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience (or, unbelief); among whom we also, all, once had our conversation (or, lived our life) in the lusts of our flesh (or, the old nature), practicing the things willed by the flesh and the thoughts [of our heart, or, old nature] and were by nature, children [destined to wrath even as the rest" (Eph. 2:2, 3): "for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience (marginally, unbelief)" (Eph. 5:6). But from all these "sins" we have been delivered; and from all that "far off" distance we have been "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). It is not now a question of "sins" but of "sin".

We Are Not In Our Sins; But "Sin" Is In Us. This is the great subject of Romans 7 and we feel the motions and leadings of "sin", yea, we feel them most when we would do good. Sad indeed is this experience. Yea, the old nature seems all the more malignant because of the presence of the new. The new nature seems to stir up the old, and to make its opposition all the more bitter. It is as though the old tenant resents the incoming of the new tenant. Until the new tenant sheds its blessed light abroad within, we do not see or realize the depths and powers of the old one. There are those who have been astounded to discover in themselves tendencies and desires which they never knew the existence of before. They simply carried those desires out "in times past", being "dead" to all sense of their real nature, and awful character. But now, there is a new will directing the members. The members were once under the entire domination of the old will: but they have now been absolved from their allegiance. The old will has no longer dominion over them (Rom. 6:14). The old will is in us, and does all it can to influence our members; but, it no longer has the control.

The conflict between the two natures may be compared to a ship, on which a new Captain has been put on board by the owners. The old Captain has so long held command, and his enmity to the owners is so great, that he has practically treated the vessel as his own; and kept the crew in perfect bondage. The crew have submitted to it, never having known any other authority; or understood what real liberty of service was. From time to time they have heard of it; they have passed other vessels which they saw at once were very different from their own. But, now that the new Captain is in authority they begin to find out what the difference is. The new Captain, henceforth always has control of the helm and the charge of the ship. The ship is the same, the crew is the same. Even the old Captain remains on board. The book of instructions which the new Captain has brought on board tells that the old Captain has been judged and condemned: but the sentence cannot be executed except by the proper judicial authorities, when they reach port. They cannot put him ashore, or throw him overboard. But, he no longer "holds the helm or guides the ship". He tries from time to time to get hold of the wheel, but in vain. He succeeds sometimes in putting forth his old influence by creating disaffection in some

members of the crew; for he knows them and their weaknesses well from his former complete control of them. He occasionally bribes or deceives some of them into acts of insubordination which they afterwards deeply regret. But the old Captain cannot get at the "ship's papers". They are now put quite out of his reach, where he cannot touch them. He cannot succeed in altering the ship's course; or change the port for which she is now making. He does not read the book of instructions; and if he looks at it, he does not understand it (1 Cor. 214). The ship's company were once his executive, and carried out only his will: but there is now no obligation for any of them to obey his orders, or to recognize his authority. They are released from it; and henceforth they are under the orders of the new Commander. They are to "reckon" the old Captain as already condemned; and the sentence as only waiting to be carried out. As to his power over them, they are to reckon themselves "as good as dead" so far as he is concerned.

This is the argument of Romans 6:17-19. "But thanks be to God that [though R.V. whereas] ye were the servants (or bond-servants) of sin, yet ye have obeyed from the heart that line of teaching unto which ye were delivered. (18) And being set free from [the dominion of] sin, ye became servants of righteousness. (19) I speak as a man, on account of the weakness of your flesh): for as ye [once] yielded your members in bondage to [work] uncleanness and to iniquity to [work] iniquity; even so now ye present your members in bondage to righteousness to [work] holiness."

We therefore have not only been delivered from our sins, but have been delivered unto this line, or kind of teaching, if we have "so learned Christ" (Eph. 4:20).

But the question is, have we "so learned Christ"? and have we gotten to know the wondrous deliverance which we have obtained in and through Him? This is the application of the Apostle makes of this "line of teaching" given in Romans 6. After speaking of how "other Gentiles walk", who know not this deliverance, he turns to these Ephesian saints and says (Eph. 4:20): "but ye did not thus learn Christ, if indeed ye heard Him, and were taught by Him (according as [the] truth is in Jesus) to have put away from you [all that was] according to your former course of life, the old man, which is corrupt according to its deceitful lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit, that is to say your mind (or new nature), and to have put on the new man, which, according to God, was created in righteousness, and true holiness. Wherefore, having put off "falsehood, speak ye, each one, truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:20-25).

This passage speaks of what they had done in consequence of having received the new nature. It does not tell them what they were to do. They were not told to put off the old man. That had been done. They are being reminded of what they had "learned" from, or concerning Christ, and of the blessed position the believer in relation to the conflict between the two natures. This is the "truth" which the members of the one body were to speak of to each other (4:25). We are to remind each other that the old man has been deposed from his dominion, and that we have been put under the dominion of the new man. The moods and tenses in this passage must be carefully noted. For unless we know the doctrine of the two natures, we miss the whole scope of the passage. And if we do not discern the scope. we cannot understand the moods and tenses. They are all past infinitives, and not present imperatives. They are not commands for us to do what has already been done. These Ephesian saints were not here told "to put off" or "to put on"

anything; but, all having been done for them and for us by God, the one command is to "speak" of, and talk about, this precious "truth" with the other members of the one body. And if we have "so learned the Christ" (i.e., Christ spiritual or mystical) and "heard Him," and have been "taught by Him," this is what we shall do. We shall not do this if we have listened to man, and been taught by man. Man will teach us and tell us that we have got to spend our life in trying "to put off the old man", and labouring "to put on the new man". He will put us under these hopeless tasks and thus bring us into a new kind of bondage: all the more deceitful and dangerous because it seems such a good work. But it is bondage all the same. It is not the "truth" which we learn of Christ. It is not "the line of teaching" unto which we have been delivered. We were not delivered from one bondage in order to come under another; however plausible it may seem.

Man's teaching either ignores the doctrine of the two natures altogether, and is devoted to rules and regulations for controlling the old nature (the only one he knows of): or, where the doctrine is known, it is vitiated by not knowing all that is "taught by Him" concerning our present deliverance from the dominion of the old man now, by the reckoning of faith (Rom. 6:11); and the future" and perfect deliverance from it in resurrection (Rom. 7:24; 1 Cor. 15:57). Hence, man's teaching perverts the blessed doctrine by promising us that, if we follow his prescriptions we can get rid of the old nature now by our own acts of "surrender"; and thus he paves the way for ignoring altogether, and doing without the only deliverance which God has promised by means of rapture or resurrection "through our Lord Jesus Christ"; by substituting death as our hope. This is why "that blessed hope" of the Lord's coming has been so long lost to the great majority of believers. This is why "the hope of Resurrection" has been superseded by the Babylonian tradition of death and an "intermediate state" which is so universally substituted for the Word of God.

There are responsibilities, under which the doctrine concerning the two natures puts us; and there are practical precepts connected with both: but these are all in full harmony with the great lessons which we learn in the school of grace, where grace itself is at once our Saviour and our Teacher (Titus 2:11-13).

CHAPTER VI

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS TO THE OLD NATURE

We have seen that, though the two natures dwell side by side in the same personality, it is clear that we have certain responsibilities with regard to each of them, quite apart from precepts, rules, regulations, and "commandments of men".

1.) Our first responsibility is to accept God's estimate of it. The Word of God does not reveal the doctrine to us without giving us the needed instruction. Holy Scripture is "profitable for both" (2 Tim.3:16); so that, with the "instruction" we may know how to use the "doctrine"; and how we are to know our responsibilities, and fulfill them for our profit and our peace. If then we recognize this as our first responsibility, then we shall reckon that our old nature "died with Christ" (Rom. 5:11). We are not left in doubt as to what this means. The verse begins "So likewise ye:" Like what?

The preceding verses tell us:

"He that died has been [and is] justified from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall live [again] also with Him: knowing that Christ having been raised up from among [the] dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over Him. For He who died, died unto sin once for all; but He who liveth, liveth unto God. Even so ye also reckon yourselves indeed [to be] dead ones as to sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus" (Rom, 6:8-11). Observe, it does not say we are to feel ourselves as dead; or that we are to realize it; but to "reckon" it as being really so in God's sight, as though it were an accomplished fact. These four verses (Rom. 6:8-11) are added as an explanation and illustration of the statement of the fact in the previous verse (5:6). "This knowing, that our old man was crucified with [Christ]." We have the same fact in Romans 7:6: "But now we were cleared [or, discharged] from [the claims of] the law, having died to that in which we were held" (so A.V. margin and R.V. text). We have the same testimony in Galations 2:20, where the Apostle emphasizes an important, independent and dogmatic statement by using the Figure, *Epanadiplosos*, which commences and closes the sentence (in the Greek) with the same word "Christ"; thus emphasizing and marking off the statement; setting it forth distinctly and attracting our attention to it, and fixing it upon it. "Christ I was crucified with; yet I live, [and yet] no longer I, but He liveth in me, Christ." This is how the Apostle "reckoned" that he died to the law. This is why he says he would actually be a transgressor if he sought now "to be justified by Christ" (5:17); because, if he died with Christ he is freed from the law. His seeking, therefore, after that, for justification even by Christ would be a practical denial of that great revealed fact which had been already accomplished. Even so, it is our first bounden duty to reckon that we are (as regards the law and all its claims on us) as though we were dead persons.

This is not a matter of feeling, but of faith. If we are guided by our feelings we shall never enjoy it. It is for us to "believe God". "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). God has declared this great fact in His Word (or we could have never known it); we hear that Word; faith believes it and rejoices in what it hears; and believes God, quite apart from the question of feeling. So that our first responsibility as to the old nature is to accept God's estimate of it, and to reckon it (as He does) as having died with Christ when He was crucified.

2.) Our next responsibility is that we are to reckon it as being dead for what is good, as well as for what is bad. When we say "good" we mean, of course, good for God; good in God's sight; good for eternity; good in God's estimate, good as what He looks for and can accept. In His sight there is in the old nature (as we have already learnt) "no good thing". So that when we say we are not to cultivate the good in it, we do not mean what man would call "good", but what God reckons as "good". We are to reckon the old nature as dead in all its goodness as well as in all its badness: and to have done with all expectation of producing anything for God from it, as we are of one who is actually dead and God says it is dead, He expects us to believe it is dead, because He says it is. He looks for us to own it as buried. In the natural man there may be found natural religious and amiable characteristics: and he may cultivate these. But the child of God need not, and is not, to cultivate these. For, by walking according to the new nature, and led by that, what need will there be for cultivating the flesh? Led by that, we have Christ in the place of "religion"; and, we have "the mind of Christ". This infinitely exceeds anything that we could ever produce by any attempted cultivation of the old nature. This leads to

3.) A third responsibility, which is to Make No Provision For The Flesh. (Rom. 13:14), but always to remember "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63). This is what man calls "the teaching of Jesus", our adorable Lord and Master. But though man so calls it he does not want it and he will not have it. At any rate, he will pick and choose what "teaching" he likes. Nevertheless, this is what the Lord taught: "the flesh (or old nature) profiteth nothing". If we believe His estimate of it we shall never seek to make it, or force it, to do anything for God, either in the way of worship or service; we shall never try to get it to do anything by way of meeting God's demand for righteousness. We shall remember that all such righteousness is "as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). The flesh can be made very religious. Indeed, it is just this which distinguishes "religion" from Christianity. Religion has to do solely with the flesh. All its ordinances are on, or connected with, the flesh. They are all things that the flesh can perform. In Isaiah 1 we have a picture of what "religion" consists. When our Lord appeared on earth this exhibition of religion was at its height. Never was there a greater or more punctilious observance of all its ordinances and ceremonies. But, that these can never give a new nature, or change the old, is shown by the fact that it was the religious part of the nation that crucified the Lord Jesus. That is what a religion, even when given by God, culminated in, when perverted and misused by the old nature. It is to this that such passages as these refer: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold; to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22). "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows, in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27). That is to say, if it is a question of religion, i.e., of outward acts and observances, then, acts of mercy and kindness are purer and better far than all outward religious acts of service and services; bowings and kneelings; crossings and counting beads; drawing near with the lips, and the observing of days, and keeping of feasts.

This is the essence of the argument in the Epistle to the Colossians, which sums up this very question; "If ye died with Christ from the religious ordinances of the world, why, as living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances ('Touch not, taste not, handle not'; which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Col. 2:20-23). The flesh can understand and be subservient to these ordinances, for they all belong to "earthly things" whereas, "If ye then were raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things which are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:1-3). Thus we are taught as possessors of the new nature, not to make provision for the old nature; not to feed it up nourishment which it loves; not to seek to please or gratify it, not even in what in man's sight appears "good". The old nature is full of pride. This is why those gatherings and congregations are crowded where the teaching is what is called "practical"; and the hearers are told to "do" this or that (not that they necessarily think much afterwards about doing it); but still it gratifies the old nature of the religious man: and, the old nature, even in the child of God, loves to hear "precept upon precept, precept upon precept". But let God be honoured, and Christ glorified, His Word magnified and man abased, that is what the old nature will not have. He will have the churches and chapels deserted where this is the doctrine and where the worship is really spiritual. All this is hateful to him; and he will plainly tell you how thoroughly he dislikes it. But where provision is made for him; where there is plenty of

music in the choir, and "precept upon precept" in the pulpit, and worldliness in the parish room, there he will be found, with the multitude. There is more danger for the child of God in the things that pertain to "religion" and in the refined desires of the carnal mind, than there is in the coarse and vulgar "lusts of the flesh". The child of God will not readily, or so easily, make such provision for the flesh. His real snare is when the provision is made by others for what is not openly associated with vice and irreligion, worldliness or immorality.

4.) The fifth verse adds another responsibility: "Mortify, Therefore Your Members Which Are Upon the Earth (Col.3:5). This sounds very strange at first, after being told repeatedly that we "died with Christ". It sounds practical also. But for a thing to be practical, it must be practicable. It must be something which we are able to do. The word "mortify" is *nekroo*, to make dead; hence, to treat as having become dead. The Scripture meaning of the word, here, may be gathered from its usage. Its other two occurrences show us, unmistakably, what this usage is:

Romans 4:19. Of Abraham it is written: "Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now as good as dead (he being about a hundred years old); or the deadening of Sarah's womb."

Hebrews 11:12. "Wherefore also there sprang of one and that too of [one] as good as dead." It is not a question of what the word means in the Lexicon; or how it was used by the Greeks: but it is a question of how the Holy Spirit uses it. And we see from the two passages just quoted that it is used of one who was actually alive; but, "as good as dead", i.e., impotent as to producing life, and as to all practical purposes. Moreover, the word is used in Colossians not of the old nature itself, but of its "members" (as of Abraham's and Sarah's members): and the exhortation is consequent on the doctrine in the preceding verses.

It begins with "therefore", and the argument is: Seeing that ye died with Christ, occupy yourselves with heavenly things and not earthly things; set your mind on Christ and on the blessed fact that ye are "complete in Him"; and that when He appears in glory ye also shall be manifested in glory. Be not weak in faith: consider not your members which are upon the earth; but reckon them as good as dead, "ye having put off the old man with his deeds, and having put on the new, which is being renewed unto full knowledge, according to [the] image of Him that created him" (Co1. 3:1-10).

It is because of the fact that we died with Christ, and hence, have put off the old man, and have put on the new, that we are therefore on that account to "reckon" the "members" of our body "as good as dead", and to account them as being impotent, and unable to produce any "living", or "good works".

All so-called "good" works done by the old nature are "dead works". They are wrought by our members which are, in God's estimation, "as good as dead". Only those are "good works" which God Himself has "prepared for us to walk in" (Eph. 2:10); and which are done in the spiritual strength of the new nature.

Oh! that God's estimate may be ours: that, like Abraham, we may be not "weak in faith" in this important matter; but strong, believe God; and thus, set free to center our affections on the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God; and to wait for our manifestation with Him in glory.

CHAPTER VII OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS TO THE NEW NATURE

Our responsibilities as to the new nature are exactly the opposite to those as to the old nature. Our first responsibility as to the old nature was to reckon it as having died with Christ. So our first great responsibility as to the new nature is:

1.) To Reckon Ourselves Alive in a new species of life (Rom. 6:11) This new nature is life—new life, spiritual life, divine life, eternal life (Rom. 3:6). And we are to reckon that we are now "alive", and living in this new life: i.e., living on a new plane of life, unto, and for God; and that this life is "in Christ Jesus". Not in "Jesus Christ", as in the A.V. How the A.V. should ever have said "Jesus Christ" is incomprehensible; for there is no question at all of a various reading in the Greek. It is plainly and indisputably "in Christ Jesus"; for the believer is never said to be "in Jesus". It is not in a dead Jesus, but in a risen and living "Christ" that we now stand. And we are to "reckon" now, by faith (not by feeling), that we do really stand before God in this new species of life. As long as we look at ourselves we shall never be able to "reckon" it; for we shall see no reason why He should ever have given us this wondrous "gift". We shall see no cause for it in anything that we have ever done.

If we are to carry out this reckoning we shall have to "believe God". In Ephesians 2:4-6 He has given us every encouragement so to do; for there He reminds us that it was while we were children of wrath and unable to think a good thought, or to do a good act, then it was that "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead ones in our trespasses, made us together alive in Christ: (by grace ye are saved), and raised us up together, and seated us together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus: that He might show, in the ages to come, the surpassing riches of His grace in [His] kindness towards us in Christ Jesus: for by grace ye [have been and] are saved through faith: and this [salvation is] not of yourselves [for it is God's gift]: not of works, in order that no one should boast" (Eph. 2:4-9). If it is not by "works", then certainly it is not by feeling. It is only by the reckoning of faith that we can enter into, and enjoy, this precious declaration of an accomplished salvation. But this leads us to another responsibility, which is given in the following verse (Eph. 2:10). "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared (marg.) that we should walk in them." Therefore,

2.) We are to walk in this new life (Rom. 5:4). The Greek here for "new", *kainates*, newness. It is from *kainos*, new (not as being young, or fresh, or recently made; which is *neos*; but, as being new-made, and different from what had been before; new, in the sense of coming in the place of what had formerly been. *Kainotes* occurs only in Romans 6:4, and 7:6, but in each case the word is used in a different association or connection. In Romans 6:4 it refers to our walk (and in 7:6 to our service).

1.) As to our walk, it is to be in "newness of life": i.e., as living on a new and different plane of life; no longer merely the physical life; but now, the spiritual life. No longer the life as derived from the first Adam, but the life as derived from the last Adam, even Christ. A new sphere of life altogether. The former was of the earth, earthly: the latter is heavenly in its origin, its course, and its end. Our seat of government now is in heaven, and our "walk" is to be governed by that heavenly government, and not by any authority having its origin on the earth. As we walk about in the world we are ever to think of and to remember that we are in it, but not of it; and, as all who walk are responsible to look and see where they are going, so we are to "look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, 21): and this is to govern our walk.

2.) In Romans 7:6 this new sphere of life is used in connection with service "but now we were cleared [or discharged] from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we [are now privileged] to serve in newness of spirit (i.e., in the new sphere of the new nature), and not in the old sphere of [the] letter [of the law]". This tells us that our service is no longer to be governed by the "letter" of the law, but by its "spirit"; and our service is to spring from a new motive altogether; the other is old⁴¹ and antiquated and out of date. Now it is to be not from duty, but from love; not from the observance of rules and regulations, but from delight; not from vows or pledges, but in perfect freedom of action; not as being bondservants, but as sons. A totally new sphere of service is brought to us with the new nature; and our responsibility henceforth is to serve God on this line and plane of service. Unless we are most watchful we shall find ourselves constantly dropping into the bondage of the antiquated letter, and acting in a servant-spirit instead of a sonship-spirit.

3.) But there is a third walk connected with this "newness", or new sphere, into which the new nature brings us; and that is in connection with worship. It is spoken of in Galatians 5:25, and it follows on as an additional thought to living in this new spiritual sphere. It has to do with our walk and worship, as being "in Christ", and not according to the religious ordinances of the world.

"If we live [according] to [the] spirit (or new nature), [according] to [this] spirit we should walk" (Gal. 5:25). That is to say, we, who have this new nature are to walk accordingly; and the verb rendered "walk" here is a different word from that we have had in Romans 5:4 and 7:6. It is *stoicheo*, and it always means to walk according to religious rules and regulations; and has reference to outward religious rites, ordinances, and ceremonies. The noun *stoicheiun* occurs only in two of the seven Church Epistles, viz.: Galatians and Colossians, which are both corrective of doctrinal errors, arising from being ignorant of the teaching of Romans and Ephesians respectively. It occurs twice in each epistle (Gal. 4:3, 9, and Col. 2:8, 20). Three times out of the four it is associated with the word "world", *cosmos*, and thus refers to what is outward and material, in contrast with, and opposition to, what is inward and spiritual.

The uncertainty as to its meaning, in both the A.V. and R.V., is shown by the inconsistent renderings. In the A.V., in Galatians, it is rendered "elements" in the text, and "rudiments" in the margin; while in Colossians it is "rudiments" in the text, and "elements" in the margin. The R.V. has the latter (the Colossian rendering of the A.V.) in all four passages.

The word refers to all that is outward in religious observance; all religious acts that have to do with the flesh, or the old nature. So that the responsibility brought before us in Galatians 5:25 tells us that, as we are now living in the new sphere of life, so we are to walk according to the new spiritual nature; and not to follow, or walk in, or according to, the outward religious ceremonialism of the world: neither as to heathen institutions, or Jewish rites and meats, and drinks, and washings; days and months, and seasons, and years (Gal. 5: 10, 11; Col. 2:16, 17; Rom. 13:1-9); or according to Babylonian traditions.

Thus there are three distinct responsibilities as to our walk according to the new nature: they are Life, Service, and Worship; and relate, respectively, to what is Inward, Outward, and Upward. As to the sphere within, we are to walk according to the new sphere of life into which the new nature introduces us (Rom. 6:4). As to the sphere without, we are to serve according to the same newness of the spiritual or new nature (Rom. 7: 6). As to the sphere above, we are to "worship God in (or, according to) spirit", and not according to the religious traditions and ordinances and commandments of men (Gal. 5:25; Col. 2:20-22). These are the same three spheres which are all summed up in Titus 2:11-13; and these are the same three lessons which grace teaches. For grace not only brings us salvation, but it teaches us "that having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts (i.e., all the products of the old nature), we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, even [the] glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ"? Here we are taught how we are to live in our new sphere, or plane, of life.

1.) As to the world within. our walk is to be "soberly". The Greek *sophronos*, with self-control over all our desires, and a dignified constraint over all our members. This alone, and nothing short of this, is "gospel temperance". To limit this self-control to only that one of our desires which is created by thirst, is to miss the whole point of the injunction, and to leave all our other desires of the flesh, and of the mind, without restraint and without control; or, at any rate to act as though they may well so be left. But the greater includes the less. And true gospel temperance includes self-control over not only drinking, but over eating, dressing, reading, spending, saving, traveling, talking, sight-seeing, visiting, singing, etc.; and covers the whole ground of what is called "purity". It includes every department of our daily life; not only the coarse lusts of the flesh, but the refined desires of the mind; it covers not only what is unlawful, but what is lawful. It controls not only what is lawful, but what is expedient.

Man's perversion of "temperance" is the result of walking according to the flesh, and not according to the spirit. It would control only one of the lusts and leave the door open to all the others. Money not spent in drink may be spent on immorality. Money saved in drinking may be lost in gambling. And thus the mere ethical reformer is only picking off a dead leaf or rotten fruit here and there, while what is wrong lies at the root. It is not reformation that is needed, but regeneration. A "reformed character" is far from being a saved sinner. Such work is good for the world to be engaged in: but it is not the work of the Church of God to labour to make reformed characters. A minister of the Gospel cannot engage in it without neglecting the higher, and only work for which he is commissioned. No! The walk, according to the new nature, settles all such questions as these for the child of God, and includes the whole; while a walk, according to the flesh, is

occupied with only a certain part of the whole. As to the world within, therefore, our walk is to be with self-control in all things.

2.) As to the world without our walk is to be *dikaios*, righteously. And this, not only for righteousness, but from righteousness. Not because it is required by the laws and commandments of men, but because it is the desire of the new nature. Not from a sense of duty, but from the power of love. Not as servants, but as sons. Not as compelled by pledges, or badges, or vows, but as constrained by the divine nature within to walk righteously as to the world without.

3.) As to the world above, our walk is to be "godly", (i.e., it is to have God for its one and only object. It will consist, therefore, not in the ordinances, and ceremonies of man's religious traditions, but in the activities of the new nature. In a word, it is Christ only, in place of all that goes by the name of religion. It is Christ, and not even the "Christian religion", as being one of the many other religions; but Christ, or true Christianity. Thus, and thus only shall we fulfill this responsibility as to our new nature, and be of those "who [according] to spirit (or the new nature), worship (or serve) God; and glory in Christ Jesus; and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

4). The third responsibility as to the new nature is To Feed And Nourish It On Its Own Proper Food. As the old nature, the flesh, is fed and nourished by that which is extraneous to it (for it cannot feed on itself), so it is with the new nature. Its food must come from without, It requires to be constantly supplied with the food provided and suited for it. That food is the Word of God. Hence we are told that, as new-born babes, we are to desire the sincere or pure milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). The Word of God is the food of the new nature. "Man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live" (Deut. 8:3). There is food of all kinds in it. Milk for babes, and meat for the strong: comfort for the mourners, help for the weak. As new-born babes desire milk, so the new-born child of God needs and yearns for the milk of the Word. This is the only food of the new nature; but it must be "pure": the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the written Word, "the scriptures of truth". Not one without the other. "I am the bread of life"; i.e., the bread which supports life. "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven" (John 6:33, 35, 48-51). And then, of the written words of God, Jeremiah could say, "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16). If this could be said by one under the old Covenant—*a fortiori*,—how much more must it be so for those under the new Covenant, and for the possessors of a "divine nature". If the manna from heaven is called "angel's food", how much more can the Word be called "the bread of God"?

It is only by feeding on the Word that the new nature can be properly nourished. It cannot thrive on man's words, nor on all his "great thoughts". They are useless in the spiritual sphere. The new nature would starve on human reasoning and worldly literature. All these, at best, would make a "man of men"; but he who feeds on the God-breathed Scriptures will become a "man of God" (2 Tim. 3:17), thoroughly fitted out for every emergency; ready for every difficulty; equipped for every conflict; provided against every danger; armed against every temptation; prepared for every trial. The Son of God, when tried, fell back on the Word of God. His first ministerial words were, "It is written";

and His first ministerial utterance was in the words of Scripture (Deut. 8:3). Three times the Lord spoke on that solemn occasion, and each time it was in the words of Scripture.

In His last ministerial utterances (John 17), three times did He again refer to this Word. "Thy Word is truth" (5:17). "I have given them Thy Word" (5:14). "I have given unto them the WORDS which thou gavest Me" (5:8). Here we have again the "words" and the "Word"; for the Word is made up of words; and it is impossible to have the one without the other. If words be tampered with, the Word as a whole is vitiated. No wonder that believers are so weak and powerless both in resisting the evil and in producing the good. So manifest is this weakness that special meetings, and "Missions", and "Conventions", have been introduced with the express object of "deepening the spiritual Life". These furnish the evidence as to the low standard of spiritual life, and the unsatisfactory condition of multitudes of Christians. These are the confessed grounds for the need of such special efforts being made. But the very expression is non-scriptural. We will not say un-scriptural, because what is meant is right. But it shows a forgetfulness of the Word which declares that this new nature is "perfect", and "divine", and cannot therefore be "deepened", or increased. It can be nourished, and fed, and strengthened, but this can be done only by feeding on God's Word, and not by listening to men's words. It is by the "exposition" of the Word, and not by exhortation of men, that the new nature can be strong and can be kept in good spiritual health. It is by setting the mind on the things that are above, and not by fixing the attention on anything on earth. It is by searching the Scriptures, not by the examination of self. All other and lower means that may be adopted only tend to feed and puff up the flesh; and the snare is all the more subtle and dangerous, because it seems and sounds so "good", both in matter, and manner, and motive.

Moreover, these Conventions are at considerable intervals of time; and to depend on them is as though one were to live on very low diet for a time, and then to make up for it by a great banquet. Thus, at best, it becomes a very irregular, not to say unhealthy, mode of living. There were saints of God, and a noble army of martyrs and giants in the ministry of the Word of God, and a host of true faithful witnesses long before the days of "Missions", and "Conventions", and Societies. It was such Protestants as these who gained for us our great and priceless liberties, long before the days of our modern Protestant Societies, which were invented only for the purpose of defending and preserving what others had gained for us. All these modern inventions are at once a confession and proof of the low estate into which we are fallen. The many, instead of feeding on the Word for themselves, prefer to hear the results of other people's studies of it. It is as though a person were to attend lectures on diet, and study the chemistry of food, instead of eating it, and digesting it, and gathering strength and vigour for his daily duties. To live on exciting literature, whether sacred or secular, is as though a person were to attempt to live on cakes and sweets and "made dishes" instead of on strength-producing, life-giving, wholesome food. This is why so many are unequal to the opportunities and responsibilities of the Christian life. This is why so many are powerless before temptation. They give their new nature so little food. They feed on the unwholesome food of their own experiences, or on the experiences and biographies of others. They partake of "good" books, man's books, and hymn-books, which only produce fermentation instead of digestion; because such food cannot be assimilated by the new nature. Is it any wonder that, with this kind of dietary, and the Word of God

partaken of irregularly or only at rare intervals, or scarcely at all, that so many Christians do not manifest a very high conception of the sonship-spirit, of the high and wonderful privileges of the sons of God; or exhibit a real sense of their responsibility in the world in which their lot is cast?

Let us remember then, that, to realize the privilege of being sons of God, the word of Christ must "dwell within us richly in all wisdom (Co1. 3:16). The Written Word and the Living Word are the only food of the new nature, and our feeding upon them must not be irregular or at haphazard, getting a mouthful now and again. We do not treat our physical bodies thus: nor do we thus partake of our ordinary bodily food: for we all know full well that proper meals must be partaken of at regular intervals, masticated slowly, and thoroughly digested, so that it may be assimilated and become part of ourselves. Even so must it be with regard to that new spiritual life, which is ours in the gift of the new nature. When our spiritual condition is weak through neglect of our necessary food, then it is that we are tempted to resort to all sorts of remedies to get the needed strength and health. Many have recourse to quack medicines, which abound in the religious as they do in the natural world. All sorts of new-fashioned courses of "treatment" are recommended by the "profession", and all sorts of "foods" are advertised as the "best". God's "bread of life", which He has provided for us, contains within it all that is necessary for us. But we treat it as we treat God's "corn", which He has provided for our natural life. In the grinding of this corn, man has so constructed his mills that he eliminates from it, automatically, in the grinding, nearly all that God has put in it. What is left is mostly starch (to say nothing of deleterious matters which are put into it); and as this starch is out of all proportion to the diastase, which is that part of the saliva that can alone digest it, it ferments in the stomach instead of being digested: hence it remains, to become the source of many evils. Meanwhile our system is so poorly nourished that our general health is affected: we mourn over the loss of hair, or teeth; we feel that we are "out of sorts" generally; and then it is that we resort to widely advertised medicines and "foods", until many contract what is known as the "drug habit", and cannot do without such props to their natural life.

In the matter of bread (which to a large extent is practically unobtainable), man is beginning to find out his mistake, and is attempting to remedy it. But what does he do? Instead of adopting the very obvious means, and going back to what God has provided in the corn of wheat which contains everything that is needed, and this in the right proportion, he is concocting various kinds of "breads", to which he gives wonderful names. The unwary try these new fashioned breads; and, though their food costs them more, they do not find the result they hoped for. All this is a great reality going on before all our eyes; and it has its counterpart in the spiritual world. The Word of God is neglected, or dealt with, or dealt out, by man in various ways. The milk of the Word is put into a "separator", and what is not believed by this sect or the other is carefully eliminated or avoided. Man's substitutes are partaken of; and when we realize that we are weak, or out of health, then, instead of going back to the cause of all the mischief (which is neglect of feeding of the simple diet of the Word of God), we continue the very system which has produced all these sad effects, and seek to remedy them by having recourse to man's prescriptions, and by adapting man's recommendations. One party recommends some new kind of "treatment": another adopts "retreats", which are a kind of "rest cure":

some take to "stimulants", and, while carefully eschewing those of the material world, will go in for the stimulants and excitement of "missions" and "meetings". Others will act as though the continued practice of the "confession" of the ills they deplore would remove them or cure them; while others, again, act as though a "convention" on these things would bring the desired relief. Meantime, it is openly confessed by the very promoters of these modern methods that Christian life is at a very low standard; while spiritual life and sturdy Protestant strength is at a low ebb. Like an ill-fed horse, which has constantly to be whipped, so these ill-fed believers lash themselves; and go and sit in crowds for others to whip them up to their duties; instead of being like a well-led horse, on which a whip has no need to be used, and which requires only guiding and holding in. But all this is not the only evil, or even the worst feature of it. For it is when, in this very low condition of spiritual strength, we engage in spiritual work for the Lord, that we are compelled to do this work in the strength of the old nature, the flesh. This naturally leads many into still greater trouble; until, finally, they "break down", and are "ordered away"; or they break up, and all comes to an end.

Oh, that we could make them see the one simple cause of all these evils, which are universally recognized, admitted, and deplored. The existence of these evils is borne witness to by the very efforts which are made on all hands to remedy them. The root of all the trouble is the neglect of the divinely appointed means, the feeding upon the Word of God. This is the instrument by means of which the new nature is implanted; and this is the only means by which it can be supported, nourished, and strengthened. This Word of God is of value, only as we feed on it for ourselves; and as we properly digest it and assimilate it. No one can do this for us. Do not think, therefore, that we can live by looking on and seeing other people eat or that we can learn by merely looking over and copying their work. We must do our own searching's of the Word, and "mark" our own Bibles, and make our own tables and analyses. True, we may be guided and instructed in this by others; and we may be stimulated by their labours and examples; but we must each one do it for one's self, and we must learn it for ourselves from the Word. After we may have heard it from others, we must feed on it for ourselves in order to derive strength from it. Everything that we can need for our spiritual health and strength is in the Word of God: and the Holy Spirit who inspired it there is with us, to teach us, and to inspire it in our hearts. Let all our dependence be placed on Him. Let us not slight Him by leaning upon man. Lean not on our own writings. Listen to them only so far as they glorify Christ and magnify His Word. All we can do is to act as a guide and a fingerpost, to tell you where the food is, and where the "green pastures" lie; and to point out the usefulness, the sweetness, the power, the truth, and the profitableness of this heavenly food; and tell you where you may find what is suited to your needs. We have no monopoly in this. We have only the same Word to feed on for ourselves. We can prepare the food, and carve it for you, but we cannot eat it for you: you must do this for yourselves. It is, after all, simply a question of diet, in the spiritual, as it is, so often, in the physical sphere; and the health of both may be ascertained and known by the same test, and that is "appetite". Appetite in the natural world is the sign of health. The absence of it is the opposite sign. So it is in the spiritual sphere. Our appetite or desire to feed on the Word of God is the measure of our spiritual health. By this measure we may test ourselves. This acts like the clinical thermometer in enabling us to find out and demonstrate our real spiritual condition.

All depends on our spiritual appetite for our only spiritual food, the Word of God. Only as we not only feed on that Word, but as we digest it, and assimilate it, for our own selves, only so far will it profit us. Like money, it is of value only in proportion to the enjoyment, benefit, or true happiness that we get out of it. We may have a million pounds in the bank, but if we never use our cheque-book or spend that money, the mere coins are no more to us than so many "counters", or they remain merely a row of figures in a book. God forbid that it should be so with us in relation to His Word. We have all there that is able to make us "walk in newness of Life". Here we shall find all armour for every conflict, all strength for every service, all comfort for every sorrow, all resources for every need. Oh, may this precious Word be not only our armoury, or our storehouse, but our table. Oh, that we may, by God's grace, truthfully be able to say : **"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runeth over"** (Ps. 23:5).

CHAPTER VIII PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS

There are some remaining points with regard to our responsibility as to the two natures which come more under the head of practical conclusions, or advice, which follow logically from what has been received from Scripture. Not that we would put readers under any rules or regulations. But, after what we have learnt from the Word of God, there are certain responsibilities which are inevitable if we would enjoy the full blessing and fruits of the doctrine, in our own experience. It is not enough for us to "hold the truth" as to the two natures. The truth must hold us, if we are to know its value and its power. If the truth holds us, then:

1.) We Shall Daily Ignore The Flesh, And Deny All Its Calls And Claims. We have to remember that though we are "not in the flesh", the flesh is in us, and that we can never get rid of it till rapture, death, or resurrection. If we fail to keep this in daily remembrance we are at the mercy of every false teacher; liable to fall into any error which may spring up; and to be led astray into any of the new fashions and modern methods, the tricks and contrivances of fleshly religion. All these errors in doctrine and practice come from this one source. This source is the acknowledging of the claims and capabilities of the old nature. It is the essence and foundation of all false religions, as seen in the Church of Rome and elsewhere. We have it set forth in one sentence in a Roman Catholic book? "We are commanded by Jesus suffering and dying for us to imitate Him by the crucifixion of our flesh, and by acts of daily mortification."

Wherein does this differ from the popular holiness teaching of the present day? True, it may be put in a different way; it may be looked at from other points of view; but this is the ultimate end, aim, and. object of all who cultivate or attend to the claims of the old nature. The means employed or recommended may vary: but the result desired is one and the same, viz., to arrive at a state of sinlessness more or less. All this comes from one root, the flesh, with all its claims and calls, is not ignored as being "as good as dead".

If this practical duty be not attended to, the door stands wide open for every form of error that may choose to enter. If we can bear this responsibility in daily remembrance, it will keep us from embarking on any efforts, plans, or schemes which have for their object

the cultivation or improvement of the flesh. It will preserve us also from any form of modern teaching which would excite the hope that, by following certain rules, the flesh can be eradicated. Both hopes are absolutely groundless, and can end only in grievous disappointment. Let us make no mistake as to this first fundamental fact, and then we shall not be misled by false hopes that, by suitable food and training, we can change flesh into spirit: or that, by mortifying it in any way, we can get rid of it.

2.) The Best Practical Way of Treating The Old Nature Is To Starve It, by keeping it on low diet. But this cannot be done directly by making that an aim or a "work". It can be done only indirectly by constantly attending to the claims and desires, and satisfying the ever heaven-ascending longings of the new nature. We have seen that the food of the new nature is the Word of God. While we are directly feeding upon that we are indirectly starving the old nature. For (and this is the important fact) we cannot be feeding both natures at the same time! The nourishment on which the one nature thrives will starve the other. And this fact cuts both ways. If we are feeding the old nature on man's books and man's teachings, we shall be keeping the new nature ill-fed, impoverished and weak. The old nature will thrive on general literature. But the new nature will thrive only on the Word of God. His words "are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63); and only what is spiritual can be assimilated by spirit.

Many Christians are constantly occupied with man's thoughts and man's books; and then they are surprised at the low condition of their Christian life and walk. They then rush off to adopt some new fashion (just as the old nature flies to stimulants or drugs), which promises to supply the want and the vacuum which has actually been created; whereas it is only a matter of diet. If, in our physical life, people will persist in eating or drinking what is bad for them, they must suffer the inevitable consequences. It is exactly the same in the spiritual sphere: and if the palpable effects are seen in our walk and conversation, then the one and only remedy is to remove the cause. That will prove much less expensive; give much less trouble; prove perfectly effective; and will bring with it no disappointment. Our practical conclusion, therefore, is: do not read any book, do not listen to any speaker, teacher, or preacher unless you are sure that you will know more of God's Word after so doing than you did before. It matters nothing to you what any mortal man thinks. Unless he can help you to understand more dearly what God says, he will be a hindrance to you instead of a help. You cannot thrive upon man's words. It is only "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man Live" (Deut. 8:3). If you feed on the words that proceed out of the mouth of man you will starve. God's words are "spirit and they are life". Do not talk so much about the Scriptures. Be more ready to let them talk to you. In conversation about them, do as Ezra the scribe did. Instead of trying to remember imperfectly what the Word says, and hence, often misquoting it, "open the book" (Neh. 8:5). Let it speak for itself. Its words will be more weighty than your own, for God is with them to make them work effectually. Bind the Word about your heart. For, **"When thou goest it shall lead thee: when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life"** (Prov. 6:21-23).

You will find people always ready to talk on any subject but God, and His Christ, and His Word. They will talk about man, and the news of the world. On Sundays they will

vary this by talking of churches and ministers and sermons and services, but it is still man! Those who possess the new nature find that these things do not satisfy; they leave a craving for something better. Nothing will ever satisfy but God Himself, and the Living Word and the written Word. If "David's Psalm of praise" (Ps. 145.) was true of him, how much more shall it be true of us. How shall not we say, **"I will extol Thee, nay God, O King; and I will bless Thy Name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy Name for ever and ever . . . I will speak of the glorious honour of Thy Majesty, and of Thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts: and I will declare Thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness, and shall sing of Thy righteousness"** (Ps. 145:5-7).

This will be found to have a very different practical conclusion to talking of the eloquent words of one, or the inconsistent acts of another, or the wonderful works of another. The former is a sowing to the spirit, the latter is a sowing to the flesh.

If our new nature is to thrive, and if we are to be "fat and well-liking", we must feed upon the words of God, and thus starve the old nature (Gal. 4:8).

We must be occupied either with the flesh or with the spirit; with the old nature or with the new; and according as we sow to the one or the other we must reap. This is the plain truth and teaching given to us in Galatians 6:7, 8, commencing with the solemn warning:

"BE NOT DECEIVED,"

given to the Galatian saints, who, having begun their walk in the spirit (or the new nature) were seeking to be made perfect in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). They had "run well", but someone had come in and hindered them, so that they forgot, and did not obey this important truth and teaching (Gal. 3:7) which we are now seeking to enforce. We all desire (according to the desire of our new nature) so to walk as "not to fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (the old nature). What, then, are we to do to accomplish these our desires? Many put themselves under a yoke of bondage, and try to obey rules, and make vows and give pledges, and wear badges. But it is all in vain. All this, instead of weakening the flesh, only strengthens it by ministering to it, and occupying our minds with it. God's way is much more simple. It is--"Walk [according] to [the] spirit (or new nature), and the lust of the flesh ye shall in no wise fulfill" (Gal. 5:16). This is God's promise and God's rule. Try it! It will take you clean out of the hands of man. It will deliver you from a terrible bondage. It will bring peace and blessing into your life. It will give you refreshment and rest. Walk according to the *pneuma*; occupy yourselves with your new nature; minister to its needs; make provision in every way for it, and it alone; and you have God's word for it that your desire shall be attained. He assures you that "Ye shall in no wise fulfill the lusts of the flesh." This expression *ou me*, in no wise, is the very strongest that can be used! It is a double negative, which emphasizes and intensifies the assertion to such a degree that whenever it was used by man it was never made good. But whenever it was used by the Lord, it was surely and certainly abundantly fulfilled. When He said, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37), He used the expression, *ou me*, by no means, on no account, will He cast out.

Even so is this the ease with the Divine assurance of Galatians 5:16: "Ye shall in no wise fulfill the lust of the flesh." Let us blessedly and thankfully rest on this Divine assurance.

3.) We Must Never Put Ourselves Under Law (Rom. 7:6 marg.). This is another thing we must never do. The moment we fail to remember this, we quicken the flesh into activity. The flesh revels in law, as we have seen. The law was meant for the flesh; but only, and on purpose to prove the "weakness" of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). The law was never meant for a man "in Christ". Hence, the moment we come down from the high position in which grace has set us, and put ourselves under law, we stir up the flesh into greater activity and power.

This is what Scripture means by the expression "falling from grace". This does not mean backsliding or apostasy, as we call it; but it means walking according to the old nature instead of the new; thinking of that; cultivating and attending to that, instead of to the new nature. "Christ is become of none effect unto you whosoever [of you] are being justified by law" (Gal. 5:4). No wonder, then, that this important chapter (Gal. 5.) commences with the solemn exhortation: "For liberty Christ made us free: stand fast, therefore, and do not be entangled again in a yoke of bondage." Do not put yourselves under any vows, or take any pledges of any kind whatsoever. Do not wear any badges of any kind. They are only badges of bondage. They are the signs and tokens of "the yoke of bondage" under which you have put yourselves. They are entanglements. They imply that grace is not able to keep you, apart from some human props and devices. They practically deny the divine assurance—"My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12:9).

True, we may constantly feel our weakness, through the flesh being in us; but all this has been provided against by "the God of all grace"; for He has said, "My power is made perfect in [your] weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Avoid, therefore, all "rules for daily living", all "directories", or guides for living a "devout life". Shun them as you would your most deceitful enemy. They will prove fatal to your peace; they will take all the sunshine out of your life; they will turn you from a son, into a bondservant; and sap your spiritual powers at their fountain head. Cease all efforts either to improve the flesh or to get rid of it. Feed the new nature regularly with the divinely prepared food, and everything else will fall into its own proper place. Have full confidence in the grace of God and the power of God (2 Cor. 12:9). And adopt no schemes or plans that would imply that you need any help outside the Word of God.

4.) Finally, remember The Distinction Between Religion and Christianity. Religion has to do with the flesh; but only Christ will do for the new nature. The flesh knows nothing of Christ, the Son of God, as our Life. It is concerned only with what it can see and hear and comprehend. But the new nature cannot be satisfied with anything lower than Christ Himself. Not even with Christianity or the "Christian religion" apart from Him. In Philippians 3 we have this great contrast fully exhibited and illustrated in the personal experience and "pattern" of the Apostle Paul. His example will help us more than any precept. He tells us of the wonderful ground of "confidence in the flesh" which he once had as a strictly religious Jew. However much confidence in the flesh others might have, he could still say, "I more": and in seven particulars he enumerates them and sums them up (Phil. 3:5, 6). But all this time he was blind. He had as yet no new nature within to

bring the old and sinful (though religious) nature to light. But when he received that priceless gift of the new nature, then he discovered that he had been all that time really "a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious", and the "chief of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:13-16). So that, as to religion, he could say, "I more"; and as to sinners, "I chief". But when his eyes had been opened to know the Lord Jesus as his Saviour and his Lord, then he was only too thankful to cast away all his religion, which he had as a Jew, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. 3:8). He counted all things but loss, and as garbage, compared with Christ. He did not merely change the "Jews' religion" for the "Christian religion"; but he thankfully gave up all religion for Christ.

As to his standing before God, his glory was that he was now "found in Him" (5:9). As to his new object as a Christian, it was that he might "get to know Him" (5:10). As to his hope, it was to "like Him" in resurrection glory at His coming (5:22). It was all "Him". As a Jew he had the hope of resurrection, but he gladly gave even that up for the far greater hope of having part in what he calls "the out-resurrection from among the dead" (5:11), which had become his as a member of the one spiritual Body of Christ. This does not mean that he, as a Christian, hoped that by certain efforts he might obtain some advantage over other Christians; but that, as a Christian (a man in Christ), he already had a more blessed hope than any which the "Jews' religion" could ever give him. He is not speaking of giving up his sins, but of giving up his "gains". All that he once counted religious gains he now counted as garbage, compared with the real "gain" which he had in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; for he had gotten to know "the power of Christ's resurrection", and what that meant for all the members of the One body: for all who had fellowship in His sufferings, and had died with Him in His death (5:10). Nothing less than this is Christianity. All short of this is religion. Christianity consists, not in articles, creeds, or confessions; not in churches, memberships or fellowships; but, in a Person. God grant that each of our readers may be enabled by grace to say of all their supposed advantages in the flesh—"What things were [counted] gain to these I have esteemed as garbage for Christ" (Phil. 3:7).

5.) But, in conclusion, Forget Not That This Is The Way Sorrow And Of Conflict; not from within, but from without. Not merely conflict arising from our own old nature, but from that of others. It remains true, and will be found to be true in our own experience, and to the end :—"As then, He who was born according to the flesh persecuted him that was born according to Spirit, thus also it is now" (Gal. 4:29). The emphasis is placed on the two words "then" and "now": one being the first word in the sentence, the other the last word. This is to assure us that we must look for no change in the old nature; no change in these circumstances. All we are exhorted to do is to be reminded that we are sons of the free-woman, not of the bond-woman; and that we are to "stand fast in this liberty" (Gal. 5:1). Blessed liberty! The word "theft" in Galatians 4:29 refers to Ishmael and Isaac, but it points backward, further still, even to Cain and Abel, and to the religious hatred which ended, and would always, if it could, end in murder still. It points also to the fact that it was the religious party among the Jews, not the rabble, but "the chief priests", who were determined on the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus? Even so it is "now". "All who will (i.e., are determined) to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). And this persecution will come chiefly from religious flesh. Who among us will not mournfully admit that his chief troubles and trials have come to him through the

working of the flesh in his fellow-Christians? Instead of the persecutions coming as of old from the world, which broke people's bones, they come now from fellow-believers and break people's hearts!

It was when Saul was carrying out his religion the more earnestly that he was engaged in the work of persecution (Phil. 3:6). It is religion that has shed the blood of the saints; it is religion which has filled the ranks of "the noble army of martyrs".

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called "children of God". On account of this the world does not get to know us, because it has no knowledge of Him."

It is in connection with this that we are told: "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hateth you" (1 John 3:1, 13).

"If the world hateth you, ye know that it has hated Me before [it hated] you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; and because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, on account of this, the world hateth you" (John 15:18, 19, and 17:14).

If these words were true "then", of the Apostles to whom they were addressed, how much more true shall we find them "now" in our own experience. Therefore, as possessors of the new nature, let us "marvel not" either at its conflict with the old nature within us, or at its conflict with those without us: but let us rather rejoice that we have in this very conflict the greatest assurance that we are "sons of God", and are "His workmanship". This is the surest proof we can have that, as the children of God, we have been chosen out of the world; and let us "count it all joy" if we are privileged to suffer anything for Him who suffered all for us—"for the joy that was set before Him".

Found in: <http://www.tftmin.org/TwoNatures.htm>

How to Enjoy the Bible (Introduction)

by E.W. Bullinger

Introduction "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live." -- Deut. 8:3. Thus is it asserted that the Word and the words of Jehovah constitute the food of the New nature. As in the natural sphere so in the spiritual, the desire (or appetite) for the food which is the proper support of each respectively, is the sign of natural and spiritual health. Attention to diet is becoming more and more recognized as essential to nutrition and growth.

A low condition of bodily health is produced by inattention to the laws of nature as to suitable diet. As this leads to the "drug habit," or to the immoderate use of stimulants in the natural sphere, so it is in the spiritual sphere. A low condition of spiritual health is produced by improper feeding or the neglect of necessary food, which is the Word of God; and the end is a resort to all the many modern fashions and novel methods and widely advertised nostrums in the

Religious world in the attempt to remedy the inevitable results. The Root of all the evils which abound in the spiritual sphere at the present day lies in the fact that the Word and the words of God are not fed upon, digested, and assimilated, as they ought to be. If we ask the question, Why is this the case? the answer is, The Bible is not enjoyed because the Bible is not understood. The methods and rules by which alone such an understanding may be gained are not known or followed; hence the Bible is a neglected book. The question Philip addressed to the Eunuch (Acts 8:30,31) is still greatly needed: Understandeth thou what thou readest? And the Eunuch's answer is only too true to-day: How can I, except some man should guide me? The following pages are written with the object of furnishing this "guide." Certain canons or principles are laid down, and each is illustrated by applying them to certain passages by way of examples. These are intended to be taken only as examples; and the principles involved are intended to be used for the elucidation of other passages in the course of Bible study. The Word of God is inexhaustible. It is, therefore, neither useful, nor indeed practicable to extend these examples beyond certain limits. By the aid of these twelve simple canons or rules, other passages and subjects may be taken up and pursued both with pleasure and profit -- subjects which are even yet matters of controversy and of conflict. We have to remember that the Bible is not a book of pure Science on the one hand, nor is it a book of Theology on the other. Yet all its science is not only true, but its statements are the foundation of all true science. And, it is Theology itself; for it contains all that we can ever know about God. The cloud that now rests over its intelligent study arises from the fact that it is with us to-day as with the Jews of old -- "The Word of God has been made of none effect by the traditions of men" (Matt. 15:1-9). Hence it is that on some of the most important questions, especially such as Biblical Psychology, we are, still, in what the great Lord Bacon calls "a desert." He alludes to those "deserts" in history, where discovery or research comes to a stand-still, and we get schoolmen instead of philosophers; and clerics instead of discoverers. The Reformation came as an oasis after one of these deserts. Men were sent from the stagnant pools of tradition to the fountain-head of truth. But within two or three generations the Church entered the desert again; Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms took the place of the open Bible; the inductive method of Bible study was abandoned, and to-day it is scarcely understood. One party abides by "Catholic consent" or the "Voice of the Church." Other parties in the same way abide by the dicta of some who had stronger minds. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Darby, and Newton would be surprised to-day to find that those who question what they believed are treated as guilty of presumption, and of a sin to be visited with excommunication! These good men little thought that the inferences which they drew from the Bible would be raised to a position of almost equality with the Bible itself. The result of all this is too painfully evident. Controversies, bitterness, strifes have been engendered. These have taken the place of simple Bible study. If studied at all it has been too much with the view of finding support for one or other of the two sides of these controversies, instead of with the object of discovering what God has really revealed and written for our learning. Failing to understand the Scriptures we cease to feed on them; then as a natural consequence, and in inverse proportion, we lean on and submit to "the doctrines of men," and finally reach a theological desert. Bishop Butler has pointed out the way back to the land of plenty and of delight. He has shown that the only way to study the Word of God is the

way in which physical science is studied. He says: "As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at, by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, and which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world" (Analogy, Part II., ch. 3). On this another writer (Rev. J. B. Heard, M.A., Tripartite Nature of Man, p. 358) has remarked, "Thus, the way of discovery still lies open to us in Divine things if we have only the moral courage to go to the fountain-head of truth, instead of filling our vessel out of this or that doctor's compendium of truth... Were Bishop Butler's method of inductive research into Scripture more common than it is we should not have stood still so long, as if spell-bound by the shadow of a few great names. 'It is not at all incredible,' Bishop Butler adds, 'that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.' Such a saying is worthy of Butler. It is only a philosopher who can allow for time and prescription. The majority of mankind think that they think; they acquiesce, and suppose that they argue; they flatter themselves that they are holding their own, when they have actually grown up to manhood, with scarcely a conviction that they can call their own. So it always was, and so it will ever be. The Divine things of the Word are no exception, but rather an instance. The more difficult the subject, and the more serious the consequences of error, the more averse the majority are to what is called 'unsettling men's minds'; as if truth could be held on any other tenure than the knight's fee of holding its own against all comers. Protestantism has brought us no relief against this torpid state of mind, for, as the error is as deep as the nature of man, we cannot expect any deliverance from it so long as the nature of man continues the same, and his natural love of truth almost as depraved as his natural love of holiness." But the way of discovery, as Bishop Butler has pointed out, still lies open before us; and it is our object in this work to enter on that way, and study the Bible from within and not merely from without. We believe that only thus we shall be furnishing just that help which Bible students need. It may be the work of others to explore Geography, History, Natural History, Chronology; the antiquities of Assyria, Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon; all these are legitimate subjects of systematic research which cannot but help us in understanding more of the Word of God. But our object is to "Open the book"; to let it speak; to hear its voice; to study it from within itself; and have regard to other objects and subjects, only from what it teaches about them. The method of the "Higher" criticism is to discredit a Book, or a passage on internal evidence. Our method is to establish and accredit Holy Scripture on internal evidence also, and thus to derive and provide, from its own pharmacopoeia, an antidote to that subtle and malignant poison. This method of study will reveal more convincing and "infallible proof" of inspiration than can be adduced from all the reasonings and arguments of men. Like Ezra of old, our desire is to "Open the Book" and let it speak for itself, with the full conviction that if this can be done it can speak more loudly, and more effectively for itself, than any man can speak on its behalf. May the Lord deign to use these pages, and make them to be that "guide" to a better understanding and a greater enjoyment of His own Word. E. W. B. London, September, 1907. How to Enjoy the Bible: or, The "Word," and the "Words": How to Study Them Introductory A revelation in writing

must necessarily be given in "words." The separate words, therefore, in which it is given must have the same importance and authority as the revelation as a whole. If we accept the Bible as a revelation from God, and receive it as inspired by God, we cannot separate the words of which that inspired revelation is made up, or admit the assertion "that the Bible contains the Word of God, but is not the Word of God." The position conveyed by such an expression is both illogical and impossible. As we design this work for those who accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, we do not propose to offer any arguments in proof of its inspiration. The Bible is its own best proof of its inspiration. It claims to be "the Word of God;" and if it be not what it claims to be, then it is not only not a "good book," but is unworthy of our further attention. We cannot understand the position of those who assert and believe that many of its parts are myths and forgeries, while at the same time they continue to write commentaries upon it, and accept their emoluments and dignities for preaching or lecturing about it. If we were told and believed that a bank-note in our possession is a forgery, we certainly should take no further interest in it, beyond mourning the loss which we had sustained. Our action would thus be consistent with our belief. We write, therefore, for those who, receiving the claims of the Scriptures as being the Word of God, desire to study it so as to understand it and enjoy it. When this claim is admitted, and a course of study is undertaken in this spirit, we shall be at once overwhelmed with proofs as to its truth; and on almost every page find abundant confirmation of our faith. The Bible simply claims to be the Word of God. It does not attempt to establish its claim, or seek to prove it. It merely assumes it and asserts it. It is for us to believe it or to leave it. Hence we do not now attempt to prove or establish that claim; but, believing it, our aim is to seek to understand what God has thus written for our learning. Nor do we attempt to explain the phenomena connected with Inspiration. We have no theories to offer, or suggestions to make, respecting it. We have the Divine explanation in Acts 3:18, where we read: "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets ... he hath so fulfilled." The particular "things" referred to here are "that Christ should suffer;" but the assertion is comprehensive and includes all other things "showed" by God. Note, that it was God who, before, had showed them. It was the same God who had fulfilled them. The "mouth" was the mouth of "all His prophets," but they were not the prophets' words. They were the words of God. Hence, concerning other words, it is written: "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). It was David's "mouth," and David's pen, David's vocal organs, and David's hand; but they were not David's words. They were the words "which the Holy Ghost spake before concerning Judas." David knew nothing about Judas, David could not possibly have spoken anything about Judas. David's "mouth" spake concerning Ahithophel; but they were the words "which the Holy Ghost spake concerning Judas." David was "a prophet": and, being a prophet, he "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1:21). Hence, in Psalm 16, he spake concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:30,31). In the same way he "spake before concerning Judas." In like manner, in the Book of Exodus Moses wrote about the Tabernacle, but he himself did not and could not know what "the Holy Ghost signified" (Heb. 9:8). Here, then, we have all that God condescends to tell us about the inspiration of the "Word" and the "words." This is the Divine explanation of it; and this is all that can be known about it. It is not for us to explain this

explanation, but to receive it and believe it; and there leave it. It is enough for us that God speaks to us; and that He says "Thus saith Jehovah." We do not question the fact; we believe it; and only seek to understand it. We desire to be in the position of those Thessalonian saints who, in this, "were ensamples to all that believe," and to whom it was written: "For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe " (I Thess. 2:13). The Word of God is thus for those "that believe." The "Word" as a whole; and the "words" of which it is made up. They cannot be separated. It is Jeremiah who says (Jer. 15:16): "Thy words were found, [1] and I did eat them; And Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: For I am called by Thy name, O Jehovah Elohim of hosts." Here again, it is those who are called by Jehovah's name who feed upon His "Word," and rejoice in His "words." The same distinction is made in the New Testament by the Lord Jesus in John 17: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (v. 8). "I have given them thy Word" (v. 14). Those who are referred to in the word "them" are described seven times over, as having been "given" to Christ by the Father. (see verses 2, 8, 8, 9, 11, 12, 24). These had "received" the words; these had "known surely"; these had "believed" (v. 8). It is for such as these we now write, who receive, believe, read, and desire to feed upon the "words" of God; that the "word" of God may become "a joy, and the rejoicing" of the heart (Jer. 15:16, R.V.). True, this joy within will be tempered by trouble without. Jeremiah prefaces the statement, quoted above, with the words immediately preceding it in verse 15: "For Thy sake I have suffered rebuke." ("Cherpah", . reproach; and so nearly always rendered). And the Lord Jesus after saying (John 17:14): "I have given them Thy Word" immediately adds, "And the world hath hated them." Those who thus feed upon and rejoice in God's Word will soon realize their isolated position; but, in spite of the "reproach" and "hatred" of the world, there will always be the "joy and rejoicing" of the heart. It was so on another occasion when the neglected Word of God was brought forth, "and Ezra opened the book," the people were assured that "the joy of the Lord was their strength" (Neh. 8:5, 10, 12, 17). And we are told: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (v. 8). It must be the same with us if that "Word " and those "words" are to be the cause of our joy and rejoicing. And this is our object in writing now. We do not write for casual readers, or for those who read a daily portion of the Word merely as the performance of a duty and as a matter of form, but for those who "search the Scriptures," and who seek, in them, for Him of whom the Scriptures testify (John 5:39). Such a one was the eunuch who went up to Jerusalem from Ethiopia in Acts 8. He sought the Saviour, but he did not find Him in Jerusalem. He found "religion" there, and plenty of it; but he did not find that Blessed One; for He had been rejected, "crucified, and slain." So the eunuch was returning, and was still seeking for the Living Word in the Written Word; "and, sitting in his chariot, read Isaiah the prophet." Being directed by the Divine Angel-messenger, Philip "ran thither to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' And he said: 'How can I except some man should guide me?' And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:27-31). Philip's question (v. 30) implies (in the Greek) a doubt on Philip's part as to whether the eunuch did really understand. And the eunuch's reply (v. 31) implies a negative answer. It begins

with the word "for," which is not translated either in the A.V. or R.V. If we supply the ellipsis of the negative which is so clearly implied we can then translate the word gar, "for"; thus; "[No]: for how should I be able unless some one should guide me." Of course, the Holy Spirit Himself is the guide and teacher of His own Word. But sometimes, as in this case, He sends a messenger, and uses human instruments and agencies. The word "to guide" is hodegeo, to lead or guide in the way. [2] It is this guidance which the ordinary reader stands in need of to-day; and never more than to-day, when so many would-be guides are "blind leaders of the blind." On all hands there are so many attractions to draw readers out of "the way" altogether; and so many "good" books and "helps" to lead them astray. We cannot pretend to be a Philip, or to have his special commission. But, without assuming to teach others on such an important subject we may at least tell them what lines of study we have ourselves found helpful; and what principles we have found useful in our own searchings of God's Word. But these will be useless unless we are first prepared to unlearn. If any think they know all, or that they have exhausted the Divine Word; or that what they set out to learn is only to be in addition to what they already know, instead of sometimes in substitution for it, then we shall be of little service to them: and they need not follow us any further. When we come to ask ourselves, and say, "Where did I learn this? " "How did I get this?" "Who taught me this?" it is astonishing to find how much we have imbibed from man, and from tradition; and not directly and for ourselves, from the Word of God. All that we have learned from our youth up must be tested and proved by the Word of God. Where we find it is true we must learn it over again, from God. And where it will not stand the test of His Word we must be not only content, but thankful to give it up; and receive Divine revelation in the place of man's imagination. Footnotes: matza, to discover. Gen. 2:20. Here referring to the historic fact (II Kings 22:8, II Chron. 34:14,15) of the finding of the book of the law by Hilkiyah in the reign of Josiah. From hodos, a way; and hegeomai, to lead. It occurs only in Matt. 15:14, Luke 6:39, John 16:13, Acts 8:31, and Rev. 7:17. It is used both in its literal or proper sense (Exod. 13:17; 32:34, Num. 24:8; Deut. 1:33); and in a Tropical sense (Ps 5:8; 23:3; 25:5,9; 77:20, etc.). This article appears on the site:
<http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

The Church Epistles

By E. W. Bullinger

Foreword -- by Peter Wade

Foreword

Introduction

Importance of Their Order

Their Inter-relation

This classic and scholarly work deserves a wide circulation among the people of God, especially those who love God's Word and are hungry for deeper truth.

The Church Epistles was first published in book form in 1902 from a series of articles written in 1898. Our text is taken from the second edition, published in 1905 (some shorter footnotes have been incorporated in the text and biblical references have been modernised).

The present work appears to have taken second place to *The Foundations of Dispensational Truth*, first published posthumously in 1911. While Dr. Bullinger modified his teaching on the chronological order, he quotes at length from the present volume and states that "for us today... the canonical order is the more important" (page 82, third edition). Earlier on the same page he writes: "It is not that one order is right and the other wrong. Both are right; neither is wrong. Both are important, but not equally so..." He takes the same stand in *How To Enjoy The Bible* (1907), and this is repeated in the *Companion Bible*, just prior to the book of Romans and also in Appendix 192. I have not yet found any statement in his writings where he discounts the experimental teaching of the canonical order of the epistles to the seven churches.

I have found great enlightenment in the divine order emphasised in this work, and having now prepared it for electronic publication I am convinced of its timeliness for new generations of Bible students. I trust that this republication will encourage believers to study the epistles to the churches afresh, the "complete course which shall begin and finish the education of the Christian; a curriculum which contains everything necessary for the Christian's standing and his walk; the 'all truth' into which the Spirit guides him."

The Church Epistles Introduction Foreword Introduction Importance of Their Order Their Inter-relation When the Apostle Paul preached the good news concerning Christ and His Church, at Ephesus, his ministry continued in Asia for the space of two years (Acts 19:10). We read that the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed, and that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus." And yet, at the close of his ministry, and of his life, he writes his last Epistle to Timothy, when he says "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (II Timothy 1:15): "This thou knowest that all they that be in Asia have turned away from me."

We are told, on every hand, today, that we must go back to the first three centuries to find the purity of faith and worship of the primitive church! But it is clear from this comparison of Acts 19:10 and II Timothy 1:15, that we cannot go back to the first century. No, not even to the apostle's own lifetime! This turning away could not have been merely personal; but must have included his teaching also. For in chapter 2, verse 18, he speaks of those "who concerning the truth have erred." In chapter 3, verse 8, he speaks of those who "resist the truth." In chapter 4, verse 4, he speaks of those who "turn away their ears from the truth" and are "turned unto fables." It was Pauline truth and teaching from which all had "turned away." It was this turning away from the truth as taught by the Holy Spirit through Paul, especially as contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians, that led necessarily: (1) To the loss of the teaching concerning the Mystery; that truth concerning the one Body of Christ. The effect of this was at once to put everything wrong ecclesiastically, and to make room for all the various and different "Bodies," so-called, with all the consequent divisions and schisms of the church. Instead of recognising "the One Body" which God had made, men set about making their own "Bodies" and Sects! and with this ecclesiastical confusion came the loss of the truth as to the Christian's perfect standing in Christ as having died and risen in Him. (2) Next, after this, went the truth of the Lord's promised return from heaven; and of resurrection, as the one great and blessed hope of the church. Other hopes, or rather fears, came in their place, and "death and judgment" took the place of those lost hopes.

Having lost the truth of what God had made Christ to be unto us, and the joy as to our standing thus given, in looking for that blessed hope, preparation for death and judgment was the necessary result, and therefore: (3) The next thing to go was the truth as to what God had made us to be in Christ; and "justification by faith" and by grace was lost. The way was now open for the full tide of error to come in: and it came in, like a flood, with all the corruption and superstition which ended in centuries which have the significant description "the dark ages." Everyone is familiar with the term, and with the fact. But what were the dark ages? How did they come? They were not brought on suddenly by some untoward event. There must have been some cause, something that made them possible. The corruption was historical. The Eastern churches today are in similar darkness. And the Western churches, where the Reformation has not removed it, are in the same darkness. The Reformation itself -- what was it, but the beginning of a recovery of these great truths? The remarkable fact is that the recovery of these truths has taken place in the inverse order to that in which they were lost. Justification by grace through faith was the first great truth recovered at the Reformation. This was the truth over which that great battle was fought and won, though the victory was far from complete. For not until the nineteenth century had well begun did the Lord's return from heaven begin to become again the blessed hope of His church. In later years the subject has become more and more precious to increasing numbers. But this great and "blessed hope" is not yet really learned, because it ought to be the natural outcome of truth received and held, instead of being treated as an independent subject artificially produced. It must come from the heart into the life, and not be merely held and retained in the head, if it is to be productive of the blessed results seen in the Thessalonian church. It must be learned experimentally as a vital and essential part of our standing as Christians, and not be studied as if it were an extra subject, in order to produce Thessalonian fruit. Hence, it is that we more often see prophecy taken up as a study, rather than as the result of waiting for God's Son from heaven. The last of the three truths to be recovered is the truth taught in Ephesians; and it is only in our own day that we see any real sense of the loss, with any real effort to recover it. The truth of the Mystery, as it was the first to go, so, it seems, is the last to be recovered. It is with the hope of doing something to recover this truth that these papers have been written on the Church Epistles. May the Lord use them to bring back vital truths to their proper place, that their power may be felt in the hearts and seen in the lives of an increasing number of the members of the Body of Christ. The cause of all the confusion around is that thousands of those who profess to be Christians know little or nothing of these Church Epistles. There is no other profession which they could enter without being able to pass a satisfactory examination in the text books set forth for that purpose. There is no position in life that anyone could apply for without being asked how much one knew of its duties and responsibilities. But the Christian "profession" is treated in quite a different manner, and as quite a different matter. Anyone may undertake that, and all the while be totally ignorant of these Church Epistles: -- "The Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the Ten Commandments" are considered as sufficient for Christian position and profession. Hence the almost total neglect of these Epistles. The four Gospels and the Sermon on the Mount are taken as the essence of Christianity, instead of the Epistles specially addressed to Churches. Hence the great ignorance of Christians as to all that God has made Christ to be unto

His People, and all that He has made them to be in Him. Not knowing their standing in Christ, and their completeness and perfection in Him, they are easily led into error concerning their state and their walk. Many, who know they are justified by grace, yet seek to be sanctified by works. Nothing but full knowledge of what is revealed for our instruction in these Church Epistles will effectually deliver us from all the new doctrines and schools of thought which find an entrance into our midst. May the great Head of the Body the Church, own this effort, and use it and bless it to the deliverance of many from all the variable winds of doctrine, and build them up in their most holy faith.

The Church Epistles Importance of Their Order Foreword Introduction
Importance of Their Order Their Inter-relation It is a serious blow to Inspiration when the importance of one part of Scripture is exalted above another. To do this is to reduce the Bible to the position of any other book, and practically to deny that the whole is made up of "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." This is done in the present day when, according to the new Ritschlian School, The Teaching of Jesus is exalted above the Teachings of the Holy Spirit by Paul, as though there were a rivalry between the two.

The words of Christ, and the words of Paul are equal in weight and importance, inasmuch as both are recorded and given to us by the same Holy Spirit; and are therefore equal in authority. That authority is Divine: and no difference can be made between them without jeopardising the very essence of Inspiration. That there is a difference is clear. But this difference arises from failing to rightly divide the word of Truth as to the various Dispensations of which it treats. What He said on earth is necessarily of the highest importance to us dispensationally as showing how, through His rejection by His people Israel, "the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles" (Acts 28:28). But that teaching was given to special persons under special circumstances, and it must be interpreted and applied accordingly. It was not designed as a compendium of instruction for the Church of God, for the Church was not then being formed, and, as a matter of fact, the churches to whom the epistles were addressed did not at that time possess the four Gospels as we have them. On the contrary Christ expressly said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth (R.V., 'all the truth'): for He shall not speak of (or from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:12-15). May we not ask How, When, and Where this promise and prophecy was fulfilled? Does this promise refer to us only as individuals, and to a subjective personal communication of the Holy Spirit to each individually? or, Are we to look for some formal and special realisation of the Lord's words? (1) What is meant by "all truth," or as the Revised Version has it, "all the truth," into which the Holy Spirit was to guide the Church? Where are "the things of Christ" which He was to show unto us? Does it mean that the Holy Spirit shows one truth to one person and another to another person, and these are so different that those who receive them proceed to quarrel as to which is the truth? It cannot be! Where are we to look then for this specially promised teaching and guidance? Surely,

when we take these words of Christ, in connection with His last seven-times repeated injunction from the glory, we are to look for some specific fulfilment of such a definite promise as this. All those parts of the promise, "He shall guide... He shall speak... He shall show you..." etc., are very precise, and must surely have a specific performance in some definite teaching of the Spirit specially addressed to "the churches" as such, and not merely to the experiences of individuals. Where are we then to look for this, if not in the epistles addressed to churches, as such, by the Holy Spirit? How many churches were so addressed? How many Bible students are there who can say at once how many there are? We have not yet found one who could do so! What a solemn comment this fact is as to the universal disregard for the Lord's last injunction! Seven churches were addressed as such by the Holy Spirit, seven being the number of spiritual perfection. (There were nine epistles altogether so addressed, two being addressed to the Church at Corinth, and two to "the Church of the Thessalonians". And nine is the square [or completeness] of Divine perfection: three times three (3 x 3.) Is it not remarkable that the Holy Spirit addressed seven churches and no more: exactly the same in number as the Lord Himself addressed later from the glory? The seven epistles of the Holy Spirit by Paul had already been written and read, and neglected and practically forsaken, when Christ sent His own seven to those seven churches in Revelation chapters two and three. This is evident when we compare Acts 19:10 with II Timothy 1:15. Some would tell us to go back to the first three centuries to find primitive Christianity in its purity. But these Scriptures show that we cannot even go back to the first century. The only successors the Apostle knew of were likened to "grievous wolves" (Acts 20:29). The seven churches to which the Holy Spirit addressed His epistles by Paul are Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. (The other epistles are "General" (John), or are addressed to "Hebrews," or "to the Twelve Tribes" (James), or to "the Dispersion" (Peter), or to individuals (Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and II John.) In these epistles we have the perfect embodiment of the Spirit's teaching for the churches. These contain the "all truth," into which the Spirit of Truth was to "guide" us. Where are we to look for this "all truth," if not here? These contain the things which Christ could not speak on earth, for the time for such teaching was not then. These contain the "things of Christ" which the Spirit was to receive and show unto us. Where else are we to look for the fulfilment of the Spirit's mission as the great Teacher, if not here? Not only is the number of these epistles perfect, but their order is perfect also. The order in which they come to us is no more to be questioned than their contents. But what is that order? Is it chronological? No! Man is fond of arranging them according to the times when he thinks they were written, but God has not so arranged them. Indeed, He seems to have specially disposed of that for all time, and to have forbidden all attempts to arrange them thus, by placing the Epistles to the Thessalonians last of all, though they were written first. The question, therefore, is settled for us at the outset, and so decisively as to bid us look for some other reason for the order in which the Holy Spirit has presented them for our learning. In all the hundreds of Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, the order of these seven epistles addressed to churches is exactly the same. We have examined the five most ancient in existence, viz., the Codex Vaticanus (Cent. IV.), the Codex Sinaiticus (Cent. IV.), the Codex Alexandrinus (Cent. V.), the Codex Ephraemi (Cent. V.), and the Codex Bezae (Cent. V. or VI.). The general order of the books of the New Testament takes

the form of groups, viz., (1) the Four Gospels, (2) the Acts, (3) the General Epistles, (4) the Pauline Epistles, and (5) the Apocalypse. But while the order of these five groups varies in some of the MSS.: and the Pauline Epistles vary in their position with respect to the other four groups: and while the Pauline Epistles themselves vary in their order (e.g., Hebrews in some cases following Thessalonians), yet the order of these seven addressed to churches never varies. And, further, though the four Gospels vary in their order (even in the five most ancient MSS.), these seven epistles are never given in any other order than that in which they have come down to us, and are given in our English Bibles. That order therefore must present to us the line of study marked out for the churches by the Holy Spirit: a complete course which shall begin and finish the education of the Christian: a curriculum which contains everything necessary for the Christian's standing and his walk: the "all truth" into which the Spirit guides him. If he is ignorant of this, he must necessarily err, and be an easy prey for every new teacher who may rise up. He has no foundation on which he may securely rest: no anchorage on which he may depend. He is at the mercy of every "wind of doctrine" against which he has no protection. He will be carried away by any new "views" or teaching that may be put forth from time to time, for he has no standard by which to try them! How can it be otherwise, if a Christian does not give earnest heed to what has been specially written for his instruction? Every word of Scripture is for him and for his learning, but every word is not about him. But these epistles are all about him and about the special position in which he finds himself placed with reference to the Jew and the Gentile; the old creation and the new; the flesh and the spirit, and all the various phenomena which he finds in his experience. But now let us seek, in connection with the order in which these seven epistles come to us, for their division into three and four: for such division there must be. We find it in the fact that three of these epistles stand out distinct from all the others as being treatises rather than epistles; and as containing so much more doctrinal matter as compared with that which is epistolary. This will be clearly seen when we come later on to notice the structure, which exhibits the contents of each. These three epistles are Romans, Ephesians, and Thessalonians. And the four are placed between these three in two pairs, each pair containing respectively "Reproof" and "Correction" in contrast to the other which contain "Doctrine and "Instruction" (according to II Timothy 3 :16): A. | Romans (Doctrine and Instruction). B. | Corinthians (Reproof). C. | Galatians (Correction). A. | Ephesians (Doctrine and Instruction). B. | Phillipians (Reproof). C. | Colossians (Correction). A. Thessalonians (Doctrine and Instruction). (2) We must leave the inter-relation of these epistles for our next chapter, and then having looked at them as a whole, and in relation and contrast to each other, we propose to consider each of them in the light of the whole, and in detail, as that detail is suggested and brought out by the special relation of each to the whole. One fact, however, we may notice here, and that is the reason why Thessalonians, which was written before all the others, is put last of all. We may be certain that the order is perfect, and that the reason is divine. Is it not this? The Epistles to "the Church of the Thessalonians" are the epistles in which the special revelation is given concerning the coming again of the Lord Jesus. If we have "ears to hear," this fact speaks to us, and it says: -- (Listen!) It is useless to teach Christians the truths connected with the Lord's coming, until they have learned the truths in the other epistles! Until

they know and understand what God has made them to be in Christ, and what He has made Christ to be unto them, they have no place for the truths concerning His return from heaven! Until they have learnt what is taught concerning their standing and their walk, they will be occupied with themselves, and have no use for the truths connected with the Lord's coming again! How important, then, that we should set ourselves to give heed to "what the Spirit saith unto the churches," and thank God for the opened ear, while we pray that, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may see what has been thus written and given and sent to us for our learning. Footnotes: (1) If this guidance is not individual, neither can it be collective, or find its fulfilment in the Church of God as a whole. A mistaken view of these words has led mere ecclesiastics to see in these words the figment called "the inspiration of the Church" (see an article in The Expository Times, for Oct., 1898, in which this is affirmed). The difficulty with regard to the Church of Rome is at once raised, and is evaded by maintaining that "moral inspiration" must precede and be the foundation of the "doctrinal inspiration," and this "moral inspiration" is seen "in all that greater care for the poor, in all that wider sympathy for suffering, all that deeper horror of bloodshed, in all that greater purity of life, in all that profounder sense of sin, in all that true love of simple, unaffected goodness, etc., etc. And this is the popular theology of the present day substituted for Christianity by which "the Christian faith" (instead of being the revelation of the Holy Spirit in these seven epistles) has for its striking feature the "power of assimilating itself to the advancing knowledge of the human race"! (2) There is a further and different division of the seven into four and three. One within the other. We believe that the one we have given above is the true one and the one for our instruction. But there is another more technical, which interlaces it and enhances its perfection. Four of the seven churches were in what became the Western half of the Roman Empire (now called Europe); and three were in what became the Eastern half (now called Asia). And each one answers to the other, West to West and East to East, as follows: West Romans Corinthians West Galatians East East Ephesians Philippians West Colossians East West Thessalonians.

The Church Epistles Their Inter-Relation Foreword Introduction Importance of Their Order Their Inter-relation We come now to consider the seven Epistles as a whole, and their inter-relation with each other. We have seen that their order, like their number, is spiritually perfect. We have referred to their division into three and four. Let us first look at and compare the three -- Romans, Ephesians, and Thessalonians.

They are treatises rather than letters (Lightfoot [Biblical Essays, p.288] says [comparing Romans and Ephesians], "Both alike partake of the character rather of a formal treatise than of a familiar letter."), and, taken together, they contain the whole revelation of the Spirit concerning Christian standing and state, both individually and collectively: the "all truth" into which He was to "guide" them (John 16:12). Romans stands first, as containing the ABC of Christian education. Until its great lesson is learnt we know nothing. If we are wrong here, we must be wrong altogether. The Spirit has placed it first because it lies at the threshold of all church teaching. It begins, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, by Divine calling an apostle, separated unto God's Gospel, which..." and then he proceeds to unfold

and reveal the Gospel of God's grace. Man is shown to be utterly ruined and helpless, and ungodly sinners of the Gentiles and Jewish transgressors are alike made to know themselves as lost, and how they are justified by God. The doctrinal portion, consisting of the first eight chapters, shows what God has done with "sins" and with "sin," and how the saved sinner has died with Christ, and is risen with Christ -- made a son and heir of God in Him. This is where Ephesians starts from! It begins, not with man, but with God. It approaches its great subject, not from man's necessities, but from God's purposes. It is occupied not so much with what the saved sinner is made in Christ, but with what Christ is made to be unto him. It is God's point of view rather than man's. Notice how it begins (after the salutation): "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ," and Christ is shown to be the Head of all things, the Head of His Body, the Church. It is not so much the knowledge of ourselves which is the subject here, but the knowledge of God and of His purposes in Christ. Its first great prayer is "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Glorious Father, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the glorious riches [or the rich glory] of His inheritance in the saints. And what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe" (Ephesians 1:17-19). In Romans we have the Gospel: in Ephesians the Mystery. In Romans it is Jew and Gentile sinners individually: in Ephesians it is the Jew and Gentile collectively, made "one new man" -- in Christ (2:15). In Romans the saved sinner is shown as dead and risen with Christ: in Ephesians as seated in the heavenlies in Christ; while in Thessalonians he is seen for ever in glory with Christ. Romans takes up the sinner in his lowest depths of degradation: and Thessalonians leaves him on "the throne of glory" for ever with the Lord: while, midway between, Ephesians views us now by faith as already seated with Him there. Our feet have been taken out of the mire and clay (Romans 1); they are now set upon the rock (Ephesians 1); and presently we shall be upon the throne (I Thessalonians 4). This is the relation which these three Epistles bear to each other. Viewed together, they form the ABC of the Christian faith, as distinct from all else in the whole Bible -- nothing like it is found elsewhere. All the rest is written for us, for our learning. But this is all about us. The course of instruction is complete, and it is perfect. It commences at the lowest point and leaves us at the highest. We cannot proceed further in either direction. It begins with us on "the dunghill," and ends with us on "the throne of glory." It begins with us as "beggars," and ends with us as "beggars." It finds us "poor," and makes us "rich." And having brought us "low," it "lifteth us up" to the highest heaven, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, "for ever with the Lord." The Lord's dealings are thus stated in I Samuel 2:6-8, but how they were to be manifested in the Gospel of His grace is revealed only in these Epistles. And now, having seen the mutual relation of these three Epistles, let us look at the other four. Where are they placed? In our previous chapter we saw that they are placed in two pairs, the first pair coming after Romans, and the second pair after Ephesians. So that there are two Epistles arranged between the three. Now the question is, Why are they so placed? There must be some design in this order; and it is not far to seek. The first pair (Corinthians and Galatians) follow Romans because they exhibit departure from its special teaching. The second pair (Philippians and Colossians) follow Ephesians because they

exhibit departure from its special teaching. So that we have the whole course of church teaching; the complete curriculum of Christian education, set before us as a whole, positively and negatively. In the three (Romans, Ephesians, and Thessalonians), we have "doctrine" and "instruction." In the four (Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians), we have "reproof" and "correction." Here is seen how "profitable" these Epistles are for the perfection (i.e., the complete education) of "the man of God," fitting I him out for every duty and every emergency. But there is a further correspondence between these four Epistles. The first of each pair (Corinthians and Philippians) exhibits practical departure, while the second of each pair (Galatians and Colossians) exhibits doctrinal departure. That is to say, in Corinthians we have practical failure as to the teaching of Romans, while in Philippians we have a failure to exhibit in practical life the teaching of Ephesians as to the unity of the members of Christ's Body. (We shall show this more completely when we come to look at these Epistles separately.) On the other hand, in Galatians we have doctrinal failure as to the teaching of Romans. This is why Galatians and Romans are so much alike, as everyone knows; though, all that most can see in this likeness is that they were "written about the same time"! The real difference is that what is stated as "doctrine" in Romans is repeated as "correction" in Galatians. Romans begins with a declaration of God's Gospel. Galatians begins, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of God unto another [or different] Gospel." So in Colossians we have doctrinal failure as to the teaching of Ephesian truth. (Lightfoot says, "The Epistle to the Ephesians stands to the Epistle to the Colossians in very much the same relation as the Romans to the Galatians. -- [Biblical Essays, p.395.] In Ephesians, Christ is revealed and set forth as "the head of the Body." In Colossians we have the doctrinal evils which come from "not holding the Head" (Colossians 2:19). We may thus exhibit the structure of: The Seven Epistles to the Churches A | Romans. "Doctrine and Instruction." The Gospel of God: never hidden, but "promised afore." God's justification of Jew and Gentile individually -- dead and risen with Christ (1-8). Their relation dispensationally (9-11). The subjective foundation of the mystery. B. | Corinthians. "Reproof." Practical failure to exhibit the teaching of Romans through not seeing their standing as having died and risen with Christ. "Leaven" in practice (I Corinthians 5:6). C. | Galatians. "Correction." Doctrinal failure as to the teaching of Romans. Beginning with the truth of the new nature ("spirit"), they were "soon removed" (1:6), and sought to be made perfect in the old nature ("flesh") (3:3). "Leaven" in doctrine (5:9). A. | Ephesians. "Doctrine and Instruction." The Mystery of God, always hidden, never before revealed. Jews and Gentiles collectively made "one new man" in Christ. Seated in the heavenlies with Christ. B. | Philippians. "Reproof." Practical failure to exhibit the teaching of Ephesians in manifesting "the mind of Christ" as members of the one Body. C. | Colossians. "Correction." Doctrinal failure as to the teaching of Ephesians. Wrong doctrines which come from "not holding the Head" (2:9), and not seeing their completeness and perfection in Christ (2:8-10). A. | Thessalonians. "Doctrine and Instruction." Not only "dead and risen with Christ" (as in Romans); not only seated in the heavenlies with Christ (as in Ephesians); but "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so to be for ever with the Lord." In Romans, justified in Christ; in Ephesians, sanctified in Christ; in Thessalonians, glorified with Christ. No "reproof." No "correction." All praise and thanksgiving. A typical Church. And now we see another reason why

Thessalonians comes last. There are no Epistles beyond this, because there is no higher truth to be taught. The consummation is reached. This is the highest Form in the school of grace, where the Holy Spirit is the great Divine Teacher. "All the truth" culminates here -- the "all truth" into which He was to guide the Church of God. It is led from the depths of degradation (in Romans) to the heights of glory (in Thessalonians), caught up to be for ever with the Lord, and left there in eternal blessing "in," and "with," Christ. This completes the view of the seven Church Epistles as a whole. In our next chapters we will look at each Epistle separately. (1) Exhibiting its structure, (2) showing from that, its special scope and teaching, and (3) giving such details (by translation and comment on special passages) as may be necessary for the education of Christians in the school of grace, so that they may know their proper standing in Christ. It is interesting to note that Lightfoot's classification (Bib. Ess., page 222, etc.) is practically the same, even though he arranges the Epistles chronologically. He puts Thessalonians by themselves, as standing alone and distinguished by their connection with "the Tribunal." He places Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans together, as being all three connected with "the Cross"; while he places Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians together, as being all three connected by their subject matter with "the Throne." It is something to have such testimony as this in a matter so important. It is not affected by the different chronological order. The grouping is exactly the same; we have the same two groups, with Thessalonians standing out alone. This agreement with so thoughtful and learned a teacher will commend what we have written above to the attention of all earnest Biblical students.

The Christian's Standing, Object, and Hope by E.W. Bullinger 1. The Christian's Standing 2. The Christian's Object 3. The Christian's Hope "Brethren, be ye followers together of me" (Philippians 3:17). "Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do" (Philippians 4:9). It is interesting to note the character in which Saint Paul, by the Holy Spirit, speaks to us in the passages quoted. In the Epistles to the Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and I and II Timothy, he calls himself "Apostle". In I and II Thessalonians he uses no term at all in regard to himself. In Philemon, he is "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," and in Philippians, only, "a servant of Jesus Christ."

So that when he writes and speaks here, and says, "be ye followers of me," he speaks not as one endowed with extraordinary gifts, or one privileged to see unspeakable visions, not as a laborious Apostle, nor as a gifted vessel, but as the "Servant of Jesus Christ," the simple Christian. We could not follow him in his labours as an Apostle, in his rapture to the third heaven and Paradise; but we can follow him in his simple Christian character as a servant, and this Epistle where he exhorts us to follow him, is the only Epistle in which he thus describes himself simply as a servant. It is true that in Romans he styles himself a "servant of Jesus Christ," but he adds, "called to be an Apostle"; and in Titus, "a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ." We can follow him when he sets the pattern as he does in I Timothy 1:16. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first, Jesus Christ might, show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." What a pattern! What a hope-inspiring pattern! What an encouraging pattern! What a blessed pattern! What a pattern for poor lost sinners (I Timothy 1:13)! What a pattern for such as have been

"blasphemers, persecutors, injurious"! The Apostle couples himself with another servant of God when he says to Titus (3:3), "We ourselves were sometimes foolish disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." But he touches the lowest depth of all when he says, "Sinners; of whom I am Chief" (I Timothy 1:15). What a pattern for Pharisees, for all who are seeking to be saved by works! He refers to this in Philippians 2:3, where he declares that he has no confidence in the flesh," although possessing all the advantages enumerated in verses 4-6. So that, however far any may go in working out a righteousness of their own, so that they may have confidence in the flesh, they hear a voice from a higher height saying, "I more" (verse 4). No one could excel Saul of Tarsus. Hear him in verses 5, 6. The point here is not about sins as in I Timothy 1, but about his "gains". Hence in verse 7 he is not speaking of his needs as a sinner, but of his advantages as a religious man; it was not that Saul as a sinner needed righteousness, but that Saul as a Pharisee preferred the righteousness of God because it was infinitely better and more glorious than any other. It would be a positive loss for anyone to have a righteousness of his own, seeing God has provided "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith." This brings us to the first of three things which are revealed in this chapter as making the perfect character of a true Christian. They are like the three things of I Thessalonians 1:9,10. 1. The Christian's Standing -- Turning from idols (verse 9) "Found in Him" (Philippians 3:9). This is the Christian's standing. Nothing less, nothing lower, nothing different. Not partly in Christ and partly in a church, but "found in Him." It is in Christ that we must be found, in His righteousness. Like stones in the Temple, hid in Christ. If we are not found in Him, it matters little where else we are. If we are found in Him, it matters little where we are not found. Oh. to be found "in Him," in our own experience! This, then, is the proper Christian standing. See also Galatians 2:15-24. 2. The Christian's Object -- To serve the living and true God (verse 9). "That I may know Him" (Philippians 3:10). Here, again, true Christianity throws us back on Christ, and takes up the thoughts from verse 8. Our object is not this or that church, or this or that work, but Christ Himself in His own glorious Person. As to the natural man, all is different. The ancient philosophy had a motto continually sounding in its ears, "Know thyself." This saying was introduced by Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the wisest of them all. A lawgiver, a great reformer, and a great patriot, 638 years before Christ, Solon gave this as his most precious wisdom. It was carved over all the schools and seats of learning, its letters may be seen to-day carved in the marble ruins of Greece. It was good, so far as man's wisdom went; it was the best that man could do! But oh! how impossible to obey it! It is the one thing man never could do. It is the one thing none of us know." The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" And if we could know ourselves thus, what then? When we came to this knowledge, and saw ourselves and our ruin, would it not end in despair? No, we can only know ourselves by the knowledge of Christ. Christianity came and brought with it a loftier motto, a heavenly wisdom, a Divine truth: "That I may know Him." And why? Because it is only by comparing ourselves with that which is perfect that we can form a true judgment (II Corinthians 10:12). How can we know whether anything measures what it ought to? Only by bringing it to the standard. How can we tell whether a weight is correct? Only by putting it in the balances. How can we tell

whether anything is perfectly upright or perpendicular ? Only by applying a plumbline to it. How can we tell whether anything is perfectly straight or horizontal ? Only by applying a straight edge, or a spirit level to it. We could never tell, though we tried for years, unless we applied the true test. We might think a thing was right measure; we might believe a thing was right weight; but we could not possibly know it. So it is with ourselves. We might study ourselves all our lives, we might compare ourselves with others -- I might fancy I was this, or hope I was that, or believe I was the other, but apart from Christ's perfect standard, I could never know it. Hence we see the highest earthly wisdom is at fault. This was the best it could do, but it was a failure! Not until Christianity came, could a man know himself. Why? Because Christianity is Christ. Tried by other standards we might compare more or less favourably, but tried by Christ, God's standard, tried by Christ, God's glory, there is only one result for all. "All have | sinned, and come short of the Glory of God." That is why we must be "found in Him," not having our own righteousness, but covered over with His righteousness. But the desire of the Apostle here is the object of the Christian, and this is Christ, always CHRIST, only CHRIST. Alas! How many have other objects, how many are occupied with lower objects! Paul's spiritual gain We have considered St. Paul's natural advantages, which he once considered his gains, but which he had learnt to count as loss. We now come to his real spiritual gain. In Philippians 3 we learn what this was, viz., "The power of Christ's resurrection." Paul knew he had died with Christ, and had risen with Christ, but he wanted to know (to get to know) what the power of Christ's resurrection was, what it meant to his own life and service. Too many are occupied with the church and its service; Paul wanted to be occupied with Christ's service, with the things of Christ. Even the Word of God is useless without Christ, for "the letter killeth." The one great reason of the lowness of Christian walk is that the eye is taken off from Christ, and rests on some lower object, either on one's self, or on others, or on one's service. Now Saint Paul's object was one (verse 13). "This one thing I do," whether he was resting or travelling, making tents or planting churches, Christ was his object (verse 10). At home or abroad, by sea or by land, by night or by day, alone or with others, "This one thing I do;" and this, remember, not as the Apostle, not as the enraptured Saint, but as the Servant, the one who addresses us in the words of the passages quoted. Nor should we ever be satisfied with anything lower than this. True, we all fail sadly. Why? Why do we fail in other things ? What were we told when we learned to write? "Look at the copy." The copybook had a line of perfectly-shaped letters printed at the top, we looked at it, and perhaps our first line was fairly well done, but what was our tendency? Each line we looked at the last we had written, instead of looking at the copy, so the writing grew worse and worse. This is our tendency in the spiritual life. We copy one another: we are copies of copies, instead of copies of Christ. No! Christ must be our object, and this includes all else. In this way alone can we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4:10. Christ is our strength as well as our righteousness, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." This being so, it is our adversary's one aim to keep us from Christ. To accomplish this, he will occupy the sinner with his sins; he will occupy the penitent with his repentance; he will occupy the believer with his faith, as though it and not the Object of it were the ground of his salvation. He will occupy the servant with his service; and the saint with his holiness. It matters not what it is, anything can be

used for the same end, and if the end is not gained by one thing it is by another: Christ is shut out of view. How many Christians are taken up with something short of Christ! They are occupied with their holiness instead of with the Holy One; they are occupied with the promises instead of with the Promiser; they are occupied with the blessing instead of with the Blessor. And yet having Him we have everything. The promises of God "in Him are yea and in Him Amen." His holiness is mine. His blessing is mine. The full occupation with a Heavenly Object will alone make us Heavenly without an effort. We have not to try to be this or that: we "beholding ... ARE changed" (II Corinthians 3:18). Nothing else will form our character. It is the object that forms the character; therefore let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:1,2). And now, to help us and make us look to Christ we have a blessed Hope given to us, a hope in Christ. This will ensure our looking to Him. This brings us to the special object of Philippians 3. (See I Thessalonians 1:10, "to wait for His Son from heaven.") 3. The Christian's Hope -- To be like Christ (verses 20,21) "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body " (verses 20, 21). Here our hope is presented in a manner quite as characteristic as our standing and our object. If our standing is to be found in Christ, then our object is to know Christ, and our hope is to be like Christ. Our hope is not the glory of the Kingdom, but "the Saviour"; not the "Restoration of Israel," but Israel's King; and when we see Him, we shall be like Him (I John 3:1,2). That is the hope presented here. Here we have a "body of humiliation," but we shall be changed. There we shall have a body like His own glorious Body -- for we shall be like Him. Here we have a body in which we groan, but we shall be changed. There we shall be free from all sin and sorrow, for we shall be like Him. Here we have a body of suffering and death, but we shall be changed, There we shall have a body of immortality and life, for we shall be like Him. This is our hope. No sooner do we find ourselves in Christ as our righteousness, than we desire to know Him as our Object, and look for Him as our Hope. The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm>

A New Creation

by E.W. Bullinger

The contrasts, old and new 1. The Connection 2. The Character of those spoken of 3. The Condition 4. The Deliverances Enjoyed 5. The Privileges Possessed "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

The Scriptures reveal to us many new things. In Isaiah 42:9, we read: "New things do I declare"; and God goes on to speak of the new song which is to be sung in view of His work for restored Israel. We read in Lamentations 3:22,23, "The Lord's mercies are new every morning." We read in Ezekiel 36:26, of "a new heart and a new spirit." In the text before us we read of the new creature. We read in Ephesians 2:15, of "the one new man"; in Revelation 21 and 22, of "the new heavens and the new earth," also of "the new Jerusalem," and of a

glorious time when it will be said, "Behold, I make all things new." Perhaps the most important of all these wondrous things is that which is spoken of in our text, because without this new creation, none of the other new things can be known or enjoyed. Having this, we have all the others. The contrasts, old and new Let us consider, first of all, the contrasts -- Old and New. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians seems to be an Epistle of contrasts; it abounds in them from beginning to end. Led by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul contrasts, in chapter 1:5, the sufferings which abound in the child of God with the consolations which abound in Christ. At the close of chapter 2, verse 16, we meet with a very solemn contrast, which is seen by the spiritual eye throughout the whole of God's Word. True, the carnal mind objects to, indeed hates, such contrasts between the living and the dead, between the regenerate and the unregenerate; but the Holy Spirit invariably marks these contrasts, and those who are taught by Him see them and love them (see verse 14). Note again, in verse 15, another contrast "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." It is we, not our testimony. The burden of the Word of the Lord showed the Apostle his insufficiency, while at the same time he knew that his sufficiency was of God. The third chapter is full of contrasts; in verse 1 we have man's commendation and God's commendation; in verse 2 and 3, man's writing and the Spirit's writing; in verse 5, man's insufficiency and God's sufficiency; in verse 6 the letter and the spirit; in verses 7-9, condemnation and righteousness. The fourth chapter contains many wonderful contrasts and paradoxes; in verse 8, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair." One may say, "Ah! that is not I"; but look at the margin, "But not altogether without help." Can we not say that? Verse 9: "Cast down, but not destroyed." We do fall, but not from grace, being upheld by "a Loving Omnipotent Hand." At the end of the chapter again we see wonderful contrasts; in verse 16, our outward man perishing, but our inward man renewed day by day; in verse 17 our present light affliction, our future weight of glory; in verse 18, temporal things and eternal things: things seen and things unseen. Each of these leads us to the contemplation of the words of our text. In considering this vast and important subject, note: 1. The Connection "Therefore" (Verse 17). This is the conclusion of the Spirit's argument, or of the truths He had declared for the instruction, the comfort, and the edification of the saints at Corinth, and through them to the Church of God in all succeeding generations. His conclusion is that all old things, even those of Divine appointment, having served their purpose and waxen old, must pass away for ever, as of no value whatever in comparison with the eternal work of the new creation in Christ Jesus. Note next: 2. The Character of those spoken of "If any man be in Christ." Observe, [in the King James Version] there are words in italics which may be differently supplied thus: "If any man in Christ be made a new creature," or a new creation; the R.V. margin gives: "there is a new creation." Now creation is a Divine work, and therefore this excludes all means, all modes, all distinctions. Truth by the Holy Ghost is a great leveller. Turn to Galatians 3:28 and 6:15. The new creation does not consist in an acknowledgement of a form of sound words, or delight in a clear creed, or in prizing the outward so-called means of grace. It is ten thousand times more than these. The cross of Christ is God's monument erected over the grave of all carnal ordinances, all sensuous ceremonies, all fleshly sacrifices, all earthly types, all fleeting shadows. The cross of Christ is God's monument over the grave where He

has buried all human distinctions, all human modes, all human means in matters pertaining to His creation work. IN CHRIST. This is a living union by the Spirit of God. It is not a mere profession of religion; it is not in self-condemnation but in Christ, justified and accepted (Ephesians 1:6). It is not in Adam dead, but in Christ alive (I Corinthians 15:22). In Christ by sovereign purpose; in Christ by sacred purchase; in Christ by spiritual power. Next look at: 3. The Condition "A New Creation." What is it to create ? Not to change, not to renovate, not to reform, not to improve, not the old nature adorned and beautified, not the flesh with its corruptions and lusts trimmed and trained; but it is the new and Divine nature imparted, with all its spiritual blessings and holy privileges. It is not the Old Adam made clean or religious, clothed and adorned. No! It is a something altogether NEW. Therefore, in Christ Jesus I am a partaker of the Divine nature; I am a partaker of His Resurrection-life, according to the Father's promise: "Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). Life was promised in Christ for His people before the world began; and in due time it is communicated to them through the ministry of the Word. How this is brought about, the poor child of God very often, knows not, and when questioned about it, he can only say, like the blind man in John 9:25: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Once I was blind and dead to God's Christ, God's covenant, God's salvation; I was dead to all interest in the precious atoning blood, to justifying righteousness, regenerating grace, and restoring mercy, also to that peace, which passeth all understanding. But now, in living union with Christ, I love to dwell on those glorious verities which are found alone in Him and through Him. I love the company of those who delight in the Father's eternal love, the son's redeeming grace, and the Spirit's regenerating mercy. A new Divine nature (II Peter 1:4) is not a mere influence, is not a mere passing religious feeling induced by ravishing music or pathetic story, but a real existence in living union with a crucified, risen, exalted, glorified, coming Lord. What a glorious union! One with the person of a glorified Christ! No words can describe it better than John 17:21-23: "That they all may be one; as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as We are one. I in Thee, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me" (John 17:22,23). This is a glorious, marvellous, mysterious Oneness, which can never be understood until we stand perfect and complete in the light of His glory. Then we shall know even as we are known, for His Father is our Father; His righteousness is our righteousness; His nature is our nature; His home is our home; His glory is our glory. 4. The Deliverances Enjoyed "Old things are passed away." What are these "old things ? " (1). Blessed be God, that old thing, SIN, which before I was in Christ manifested its power and maintained its authority over me, is gone -- passed away. Do you ask, How did it pass away ? I can answer you only in the words of Isaiah 53:6, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all"; and Hebrews 9:26, "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (2). That old thing, THE CURSE OF THE LAW, has passed away. How? Read Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us. for it is written 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.'" In thus becoming a curse for His people, He became "The end of the law for

righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4). What expressive words! "The end of the law!" What does it mean? Why it means that He went to the end of all the Law's requirements, which He satisfied by the perfect obedience which He rendered to its precepts; that He went to the end of all the Law's penal threatenings which He silenced by the sufferings which He endured. What is the end of a debt? The payment! And Christ took over and paid every debt owed by His people, and thus ended it. Hence every transgression and even sin over which my chastened Spirit has grieved, is passed away! (3). That old thing, CONDEMNATION. All that was due to me was borne by my sinless Surety, by Him who said, when they sought and found Him: "If ye seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:8). Hence: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). (4). That old thing, FEAR OF DEATH, is passed away, for "Jesus Christ... hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel" (II Timothy 1:10). Christ hath abolished death, and brought to light, and procured for us, life and immortality; and "When Christ, who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4). Yes, old things have passed away. My old notions of salvation by merit; by co-operation -- I doing something and Jesus Christ the rest -- all such thoughts have passed away! My old, degrading views of Christ have passed away in the light of His Glorious Gospel, and I see Him "altogether lovely," His salvation perfect, His righteousness complete, His intercession all-prevailing, His glorious coming sure. He is the beginner and the finisher of faith, the performer of all things for me in the presence of His Father and mine. Look now at: 5. The Privileges Possessed "Behold all things are become new." Yes, the man in Christ is a new man, with a new life in a new world. "All things are become new." He has life in Christ, he has immortality in Christ. He has life instead of death, salvation instead of sin, justification instead of condemnation, acceptance instead of banishment, peace instead of enmity. We have new affections, fixed upon things above; new hopes, entering within the veil; a new song put in our mouth; and a new heart with which to praise Him for setting our feet on the Rock of Ages, for ordering our goings, for holding our hand, for guiding our feet into the way of peace. May it be ours to know the blessedness and power of these divinely "new things," and to go on our way rejoicing, while waiting for that great proclamation to go forth -- "Behold I make all things new," and walking in newness of life, to the praise and glory of God. The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

The One Great Subject of the Word

by E.W. Bullinger

The one great subject which runs through the whole Word of God is Christ: the promised seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15. This verse marks the depth of the ruin into which man had descended in the Fall; and it becomes the foundation of the rest of the Bible. All hope of restoration for man and for creation is centred in Christ; who in due time should be born into the world, should suffer and die; and, in resurrection, should become the Head of a new creation, and should finally crush the head of the Old Serpent, who had brought in all the ruin. Christ, therefore, the King, and the Kingdom which He should

eventually set up, become the one great subject which occupies the whole of the Word of God. Hence, He is the key to the Divine revelation in the Word; and apart from Him it cannot be understood.

The contents of the Bible must therefore be seen and arranged with reference to Him. The counsels and purposes of God are all centred in Christ. In the Old Testament we have the King and the Kingdom in Promise and Prophecy, Illustration and Type. In the Four Gospels we have the King and the Kingdom presented and proclaimed by John the Baptist, and by Christ Himself. And we see the Kingdom rejected, and the King crucified. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the Transition from the Kingdom to the Church. The Kingdom is once again offered to Israel by Peter; again it is rejected, Stephen is stoned, and Peter imprisoned (ch. 12.). Then Paul, who had been already chosen and called (ch. 9.), is commissioned for His Ministry (ch. 13.), and on the final rejection of his testimony concerning the Kingdom, he pronounces for the third and last time the sentence of judicial blindness in Isaiah 6, and declares that "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles" (Acts 28:25-28). In his final communication to Hebrew believers it is written that while in God's counsels all things had been put under Christ's feet, "we see NOT YET all things put under Him" (Heb. 2:7-9). The Kingdom thenceforth is in abeyance. In the Epistles we have the King exalted, and (while the Kingdom is in abeyance) made the Head over all things to the Church, during this present Interval; the Dispensation of the grace of God. In the Apocalypse we have the Revelation of the King in judgment; and we see the Kingdom set up, the King enthroned in power and glory, the promise fulfilled, and prophecy ended. We may exhibit the above to the eye in the following Structure: The one Subject of the Word as a Whole. A. The King and the Kingdom in Promise and Prophecy. (The Old Testament.) B. The King presented, proclaimed, and rejected. The Mysteries (or Secrets) of the Kingdom revealed. Matt. 13:11, 34, 35. (The Four Gospels.) C. Transitional (The Acts). The Kingdom again offered and rejected. The Mystery of the Church made known. The Kingdom in abeyance (Heb. 2:8). B. The King exalted and made Head over all things to the Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22, 23). The Great Mystery completed (The Epistles). A. The King and the Kingdom unveiled. The King enthroned, and the Kingdom set up with Divine judgment, power, and glory (Rev. 19, 20). Promise and prophecy fulfilled (The Apocalypse). Here the correspondence is seen between these five members. In A and A we have the King and the Kingdom. In B and B we have the King and the mysteries (or secrets) of the Kingdom (Matt. 13). In C, the central member, we have the present Interval, while the King is absent, the Holy Spirit present, and the Kingdom in abeyance, and the mystery of the Church revealed (Eph. 3). From the Structure it will be seen that the great subject of the whole Book is one. From Gen. 3:15 to Rev. 22., "THE COMING ONE" fills our vision. This teaches us that the Coming of Christ is no newly invented subject of some modern faddists or fanatics, or cranks; but that Christ's coming has always been the Hope of His people. In "the fulness of time" He came: but having been rejected and slain He rose from the dead, and ascended to Heaven. There He is "seated" and "henceforth expecting until His enemies shall be placed as a footstool for His feet" (Heb. 10:13). Hence, Christ, "the Coming One," is the one all-pervading subject of the Word of God as a whole. He is the pneuma or life-giving spirit of the written Word, without which the latter is dead. "As the body without the pneuma is dead" (Jas. 2:26), so the

written Word without the pneuma is dead also. Christ is that pneuma or spirit. This is the whole argument of II Cor. 3. This is why the Lord Jesus could say of the Scriptures: "They testify of ME" (John 1:45; 5:39; Luke 24:44, 45). Their one great design is to tell of the Coming One. All else is subordinated to this. This is why we see the ordinary events in a household combining with the grandest visions of a prophet to testify of Him who fills all Scripture. It may be said of the written Word, as it is of the New Jerusalem, "The Lamb is the light thereof " (Rev. 21:23). Apart from Him, the natural eye of man sees only outward historical details and circumstances; some in themselves appearing to him trifling, others offensive, and pursued at a length which seems disproportionate to the whole; while things which "angels desire to look into" are passed over in a few words, or in silence. But once let "the spiritual mind" see Christ testified of "in Moses and all the prophets," then all assumes a new aspect: trifles that seem hardly worth recording fill the whole vision and light up the written Word and make it to shine with the glory of the Divine presence. Then we see why the Inspired writer dwells on a matter which to the outward eye seems trivial compared with other things which we may deem to be of world-wide importance. Then we observe in an event, seemingly casual and unimportant, something which tells forth the plans and counsels of God, by which He is shaping everything to His own ends. Nothing appears to us then either great or small. All is seen to be Divine when the Coming One is recognized as the one subject of the Word of God. This is the master-key of the Scriptures of truth. "These are they that testify of ME." Bearing this key in our hand we can unlock the precious treasures of the Word; and understand words, and hints; apparently casual expressions, circumstances, and events, which in themselves, and apart from Him, are meaningless. It is the use of this master-key and this first great foundation principle which is to be observed in the study of the "Word" and "words" of God. It is when we, in every part, have found "HIM of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write" (John 1:45), that we can understand those parts of Scripture which are "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence" to many; that we can explain much that is otherwise difficult; see clearly much that before was obscure; answer objections that are brought against the Word; and "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The moment this master-key is used types will be seen foreshadowing the Coming King, and showing forth His sufferings and His Glory. Events and circumstances will show forth His wondrous deeds and tell of the coming glory of His kingdom. The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

Right Division

by E.W. Bullinger

The one great requirement of the Word is grounded on the fact that it is "the Word of truth." And this fact is so stated as to imply that, unless the Word is thus rightly divided we shall not get "truth"; and that we shall get its truth only in proportion to the measure in which we divide it rightly. The Requirement is thus stated in II Tim. 2:15: "Give diligence to present thyself approved to God, a workman having no cause to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth."

The word in question here orthotomounta. As this word occurs in no Greek writer, or even elsewhere in the New Testament, we can get little or no help from outside, and are confined to Biblical usage. It is used twice in the Septuagint for the Hebrew vashar, to be right, or straight. In Prov. 3:6; 11:5, the Hebrew is Piel ,to make right (as in II Chron. 23:30; Prov. 15:21; Isa. 40:3; 45:2,13). But it is the Greek word that we have to do with here, in II Tim. 2:15; and we cannot get away from the fact that temno means to cut; or, from the fact that we cannot cut without dividing. To divide belongs to the very nature of the act of cutting. Even as applied to directing one's way it implies that we divide off one way from others -- because we desire to follow the right way and avoid the wrong. The only Biblical guide we have to the usage of the word is in Prov. 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge him And he shall direct thy paths." In the margin the R.V. gives, "make straight or plain" as an alternative rendering for "direct." But our ways can only be made straight or plain by God's causing us to proceed on our Way aright -- i.e., by avoiding all the ways that are wrong, and going in the one way that is right; in other words, the right way is divided off from all the wrong ways. What else can the word mean in II Tim. 2:15? It matters little what others have thought or said. We could fill a page with their names and their views, but we should learn but little and only become confused. The duties of Priests, Furriers, and Ploughmen have been referred to as indicating the correct meaning. But we need not leave the Biblical usage, which associates the word with guidance in the right way. The scope of the verse plainly teaches that: Our one great study is to seek God's approval, and not man's. We are to show all diligence in pursuing this study. As workmen, our aim is to have no cause to be ashamed of our work. In order to gain God's approval and avert our own shame we must rightly divide the word of truth. To do this we must direct our studies in the right way. This great requirement is associated with the Word in its special character as being the Word of truth; i.e., "the true Word." All this tells us that we shall not get the truth if we do not thus rightly divide it; and that we shall get the truth only in proportion to our "rightly dividing" it. Other titles of the Word have their own special requirements. As "the engrafted Word" it must be received with meekness (Jas. 1:21). As "the Faithful Word" we must hold it fast (Tit. 1:9). As "the Word of life" we must hold it forth (Phil. 2:16). But, because this is "the Word of truth," its paths must be well noted, the sign-posts must be observed, the directions and guides which are in the Word itself must be followed. We are to "give diligence" to this great Requirement of the Word just because it is "the Word of truth." Rightly dividing the Word as to its Subject Matter It is the common belief that every part of the Bible is to be interpreted directly as referring to the Church of God; or as pertaining to every person, at every stage of the world's history. This neglect of the precept to rightly divide it is an effectual bar to the right understanding of it, and to our enjoyment in its study. This non-understanding of the Word is the explanation of its neglect, and this neglect is the reason why so many who should be feeding on the spiritual food of the Word are so ill-fed in themselves; and so ill-furnished for every good work (II Tim. 3:17). While the Word of God is written for all persons, and for all time, yet it is as true that not every part of it is addressed to all persons or about all persons in all time. Three distinct classes of persons Every word is "written for our learning," and contains what all ought to know: yet, its subject-matter is written according to the principle involved in I Cor. 10:32,

and is written concerning one or other of three distinct classes of persons: "The Jews, The Gentiles, and The Church of God." According to the general belief, everything that goes to make up the subject-matter of the Word of God is about only one of these three: and, whatever may be said about the other two (the Jews and the Gentiles), all is to be interpreted of only the one, viz., the Church of God. This comes of that inbred selfishness which pertains to human nature: which, doing with this as with all beside, is ever ready to appropriate that which belongs to others. But no greater impediment to a right understanding of the Word could possibly be devised. We are quite aware that, in saying this, we lay ourselves open to the charge which has been made by some, that we are "robbing them of their Bible." But the charge is groundless; and it arises from a total misapprehension of what we mean, or from a perversion of what we have said. It is necessary, therefore, for us to repeat, and to state categorically our belief that every word from Genesis to Revelation is written for the Church of God. There is not one word that we can do without: not one word that we can dispense with, without loss. We deprive no one of any portion of the Word of Truth. We protest against robbery in this sphere, as in all others. It is not we who rob the Church of God; but it is they who rob the Jews and the Gentiles. We would fain restore stolen property to the rightful owners; property which has been stolen by the very persons who charge us with robbery! We may indeed retort in the words of Rom. 2:21: "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, Dost thou steal? " We are prepared to make this counter-charge, and to sustain it. The charge against us we disclaim; while those who make it are themselves guilty of the very offence for which they condemn us. We hold that what is written to and about the Jew, belongs to and must be interpreted of the Jew. We hold that what is written of and about the Gentile; belongs to and must be interpreted of the Gentile. We hold that what is written to and about the Church of God, belongs to and must be interpreted of the Church of God. Is this robbery? or, Is it justice? Is it stealing? or, Is it restitution? Evidence of the misappropriation (to use a milder term) is furnished by the Bible which lies open before us. In speaking of the page-headings of Isa. 29 and 30, in our current editions of the English Bibles (KJV), in which the former is declared to be " Judgment upon Jerusalem"; and the latter, "God's mercies to his church." . What is this but not only wrongly dividing the Word of truth, but the introduction of error, by robbing Jerusalem of her promised "mercies" and appropriating these stolen mercies to the Church? while the "judgments" are left for Jerusalem, just as burglars take away what is portable, and leave behind what they do not want or cannot carry away. We believe God when He says that the Visions shown to Isaiah were "concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (Isa. 1:1). True, they were written for us; and "for our learning " (Rom. 15:4); but they are not addressed to us, or written concerning us, but "concerning Judah and Jerusalem." It would be an act of dishonesty, therefore, for us thus to appropriate, by interpreting of ourselves, that which was spoken of Israel. In like manner, if we take, as some do, the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians as though they were written to or concerning the Gentiles (or the unconverted world), then we not only rob the Church of God of its most precious heritage, but we teach the "Universal Fatherhood of God" instead of His Fatherhood of only those who are His children in Christ Jesus. It will thus be seen that unless we rightly divide the subject-matter of the Word of truth we shall not get the truth, but shall get error instead. Every part of the Bible is written "concerning" one or other of these three divisions, or classes

of persons. Sometimes in the same passage or book there may be that which is concerning all three. Sometimes a whole book may be concerning only one of these three, and the other two be altogether excluded. We may all three learn much from what is written of only the one; for the inspired, God-breathed Word is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction," for all who shall read it (II Tim. 3:16). That which happened to Israel happened unto them for ensamples; "and they are written for our admonition " (1 Cor. 10:11). "Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). But while this is so, and remains true; what we mean is that every Scripture is written concerning one or other of these three classes; and is especially addressed to that particular class. This class has therefore the prior claim to that Scripture. The interpretation of it belongs to that class; while the other two may apply it to themselves, and are to learn from it. But, inasmuch as it is only an application and not the interpretation, such application must be made only so far as it agrees with the interpretation of those Scriptures which are specially addressed to and relate to such class. Otherwise we shall find ourselves using one truth to upset another truth; we shall be setting what is true of one class in opposition to what is true of another class. All that we are concerned with now is the right dividing of the subject-matter of the Bible, which is three-fold. And the great requirement of the Word as to this is, that we should, and must, whenever we study any portion of the Word of God, ask the question, "Concerning whom is this written?" Whichever of the three it may be, we must be careful to confine and limit the interpretation of that passage to the class whom it concerns; while we may make any application of it to ourselves so long as it does not conflict with what is written elsewhere concerning "the church of God." We must not take that which concerns the Jew and interpret it of the Church. We must not take that which concerns the Church and interpret it of the world. We must not take what is said concerning the Gentile and interpret it of the Church. If we do, we shall get darkness instead of light, confusion instead of instruction, trouble instead of peace, and error instead of truth. The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

Christ In The Separate Books Of The Word

by E.W. Bullinger

In GENESIS we shall understand the record of Creation (ch. i.), for we shall see in it the counterpart of our new creation in Christ Jesus (II Cor. v. 17).

In the light which shined out of darkness (Gen. i. 2, 3) we shall see the light which has shone "in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (or person) of Jesus Christ" (II Cor. iv. 6). No wonder that those who know nothing of this spiritual light of the New Creation know nothing of the light that was created on the first day as revealed in the record of the old creation.1 The natural man sees only a myth and an old wives' fable in the Creation record, and seems actually to prefer the Babylonian corruption of primitive truth. These "other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of

their heart" (Eph. iv. 17,18). Woe be to those who follow these blind leaders, for "they shall both fall into the ditch" they have prepared for themselves by their fleshly knowledge and worldly wisdom.

In the Creator we shall see Christ (John i. 3. Col. i. 16).

In the first Adam we shall see the last Adam (I Cor. xv. 45. Rom. v. 14). In the first man we shall see "the second man, the Lord, from heaven" (I Cor. xv. 47).

In the "seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15) we shall see the coming son of Abraham, the son of David, the Son of man, the Son of God; while those who are in the black darkness of Rome see either a helpless Infant, or a dead man, and a living woman - the Virgin Mary; having corrupted their Authorized Vulgate Version (in Gen. iii, 15),¹ to make it the foundation of this blasphemy.

In Abraham's shield we shall see the Living Word, coming, speaking, and revealing Himself to him (ch. xv. i. John viii. 56).

In Isaac we shall see Christ the true seed of Abraham (Rom. ix. 7. Gal. iii. 16). In the Annunciation to the Mother (Gen. xviii. 10. Luke i. 30-33), the miraculous conception (Gen. xviii. 14. Luke i. 35) and the pre-natal naming (Gen. xvii. 19. Matt. i. 21. Luke i. 31; ii. 21). In the projected death of the one we see the foreshadowing of the other, two thousand years before, and on the same mountain, Moriah; and this Mount, selected not by chance, or for convenience (for it was three days journey), but appointed in the Divine counsels as the site of the future altar of burnt offering (Gen. xxii. 2. I Chron. xxi. 28-xxii. 1. 2 Chron. iii. 1). In the wood laid upon Isaac (Gen. xxii. 6), and not carried by the servants or on the ass, we shall see Him who was led forth bearing His Cross (John xix. 17).

In Joseph, of whom the question was asked, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us?" we see Him of whom His brethren afterwards said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14). But we see the sufferings of the one followed by the glory, as we shall surely see the glory of the true Joseph following His sufferings in the fulness of time (1 Pet. i. 11), of which glory we shall be the witnesses, and partakers (1 Pet. iv. 13; v. 1).

We must not pursue this great subject or principle in its further details, though we have but touched the fringe of it, even in the book of Genesis. As the Lord Jesus began at Moses so have we only made a beginning, and must leave our readers to follow where we have pointed out the way.

It may be well, however, for us to indicate one or two of the leading points of the other books of the Old Testament.

EXODUS tells of the sufferings and the glory of Moses, as Genesis does of Joseph, and in both we see a type of the sufferings and glory of Christ.

Joseph's sufferings began with his rejection, his own brethren asking, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" (Gen. xxxvii. 8). Moses' sufferings began with his rejection and the question of "two men of the Hebrews," - "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" (Exod. ii. 14). In all this we see the rejection of Christ by a similar question, the thought of their hearts being put into their lips, in the parable, where "his citizens hated Him and sent a message after Him saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us'" (Luke xix. 11).

But the issue in all three cases is the same. Of each it is true, as it is said of Moses, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made thee a ruler and a deliverer?' The same did God send to be a ruler

and a judge by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush (Acts vii. 35).

Even so will God surely "send Jesus Christ whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii. 20, 21).

Thus early, in Genesis and Exodus, we have the great subject of the sufferings and the glory of Christ more than foreshadowed (1 Pet. i. 11; iv. 13; v. 1. Luke xxiv. 26).

Exodus tells us also of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb (I Cor. v. 7, 8); as the true Priest (Exod. xxx. 10. Heb. v. 4, 5); and the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not men (Heb. ix).

LEVITICUS gives us, in the offerings, a fourfold view of the Death of Christ (the Sin and Trespass Offerings being reckoned as one), as the Gospels give us a fourfold view of His life.

NUMBERS foreshadows the Son of Man come to be lifted up" (ch. xxi. 9. John iii. 14, 15); the Rock (ch. xx. 11. I Cor. x. 4); the Manna that fed them (ch. xi. 7-9. Deut. viii. 2, 3. John vi. 57, 58); and the future Star that should arise "out of Jacob" (ch. xxiv. 17. Luke i. 78. II Pet. i. 19. Rev. ii. 28; xxii. 16).

DEUTERONOMY reveals the coining Prophet "like unto Moses" (ch. xviii. 15. Acts vii. 23-26); the Rock and Refuge of His people (chs. xxxii. 4; xxxiii. 27).

JOSHUA tells of "the Captain of the Lord's host" (ch. v. 13-15. Heb. ii. 10; xii. 2) who shall triumph over all His foes; while Rahab's scarlet cord (ch. ii. 12-20) tells of His sufferings and precious blood which will shelter and preserve His people in the coming day of His war.

JUDGES tells of the Covenant Angel whose name is "Secret," i.e. "Wonderful" (ch. xiii. 18, margin; compare Isa. ix. 6, where the word is the same).

RUTH reveals the type of our Kinsman-Redeemer, the true Boaz; and the question of ch. ii. 10 is answered in Prov. xi. 15.

SAMUEL reveals the "sufferings" and rejection of David, who became a "Saviour" and a "Captain" of his followers (I Sam. xxii. 1, 2), foreshadowing David's Son and David's Lord, "the Root and the Offspring of David" (Rev. xxii. 16).

KINGS shows us the "glory which should follow," and the "greater than Solomon" (Matt. xii. 42); the "greater than the Temple" (Matt. xii. 6), where everything speaks of His glory (Ps. xxix. 9 and margin).

CHRONICLES reveals Christ as "the King's Son," rescued "from among the dead," hidden in the House of God, to be manifested in due time, "as Jehovah hath said" (II Chron. xxii. 10--xxiii. 3).

EZRA speaks of "a nail in a sure place" (ch. ix. 8), which according to Isa. xxii. 23 is used of Eliakim, who typifies Christ.

NEHEMIAH tells of the "bread from Heaven" and "water out of the Rock" (ch. ix. 15, 20), which are elsewhere used as typical of Christ (John vi. 57, 58. I Cor. x. 4).

ESTHER sees the seed preserved which should in the fulness of time be born into the world. His name is there, though concealed,² but His will and power is manifested in defeating all enemies in spite of the unalterable law of the Medes and Persians.

JOB reveals Him as his "Daysman" or "Mediator" (ch. ix. 33); and as his "Redeemer" coming again to the earth (ch. xix. 25-27).

THE PSALMS are full of Christ. We see His humiliation and sufferings and death (Ps. xxii.), His Resurrection (Ps. xvi.), His anointing as Prophet with grace-filled lips (Ps. xlv. Luke iv. 22); as

Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. ex. Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21); as King enthroned over all (Ps. ii.), and His kingdom established in the earth (Ps. ciii.; cxlv., & c.).

PROVERBS reveals Christ as the "Wisdom of God" (ch. viii. I Cor. i. 24); the "Path" and "Light" of His People (ch. iv. 18); the "Surety" who smarted for His people while strangers (ch. xi. 15. Rom. v. 8-10. Eph. ii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 11); the "strong tower" into which the righteous run and are safe (ch. xviii. 10); the friend who loveth at all times, and the brother born for adversity (ch. xvii. 17).

ECCLESIASTES tells of the "one among a thousand in the midst of all that is vanity and vexation of spirit" (ch. vii. 28).

THE SONG OF SONGS reveals Him as the true and faithful Shepherd, Lover, and Bridegroom of the Bride, who remained constant to Him in spite of all the royal grandeur and coarser blandishments of Solomon.

ISAIAH is full of the sufferings and glories of Christ. He is the "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (ch. liii. 5); wounded for our transgressions, oppressed, afflicted, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter; cut off out of the land of the living (ch. liii. 2-9). Yet the glory shall follow. "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied" (ch. liii. 11). He will be His people's "Light" (ch. lx. 1, 2. Matt. iv. 16); "The Mighty God" (ch. ix. 6. Matt. xxviii. 18); Salvation's Well (ch. xii. 3); the King who shall "reign in righteousness" (ch. xxxii. 1, 2); Jehovah's Branch, beautiful and glorious (ch. iv. 2).

JEREMIAH tells of "the Righteous Branch," and "Jehovah our Righteousness" (ch. xxiii. 5, 6); of the "Righteous Branch" and King who shall reign and prosper (ch. xxxiii. 15).

EZEKIEL reveals Him as the true Shepherd (ch. xxxiv. 23), and as "the Prince" (ch. xxxvii. 25); the "Plant of Renown" (ch. xxxiv. 29), and "Jehovah Shammah" (ch. xlvi. 35).

DANIEL reveals Him as the "Stone" become the Head of the corner (ch. ii. 34. Ps. cxviii. 22. Isa. viii. 14. xxviii. 16. Matt. xxi. 42, 44. Acts iv. It. I Pet. ii. 4, 6). Also as the Son of Man (ch. vii. 13, 16); and "Messiah the Prince" (ch. ix. 24).

He is HOSEA'S true David (iii. 5), the Son out of Egypt (xi. 1);

JOEL'S "God dwelling in Zion" (ch. iii. 17);

AMOS'S Raiser of David's Tabernacle (ch. ix. 11; Acts xv. 16, 17);

OBADIAH'S "Deliverer on Mount Zion" (v. 17);

JONAH'S "Salvation" (ch. ii. 9); the "Sign" of Christ's resurrection (Matt. xii. 39-41);

MICAH'S "Breaker," "King" and "Lord" (ch. ii. 13; v. 2, 5);

NAHUM'S "Stronghold in Trouble" (ch. i. 7);,

HABAKKUK'S "Joy" and "Confidence" (ch. iii. 17, 18);

ZEPHANIAH'S "Mighty God in the midst of Zion" (ch. iii. 17);

HAGGAI'S "Desire of all nations" (ch. ii. 7);

ZECHARIAH'S Smitten Shepherd; The Man, Jehovah's Fellow (ch. xiii. 7); Jehovah's "Servant-the Branch" (ch. iii. 8); "the Man whose name is the Branch" (ch. vi. 12);

MALACHI'S "Messenger of the Covenant" (ch. iii. 1); the Refiner of the Sons of Levi (ch. iii. 3); "The Sun of Righteousness" (ch. iv. 2).

Thus, the "Word" of God has one great subject.

That one great all-pervading subject is Christ; and all else stands in relation to Him. He is "the beginning and the ending" of Scripture, as of all beside.

Hence, the Word of God, at its ending, shows how the beginning all works out; and how, that to which we are introduced in Genesis is completed in Revelation.

Satan's first rebellion is implied between the first and second verses of the first chapter of Genesis, and his final rebellion is seen in Rev. xx. 7-9. His doom is pronounced in Gen. iii. 15, and is accomplished in Rev. xx. 10.

We have the primal Creation, "the world that then was," in Gen. i. 1 (II Pet. iii. 6). "The Heavens and the Earth which are now" in Gen. i. 2, etc. (2 Pet. iii. 7). And "The New Heavens and the New Earth" in Rev. xxi. 1 (2 Pet. iii. 13).

We have "night" in Gen. i. 1; and see "no night there" in Rev. xxii. 5.

We have the "sea" in Gen. i. 10; and "no more sea" in Rev. xxi. 1.

We have the "sun and moon" in Gen. i. 16, 17; and "no need of the sun or the moon" in Rev. xxi. 23; xxii. 5.

We have the entrance of sorrow and suffering and death in Gen. iii. 16, 17; and "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying" in Rev. xxi. 4.

We have the "curse" pronounced in Gen. iii. 17; and "no more curse" in Rev. xxii. 3.

We have banishment from Paradise and the Tree of Life in Gen. iii. 22-24; and the welcome back and "right to it" in Rev. xxii. 2.

This will be sufficient³ to show the unity of the "Word" as a whole; and to stimulate Bible students to a further study of it on the line of this great fundamental principle.

Footnotes:

1. Though the recent discovery of Radium is beginning to open our eyes and show how light can exist without the sun.
2. Where the Hebrew masculine is misrepresented as feminine, and is thus made, as Dr. Pusey has said, the foundation of Mariolatry, and the basis of the Immaculate Conception.
3. See The Name of Jehovah in the Book of Esther, in Four Acrostics, by the same author.
4. More instances will be found in The Apocalypse, or, the Day of the Lord, republished as Commentary on Revelation, by Kregel Publications, pp. 58, 59.

The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/>.

The Names of Jesus

by E.W. Bullinger

"Jesus" "Christ" "Lord" "Jesus Christ" "Christ Jesus" "Son of Man" "Son of God" So little attention has been paid to these titles of the Lord Jesus Christ, that few imagine there is any significance in their choice or order. But enough has already been said to convince us of the importance of accuracy in noticing and studying every detail. So numerous are these variations, that in Paul's epistles alone there are seventeen different combinations of the words "Lord", "Jesus" and "Christ". This includes the article, and in three cases the word "our". Unless these words are used at random, there must be a reason why, if certain words are used, no other words would have answered the same purpose. For example, if it says "Jesus Christ" we must believe that

"Christ Jesus" would not have been appropriate. Whether we may ever discover a reason, or whether the reason I now submit may be the right one, does not alter the fact.

I was led to the conclusion at which I have arrived from the circumstances of counting the number of occurrences of each name and the various combinations. When I discovered that the Resurrection was the great line of demarcation, the reason was not far to seek. When I found that in the Gospels "Jesus" occurs alone 612 times, and in the other books only 71 times (out of which 38 are in the transitional book of the Acts); while in all the four Gospels "Christ" occurs alone only 56 times, and in the other books 256 times, the reason was clear. But let us look at the names in order: "Jesus" "Iesous". It means not merely "a saviour" because there is another word for that. It means really Jehovah our Saviour. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). It was therefore, the name of His earthly life, and was associated with Him as the sin-bearer, the sufferer, the man of sorrows. It was the name of His humiliation and shame. It was the name under which He was crucified. "This is Jesus" was the inscription on the Cross. Notice then, that though it occurs alone some 683 times, it never occurs with an adjective. Let us learn to observe accurately what is omitted as well as what is written, and never say with sentimental Christians "blessed Jesus", "dear Jesus", "sweet Jesus". Nothing can add to the perfection of His person, His works or His ways; He needs no adjective to set Him forth. Let us also be accurate in our use of scripture expressions. If we were all more careful in this matter, there would not be so many and great differences between us. Again, the expression "in Jesus" is not a scriptural expression. It does occur once in the English version in I Thessalonians 4:14, but following the Greek, this should read "by" or "through Jesus." "Yours in Jesus" is written in epistolary correspondence because the writers have not noticed that we are never said to be "in Jesus": but, as we shall presently see, we are always said to be "in Christ". Jesus was His earthly name; and suffering, sorrow, and death were His earthly lot. But God raised Him from the dead, and then all was changed. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). God has now ordained that the scene of His suffering shall be the scene of His glory, and "that at the name of Jesus (not the Lord or Christ) every knee shall bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10,11). Whenever, therefore, you meet with the word "Jesus" alone, it bids you think of "the man of sorrows" who humbled Himself to death for you. "Christ" "Christos". This word means "anointed". It speaks of Him as the Anointed One. Anointed and appointed to carry out the gracious covenant of Jehovah as the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. As I have said, it occurs only about 56 times in the four Gospels, and then it is generally with the article, the Christ, His official title. The Christ who came unto His own, and was set for the blessing of Israel. But Israel knew not the day of their gracious visitation. They saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. But now, as raised from the dead, He is made the Head of His body -- the church, anointed for blessing to His people. In the other books therefore, we have this title 256 times, setting Him forth as the risen and glorified One, defining the believer's position as justified and accepted in Him. And hence, believers are always said to be "in Christ", quickened with Him, raised with Him, sitting together in the

heavenlies with Him, blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. We connect our position with Him as Christ, but we connect our responsibility to Him as -- "Lord" "Kurios". This title, according to its meaning, sets Him forth as the One who owns, and therefore as one having power and authority. Whenever we find this title, this is the thought connected with it. It is a title connected with the privileges and responsibilities of our position and standing "IN Christ". All the various conditions of life are associated with Him as "Lord" -- Marriage: "Marry only in the Lord" not merely "in Christ". That would mean you must marry only a Christian, but this means more, -- not only that you are to marry a Christian, but, in doing so, you are to say "If the Lord will": you are to recognize His authority, whom you are to acknowledge in all your ways. Wives: "As it is fit in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18). Children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" (Ephesians 4:1). Servants: "Do it heartily as to the Lord" (Colossians 3:23). Believers: It is "the Lord's supper", "the cup of the Lord", "the body and blood of the Lord", "the Lord's table" (1 Corinthians 11). He, therefore, has a right to command, and say "Do this in remembrance of me". Unbelievers: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost". He may say He is Jesus or Christ, but to say that He is "Lord" is to take Him for our Master as well as our Saviour, it is to bow our wills to His, and take His yoke upon us. That is the work of the Holy Ghost. "Jesus Christ" When we have this combination, the emphasis is on the first word, and our thoughts are conveyed from what He was to what He is, from His humiliation to His exaltation. You may translate it in your own minds as you read, "The humbled one who is now exalted" or "The suffering one who is now glorified". In every instance you will find the most remarkable accuracy. "Christ Jesus" "Christ Jesus" conveys just the opposite thought. The glorified one who was once humbled. The exalted one who once suffered and died. I must not stop to give you many examples. The whole New Testament is one vast example. You will not find however, each passage equally clear. Sometimes you will see it at once, and it will give you the thought of the context; at another time, the context will tell you why the titles are used in a particular order. Look at Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". Why "Christ Jesus"? Why not "Jesus Christ"? Because the thought of the context is -- from what He was to what He is. The next verse explains, "Who being in the form of God... made Himself of no reputation". Philippians 1:1,2: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of JESUS CHRIST, to all the saints IN CHRIST JESUS... Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST". Here the Apostles were servants of Jesus (now exalted) servants of the One who sent them forth even as He was Himself sent forth, as a servant: but they wrote to the saints who were "in Christ" (once humbled) and they prayed that, as Lord and Master He would send forth to them grace and peace. "Son of Man" This title sets Him forth in His human nature, as the "second man", and as the "last Adam". "Son of God" This title reveals Him in His divine nature, and in His relation to God. Hence, in Him all who believe are "called the sons of God". There is an important difference to be observed in the use and choice of these names. Sometimes they occur in close proximity. Notably in John 5:25. The hour is coming "when the dead shall hear the voice of the SON OF GOD and they that hear shall live". It is as Son of God that He is the quickener of the dead, as is explained in the next verse: "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also,

because He is the SON OF MAN". It is as Son of Man that He will judge, as it is written: "God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by THAT MAN whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). In conclusion, let me exhort you to be accurate, not merely in your reading and in your study of the Bible, but in your quotation and interpretation of it. Do not sit down to interpret it, but sit down before it that it may interpret to you the will and purposes of God. It is too often assumed that God never means exactly what He says; and persons go to His word not simply to learn what He says, but to tell us what He means, which is very often something quite different. But may we not ask: If the Holy Ghost meant just that, why did He not say just that? For example, if He says Jerusalem or Zion, why must we suppose that He meant the church? If He says Euphrates, why are we to assume that He meant to say Turkey? The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm>

Stablished -- Strengthened -- Settled

by Dr. E.W. Bullinger

The God of all grace His effectual calling The necessary suffering
The certain blessing "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His
eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that we have suffered awhile,
make you perfect. stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and
dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (I Peter 5:10,11).

These words contain a prayer for a very special blessing. But in order to obtain it we are cast upon the God of all grace -- God, who performeth all things for us. Thus we have in this verse four things: (1) The God of all grace. (2) His effectual calling. (3) The necessary suffering. (4) The certain blessing. 1. The God of all grace We must not dwell on the first of these (if we are to consider the others), for it is a subject in itself -- a vast subject. For we are lost in wonder, love, and praise, the moment we enter upon the consideration of "the God of all grace," and survey His sovereign grace, His redeeming, grace, His saving grace, His justifying grace, His providing grace, His abounding grace, His exceeding grace: and all this uninfluenced grace, invincible grace, inexhaustible and immutable grace. What grace! All treasured up in Jesus Christ who is "full of grace," and He alone. It can never be said of any mortal as it is said of Mary, "Hail, Mary, full of grace!" in perversion of Luke 1:28, in all the Romish versions. No! all grace is treasured up for us in Christ, and He holds it at His own disposal. Let us pass on to the second point. 2. His effectual calling "Who hath called us unto His eternal glory," not, who is calling us, not, who may call us, but "who hath called us," a past, completed act, and that not to a temporal glory, nor to a fleeting transient glory, but to a glory which knew no beginning and can know no end. If He has called us, it is to His eternal glory. If He has called us, we shall have experienced our inability to obey. That is why it is here, "The God of all grace." When God commands, the first thing we do is to discover our inability to obey; it is this which fills us with anxiety to be saved. When He calls, we immediately discover that we are like Mephibosheth in II Samuel 9. We are at Lo-Debar, a "place of no pasture." We have nothing

really to sustain us, we are clothed in filthy garments, we are not worthy to come into the King's presence, not meet to sit at the King's table, and, moreover, "lame on both feet" (verse 13). When King David called Mephibosheth, how could he obey? But David called him not for his own sake. He said, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (verse 1). "Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy Father's sake" (verse 7). Still, how could he obey, being lame on his feet? We learn in verse 15, only by being sent for, fetched and carried. And so with us. The Lord Himself must be the carrier, the sender, the fetcher, or the appointer of those who shall do so. Like the man sick of the palsy; he was carried to the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is written, "Jesus seeing their faith." Why is it that we immediately and universally think of the four and not of the five. Why do we exclude the man himself? Had he no faith, no desire? How do we know but that it was he who urged his friends to carry him? It is only our own perversity that thus limits God's grace. Yes, and "When Jesus saw their faith" He saw the desire of His own heart, the work of His own hands. Where there is the Master's gracious call, there will also be His careful carrying. "Who hath called us unto His eternal glory?" How does He call? By Jesus Christ, it says. Yes, it is all by Christ, with Christ, through Christ, in Christ. Called by Christ to the experience of identification with Him in the glory of God the Father, we are comforted with the fact that as the Head is, so are the members of the body of Christ. As the Father sees Him, so He sees His members. They are glorified together in the purpose of God. But as Jehovah the Spirit brings them into the apprehension of what they are in Christ, it is then that they discover their corrupt and depraved condition. It is then they cry, "I am black," "I am vile," "I am undone." But the declaration of His grace-filled lips is, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." That is glory! Can we believe it? Only as He brings this precious truth home to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is thus that we, as the members of His body, realize something of the glory we possess in and through Him.

3. The necessary suffering "After that ye have suffered awhile." Have we been called to His eternal glory? Then we have the call to suffering also. Has Christ left us the legacy of His peace (John 16:33)? He has left us the legacy of tribulation also. Then in the world we shall have tribulation. Do the consolations of Christ abound in us? Then the sufferings also abound (II Corinthians 1:5). But we have this testimony concerning them: "That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto, for, verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know" (I Thessalonians 3:3,4). Is it not a mercy to know this blessed truth, so that we may not be moved? To know that there is not a pain or anxiety or trial or care but what comes in all wisdom, and is accompanied by infinite love. Have you experienced any of them? What have you done with them? Does your conscience condemn you for having taken them to anyone but to Him, who calls you by them to Himself? May the Lord ever enable us to carry our anxieties, our cares, our distresses and our sorrows to Himself. He alone can comfort us, He alone can deliver us in His own good time. Hence we pray in our service, "We commend to Thy Fatherly goodness all those who are anyways afflicted in mind, body or estate, that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions." Our hearts respond to that. There is true fellowship

there. "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Christian sympathy breathed in that prayer. If we are called to His eternal glory, we shall be called to suffering also. If we are called to experience spiritual union with a risen Christ in the heavenlies, to enjoy fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:6), we shall also experience conflict with wicked spirits in the same heavenlies (Ephesians 6:12). The very place of favour is the scene of conflict. You see this in the case of the Lord Jesus Himself. "Lo, a voice from heaven saying, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." You see the same in His servant Paul (II Corinthians 12:1-10). Paul was in the third heaven, blest with extraordinary revelations of eternal glory, yet there was the necessary suffering, "a messenger of Satan to buffet him." "A man in Christ," yet a man "buffeted" by an angel of Satan. But after he had suffered awhile he was stablished, strengthened, settled by those gracious words, "My grace is sufficient for thee for My strength is made perfect in weakness." This brings us to... 4. The certain blessing "Make you perfect." What are we to understand by these words? It is a word of simple meaning, but full of instruction. It means to adjust, put in order again. Among the Greeks it was the technical surgical term for setting a bone, a medical term for making up and preparing medicine. It was also a nautical term for fitting out, refitting or repairing a ship. We have its various meanings, all true in a spiritual sense, expressed in this prayer; it is the prayer for us to pray, and it expresses the work of God for us. The following are some occurrences of the word, and they illustrate its use: (Matthew 4:21), "He saw other two brethren... with their father mending their nets." (Galatians 6:1). "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such a one." (Hebrews 10:5), "A body hast Thou prepared (margin fitted) Me." (I Corinthians 1:10), "Perfectly joined together." Who can mend our ways and repair our nets? Restore us when overtaken in a fault, prepare our hearts, join us together in the same mind, the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, but the God of all grace? It is He also who can stablish us. This speaks of permanency. "It came to pass when the time was come that He should be received up He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51); i.e., His purpose was stablished, fixed, settled; nothing could move it. "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you (plural) that he may sift you (plural) as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted strengthen (i.e., stablish) thy brethren'" (Luke 22:31,32). That is the very thing Peter is doing by the Holy Spirit here in our text. He was obeying by the Spirit this very command. May he by these words stablish us his brethren now. His very example stablishes us, for though Peter failed and fell, his faith did not fail, it was the faith of the operation of God, and neither men nor demons, neither Peter's sins, Peter's wavering, or Peter's doubting could ever mar the fair beauty of that faith which stood not "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:5). Peter's faith had many a shaking, but it was stablished upon the truth of his God, upon the person and work and righteousness of Jesus Christ. A faith, so stablished by the "God of all grace," reconciles the heart to His mysterious and sometimes perplexing providences, and nothing shall ever remove it from its foundation. Peter does not say that we are to arrive at any state of perfection, or at this stablishing by praying, by believing, or by any act of faith or act of surrender as it is

popularly called. No. He looks to the God of all grace to do it all for us. "Strengthen." Why are those who are established in Christ to be strengthened? Because in themselves they are weak and often faint and weary. See how we read of this strengthening in the case of Paul (II Corinthians 12:5-10). Paul had no strength out of Christ, and yet he was "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10). He could do all things through Christ strengthening Him (Philippians 4:13). He was "strengthened with all might according to His glorious power unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:11). God, having commanded strength for His people, secures it to them in the Son of His love, and performs it in them by His Spirit. Therefore this is their supplication. "Strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast wrought for us" (Psalm 68:28). "Settled." Settled means grounded, founded as on a foundation. What mercy to be grounded and settled in the faith so as not to be "moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Colossians 1:23). It is a great blessing to be on God's sure foundation, but it is a greater blessing to be settled thereon. If we know anything of this spiritual settling upon the one foundation which God has laid in Christ, that settling will be experienced in connection with suffering, stabilizing, and strengthening. Those who are by the God of all grace called unto His eternal glory, and are suffering for a little while in fellowship with a despised and rejected Lord, who are perfect only in Christ, those whom He is stabilizing, strengthening and settling in the faith, the fear, the truth of God, will be able to sing the glorious doxology of I Peter 5:11, "To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

They Sang His Praise. They Soon Forgat His Works

by E.W. Bullinger

Occupied with the instrument Man's "nevertheless" The Christian life "Then believed they His words: they sang His praise. They soon forgat His works: they waited not for His counsel" (Psalm 106:12,13) These are solemn words, because they record a solemn fact. They are true, not only of Israel but of God's people in all ages. They refer to that tendency in the heart of each one of us to cry unto the Lord in our trouble, and then to need the exhortation, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness" (Psalm 107:8), and even to sing His praise and then forget His works. When God separated a people to Himself, it was not merely that He might be the God of Israel, but a God to Israel. He will not only have the people for Himself, but He will be their God, and "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 144:15). This Psalm records many examples of the statement made in the text. The first refers to the deliverance from Egypt. For a brief moment we see them in the attitude of faith: "Then believed they His word, they sang His praise" (verse 12). They are on the wilderness side of the Red Sea--"THEN." The waters that opened just now for their salvation and closed again for the destruction of their enemies roll between them and the house of their bondage. They are celebrating in their song the triumphs of God's right hand. They measure everything by it. Not only do they sing of what it has done, but by faith they celebrate victories

yet to come, Exodus 15. Compare verses 12 and 13 with 15-18, and note the repeated "shall," "shall," "shalt."

Not one thing remains to be done; all is accomplished to Faith. Faith is seen thus to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And now Moses and the children of Israel are silent, and Miriam and the women are taking up the strain, but still the burden is the same (verse 21). But what is the Divine comment on the scene? "They sang His praise, they soon forgot His works." So quickly does praise give place to murmurings: "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness (Exodus 16:2). Is, then, the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save? Is His ear that heard their cry in Egypt grown heavy that it cannot hear? No! But the instrument of deliverance has been leaned on instead of the Deliverer. Yes! So really is this true that as soon as Moses is out of sight, they run with haste to Aaron, and say: "Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him " (Exodus 32:1). The comment of the Spirit is: "They forgot God their Saviour which had done great things in Egypt"! (Psalm 106:21). And so it is ever! Where there is not a living God-wrought faith, man must have something to look to that is visible and tangible -- that is IDOLATRY. Occupied with the instrument We have another example of this in the days of the Judges. The people had gone into open idolatry, and the Lord had sold them into the hands of their enemies Yet (as in Psalm 106:8, 41-44) "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges which delivered them" (Judges 2:16). But there was man's "nevertheless" in verse 19; they returned to their evil ways after God's merciful deliverances, and in chapter 6 we see them greatly impoverished The hand of Midian prevails; the Midianites were as grasshoppers for multitude, the people betook themselves to mountains, dens, and caves, the highways were unoccupied, the harvest was reaped by others, there is no sustenance left for Israel. Then the Lord raised up Gideon, He looked on him and strengthened him; He went forth with him, and delivered Israel with a great deliverance by "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." But Israel was occupied with the Instrument! and they say to Gideon: "Rule thou over us, both thou and thy son and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian" (Judges 8:22). It was "thou, thou." Gideon was true to God here, but a few verses later we find him making an ephod of the gold that had been given him, and "all Israel went a whoring after it, and it became a snare to Gideon and his house." Again, if we turn from the times of the wilderness and the days of the Judges to the reigns of the Kings, it is still the same. The history of the Kings is a dreary record of provoking the Holy One of Israel to anger, so that but a few reigns, like those of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah stand out as bright exceptions. Manasseh, indeed, did repent and reform at the end of his reign, but we read of his son Amon that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord as did Manasseh his father... and humbled not himself before the Lord as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but Amon trespassed more and more." We see the condition of things worse and worse till Baal-worship was carried on in the Temple of Jehovah, and actually the horses of the idol were stabled in the house of the Lord (II Kings 23). At this juncture Amon's son Josiah succeeded to the throne, and the history of his reign is minutely given in II Chronicles 34 and 35. "While he was yet young," he sought the Lord (II Chronicles 34:3), and four years afterward he set about purging the city and the

land, and thus fulfilled a prophecy uttered 300 years before: "There came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense, and he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, 'O altar, altar! thus saith the Lord, behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee" (I Kings 13:1,2). And although the messenger, the instrument employed, failed directly after delivering his message, yet the word of God could not fail. That word came to pass. The king, "Josiah by name," received a great encouragement for his work, and a solemn warning to "take heed" to the voice of the Lord, for in the midst of his labours "the Book of the Law" was found (II Chronicles 34:14). The king received it in its power, for he traced all the misery up to neglect of this blessed book (verses 19-21). He learned that the Law may be neglected, though it cannot be broken. A blessed season from the Lord was vouchsafed, and the chapter which gives the record ends with the words: "All his days they departed not from following the Lord." Ah! "all his days"! Man's "nevertheless" Yes, it is the same lesson still; the Lord Himself detects it, He sees the heart, and He has recorded what He saw in Jeremiah 3:6,10. Treacherous Judah "hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord." Hence we read: "After all this... Necho King of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish... and Josiah went out against him" (II Chronicles 35:20). Listen to Necho's words: "What have I to do with thee, thou King of Judah?. I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war, for God commanded me to make haste; forbear thee from meddling with God who is with me that He destroy thee not" (verse 21). Hark what the Scripture says: "Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him... and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God" (verse 22), with fatal result. Oh, how solemn! how instructive! We are not told all the reasons, and how far, like Uzziah, "he was marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (II Chronicles 2:15,16). Like ungodly Ahab he disguised himself in the battle, but no disguise will hide us from God's eye, no shelter will avail us, and like another Ahab he is struck down by an arrow. Sad! Solemn! and instructive lesson! Yet he was taken away from evil to come, and great lamentation was made for him (II Chronicles 35:25). Let us draw near and listen to the mourners. "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, 'Under His shadow we shall live among the heathen'" (Lamentations 4:20). Ah, it is the same lesson still. Israel served God "all his days," but at heart they were the "same generation." In the light of Josiah they walked, and not "in the light of the Lord." Upon "the breath of his nostrils " they lived, not on the words which proceeded out of the mouth of God. Under the shadow of Josiah they thought to dwell, and not under the shadow of the Almighty. These things happened of old, they are "written for our admonition." Like a bell swinging to and fro over the sunken rock, giving warning to the mariner, that hard by where he is passing others have made shipwreck, they sound in our ears: "Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." The Christian life No one is really a Christian, but he who has received the Word of God "with the Holy Ghost and with power." He who has done this has turned to God from every idol, and is entitled to know that the blood of Christ has cleansed from all sin; and in Him who is now at the right hand of God he has been brought nigh. But the Christian life

down here is not merely a fresh direction given to religious instincts or to the fleshly activities of man. It is not the holding of certain views or the taking of certain vows; pledges, or badges, or the shaping the conduct after a certain course, but it is the having to do with God in Christ, believing God, obeying God, fearing God, walking with God, worshipping God, serving God, joying in God. In short, "setting the Lord always before us," and setting the heart and conscience before Him. All ministry of the Word is for this end, and is healthful only as it subserves it. The days in which we live are marked by the same character as of old: "They sang His praise, they soon forgot His works." God is forgotten, the instrument is too much thought of; man is glorified, the creature is exalted as though the saint has anything which he has not received. See what godly jealousy was manifested, by that faithful pastor, Saint Paul: "Let no man glory in men" (I Corinthians 3:21). "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos... that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another" (I Corinthians 4:6). "The Lord gave... God giveth" (I Corinthians 3:5,7). To lean on the instrument is the very essence of idolatry, for it displaces God. It is natural for us to do so because it is ever irksome to the flesh to be directly, continually, and absolutely depending upon God. When the stripling David returned from the fight, the women sang his praises (I Samuel 18:7); but they were no true daughters of Miriam, their song was not "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously, "but "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands"; and we read that "Saul eyed David from that day forward" (I Samuel 18:9). While we may see in this Saul's envy and jealousy, we must note that it became David's "thorn in the flesh," the Divine antidote for man's praise, and though a "messenger of Satan," it ministered the love of God. There is but ONE on whom we may safely depend, only ONE under whose "shadow" we may dare to dwell. Of that One, the voice from the excellent glory has testified as the cloud hid Moses and Elias: "HEAR HIM" (Luke 9:33-35). What do we know of all this? Are we dwelling under His shadow, occupied with Him? Or are we taken up with instrumentalities, doctrines, observances, ceremonies, things about Christ instead of with Christ? Oh, to be occupied with Christ Himself! May God bless His Word to our hearts, reveal Christ to us in it, and open our ears to HEAR HIM! The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

The Ground is Thirsty by Dr. E.W. Bullinger A figure is simply a word or a sentence thrown into a peculiar form, different from its original or simplest meaning or use. These forms are constantly used by every speaker and writer. It is impossible to hold the simplest conversation, or to write a few sentences without, it may be unconsciously, making use of figures. We may say, "the ground needs rain": that is a plain, cold, matter-of-fact statement; but if we say "the ground is thirsty," we immediately use a figure. It is not true to fact, and therefore it must be a figure. But how true to feeling it is! how full of warmth and life! Hence, we say, "the crops suffer"; we speak of "a hard heart," "a rough man," "an iron will." In all these cases we take a word which has a certain, definite meaning, and apply the name, or the quality, or the act, to some other thing with which it is associated, by time or place, cause or effect, relation or resemblance.

Some figures are common to many languages; others are peculiar to some one language. There are figures used in the English language, which have nothing that answers to them in Hebrew or Greek; and there are Oriental figures which have no counterpart in English; while there are some figures in various languages, arising from human infirmity and folly, which find, of course, no place in the word of God. It may be asked, "How are we to know, then, when words are to be taken in their simple, original form (i.e., literally), and when they are to be taken in some other and peculiar form (i.e., as a Figure)?" The answer is that, whenever and wherever it is possible, the words of Scripture are to be understood literally, but when a statement appears to be contrary to our experience, or to known fact, or revealed truth; or seems to be at variance with the general teaching of the Scriptures, then we may reasonably expect that some figure is employed. And as it is employed only to call our attention to some specially designed emphasis, we are at once bound to diligently examine the figure for the purpose of discovering and learning the truth that is thus emphasized. From non-attention to these Figures, translators have made blunders as serious as they are foolish. Sometimes they have translated the figure literally, totally ignoring its existence; sometimes they have taken it fully into account, and have translated, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit; sometimes they have taken literal words and translated them figuratively. Commentators and interpreters, from inattention to the figures, have been led astray from the real meaning of many important passages of God's Word; while ignorance of them has been the fruitful parent of error and false doctrine. It may be truly said that most of erroneous and conflicting views of the Lord's People, have their root and source, either in figuratively explaining away passages which should be taken literally, or in taking literally what has been thrown into a peculiar form or Figure of language: thus, not only falling into error, but losing the express teaching, and missing the special emphasis which the particular Figure was designed to impart to them. This is an additional reason for using greater exactitude and care when we are dealing with the words of God. Man's words are scarcely worthy of such study. Man uses figures, but often at random and often in ignorance or in error. But "the words of the Lord are pure words." All His works are perfect, and when the Holy Spirit takes up and uses human words, He does so, we may be sure, with unerring accuracy, infinite wisdom, and perfect beauty. We may well, therefore, give all our attention to "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Introduction Jehovah has been pleased to give us the revelation of His mind and will in words It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should understand not merely the meanings of the words themselves, but also the laws which govern their usage and combinations. All language is governed by law; but, in order to increase the power of a word, or the force of an expression, these laws are designedly departed from, and words and sentences are thrown into, and used in, new forms, or figures. The ancient Greeks reduced these new and peculiar forms to science, and gave names to more than two hundred of them. The Romans carried forward this science: but with the decline of learning in the Middle Ages, it practically died out. A few writers have since then occasionally touched upon it briefly, and have given a few trivial examples: but the knowledge of this ancient science is so completely forgotten, that its very name to-day is used in a different sense and with almost an opposite meaning. These manifold forms which words and sentences assume were called by the Greeks Schema and by the Romans, Figura. Both words have the same meaning, viz., a shape or figure. When

we speak of a person as being "a figure" we mean one who is dressed in some peculiar style, and out of the ordinary manner. The Greek word Schema is found in I Cor. 7:31, "The fashion of this world passeth away"; Phil. 2:8, "being found in fashion as a man." The Latin word Figura is from the verb fingere, to form, and has passed into the English language in the words figure, transfigure, configuration, effigy, feint, feign, etc. We use the word figure now in various senses. Its primitive meaning applies to any marks, lines, or outlines, which make a form or shape. Arithmetical figures are certain marks or forms which represent numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). All secondary and derived meanings of the word "figure" retain this primitive meaning. Applied to words, a figure denotes some form which a word or sentence takes, different from its ordinary and natural form. This is always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis. Whereas to-day "Figurative language " is ignorantly spoken of as though it made less of the meaning, and deprived the words of their power and force. A passage of God's Word is quoted; and it is met with the cry, "Oh, that is figurative" -- implying that its meaning is weakened, or that it has quite a different meaning, or that it has no meaning at all. But the very opposite is the case. For an unusual form (figura) is never used except to add force to the truth conveyed, emphasis to the statement of it, and depth to the meaning of it. When we apply this science then to God's words and to Divine truths, we see at once that no branch of Bible study can be more important, or offer greater promise of substantial reward. It lies at the very root of all translation; and it is the key to true interpretation... As the course of language moves smoothly along, according to the laws which govern it, there is nothing by which it can awaken or attract our attention. It is as when we are travelling by railway. As long as everything proceeds according to the regulations we notice nothing; we sleep, or we read, or meditate as the case may be. But, let the train slacken its speed, or make an unexpected stop; -- we immediately hear the question asked, "What is the matter?" "What are we stopping for?" We hear one window go down and then another: attention is thoroughly aroused, and interest excited. So it is exactly with our reading. As long as all proceeds smoothly and according to law we notice nothing. But suddenly there is a departure from some law, a deviation from the even course -- an unlooked for change -- our attention is attracted, and we at once give our mind to discover why the words have been used in a new form, what the particular force of the passage is, and why we are to put special emphasis on the fact stated or on the truth conveyed. In fact, it is not too much to say that, in the use of these figures, we have, as it were, the Holy Spirit's own markings of our Bibles. This is the most important point of all. For it is not by fleshly wisdom that the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" are to be understood. The natural man cannot understand the Word of God. It is foolishness unto him. A man may admire a sundial, he may marvel at its use, and appreciate the cleverness of its design; he may be interested in its carved-work, or wonder at the mosaics or other beauties which adorn its structure: but, if he holds a lamp in his hand or any other light emanating from himself or from this world, he can make it any hour he pleases, and he will never be able to tell the time of day. Nothing but the light from God's sun in the Heavens can tell him that. So it is with the Word of God. The natural man may admire its structure, or be interested in its statements; he may study its geography, its history, yea, even its prophecy; but none of these things will reveal to him his relation to time and eternity.

Nothing but the light that cometh from Heaven. Nothing but the Sun of Righteousness can tell him that. It may be said of the Bible, therefore, as it is of the New Jerusalem -- "The Lamb is the light thereof." The Holy Spirit's work in this world is to lead to Christ, to glorify Christ. The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit; and the same Spirit that inspired the words in the Book must inspire its truths in our hearts, for they can and must be " Spiritually discerned " (I Cor. 2:1-16). On this foundation, then, we have prosecuted this work. And on these lines we have sought to carry it out. We are dealing with the words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." All His works are perfect. "The words of the Lord are pure words"; human words, indeed, words pertaining to this world, but purified as silver is refined in a furnace. Therefore we must study every word, and in so doing we shall soon learn to say with Jeremiah (15:16), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..." It is clear, therefore, that no branch of Bible-study can be more important: and yet we may truly say that there is no branch of it which has been so utterly neglected. A figure is, as we have before said, a departure from the natural and fixed laws of Grammar or Syntax; but it is a departure not arising from ignorance or accident. Figures are not mere mistakes of Grammar; on the contrary, they are legitimate departures from law, for a special purpose. They are permitted variations with a particular object. Therefore they are limited as to their number, and can be ascertained, named, and described. No one is at liberty to exercise any arbitrary power in their use. All that art can do is to ascertain the laws to which nature has subjected them. There is no room for private opinion, neither can speculation concerning them have any authority. It is not open to any one to say of this or that word or sentence, "This is a figure," according to his own fancy, or to suit his own purpose. We are dealing with a science whose laws and their workings are known. If a word or words be a figure, then that figure can be named, and described. It is used for a definite purpose and with a specific object. Man may use figures in ignorance, without any particular object. But when the Holy Spirit takes up human words and uses a figure (or peculiar form), it is for a special purpose, and that purpose must be observed and have due weight given to it. Many misunderstood and perverted passages are difficult, only because we have not known the Lord's design in the difficulty. Thomas Boys has well said (Commentary, I Pet. 3), "There is much in the Holy Scriptures, which we find it hard to understand: nay, much that we seem to understand so fully as to imagine that we have discovered in it some difficulty or inconsistency. Yet the truth is, that passages of this kind are often the very parts of the Bible in which the greatest instruction is to be found: and, more than this, the instruction is to be obtained in the contemplation of the very difficulties by which at first we are startled. This is the intention of these apparent inconsistencies. The expressions are used, in order that we may mark them, dwell upon them, and draw instruction out of them. Things are put to us in a strange way, because, if they were put in a more ordinary way, we should not notice them." This is true, not only of mere difficulties as such, but especially of all Figures: i.e., of all new and unwonted forms of words and speech: and our design in this work is that we should learn to notice them and gain the instruction they were intended to give us. The Word of God may, in one respect, be compared to the earth. All things necessary to life and sustenance may be obtained by scratching the surface of the earth: but there are treasures of beauty and wealth to be obtained by digging deeper into

it. So it is with the Bible. "All things necessary to life and godliness" lie upon its surface for the humblest saint; but, beneath that surface are "great spoils" which are found only by those who seek after them as for "hid treasure." Ethelbert W. Bullinger. November, 1899. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

The Christian's Greatest Need

by E.W. Bullinger

There is one thing that the Christian needs more than he needs any other thing. One thing on which all others rest; and on which all others turn. It is certain from the Word of God, and also from our own experience, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought". But "the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities" (Romans 8:26). He knoweth what we should pray for. He knoweth what we need. He maketh intercession for us and in us. He teacheth us how to pray, and in Ephesians 1:17, we have His prayer set forth in these words: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."

This, then, must be our greatest need: A true knowledge of God. If the Holy Spirit thus puts it before all other things, it must be because it is more important than any other thing; yea, than all others put together. This, it is, that lies at the foundation of the Christian Faith; at the threshold of Christian life. It is the essence of all trust. We cannot trust a person if we do not know him. At least, it is safer for us not to do so; and as a rule we do not. But on the other hand, when we know a person thoroughly well, we cannot help trusting him!. No effort to trust is required when we perfectly know a person. The difficulty then is, not to trust. Why, then, do we not thus trust God? Is not the answer clear? It is because we do not know Him! Thus we see how this knowledge of God is our greatest need; the very first step of our Christian course. Our trust will ever be in proportion to our knowledge. If we knew, for example, a billionth part of God's infinite wisdom, we should see our own to be such utter folly, that we should not merely be "willing" for His will, but we should desire it. It would be our greatest happiness for Him to do and arrange all for us. We should say, "Lord, I am so foolish and ignorant; I know nothing, and can do nothing; I can see only this present moment; I know nothing of to-morrow. But Thou canst see the end from the beginning. Thy wisdom is infinite, and thy love is infinite; for, our Saviour and Lord could say of us to Thee, as Thy beloved Son -- "Thou hast loved them, as thou has loved me" (John 17:23). Do, then, Thine own will. This is my desire, the desire of my heart. This is what I long for above 'all things.'" This is far beyond being "willing". We may be willing for a thing, because we cannot help it. It may be even a low form of Christian fatalism. A Mahommedan may be thus resigned to the will his god. But what we are speaking of is far, far beyond the modern gospel of holiness; far in advance of merely being "willing". Those who are in the still lower condition; not "willing," but "willing to be made willing," do not see that this condition arises from not knowing God; not knowing how infinite is His love, how vast is His wisdom, how blessed and how sweet is His will. If they did but know something of this, they would yearn for His will. It would be the one great earnest desire and longing of their hearts for Him to do exactly what is

pleasing in His own sight, in us, and for us, and through us. Not knowing this secret, Christians, everywhere, are striving and labouring to be "willing" by looking at themselves; and by some definite "act of faith" to do something of themselves. Instead of thinking of His wisdom and His love, they are thinking of themselves and of their "surrender". But this is labour in vain. Even if it should seem to accomplish something, it is only like tying paper flowers on a plant. They may look natural and fair; but they have no scent, and no life; no fruit, and no seed. It is an artificial, fictitious attempt to produce that which, if they did but know God, would come of itself, without an effort: yea, the effort would be to stop or hinder the mighty power of a true knowledge of God. The trouble with us is, if we prove our hearts to their depth, that, at the bottom, we think we know better. We would not say it for the world, we would hardly admit it to ourselves. But there it is; and the difficulty of being "made willing" is the proof of it. If we really knew Him, and believed that He knows better than we do what is good for us, there would be no effort whatever, but only a blessed irrepressible desire for His will.

The two words are explained in detail in this additional piece. See also the article by Peter Wade, Don't You Know? -- A Bible word study on the two words translated "know" in the first Epistle of John.

Before we proceed further to consider some other of the practical effects of this knowledge, let us notice the fact that there are two words in the original for this knowledge of God, two verbs which mean to know. As these are used some times in the very same verse, it is very important that we should carefully distinguish that which the Holy Spirit has so especially emphasised. There are, indeed, six Greek words which are translated to know, but these two are the most common. 1. The one, oida, means to know without learning or effort; and refers to what we know intuitively, or as a matter of fact or history. 2. The other, ginosko, means to get to know; by effort, or experience, or learning. See the sidebar for further study on these two words. Practical Christian living The importance of getting to know God is our one great need. This knowledge is not only the basis of trust in God; not only the foundation of Christian faith; but of Christian life. Practical Christian life and walk will be in direct proportion to our knowledge of God. Look at Colossians 1:9,10, where we have the practical outcome of the prayer in Ephesians 1:17. In Ephesians 1:17 we have the prayer itself. In Colossians 1:9,10, we have it applied for our correction and instruction. Carefully weigh the words. "For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire" -- Desire what? "that ye might be filled with the knowledge (the noun from No. 2, i.e., acquired knowledge) of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Why? For what purpose? To what end? "That ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Then, to walk worthy of the Lord, I must know Him? Exactly so. If I would please Him in all things I must know what will please Him. Is this all that is required? All that I have to do? Yes, this is all. Then I have not to rush hither and thither; from Convention to Convention? No, I have to sit down before God's Word, and get to know Him through that. There is no other way of getting to know Him. And He has given us His Word, and revealed Himself therein, on purpose that we may study it and find out what it is that pleases Him; what it is He loves; what it is He hates; what it is He does. To get to know His wisdom, His will, His infinite love, His almighty power, His faithfulness, His holiness, His

righteousness, His truth, His goodness and mercy, His long-suffering, His gentleness, His care, and all the innumerable attributes of our great and glorious God. See how this knowledge is absolutely necessary, if we would please God. We cannot please any of our friends unless we know what they are pleased with. If we would make a present to one of them, we naturally think, or try to find out, what it is he or she needs or would be pleased to have. If we are receiving a guest, we naturally try to remember or find out what pleases him in food or drink, in occupation or recreation. If we cannot find this out, then we have to guess at it, and we may or may not succeed in our effort to please. We may take the greatest trouble and pains, and yet, after all, we may arrange for or provide the very thing which is most disliked. It is even so with our God. Where can we go? How are we to find out the things that please Him? How are we to discover the things He approves? Only from His Word. There, and there alone can we get to know Him. There alone shall we learn the fulness of the Spirit's prayer for us in Ephesians 1:17; and the blessed practical outcome of it in Colossians 1:9,10. No man has this knowledge of God intuitively. No minister can even help in imparting it, except in and by the ministry of that Word. His own thoughts are valueless. Only so far as he enables us to understand that Word can he be of any assistance to us. He may be mistaken himself, and very easily be a hindrance instead of a help. God has revealed Himself in His written Word, the Scriptures of truth; and in the Living Word His Son, Jesus Christ. And it is by the Communicated Word revealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that we begin thus to get to know Him, whom to know is Life Eternal. This is the one great reason why the written Word is given to us. It is not given merely as a book of general information, or of reference; but it is given to make known the invisible God. Why do we read it? Why do we open it at all? What is, or ought to be, our object in reading it? Do we read a portion that someone else has selected for us? Do we read that portion because we have promised someone we would do so? Or do we open it, and sit down before it with the one dominant object to find out God; to discover His mind; to get to know His will. Those who are not thus engaged make their own god out of their own thoughts and imaginations. They have to fall back on what they think their god likes! Thousands make their gods with their hands, out of wood, or stone, or bread. Thousands more make him out of their own heads. But, being ignorant of God's Word, they are alike ignorant of the God Who has there revealed Himself.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S GREATEST NEED

E. W. Bullinger

There is one thing that the Christian needs more than he needs any other thing. One thing on which all others rest; and on which all others turn.

It is certain from the Word of God, and also from our own experience, that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." But "the Spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities" (Rom. 8:26). He knoweth what we should pray for. He knoweth what we need. He maketh intercession for us and in us. He teacheth us how to pray, and in Eph.

1:17, we have His prayer set forth in these words: "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in

THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM."

This, then, must be our greatest need: *A true knowledge of God.*

If the Holy Spirit thus puts it before all other things, it must be because it is more important than any other thing; yea, than all others put together.

This, it is, that lies at the foundation of the Christian Faith; at the threshold of Christian life. It is the essence of all trust.

We cannot trust a person if we do not know him. At least, it is safer for us not to do so; and as a rule we do not. But on the other hand, when we know a person thoroughly well, *we cannot help trusting him.* No effort to trust is required when we perfectly know a person. The difficulty then is, not to trust.

Why, then, do we not thus trust God? Is not the answer clear? *It is because we do not know Him!*

Thus we see how this knowledge of God is our greatest need; the very first step of our Christian course. Our trust will ever be in proportion to our knowledge.

If we knew, for example a billionth part of God's infinite *wisdom*, we should see our own to be such utter folly, that we should not merely be "willing" for His will, but we should *desire* it. It would be our greatest happiness for Him to do and arrange all for us. We should say, 'Lord, I am so foolish and ignorant; and I know nothing, and can do nothing; I can see only this present moment; I know nothing of tomorrow. But Thou canst see the end from the beginning. Thy wisdom is infinite, and thy love is infinite; for, our Saviour and Lord could say of us to Thee, as Thy beloved Son--"Thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23). Do, then, Thine own will. This is my desire, the desire of my heart. This is what I long for above all things.'

This is far beyond being "willing". We may be willing for a thing, because we cannot help it. It may be even a law for many of Christian fatalism. A Mohammedan may be thus resigned to the will of his god.

But what we are speaking of is far, far beyond the modern gospel of holiness; far in advance of merely being "willing".

Those who are in the still lower condition; not "willing," but "willing to made willing," do not see that his condition arises from not knowing God; not knowing how infinite is His love, how vast is His wisdom, how blessed and how sweet is His will. If they did but know something of this, they would yearn for His will. It would be the one great earnest desire and longing of their hearts for Him to do exactly what is pleasing in His own sight, in us, and for us, and through us.

Not knowing this secret, Christians everywhere, are striving and laboring to be "willing" by looking at themselves; and by some definite "act of faith" to do something of themselves. Instead of thinking of His wisdom and His love, they are thinking of themselves and of their "surrender".

But this is labor in vain. Even if it should seem to accomplish something, it is only like tying paper flowers on a plant. They may look natural and fair; but they have no scent, and no life; no fruit, and no seed. It is an artificial, fictitious attempt to produce that which, if they did but know God, would *come of itself, without an effort*: yea, the effort would be to stop or hinder the mighty power of a true knowledge of God.

The trouble with us is, if we prove our hearts to their depth, that, at the bottom, *we*

think we know better. We would not say it for the world, we would hardly admit it to ourselves. But there it is; and the difficulty of being "made willing" is the proof of it.

If we really knew Him, and believed that He knows better than we do what is good for us, there would be *no effort whatever*, but only a blessed irrepressible *desire* for His will.

Before we proceed further to consider some other of the practical effects of this knowledge, let us notice the fact that there are two words in the original for this knowledge of God. Two verbs which mean *to know*. As these are used sometimes in the very same verse, it is very important that we should carefully distinguish that which the Holy Spirit has so especially emphasized.

There are, indeed, six Greek words which are translated *to know*, but these two are the most common.

1. The one, *oida*, means *to know* without learning or effort; and refers to what we know intuitively, or as a matter of fact or history.

2. The other, *ginosko*, means *to get to know*; by effort, or experience, or learning.

This difference will be clearly seen, if we examine one or two passages:

John 13:7, "What I do thou *knowest* not now." this is the former of these two words, and tells us that Peter had no intuitive knowledge of what the Lord was doing; and had no means of knowing. It was impossible. The Lord, however, goes on to say, "but thou shalt know (i.e. get to know) hereafter." Peter would learn, and find out, by experience and revelation, what the Lord was then doing.

John 8:55. "Ye have not know him (i.e., gotten to know him. No. 2 of these two words); but I know him (No. 1) him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know him (No. 1)." Here the Lord declares His imminent knowledge of the Father; and declares that those whom He was addressing, not only had no such innate knowledge of God, but had not even attained to that knowledge.

1 John 5:20. "We *know* (No. 1, i.e., we know as a historical fact, without learning it) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know (i.e., *get to know*, No. 2) him that is true."

Here the truth is taught that, before any one can *get to know* God, he must have a spiritual understanding imparted to him. With this agrees 1 Cor. 2:14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he *get to know* them." Why not? Because "they are spiritually discerned." The natural man has no means of getting to know spiritual things. A spiritual understanding must first be "given" to him. Then he is able not only to discern, but to love and delight in the revelation of spiritual things, and to get to know Him, "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent." "This is life eternal" (John 17:3).

The importance of *getting to know* God is thus again wondrously emphasized as our one great need. This knowledge is not only the basis of trust in God; not only the foundation of Christian faith; but of Christian life. Practical life and walk will be in direct proportion to our knowledge of God. Look at Col. 1:9,10, where we have the practical outcome of the prayer in Eph. 1:17. In Eph. 1:17 we have the prayer itself. In Col. 1:9,10, we have it applied for our correction and instruction. Carefully weigh the words. "For this cause, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire" --- Desire what? "that ye might be filled with the knowledge (the noun from No. 2, i.e., acquired knowledge) of his will in all wisdom and spiritual

understanding." Why? For what purpose? To what end? "THAT YE MAY WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD."

Then, to walk worthy of the Lord, I must know Him? Exactly so. If I would please Him in all things I must know how to please Him. Is this all that is required? All that I have to do? Yes, this is all. Then I have not to rush hither and thither; from Convention to Convention? No, I have to sit down before God's Word, and *get to know* Him through that. There is no other way of getting to know Him. And He has given us His Word, and revealed Himself therein, on purpose that we may study it and find out what it is that pleases Him; what it is He loves; what it is He hates; what it is He does. To get to know His wisdom, His will, His infinite love, His almighty power, His faithfulness, His holiness, His righteousness, His truth, His goodness and mercy, His long-suffering, His gentleness, His care, and all the innumerable attributes of our great and glorious God.

See how this knowledge is absolutely necessary, if we would please God.

We cannot please any of our friends unless we know what they are pleased with. If we would make a present to one of them, we naturally think, or try to find out, what it is he or she needs or would be pleased to have. If we are receiving a guest, we naturally try to remember or find out what pleases him in food or drink, in occupation or recreation. If we cannot find this out, then we have to guess at it, and we may or maynot succeed in our effort to please. We may take the greatest trouble and pains, and yet, after all, we may arrange for or provide the very thing which is most disliked.

It is even so with our God. How are we to find out the things that please Him? How are we to discover the things He approves?

ONLY FROM HIS WORD.

There, and there alone can we *get to know* Him. There alone shall we learn the fullness of the Spirit's prayer for us in Eph. 1:7; and the blessed practical outcome of it in Col. 1:9,10.

No man has this knowledge of God intuitively. No minister can even help in imparting it, except in and by the ministry of that Word. His own thoughts are valueless. Only so far as he enables us to understand that Word can he be of any assistance to us. He may be mistaken by himself, and very easily be a hindrance instead of a help. God has revealed Himself in His written Word, the Scriptures of truth; and in the Living Word, His Son, Jesus Christ. And it is by the Communicated Word revealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that we begin thus *to get to know* Him, whom to know is Life Eternal.

This is the one great reason why the written Word is given to us. It is not given merely as a book of general information, or of referenece; but it is given to make known the invisible God.

Why do we read it? Why do we open it at all? What is, or ought to be, our object in reading it?

Do we read a portion that someone else has selected for us? Do we read that portion because we have promised someone we would do so? Or do we open it, and sit down before it with the one dominant object *to find out God*; to discover His mind; to get to know His will.

Those who are not thus engaged make their own god out of their own thoughts and imaginations. They have to fall back on what they *think* their god likes!

Thousands make their gods with their hands, out of wood, or stone, or bread.

Thousands more make him out of their own heads. But, being ignorant of God's Word, they are alike ignorant of the God Who has there revealed Himself.

See the power of this truth as it is applied to what is called "Public Worship" or "Divine Service". How many will still worship "the unknown God"; and serve themselves; and do what is pleasing in their own eyes, studying only their own tastes! Ignorant of that great rubrick, John 4:24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in spirit and in truth" (*i.e.*, truly in spirit), they talk of the kind of service they prefer, and say, "I don't like that at all"; or, "I do like that so much"; as though "places of worship," so-called, were opened merely for persons to go in and do what pleases themselves, forgetful of that word "MUST," which dominates the whole sphere of what we call worship.

Worship "must" be only with the spirit. We cannot worship God--who is a Spirit--with our *eyes*, by looking on at what is being done. We cannot worship God with our *noses*, by smelling incense, whether ceremonially or otherwise used. We cannot worship God with our *ears*, by listening to music, however well it may be "rendered". No! worship cannot be with any of our *senses*; or by all of them put together. It must be spiritual, and not sensual. The worshippers must be spiritual worshippers, for "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." (John 4:23).

How many of such worshippers frequent our churches and chapels? How many are still worshipping "the unknown God" (Acts 17:23)?

Is it possible that, if the true God were known--the great, the High and Holy God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands; the God who inhabiteth eternity; the God in whose sight the very heavens are not clean, and who chargeth His angels with folly--is it possible, we ask, that nay who know Him could imagine, for one moment, that He "seeks" or could be pleased with, or accept, or regard a congregation turning the Bible into "a book of the words," and listening, for example, to a girl singing a solo, getting as high a note as she can, and holding it out as long as she can! Is THAT what The Great and Infinite God is seeking? Is that the occupation of the hearth with Himself which He says He "MUST" have? No indeed! and the greater the ignorance of God, the deeper and more degraded will become the accompaniments of what is called "Public Worship".

Consider further, the effect of this great truth on our daily life. What rest and peace it brings. Look at its influence on our prayers. What is prayer for? Why are we told so often to pray? Why? Because prayer is intended to humble us by putting us into the place of helplessness and dependence. Prayer is meant to put us with our faces in the dust before the Mighty God.

Instead of that, what do we find? We turn that place which is meant to humble us and keep us in the low place, into a Throne, from which we dictate to God what He shall do in our affairs, how He shall help to carry out our plans, what He shall do among the governments and political affairs of the world. That is the outcome of the pride of the "old man" within us. So that we, who cannot manage our own affairs, do not hesitate to take on ourselves the management of the universe, and "move the hand that moves the world."

A true knowledge of God would lead to a very different condition of things. Our prayers would be frequent indeed, but we should be so filled with a sense of God's wisdom, and power, and goodness, that we should cease to pray as though we had more compassion than He had; as though we were more concerned about sins and sinners than

He is; as though we were more interested in His work than He is.

We should be "definite" indeed, as well we may be in many things where from His Word, we know "what to ask." But we should be equally "definite" in leaving all our cares with Him. We should cease to take the responsibilities of life upon ourselves. We should say, 'Lord, what Thou wilt! Do not heed my requests if Thou seest they are not good. Do not do or give this or that because I ask it or think it good. Withhold it, if Thou, who seest the end from the beginning, seest it will not be for my good. I am so foolish and ignorant before Thee: and Thou art so wonderful, so wise, and so good: Goodness and mercy itself; and Thy love is so infinite that Thou canst do only what is right, and wisest, and best. Thy will is love itself. Oh that I may be filled with such a knowledge of Thy will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that I may enjoy the perfect rest which that knowledge will give.'

In proportion as we have this knowledge of God and of His will, shall we thus pray without ceasing; and in this manner make known our requests unto Him.

When we pray definitely for our will to be done in any matter, it means (if we are honest enough to confess it), that we are willing to take all the responsibility if that request be granted. Oh, what a solemn responsibility! and how unnecessary, when God had provided us with One who is our Surety, and who is responsible for us in life and in death (John 6:39).

How much better to leave our affairs in His hands.

When we employ a person to do any labour for us, and we ask him how much we are to pay him? he replies, "*I will leave it to you, Sir.*" Why? Because he knows perfectly well that we shall be very likely to give more than he would dare to ask.

It is even so with our God. if we know Him well enough we can surely say, in making our request, "I will leave it to Thee, Lord." We have His assurance that He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). If we do the *thinking* we shall surely limit Him. How much better to leave the limit to Him: and we shall do this in proportion as we know Him.

Take another illustration. Here is a friend in great difficulties; and we have a plan that will life him right out of them, and set him on his feet again. He, meantime, comes to us and to borrow some small sum that will only give temporary relief, and leave him to struggle on still with his difficulties. *He limits our power.* His poor thoughts cannot rise to the extent of what we are able to do exceeding abundantly. If we answer his prayer, and grant him his request, and lend him what he asks, how small will be his blessing. Why does he not "ask or think" more "worthy" of our ability and love? Because he does not know us well enough! This is the secret, and that is why he is not delivered. He thinks he knows better than we do; and measures our willingness to give by his poor power to ask.

Oh to know the love, and power, and wisdom of our God. What a revolution it would make in our prayers, as well as in our lives.

But look again at another effect of this knowledge of God as applied to missionary work. What is the work of the missionary? He offers himself and is accepted. He is trained for his service, and he learns the particular language. The moment at length arrives when he is able to speak that language, and the opportunity comes to speak. Now, what is he going to say? What is the first thing that must come from his opened lips? Is it not to explain his God to that heathen man or woman? Is it not to show how far the

living God is above all their ideas? is it not to tell how God has revealed Himself in His Word? and to explain that revelation, and to minister that Word.

We thus see how a true knowledge of God lies at the threshold of all missionary work. How can a man explain God unless he knows God? and how can God be known apart from His Word? Hence the supreme necessity of so studying that Word that we may not only enjoy but be able to speak of Him of Whom that Word is sent to testify.

So far we have spoken only of a knowledge of God--the Father. But it is also of the greatest importance that we should have a true knowledge of Christ.

This is the Christian's one object, as well as his greatest need.

This is set forth with remarkable clearness and force in Phil. 3. In the ninth verse we have our standing in Christ expressed in the words

"FOUND IN HIM."

This is explained as not having our own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ; "the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Clothed in this righteousness, nothing of self is seen by God. Like the stones in the Temple, they were covered over first with cedar-wood; and the cedar-wood was covered over with gold. Then it is added, "there was no stone seen." These words are not necessary either for the grammar, or for the sense; for how could the stone be seen if thus doubly covered up? No! the words are graciously added to emphasize the antitype, and to impress upon us the blessed fact that, when covered with Christ's righteousness there is nothing of self seen in our standing before God. We are already "in the heavenlies, in Christ"; and are comely in all His comeliness, perfect in all His perfection, accepted in all His merit, righteous as He is righteousness; yea, holy as He is holy, and loved as He is beloved. All this is included in those words, "found in Him."

And being thus "found in Him" for our *standing*, we have in verses 20, 21 our *hope*; which, is to be

LIKE HIM

in resurrection and ascension glory at His coming. Hence "we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself."

This is our "blessed hope." We have referred to it here, and not in the order in which it stands in this chapter, in order in which it stands in this chapter, in order to show what it is that lies between the two--the beginning and the end of our Christian course. What is that is to fill the place between these two? What is to occupy our hearts from the moment when we were in Christ, who is our life, to the moment when we shall be like Christ, who shall be our glory? What is the one *object* that is to ever fill our hearts and occupy our minds?

"THAT I MAY KNOW HIM."

This is henceforth the Christian's great object. Nothing but this aim to *get to know* Christ (for this is the word used here, in Phil. 3:10).

As verse 9 contained the explanation of the words "found in him," so this verse (10)

contains the explanation of how and why we are to get to know Christ.

We are henceforth no longer to know Him after the flesh, but to *get to know* Him as risen; the head of the New Creation in resurrection (2 Cor. 5:16,17).

For this is how this knowledge is explained: "that I may get to know him and the power of his resurrection." Not to know merely the historical fact of his resurrection, but the "power" of it: i.e., what its wondrous power has done for us. But how can we get to know this "power"? Ah! only by experiencing "the fellowship of His sufferings": by learning that when He, the Head of the Body, suffered, all the members of that Body suffered in mysterious and blessed "fellowship with Him." Thus shall we get to know how we were "made conformable to Him in His death." Only when we have thus learned that we suffered when He suffered, and died when He died, can we begin to learn how we have risen also with Christ; and "get to know the power of His resurrection."

How few of us know what this "power" is, as it takes us out of the old creation and sets us in the new creation, where "all things are of God" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This then is our object, to get to know all that Christ is made unto us in resurrection power.

How startling must these words have been as they fell upon the ears of Greeks (for this is the first city Paul set his foot in in Europe). They had been brought up on the great motto of Solon, the wisest of the seven wise men of Greece. His motto was supposed by them to embody in itself the essence of all wisdom; and it consisted of only two words, which were carved over the entrance to the schools and colleges of Greece: *gnosthe seauton---*

"KNOW THYSELF"

But yet, how foolish are those words. For how can one know anything of himself by considering himself? If he looks at others, then he can see how different he is from them; and how much better or worse he may be than they.

But it is only when we compare ourselves with Christ, who is the wisdom and glory of God, that we learn what we really are; and how far short we come of that glory (Rom. 3:23). It is only as we see ourselves in "the Balance of the Sanctuary," or by the side of the plumb-line of that Perfection, that we see, and get to know, our absolutely lost and ruined condition. Hence this new motto was thundered from heaven into the ears of those who sought to know themselves----

"THAT I MAY GET TO KNOW HIM."

Yes; this is our one object. This it is that will have the mighty transforming power over our lives. Every moment spent in seeking to know ourselves is a moment lost: and not only lost, but used to keep us from the one thing that alone can accomplish our object and teach us ourselves. Trying to know ourselves, we not only fail in the attempt, but we cease to learn Christ, which alone teaches us to know ourselves.

And yet, how many are spending their lives in this vain search? Running hither and thither to hear this man and that man. And, being constantly directed to this self-examination, they are only led into trouble; or, into a joy which lasts only while the excitement is kept up.

Oh! to be occupied with Christ; to have Him for our object; and His resurrection power for our lives.

This we shall have; and have increasingly as we get to know Christ.

Again. What was it that led the heathen world into all its darkness, corruption, and sin? Just this: "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible man" (Rom. 1:22,28).

Like people today who, ignorant of God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, make their god, some with their own hands, or out of their own heads, vainly imagining He is what they think He is, and worshipping, like the heathen, "the unknown God," such an one as themselves.

What was it that led Israel astray and brought upon them all their sorrows and sufferings? Isaiah opens with the Divine indictment, which gathers up in the briefest form the one great cause which lay at the root of all:

"The ox knoweth his owner;
And the ass his master's crib;
But Israel doth NOT KNOW,
My People doth not consider."

See how the Lord Jesus confirms this in Luke 19:42-44, as He weeps over Jerusalem. All is summed up in the opening and closing words:

"IF THOU HADST KNOWN!

even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace."

And then, turning to the reason for that judgment, He adds: "Because thou KNEWEST NOT the day of thy visitation."

And what is to be the acme of Israel's glory in the day of her restoration?

Ah! then it shall come to pass that "they shall no more teach every man his neighbor saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all KNOW ME, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD" (Jer. 31:34).

And what shall be Creation's glory: and the peace and joy of the whole earth? This sums up all:

"The earth shall be full of the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,
As the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

And what is the secret of our being able to glory only in the Lord, and to enjoy His blessing in this the day of our visitation? It is given in Jer. 9:23,24:

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,
Neither let the mighty man glory in his might,
Let not the rich man glory in his riches:
But let him that glorieth, glory in this,
THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH AND
KNOWETH ME."

We are thus brought round, and brought back to the one great duty, which should henceforth absorb our hearts and minds, and fill our days and years; viz., to be instant in our study of the Word of God, which is given to us with the one great, express, commanding purpose--the revelation of Himself, in order that we may

GET TO KNOW HIM.

**Study to shew thyself approved
unto God...
2 Timothy 2:15**

Found in: <http://www.tftmin.org/ChrNeed.htm>

The Christian's Standing, Object, and Hope

by E.W. Bullinger

1. The Christian's Standing
2. The Christian's Object
3. The Christian's Hope

"Brethren, be ye followers together of me" (Philippians 3:17). "Those things which ye have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, do" (Philippians 4:9).

It is interesting to note the character in which Saint Paul, by the Holy Spirit, speaks to us in the passages quoted. In the Epistles to the Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and I and II Timothy, he calls himself "Apostle". In I and II Thessalonians he uses no term at all in regard to himself. In Philemon, he is "a prisoner of Jesus Christ," and in Philippians, only, "a servant of Jesus Christ."

So that when he writes and speaks here, and says, "be ye followers of me," he speaks not as one endowed with extraordinary gifts, or one privileged to see unspeakable visions, not as a laborious Apostle, nor as a gifted vessel, but as the "Servant of Jesus Christ," the simple Christian. We could not follow him in his labours as an Apostle, in his rapture to the third heaven and Paradise; but we can follow him in his simple Christian character as a servant, and this Epistle where he exhorts us to follow him, is the only Epistle in which he thus describes himself simply as a servant. It is true that in Romans he styles himself a "servant of Jesus Christ," but he adds, "called to be an Apostle"; and in Titus, "a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ."

We can follow him when he sets the pattern as he does in I Timothy 1:16. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy that in me first, Jesus Christ might, show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." What a pattern! What a hope-inspiring pattern! What an encouraging pattern! What a blessed pattern! What a pattern for poor lost sinners (I Timothy 1:13)! What a pattern for such as have been "blasphemers, persecutors, injurious"! The Apostle couples himself with another servant of God when he says to Titus (3:3), "We ourselves were sometimes foolish disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." But he touches the lowest depth of all when he says, "Sinners; of whom I am Chief" (I Timothy 1:15).

What a pattern for Pharisees, for all who are seeking to be saved by works! He refers to this in Philippians 2:3, where he declares that he has no confidence in the flesh," although possessing all the advantages enumerated in verses 4-6. So that, however far any may go in working out a righteousness of their own, so that they may have confidence in the flesh, they hear a voice from a higher height saying, "I more" (verse 4). No one could excel Saul of Tarsus. Hear him in verses 5, 6. The point here is not about sins as in I Timothy 1, but

about his "gains". Hence in verse 7 he is not speaking of his needs as a sinner, but of his advantages as a religious man; it was not that Saul as a sinner needed righteousness, but that Saul as a Pharisee preferred the righteousness of God because it was infinitely better and more glorious than any other. It would be a positive loss for anyone to have a righteousness of his own, seeing God has provided "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith."

This brings us to the first of three things which are revealed in this chapter as making the perfect character of a true Christian. They are like the three things of I Thessalonians 1:9,10.

1. The Christian's Standing -- Turning from idols (verse 9)

"Found in Him" (Philippians 3:9). This is the Christian's standing. Nothing less, nothing lower, nothing different. Not partly in Christ and partly in a church, but "found in Him." It is in Christ that we must be found, in His righteousness. Like stones in the Temple, hid in Christ. If we are not found in Him, it matters little where else we are. If we are found in Him, it matters little where we are not found. Oh, to be found "in Him," in our own experience! This, then, is the proper Christian standing. See also Galatians 2:15-24.

2. The Christian's Object -- To serve the living and true God (verse 9).

"That I may know Him" (Philippians 3:10). Here, again, true Christianity throws us back on Christ, and takes up the thoughts from verse 8. Our object is not this or that church, or this or that work, but Christ Himself in His own glorious Person.

As to the natural man, all is different. The ancient philosophy had a motto continually sounding in its ears, "Know thyself." This saying was introduced by Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the wisest of them all. A lawgiver, a great reformer, and a great patriot, 638 years before Christ, Solon gave this as his most precious wisdom. It was carved over all the schools and seats of learning, its letters may be seen to-day carved in the marble ruins of Greece. It was good, so far as man's wisdom went; it was the best that man could do! But oh! how impossible to obey it! It is the one thing man never could do. It is the one thing none of us know." The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" And if we could know ourselves thus, what then? When we came to this knowledge, and saw ourselves and our ruin, would it not end in despair? No, we can only know ourselves by the knowledge of Christ.

Christianity came and brought with it a loftier motto, a heavenly wisdom, a Divine truth: "That I may know Him." And why? Because it is only by comparing ourselves with that which is perfect that we can form a true judgment (II Corinthians 10:12). How can we know whether anything measures what it ought to?

Only by bringing it to the standard. How can we tell whether a weight is correct? Only by putting it in the balances. How can we tell whether anything is perfectly upright or perpendicular? Only by applying a plumbline to it. How can we tell whether anything is perfectly straight or horizontal? Only by applying a straight edge, or a spirit level to it. We could never tell, though we tried for years, unless we applied the true test. We might think a thing was right measure; we might believe a thing was right weight; but we could not possibly know it. So it is with ourselves. We might study ourselves all our lives, we might compare ourselves with others -- I might fancy I was this, or hope I was that, or believe I was the other, but apart from Christ's perfect standard, I could never know it.

Hence we see the highest earthly wisdom is at fault. This was the best it could do, but it was a failure! Not until Christianity came, could a man know himself. Why? Because Christianity is Christ. Tried by other standards we might compare more or less favourably, but tried by Christ, God's standard, tried by Christ, God's glory, there is only one result for all. "All have | sinned, and come short of the Glory of God." That is why we must be "found in Him," not having our own righteousness, but covered over with His righteousness. But the desire of the Apostle here is the object of the Christian, and this is Christ, always CHRIST, only CHRIST. Alas! How many have other objects, how many are occupied with lower objects!

Paul's spiritual gain

We have considered St. Paul's natural advantages, which he once considered his gains, but which he had learnt to count as loss. We now come to his real spiritual gain. In Philippians 3 we learn what this was, viz., "The power of Christ's resurrection." Paul knew he had died with Christ, and had risen with Christ, but he wanted to know (to get to know) what the power of Christ's resurrection was, what it meant to his own life and service. Too many are occupied with the church and its service; Paul wanted to be occupied with Christ's service, with the things of Christ. Even the Word of God is useless without Christ, for "the letter killeth." The one great reason of the lowness of Christian walk is that the eye is taken off from Christ, and rests on some lower object, either on one's self, or on others, or on one's service. Now Saint Paul's object was one (verse 13). "This one thing I do," whether he was resting or travelling, making tents or planting churches, Christ was his object (verse 10). At home or abroad, by sea or by land, by night or by day, alone or with others, "This one thing I do;" and this, remember, not as the Apostle, not as the enraptured Saint, but as the Servant, the one who addresses us in the words of the passages quoted.

Nor should we ever be satisfied with anything lower than this. True, we all fail sadly. Why? Why do we fail in other things? What were we told when we learned to write? "Look at the copy." The copybook had a line of perfectly-shaped letters printed at the top, we looked at it, and perhaps our first line was fairly well done, but what was our tendency? Each line we looked at the last we had written, instead of looking at the copy, so the writing grew worse and worse. This is our tendency in the spiritual life. We copy one another: we are copies of copies, instead of copies of Christ. No! Christ must be our object, and this includes all else. In this way alone can we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Ephesians 4:10).

Christ is our strength as well as our righteousness, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." This being so, it is our adversary's one aim to keep us from Christ. To accomplish this, he will occupy the sinner with his sins; he will occupy the penitent with his repentance; he will occupy the believer with his faith, as though it and not the Object of it were the ground of his salvation. He will occupy the servant with his service; and the saint with his holiness. It matters not what it is, anything can be used for the same end, and if the end is not gained by one thing it is by another: Christ is shut out of view.

How many Christians are taken up with something short of Christ! They are occupied with their holiness instead of with the Holy One; they are occupied with the promises instead of with the Promiser; they are occupied with the blessing instead of with the Blessor. And yet having Him we have everything. The promises of God "in Him are yea and in Him Amen." His holiness is mine. His blessing is mine. The full

occupation with a Heavenly Object will alone make us Heavenly without an effort. We have not to try to be this or that: we "beholding ... ARE changed" (II Corinthians 3:18). Nothing else will form our character. It is the object that forms the character; therefore let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus" (Hebrews 12:1,2).

And now, to help us and make us look to Christ we have a blessed Hope given to us, a hope in Christ. This will ensure our looking to Him. This brings us to the special object of Philippians 3. (See I Thessalonians 1:10, "to wait for His Son from heaven.")
3. The Christian's Hope -- To be like Christ (verses 20,21)
"Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our body of humiliation that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (verses 20, 21).

Here our hope is presented in a manner quite as characteristic as our standing and our object. If our standing is to be found in Christ, then our object is to know Christ, and our hope is to be like Christ. Our hope is not the glory of the Kingdom, but "the Saviour"; not the "Restoration of Israel," but Israel's King; and when we see Him, we shall be like Him (I John 3:1,2). That is the hope presented here.

Here we have a "body of humiliation," but we shall be changed. There we shall have a body like His own glorious Body -- for we shall be like Him.

Here we have a body in which we groan, but we shall be changed. There we shall be free from all sin and sorrow, for we shall be like Him.

Here we have a body of suffering and death, but we shall be changed, There we shall have a body of immortality and life, for we shall be like Him.

This is our hope. No sooner do we find ourselves in Christ as our righteousness, than we desire to know Him as our Object, and look for Him as our Hope.

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Crucified with Christ

by E.W. Bullinger

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

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Galatians 6:14,15).

These last words the Apostle Paul sums up his important letter to the churches of Galatia, and he emphasizes the great sum and substance, the essence and marrow of the Gospel of Christ, and of true Christianity. This is utterly and entirely opposed to the world and to the world's religion. The world is that which is opposed to the Father (I John 2:16). The world has always been willing to support religion, and even Christianity, provided it has been allowed to alter it, and adapt it, and put its own marks upon it. And

in all ages Christians have been willing to comply with this condition, and have allowed its sacred deposits to be tampered with.

To such St. Paul says, "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12). It was the fear of the world that constrained Christians to submit to circumcision. They allowed themselves to be made bad Jews lest they should be persecuted for being good Christians. "Marvel not," said Christ, "if the world hate you"; but His followers grew weary of being despised and hated, and so they listened to the world's overtures of peace, and accepted the world's terms to gain for themselves the world's security and luxury. But the world has ever broken its promise, and will yet break it more and more! "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." We cannot purchase peace with the world without losing peace with God. Its last work will be to strip and destroy that church, which has purchased peace at the cost of disobedience to the Lord and by compliance with the requirements of man!

St. Paul's counsel here is, that mere religion without Christ is nothing, is useless, is worthless. Circumcision is useless without Christ, and uncircumcision is useless without Christ, i.e., the old nature in any shape is nothing. Man's thought ever is that it is something, that something can be made of it. Hence no effort has been spared. In one age restraint has been tried, in another, liberty. In one age discipline cuts it down, in another, indulgence lets it grow. One school advises, and tries monasticism, another believes in the development of man, but no modification of the natural man will suffice; it must be a "new creation" (II Corinthians 5:17, R.V., margin).

We must be made new

Man must be made over again, made anew. This is the great point on which the Apostle lays such stress here. He says, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). There is a double reference in his words, when translated more closely, "Administer not to me your cuts." I need them not, I am crucified with Christ. It is not marks nor brands made by man upon the flesh that we want, but it is the brands of the Lord Jesus. He was crucified for us, "wounded for our iniquities," and those who are crucified with Christ have His marks on them, and to such can be said, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit (verse 18). This is the cry from Heaven to all who are crucified with Christ, this "grace" in them and with them is the "mark" and "brand" which the world will never countenance and approve.

The world threatens with loss all who are thus marked as the Lord's. But what says He to such? "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." "God shall supply all your need." We need not fear about not pleasing the world; Christ takes all excuses away. "Take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'what shall we drink' or 'wherewithal shall we be clothed?'... Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" (Matthew 6:31, 34). This is godliness, and godliness has the promise of this life as well as of that which is to come.

Thus we see that the Apostle's argument is based on the declaration of our Lord. We see that the only thing we can really glory in is the Cross of Christ, by which we are crucified to the world, because we are crucified with Christ, and this may mean perils and hardships. But there is a very important point connected with this matter -- and it is, that it is a very personal and individual concern. The Apostle says, "I and Me." "I am crucified with Christ... He gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20). This is the glory of the Gospel. The world talks about "man," and would deify "man"; but God, while he has condemned "man," saves "men." Men lose themselves in masses, and attempt to hide themselves in the multitude; but so soon as God speaks He separates one from the other, and deals with individual souls.

The Gospel does not deal with the masses as such; it takes out from the masses "a people for His Name." The Cross stands out in relation to all who are crucified with Christ. It is not that you have been born in a land where the Cross is honoured; it is not I that you have relations with a church that holds forth the Cross; it is not that you wear a cross, but that you are in living vital union with the crucified, so that you may say, "I have been crucified with Christ." Oh, what a wonderful expression! What a mysterious truth, when a lost sinner comes into the vital experience of it! Then for him these 1,800 years are blotted out, and he counts himself as being on Calvary in Christ.

So real is this great truth that the very crucifixion scene becomes part of our experience. In God's sight, in the Divine view, the saved sinner is identified with Christ. Everything he gets from God is in Christ. He is "chosen in Christ," accepted in Christ, redeemed in Christ, and represented by Christ. Not only is this

great fact and truth for every saved sinner, but in measure and in part the very experiences of Christ are ours. There is a sense in which they become true in our experience.

Rejection

Take, first, His rejection. He was "rejected of men," not rejected of the Father! No. We must make the distinction which the Scripture of truth makes. Not as is commonly said that the Father hid His face from the Son, but it was God against man. "Awake, O sword, against... the man that is My fellow" (Zechariah 13:7) -- "against the man," not against "My Son." "The Son of Man" was "rejected of men," and the penitent soul, the sin-convicted sinner, has this experience. The first thought of such an one is, "I am accursed before God." Never before has the sinner known the terrible weight of Divine rejection till the Holy Law of the Holy God is written by the Holy Spirit on the fleshy tables of his heart. He that has been crucified with Christ enters into the real positions and in measure and in part into the experience of the darkness which overspread the heavens when Christ as man hung upon the cross, being made a curse for us. The death due by the law is realised by such an one; conscience is now for the first time awakened; sin now for the first time is seen as that which separates from God; and the sinner loathes himself, as he thus enters into the first experience of what it is to be crucified with Christ.

Acceptance

But, secondly, there is, thank God, another experience. There is another view of the Cross of Christ, a Divine view, that of acceptance. If at His baptism and transfiguration the testimony of heaven was, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," surely it was so here when that Beloved One was accepted; for the holiness of God was then vindicated, the law of God was then honoured, the majesty of God was then magnified, and the same words are pronounced over every sinner who can say, "I have been crucified with Christ." The Father in heaven declares of Him and of every such an one, "My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," and this, just because he is "accepted in the Beloved." Oh what a mighty reality there is in this great truth! How great the merits of this Saviour who has thus stood in the sinner's place, that the sinner might stand in His! No wonder that of all such the Holy Spirit has written, "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." What a perfect satisfaction do we present! Who can measure the glorious answer to the law, the vindication of God's holiness, which the man (who a little while ago was a poor forlorn outcast sinner) brings before God, as soon as by grace he is enabled to say, "I have been crucified with Christ." Ah, this is light that will dissipate our darkness: all our bondage and fear would be instantly gone if we could only realize what it means to be "crucified with Christ."

His words become ours

But more than this is contained in the truth: not only Christ's acts and position are ours, but His words and utterances become in part ours. We know what it is to cry, "My God, my God, why has Thou forsaken me?" It is our cry of felt helplessness; it says, if God should cast us out for ever, "just and true is He." No reason can we find in ourselves, no ground for our acceptance can we find in our past living or present feelings. If saved at all, it must be by grace. and grace alone; and it shews that even this cry is the result of life which has been given; for though we cry, we say "My -- my God." This is the beginning of the end, all else is assured when we can say my God. But the full measure of our absolute unworthiness is never experienced by us until this life and light has been imparted. It was when God said, "Let there be light," that ruin and desolation was seen at its worst, and so it is with the sinner. Talk not about repentance or contrition as a preparation for coming to Christ, for if we "have been crucified with Christ," we will surely experience the horror of this great darkness, but it will be coupled with hope. "My God."

Then another cry, "It is finished." What a blessed confession is this for Christ and for us! He who is crucified with Christ may take it upon his lips, and claim it as his own. His salvation is finished, the work is complete and perfect, nothing can be put to it nothing can be taken from it. Of course, if we mean to be saved by our own merits it will never be finished, and if we hesitate to say this, it is a proof that we are trusting to our own merits. If we are seeking to be saved by anything we can produce, our rest will always be unrest. But if saved by Christ, in Christ, with Christ, "for Christ's sake," then it is presumption if we do not admit to their fullest extent such statements as these, "He that believeth hath everlasting life," "is passed from death unto life," "shall not come into condemnation." It is not presumption to claim these words, but it is presumption, and unbelief too, if we hesitate as saved sinners to confess them. Come, all ye that are going about to establish your own righteousness, all ye that are seeking some other way to the glory of God, listen to this joyful sound of a finished salvation for all who have been crucified with Christ.

The world and the crucified

We cannot follow all the other thoughts which gather round "Christ Crucified," but there are two other facts that we must not omit. The Apostle says, "By whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

(1). What is the relation of the world to the crucified? Ah, it wore a very solemn aspect as the Crucified looked upon it, and he who is crucified with Christ sees it in the same way (in part and in measure). This is more than a figure. What did Paul mean when he said, "If ye be dead with Christ" -- and "Ye are dead"? Not that we are actually dead, but judicially dead in God's sight, and therefore we are so to reckon ourselves. "If ye be dead with Christ," says the Apostle. "If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 2:20; 3:1-3). What does this language imply? We are to be blind and deaf and indifferent to the world, as was Christ upon the cross. We are in the world, indeed, but rejected by it, not of it. All the hum and distracting noises fell upon unheeding ears, as they rose from Jerusalem and were wafted by the winds towards Calvary! If we are crucified with Christ we shall know something of this experience; only remember always that it is the effect and not the cause of being thus crucified. We cannot crucify our selves, we cannot make ourselves dead. How did the Lord Jesus pray? "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). "Let me see life," says the man of the world, and he plunges into sin. "Let me see life," says the saved sinner, and he separates himself from sin. He only lives who is crucified and risen with Christ.

Joy and the crucified

(2). Those who are crucified with Christ know something of His sustaining joy. We are not left to imagine what this was, but we know that "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). Great were His sufferings, but greater still His joy. So it will be with us. This alone will support those who have been crucified with Christ. We shall never know the measure of His sorrow, but we shall know something of His joy. For a joy is set before us, and it will enable us to despise the shame and endure the suffering, and confess that "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17). Only those who have been crucified with Christ can truly say, "I live" (Galatians 2. 20), and I have the blessed hope of everlasting life. Can we say this? If we cannot, "What is our life?" Your life which you are living for yourselves? Let us not call this life. Let us not call our sinful pleasures joy. For what is our experience? Is it not a consciousness of a disappointed present, and a future without hope? Is it not a heart unsatisfied with earthly objects? Is it not a will at cross purposes with God's will? Do we call this life? Nay, call it what it is, death. Not dead with Christ, not dead to sin, but dead in sins.

May this testimony for the Crucified One quicken us together with Christ, that we may be able to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loveth me, and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

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"Abraham Believed God"

by E.W. Bullinger

"For what saith the Scripture? 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness'" (Romans 4:3).

In these words we have the essence of the Gospel of God, and of His Grace. That Gospel is explained in Romans 1:1 to be the "Gospel of God." God's Good News; and faith cometh by hearing it. This is the Gospel that Abraham believed; he believed God; believed what God said. The patriarch's feet were firmly planted on God's ground; his eyes were fixed on God Himself. He had no shadow of doubt as to his possessing, in due time, all that God had promised. He did not hope it, still less did he doubt it, or go on asking for what God said He had given.

Oh! how few comparatively among the children of God really believe God, and without any reserve take this blessed ground of having died with Christ, of being risen with Christ, of being forgiven all sins, accepted in the Beloved, and sealed by the Holy Spirit! At times they hope it; when all goes smoothly with them they can venture to speak hopefully, but when things go against them, they feel the working of the old nature, and at once they begin to reason about themselves, and to question whether after all they are in reality the children of God. From such reasonings the passage to despondency and despair is an easy one.

All this is destructive to peace, because it is dishonouring to God. It is impossible to make progress in this condition. How can one run a race if he is not sure whether he has started? How can one erect a building if he has not laid the foundation? How can any one grow in grace if he is in doubt whether he has life, or has been "planted"? But some may ask, "How can I be sure about this? How may I know that I am saved?" The answer is, How do you know that you are a sinner and need saving? Is it because you feel you are one? Possibly so, but feeling is not a ground of faith; faith that is based on feeling is not a Divine faith at all. "Faith cometh by hearing." Faith must have respect to a promise not to a feeling. True faith rests on the testimony of God's Word. No doubt it is by the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit that any one can exercise this living faith, but we are speaking now of the true ground of faith, the authority for faith, the basis on which alone it can rest, and that surely is the Word of God, which is able to make wise unto salvation without any human intervention whatsoever.

Religion versus Christianity

There is scarcely a point on which Religion is more opposed to Christianity. Religion makes the word of God of none effect by its tradition and its superstition, and is thus in direct hostility to the truth of God. Religion has to do with the flesh; it admits that there is a Divine revelation; but it denies that anyone can understand it save by the interpretation of man; or, in other words, the Word of God is not sufficient without man's authority. God has spoken, but I am told I cannot hear His voice or understand His Word without; human intervention. This is Religion!

Infidelity, on the other hand, boldly denies a Revelation; it does not believe in such a thing. Infidels can write books, they can tell us their mind, but (so they say) God cannot! But where is the difference between denying that God has spoken, and maintaining that He cannot make us understand what He says? Both are alike dishonouring to God. Both deprive man of the priceless treasure of His Word. Both exalt the creature and blaspheme the Creator. Both alike shut out God, and rob the soul of the foundation of its faith.

This has ever been the device of the enemy, to quench the light of inspiration, to plunge the soul into the darkness of infidelity and superstition, to set aside the authority of the Word of God by any means in his power. He cares not by what agency he gains this end. Witness how he brought about the Fall by casting doubt on the Word of God. "Yea, hath God said?" It is therefore very important for us to seize this great fact which is brought out in our text, "Abraham believed God." Here was Divine faith. It was not a question of feeling or Religion. Indeed, if Abraham had been influenced by his feelings he would have been a doubter instead of a believer. For what had he in himself to build his faith on? "His own body now dead" (verse 19)? A

poor ground surely on which to base a faith in the promise of an innumerable posterity. But we are told that "he considered not his own body now dead." What then did he consider? The Word of the living God, and on that he rested. This is faith.

Written for our sake

Mark what the Holy Spirit says of him. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief... therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (verses 20-22). Ah, but the anxious one may say, "What has all this to do with my case? I am not Abraham! I cannot expect a special revelation from God. How am I to know that God has spoken to me? How can I possess this precious faith?" Mark the answer to these questions in the Spirit's further words in verse 23. "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also. if..." If what? If we feel it? If we realise it? If we experience anything in ourselves? Nay! But "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Oh! what solid comfort is here, what rich consolation! It assures the anxious one that he has the self-same ground and authority to rest upon that Abraham had, with much more light than Abraham had. For Abraham was called to believe God's Word as to what He promised, whereas we are privileged to believe in a fact which God has accomplished. He was called to look forward to something yet to be done; we look back at something that has been done, even an accomplished redemption attested by the fact of a risen and glorified Saviour, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

But as to the ground or authority on which this faith is to be based, it is the same in our case as in that of Abraham -- the Word of God. So it is written, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." There is no other foundation for faith but this; and the faith that rests on any other foundation is not true faith at all. A faith resting on human tradition, or on the authority of a Church, is not Divine faith; it is a mere superstition, it is a faith which stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God (I Corinthians 2:5). It is impossible for us to overstate the value and the importance of this grand principle, the ground of a living faith. This is the Divine antidote to all the errors, evils, and hostile influences of the present day. There is a tremendous shaking going on around us, and it will grow worse. Minds are agitated; disturbing forces are abroad; foundations are being loosened; institutions are tottering; souls which found shelter in them are being dislodged and know not whither to turn. Confusion and judgment is written on all things ecclesiastical and political.

What do we need?

What is the one thing that we need? Simply this. A living faith in the living God! This is what is needed for all who are disturbed by what they see without, or feel within. Our unfailing resource is this, trust in a living God, and in His Son Jesus Christ, revealed by the Eternal Spirit in the Scriptures of Truth .

Here is the resting-place for faith. Here we solemnly exhort you to stay your whole souls. Here we have authority for all that we need to know, to believe, and to do. Is it a question of anxiety about your safety? Hear the Divine words, "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scriptures: Behold I lay in Zion a Chief Corner Stone, elect, precious,

and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (I Peter 2:6). What solid comfort is here, what deep, settled repose! God has laid the foundation, and that foundation is nothing less than His own Eternal, co-equal Son. This foundation is sufficient to sustain all the counsels of God, to meet all the needs of the soul. Christ is God's own precious, tried, Chief Corner Stone. That blessed One who went down into death's dark waters; bore the heavy judgment and wrath of God against sin, and robbed death of its sting, and, having done this, was raised from the dead, was received up into Glory, and is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the Heavens. Such is God's foundation to which He graciously calls the attention of every one who really feels the need of something divinely solid on which to build, in view of the hollow and shadowy scenes of the world, and in prospect of the stern realities of the future.

God has spoken!

Dear reader, if this is your position, if you have come to this point, be assured that it is for you as positively and as distinctively as though you heard a voice from Heaven speaking to your own very self. In spite of sin in all its forms, and in all its consequences, in spite of Satan's power and Satan's malice, God has spoken! He has caused His voice to be heard in this dark and sinful world, and what has He said? "Behold, I lay in Zion... a foundation!" This is something entirely new! It is as though our blessed, loving and ever-gracious God had said to us, "Here I have begun anew, I have laid a foundation, and I pledge My word that whosoever commits himself to My foundation, whosoever rests in Mine Anointed, i.e., in My Christ, whosoever is satisfied with My precious, tried, Chief Corner Stone, shall never, no never, no never, be confounded, never be put to shame, never be disappointed, never perish, world without end!" Oh, how blessed, how safe, how secure! If there were any question raised, any condition imposed, any barrier erected, you might well hesitate. If it were made a question of feeling, or experience, or of anything else that you could do, feel, be or produce, then you might justly pause, but there is absolutely nothing of the sort. There is the Christ of God, there is the Word of God, and what then? "He that believeth shall not be confounded."

In short, it is no more and no less than believing what God says, because He says it! It is committing your self to the word of Him that cannot lie. It is doing exactly what Abraham did. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." It does not say Abraham understood God, because he did not; nor that Abraham believed something about God, but Abraham believed God, i.e., what He said. Thus he lived in peace with God, and died in the hope of Resurrection, of a Heavenly City, of a Heavenly Home. It is resting on the immovable rock of Holy Scripture, and thus proving the Divine and saving virtue of that which never failed any who trusted to it, never did, and never will, and never can. Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of having such a foundation in a world like this, where death and decay and change are stamped upon all, where friendship's fondest ties are snapped in a moment by death's rude hand, where all that seems (to nature's view) most stable is liable to be swept away in a moment by a popular Revolution, where there is absolutely nothing on which the heart can lean and say, "Now I have found permanent repose." Oh! what a mercy in such a scene to have a living faith in the living Word and in the written Word of the living God.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,

I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

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<http://www.posword.org/pwm/>

Following Hard

by E.W. Bullinger

"My soul followeth hard after Thee; Thy right hand upholdeth me" (Psalm 63:8).

The title of this Psalm ("A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah" -- KJV) tells us that even in Canaan, though a fruitful country, there were wildernesses. But though David was in a desert, there was no desert in him; for he thirsted for the living God. The whole Psalm is one of the most beautiful in the Psalter. It has been said of it by Donne, that "as the whole book of Psalms is as ointment poured forth upon all sorts of sores -- a cerecloth that supple all bruises -- a balm that searches all wounds -- so there are some certain Psalms that are imperial, Psalms which command all affections -- universal Psalms that apply to all necessities... The spirit and soul of the whole book of Psalms is concentrated into this one."

Truly we do find described many of the exercises, the trials and the changes to which the living children of God are subject. David found that the path of his earthly pilgrimage was one of tribulation; but in the midst of all his darkness, difficulties and doubts, he found a secret something cheering his heart, and keeping him from despair. Though the dark shade of his manifold transgressions hung heavily upon his spirit, and the lowering cloud of perplexing providences wrung many a bitter cry from his heart, yet hope, sweet hope, sought in the gloom for one ray, however faint, of heavenly satisfaction in his God.

This Psalm is divided into two parts:

Those who seek after God (verses 1-8);

Those who seek the soul of God's Servant (verses 9-11).

The first eight verses are divided into 7 members (alternated).

Four showing God's goodness and a consequent resolve, alternating with three, of which the writer himself is the subject. Our text is part of the last of these four -- Goodness and Resolve.

I. Thou art my God,
Early will I seek Thee;

II. Thy lovingkindness is better than life
My lips shall praise Thee.

III. God satisfying with marrow and fatness;
My mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.

IV. God helping and upholding,
My soul rejoicing and following.

May this gracious God be our Teacher, and warm our cold hearts with His love, and cheer us with Heavenly light, while we consider the beauties of these verses.

We have four subjects, each of which we may describe by a word beginning with "D". David's Darkness, Desire, Determination, and Delight.

David's Darkness

Oh! what a mine of experimental truth. How well it agrees with those Scriptures which describe the heartfelt trials of God's children! Often in their feelings they are at a distance, and question whether God has really anything to do with them or not. But the very cry, the very anxiety, is the strongest proof we can have that this felt distance would not trouble us except God Himself had come near to us in His Grace. It is a glorious fact that no trial, no tribulation, no temptation, however fierce, no way, no work, no warfare, however desperate, can make us feel that we have nothing to do with God. We often wonder how God can have anything to do with such unworthy sinners, but we also realize that we must have to do with God.

The heart charged with its bitterness heaves the heavenward sigh, and desires, and cries after the only object that can truly satisfy it. Now David's experience in verse 1 springs from this fact. He sought for God because no refreshment could be found. The land was barren, the clouds were dark. Hence his resolve -- "Early will I seek Thee." In Hebrew these five words are expressed by one word, shah-char, which means to break, cleave, break through. Hence the noun means the dawn, the breaking forth of light, and the verb gets an additional idea of breaking forth, hence to seek carefully or earnestly. In our text the two thoughts are united. Similar is the teaching (though not the same word) in Psalm 46:5 (marg.), "God shall help her, and that right early." What volumes do these words contain for Israel and Jerusalem in the future, and for all anxious waiting souls now!

In the dark and dreary nights of trial which we are called to pass through, we wait and watch for the day's return. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning" (Psalm 130:6). As surely as God's children experience the darkness of the Wilderness, so surely will God help, defend, and comfort them with the morning of His appearing. Yes! God's deliverances are "early". Look at Exodus 14:24-27. The children of Israel are in straits. They know not what to do. The enemy is in hot pursuit, but "in the morning-watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of the fire and the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians." The Lord looks destruction on His enemies; but He looks mercy and deliverance to His own. Israel's enemies are dismayed and destroyed, while the Redeemed of the Lord break forth with songs of deliverance, and joy, and gladness.

So with Hezekiah, when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, sent his blasphemous letter. Hezekiah made no stir, marshalled no forces, but went up to the house of the Lord. What was the result? "When they arose early in the morning they were all dead corpses" (Isaiah 37:36). Ah! it is blessed (and it will ere long be blessed for Israel), after a long night of darkness and sorrow, to behold the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

And why did David long to see God's power? (verse 2). Because his own fancied strength was gone! The collect for the second Sunday in Lent exactly expresses David's mind. "Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves, keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts

which may assault and hurt the soul, through Jesus Christ our Lord." David knew that his own strength was perfect in weakness. He, like Paul, gloried in his infirmity, that the power of Christ might rest upon him.

And why did David long to see God's glory? Because God had stained all his pride, marred all his beauty, divested him of all boasting and self-glorying. Because the lovingkindness of God was better to him than life, David would praise Him with joyful lips. These were David's experiences, expressed, not only here, but in Psalm 119:25, where he says, "My soul cleaveth unto the dust, quicken Thou me according to Thy word." With so firm a foundation as Jehovah's word, he could look up and say, "Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth" (Psalm 71:20). David's faith was for the night as well as for the day, for the storm as well as for the calm. That is a faith which is worth having, a faith to live in, and a faith to die in.

David's Desire

"Thee" -- "after Thee"; nothing else could satisfy David's heart but David's God. He had a heart for God, and Oh! wondrous mercy, he had God for his heart, though he did not realize it as he would. This is the essence of true faith; it is all in a Person. This is the essence of the Gospel. The Gospel of God is concerning His Son -- "A Saviour, Christ the Lord." "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." This, I repeat, is the work of grace. All short of this is only religion, and you see it at every step. What is man (unregenerate man in search of? Pleasure, Fame, Reputation, Power, Riches, a name in the world. Man will have anything, everything, without God. So also with the religious man! He will have his creed, his sect, his belief, his responsibility, his zeal and his earnestness, but if he have not Christ he will be lost though he have all the appliances and all the forms and ceremonies of religion. What are these things to nay heart, without a knowledge of God in Christ as my God? Nothing but deception and delusion.

So with the true Christian. The temptation is ever to add something to Christ, as if He were not enough, or to substitute something for Christ as if He were not necessary, instead of being All in all. We are told to seek "'the blessing." But blessings without Christ are so many burdens which our poor, proud nature cannot carry. No! If Christ is our one object, then we have the Blessor with us, with all His Blessings with Him, making them to abound in us for our good and for His glory. We are told to rest upon the many "exceeding great and precious promises"; but promises without the Faithful Promiser to make them good in our experience, are but so many words -- meaningless words to make our hearts ache with an unsatisfied longing. "That I may know Him" was the prayer of the Apostle. "That I may know Him" will be the desire and prayer of every Spirit-taught child of God. Yes, Spirit-taught; for look at the first verse of the Psalm, "'My soul thirsteth for Thee." Now compare this with Psalm 65:9, "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it"; but see the rendering in the margin, "After thou hadst made it to desire rain." This brings us to...

David's Determination

"My soul followeth hard after Thee." The original word is dah-vak, which means literally to stick to, cleave to (as with glue). "My bones cleave to my skin " (Psalm 102:5). "My soul cleaveth to the dust" (Psalm 119:25). "I have stuck unto Thy testimonies" (Psalm 119:31). "The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth unto the roof of his mouth for thirst" (Lamentations 4:4). But here it is with the preposition "after," and therefore "followeth hard after," suitably supplies the

ellipsis and exactly expresses the meaning. Boaz says, "Abide here fast by my maidens" (Ruth 2:8). The word dai-vak occurs in Proverbs 18:24, "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." David means, therefore, that he followed after the Lord, not at a distance, but having overtaken Him, he abode fast by Him.

There is everything to make the child of God do this: a world at enmity with Him; the devil at constant war with Him; a deceitful heart that cannot believe in Him; a cowardly self that will not acknowledge Him. Truly my soul followeth hard after Him; we long to breathe our desires to Him; but the flesh is weak, and language is lame, and ability is wanting. We would live a life of praise to the God of all our mercies, but we cannot do the thing that we would. We desire that love should burn more fervently, but the flames break not forth as we would have them. It is a following hard after God; it is our determination. It is our "toiling in rowing," but Jesus Christ is on the mount of intercession, and soon He will come and bless His toiling ones with His own presence, with the full enjoyment of the peace and quietness which He now deals to them only in measure. Lastly, we come to...

David's Delight

"Thy right hand upholdeth me." This is closely connected with the other experience, for why do we cleave to the Lord? Because the Lord cleaves to us, and holds us. We have the same word in Genesis 2:24. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." The comment of the Holy Spirit on this is in Ephesians 5:32. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." It is not, then, we who cleave to Christ, but it is Christ who cleaves to us. "Thy right hand upholdeth me." This is the secret of David's determination to cleave unto the Lord. Were it not for the unseen hand of Jehovah, there would be no following hard.

Now it is all explained. David's desire is now understood. The world does not understand these blessed spiritual realities. The world represents the poor seeker who would follow after and find God, as a weak woman struggling in the water, and trying to get hold of a cold lifeless rock, and in danger of being washed away by the very next wave. The Holy Spirit of God here represents her as a poor, weak vessel indeed, but held fast in the loving embrace of the living God Himself! Oh what a distance between man's imagination and God's revelation! This is David's delight here. Not Satan's subtlety, nor Saul's cruelty, nor his own infirmities, nor all of them together are of sufficient force to cut asunder this anion with Christ! The cleaving of David's spirit was the work of the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, it was the cleaving of the Heavenly One Himself. A union of the Lord's making is altogether incapable of the devil's breaking.

But there's more in this "right hand of the Lord." It is a beautiful figure. "The right hand of the Lord is exalted... doeth valiantly" (Psalm 118:16). This is the Lord who, having saved His people from their sins, now lives ever lives to make intercession for them, and at God's right hand is pledged to deliver them from all trial, tribulation, and temptation. David knew this. Hence his prayer, "That Thy beloved may be delivered, save with Thy right hand, and hear me" (Psalm 60:5). As salvation was accomplished by the Lord Jesus, so it is applied by the Holy Spirit; and what a mercy it is to know that all our wants, all our joys, are in the right hand of our risen and exalted Saviour! Blessed with the knowledge of this, the redeemed of the Lord can say, "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done

marvellous things. His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory" (Psalm 98:1).

He who triumphed over all our foes will protect and defend us from them until our life's end. But he will teach us to bless and praise Him for His grace, His goodness, and His gentleness, as did the sweet singers of Israel: "Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy right hand hath holden me up, and Thy gentleness hath made me great" (Psalm 18:35). Well may we, poor doubting, fearing, trembling ones, whose daily cry is, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" (Psalm 119:117), apply and feed on this precious promise for our spiritual comfort and refreshment. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

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The Great Cloud of Witnesses (Introduction and chapter 1) by E.W. Bullinger

Introduction

The Scope of Hebrews Eleven

Reckoning by Faith (verse 3)

Faith (cometh) by Hearing

Hearing (cometh) by the Word of God

1. Abel: Faith's Worship of God

The Two Ways of Access

The Two Ways of Worship

Abel's Faith: The Witness God Bore

Abel's Faith: The Witness Abel Obtained

Abel's Faith: "The Blood of Abel" and "The Way of Cain"

1. The Scope of Hebrews Eleven

We trust that our readers are by this time duly impressed with the fact that we must not give an interpretation of any passage of Scripture, or even a chapter, apart from its context.

We have learnt also that the Scope of the passage must be gathered from its Structure. In other words, we must know what it is all about before we can find a clue to the meaning of the words: and we can find this out only by getting the Structure of the whole context.

As our subject here consists of a complete chapter, will be necessary for us to see the exact place in which it stands in relation to the Epistle as a whole. We must therefore give the Structure of The Epistle to the Hebrews as a whole: --

A i. ii. Doctrinal Introduction.

B iii:1 -- iv:13. The Mission of Christ.

C iv:14-16. General Application.

("Having therefore.") Boldness of access to God in heaven.

B v:1 -- x:18. The Priesthood of Christ.

C x:19 -- xii:29. Particular Application

("Having therefore.") Boldness of access to God in heaven.

A xiii. Practical Conclusion.

The first thing we learn from this Structure is that the chapter we are to consider has not been "rightly divided" by man.

Its subject does not begin at the first verse of chapter 11, but at the nineteenth verse of the previous chapter (chapter 10), the member of which it forms part. That is to say, it begins at chapter 10:19 and ends with chapter 12:29.

Hebrews 11 therefore comes in the middle, and forms part of a larger portion of the Epistle. Consequently no exposition of it can be complete which treats it as beginning only at chapter 11:1. We must go back to chapter 10:19 if we would see the part it bears in relation to the whole.

The commencement of this member, C, is marked off by the catch-words "Having therefore;" these are the same words which commence the corresponding member C (chapter 4:14-16). The former of these two members (4:14-16) contains the conclusion which follows from the establishment of the argument concerning The Mission of Christ (chapter 3:1 -- 4:13); while the latter (chapters 10:19 -- 12:29) contains the conclusion which follows the argument concerning The Priesthood of Christ (chapter 5:1 -- 10:18).

It will be necessary now for us to note the Structure of the second of these conclusions, so that we may, by its being broken up, see what is the scope of the whole, and what is the special place of the chapter we are to consider.

Each of the large members given above has its own proper and peculiar Structure, and is capable of being expanded, and of having its various-sub-members exhibited to the eye. The sub-structure of C (chapter 10:19 -- 12:29) is as follows:

C Particular Application of chapter 5:1 -- 10:18.

D x:19-25. Exhortation to draw near to God, and to "hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering," because Christ the High Priest is accessible in heaven and "faithful that promised."

E 10:24-25. Duties as brethren, to endure exhortation.

F 10:26-31. Warning in view of God being "the living God."

G a 10:32-37. Exhortation to patience, in view of the promise.

b 10:38,39. Living by faith.

G b 11:1-40 Examples of living by faith.

a 12:1. Exhortation to patience in view of the examples of faith in the promise.

D 12:2-3. Exhortations to look away from the above examples to Jesus, the Foremost and Last "example of faith," because He endured, and is accessible in Heaven.

E 12:4-54. Duties as sons, to endure chastening.

F 12:25-29. Warning, in view of God being "a consuming fire."

From the above Structure we see the true place of chapter 11.

We see also the true place of the member "G b," and the relation in which it stands to the context.

The Scope of the whole passage is an exhortation to patient endurance in view of the promises. This exhortation is based on the faithfulness of the Promiser (10:23), and the examples of faith are shown in those who "lived by faith" (chapter 11.)

The pivot on which the whole turns is the quotation from Habbakuk 2:4, "The just shall live by faith."

This is quoted three times in the New Testament, and each time the emphasis is on a different word:--

Romans 1:17. "The just shall live by FAITH." (Hebrew: The just shall live in (or by) his faith [or faithfulness].

Galatians 3:11. "The JUST shall live by faith."

Hebrews 10:38. "The just LIVE by faith."

In the first of these (Romans 1:17) the subject is Faith or Faith-principle as being the principle of Justification, in God's Gospel, which is there being revealed.

In the second (Galatians 3:11) the subject is Justification, which is by Faith-principle in contrast with law-principle.

In the third (Hebrews 10:38) the subject is Living by faith in God's promises, so as to be able to wait and watch with patient endurance.

This is the subject of Habbakuk 2:1,3,4, which begins "I will stand upon my WATCH, and set me upon the tower, and will WATCH what he will say unto me ... For the vision is yet for an appointed time... But at the end it shall speak, and not lie: Though it tarry, WAIT for it; Because it will surely come, it will not tarry ... The just shall LIVE through his faith."

This context is clear. Faith in God's word can alone enable us to wait with patience for the fulfilment of His promise.

This is the burden of the context of Hebrews 11, and hence, in Hebrews 10:37, the third verse of Habbakuk 2 is quoted as well as verse 4, while, in Romans and Galatians, this verse (verse 3) is not quoted; because patient waiting is not the burden and object of the context in those two quotations of Habbakuk 2:4.

The exhortation (Hebrews 10:32-37) is to patient waiting through faith: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Then it goes on to quote Habbakuk: "for yet a little while," etc.

The whole burden of Hebrews 11 is the patience of those who endured by faith, "not having received the promise" (verse 13); and of those who, "having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise" (verse 39).

Now we are prepared to understand and appreciate (1) The Definition of Faith in verses 1-3, and (2) The Exemplification of Faith in verses 4-39.

In Hebrews 11:1 faith is defined as being

"The FOUNDATION of things hoped for,
The CONVICTION of things not seen."

There is no question as to the meaning of the word rendered "substance" in the A.V.; which, in the margin, gives "ground, or confidence," as an alternative.

In the R.V. it is rendered "assurance," with "giving substance to" in the margin. The word is hypostasis, a setting or placing underneath. Hence, its primitive meaning is foundation. The rendering "substance" comes from the Latin, sub stans (standing under). In the Papyri it is used of title deeds.

We all hope for many things, but the question is, What foundation or ground have we for our hope? What are our title deeds? All depends upon this.

As to our hope for eternity, it all rests on the faithfulness of God's promise. If there be no God; or, if His promise be not true, then we have no foundation whatever for our hope; all is baseless.

Everything, therefore, depends upon the fact that God has spoken, and that what He has said is true.

Hence, the definition of faith in Romans 10:17:

"Faith cometh by hearing, And hearing [cometh] by the word of God."

If we have heard nothing, there can be nothing to believe. There is neither place nor room for faith. We may think it, or imagine it, or hope for it; but we cannot possibly believe it, because we have not heard anything about it. Our hopes and thoughts and imaginations are all vain, being without any "foundation."

Hence, of Abraham's faith, the "father of the faithful," it is said, "Abraham believed God"

God had spoken; Abraham had heard; and he believed God.

What he had heard came "by the word of God: and his faith came by this hearing."

Abraham believed what God had said; God had "caused him to hope;" and hence, believing God, his faith in God's Word was the foundation or ground of that for which he hoped.

None can hope in vain who believe God.

This is why the common question, Do we believe? is so senseless. The real question is, not Do we believe? but WHAT do we believe? or rather, WHOM do we believe?

We believe many things that man says, and that man promises. But the question is, are they true?

It is not a question of the sincerity with which we believe, but of the truth of what we believe.

The more sincerely we believe what is not true, the worse it is for us. This holds good in every department of life. If what we hear be not true, then, to doubt it, means our safety.

When we give ear to man, we can never be certain that what he says is true. But when we give ear to God, we can set to our seal that "God is true" in what He says; and that "He is faithful" in what He promises. Faith is hearing God and believing what He says. This is the simple definition. But there are various expressions connected with this faith.

It is used with the preposition "in". This means that our faith rests in the truth of what is said (Mark 1:15, etc.). It is the same when used with the Dative of the person.

It is used with "upon", which means that faith rests upon what we hear; and that what we hear is the foundation upon which our faith rests (Romans 9:33; 10:11, etc.).

It is used with "unto", which means that faith goes out to, and is directed to Him of whom, or that of which we hear (John 2:11; 3:16, etc.).

There can thus be no mistake as to the meaning of the first part of the definition of Hebrews 11:1.

As to the second: -- Faith is said to be "The CONVICTION of things not seen."

The A.V. renders this "evidence," while the R.V. renders it "proving," with test" in the margin.

The word is *elengchos*, a proof, that by which anything is proved or tested; logical proof, proof that conveys a satisfying conviction to the mind. Hence, this is the best meaning to give the word here. It is the conviction produced by demonstration.

In John 8:46 the Lord says, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" (not "convinceth," as in the A.V., but "convicteth," as in the R.V.); so in John 16:8, "When He [the Holy Spirit] is come, He shall convict the world in respect of sin," (not "reprove," as in A.V. margin,

convince), but convict, or bring in guilty. None could do this of Christ; but the Holy Spirit does this of the world. He brings it in guilty, and convicts it of sin. Why? For this very reason: "Because they believe not on Me."

This is the great sin. And this brings us back to our subject.

God hath spoken; and the sin is defined as not believing what He hath said: for He was the Living Word, and through Him we believe in the Living God.

Hence the opening words of Isaiah chapter 1, which is the great indictment of Israel's sin:

"Hear, O heavens,
And give ear, O earth:
For Jehovah hath spoken."

This is the great fact for us who possess the Word of God. GOD HATH SPOKEN.

Do we believe what He hath said? This is the one abiding question. He has given to us, and made us exceeding great and precious promises. Do we believe Him? If we do, then, this faith is the "foundation" of all we hope for. It is the "conviction" of what we have heard but do not see. Thus Faith is the opposite of sight. Man says that "seeing is believing." This is one of his many fallacies. Faith is the demonstration to us of what we do not see. Hence, we live in, and by, this faith, "we walk by faith, and not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7).

What we see is what we know.

What we believe is what we hear.

Hence the examples of faith given us in Hebrews 11 are those who, having heard God, believed what He said. Every instance of faith in this chapter comes under the category of "things hoped for," or of "things unseen."

Noah believed the truth of "things not seen as yet" (verse 7).

Others by faith saw the promises "afar off" (verse 13). Moses "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (verse 27).

This is faith. This was Abraham's faith. He "rejoiced to see Christ's day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). But he saw it, by faith, "afar off".

2. Reckoning by Faith (Verse 3)

Having given the true definition of faith, the Apostle proceeds to give examples of it; showing how men of God in past days lived by it: i.e., how they conducted their lives according to it.

Those whom he calls "the elders,"¹ in Heb. xi. 1, he speaks of as the "great cloud of witnesses" in ch. xii.

The scope of the whole passage (of which this chapter forms part) is, as we have seen, an exhortation to patience in view of the great tribulations these Hebrew believers were passing through, and of the faithfulness of God to His promises which He had made to them.

God's word was the foundation of all that they hoped for; His faithfulness was all that they had to rest upon.

He points his readers back to the great cloud of witnesses² who had borne such wondrous testimony to the power of a living faith in the living God: to those who had borne witness, not only in their faithful life, but in their martyr-death.

The word rendered "obtained a good report," in Heb. xi. 2 and 39, and "witnesses," in Heb. xii. 1, are cognate.

In the former chapter it is the verb, and in the latter it; is the noun. There is no word in the original about "good."

Verse 2 tells us that by (or through) this faith [of theirs]; or by such a faith as this, they were made witnesses (by God), or became witnesses (for God), and could thus be called, in chap. xii. 1, "a great cloud of witnesses," by faith in the promises which they had received from God, and believing what they had "heard."

They were enabled to bear such wondrous witness; and were strengthened to suffer, and conquer, and to wait patiently for the fulfilment of the promises which they saw, by this faith, "afar off."

It was this, and "by such faith as this," that their example was so necessary, and was such an encouragement for those to whom the Apostle was writing. The scope of the whole section is (as we have seen), an exhortation and warning against apostasy; and the words immediately preceding are, "We are not of those drawing back to destruction, but of faith, to the saving of the soul."

What it is to be thus, "of faith," is the subject of what follows in chapter xi. Faith has to do with that which is "not seen." The things we hope for are "not seen": as it is written: "Hope that is seen is not hope: for what any one seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for what, we do not see, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. viii. 24,25). It is to this patient waiting under trial that these Hebrew believers were being exhorted.

Faith is thus the opposite of sight (II Cor. v. 7). This is the essence of the whole of chapter xi. It begins, in verse 3, with the statement that the events which we see going on around us spring from things that do not appear, but from the fact that God rules and overrules, and that He has prepared and ordered the ages.

The word rendered "worlds" is not used of the created world, which is cosmos, or of the inhabited world, which is oikoumene; or of the ploughed and trodden earth, which is ge, but it is aion, age, which is here in the plural, and means ages, or dispensations. This is its proper rendering.³ It is by faith we perceive (nooumen) that the events we see happening around us do not happen by chance.

Even worldly wisdom can see this and say that "there is a hand that shapes our destinies"; that "things are not what they seem"; and that "we cannot judge by appearances."

We see Babylon replacing Israel, Medo-Persia rising up in the place of Babylon; Greece succeeding Persia; Rome succeeding Greece. To the human eye, all these things are seen merely as historical events, but faith can see beneath the surface. It can perceive what the human eye cannot see. It can see the things that are invisible. It can see the "things not seen." How? By "hearing," i.e., "by the word of God." And here, note that the word rendered "word" is not Logos (as in Psalm xxxiii. 6. Sept. xxxii. 6), but Rhema; i.e., not the creative Word, but the revealed words. By believing the prophetic words we grasp the fact that these ages were all foreknown to God, and all perfectly ordered by Him.

This is the force of the word rendered "framed," as may be seen by studying all its occurrences.⁴ It will be at once observed that in no other place is it rendered "framed," while all the other renderings taken together show that the best meaning to give the word in Heb. xi. 3 would be prepared, as in the previous chapter (Heb. x. 5). So that the sense of the verse would be, that while the events which we see with our eyes taking place around us do not happen by chance, as judging by appearances, or from the outward phenomena, they seem to do; but are prepared, ruled or over-ruled by God, who has, in His own

ordering, "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (Eph. i. 10); and orders all "according to the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11, compare R.V).

It is by faith in what God has revealed in the "faithful sayings" of the prophetic word that we perceive and "understand" this great fact which, to the outward eye of mortal man, is neither seen, nor understood, nor even acknowledged.

The rendering of the third verse, according to this, would be as follows:--

"By faith we perceive (by the word of God) that the ages were prepared, so that, the things we see, come to pass not from things that appear." That is, as we said above, as we walk by faith and not by sight, we understand that we cannot and must not judge by the outward appearances, because in one of His weighty "words" God has told us that He "seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. xvi. 7).

It was by such a faith as this that these elders knew that things were not what they seemed, and therefore did not judge by sight of the outward eye.

Though the Flood appeared to be delayed, and the unbelief of others seemed to be encouraged by it, Noah did not judge by those appearances, but believed the words of God as to "things not seen as yet."

It was by such faith as this that Abraham and Sarah, though at first staggered by the words of the angel, yet as soon as they "understood" that they were "the words of God" they considered not the outward appearances of their natural physical condition, but waxed "strong in faith," and believed God as to what they could not see.

It was by "such a faith as this" that Joseph did not consider the circumstances as they appeared to him in Egypt, but believed God as to their going up thence at the set time that He had prepared, even to the very year. It was by "such a faith as this" that Moses was not deceived by the outward splendour of his royal surroundings in the Court of Egypt, but voluntarily surrendered all; refusing the treasures; choosing the sufferings; and esteeming reproach for Christ as better than all. For he judged and "endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (verse 27).

But we must not anticipate.

The whole chapter and all its parts must be studied in the light of this third verse. It does not carry us back to Creation, and divert our thoughts into such a totally different channel; but, it lays the foundation in no uncertain way for all that is to follow.

This foundation has been hidden from the readers of the Word...

(1) By rendering aioness "worlds" instead of ages.

(2) By rendering hatartizo "framed" instead of prepared as in Heb. x. 5; "framed" being a rendering which is not given it in any other of the thirteen passages where it occurs.

(3). By rendering gegonenai "made" instead of happened, or came to pass, which is its usual meaning. There are words for creating and making, but this is not one of them.

It will be seen that verse 3 is not written to teach that there are "more worlds than one;" or that they were created out of nothing; but it is written to give us, at the outset, the secret of the elders' wondrous witness, which consisted in this; that they walked "by faith and not by sight"; and that, therefore, they did not look on the outward appearance or judge by outward phenomena; but, understanding that the ages and dispensations were all prepared by God, they rested

on the prophetic Word, and believed that He was overruling all for the accomplishment of His own counsels in them and through them.

1The word is used in its Hebrew sense ancients (zekutnim). See Isa. xxiv. 23, which thus implies the resurrection of those who are referred to, i.e., not older in age, but people who lived in olden times.

2The word is martus, and is always used of a judicial witness, or deponent; i.e., one who witnessed with his lips and not with his eyes. Hence the word comes to be limited, to-day, to the greatest of all such witness, a martyr's death.

The word for eyewitness is quite different. It is eoptis, a looker on, spectator.

3This is the sense in which aion is used in this Epistle (as elsewhere). See Heb. i. 3, where the verb poieo is used in the sense of appoint, as in chap. iii. 2. See also Heb. vi. 5, where it is used of "the age to come"; and Heb. ix. 26, where the first word "world" is cosmos) and means the created world, and the second is this word aion, age.

4Katartizo occurs in the following passages, and is rendered mend in Matt. iv. 21. Mark i. 19. Perfect (perfected, made perfect, be perfect, &c.), in Matt. xxi. 16. Luke vi. 40. II Cor. xiii. 11. I Thess. iii. 10. Heb. xiii. 21. I Peter v. 10; fitted, Rom. ix. 22; restore, Gal. vi. 1; framed, Heb. xi. 3; and perfectly joined together, in I Cor. i. 10; prepared, Heb. x. 5.

3. Faith (cometh) by hearing

In our last paper on this chapter we saw that the third verse was not a digression from the subject which the chapter had introduced, but it laid the foundation still deeper.

In verse 1 we have the definition of faith -- as to its nature.

In verse 2 we have fact that it was by the exhibition of such a faith as this that the elders obtained a good report. Having borne such witness themselves, they obtained witness from God, and thus became a great cloud of witnesses (ch. xii. 1) for our example and encouragement.

In verse 3 we are told that faith, in its nature, always has regard to the things which are not seen: and that those who exercise such a faith as this do not walk by sight; they do not judge by outward appearance, and they "understand" that the things we see do not happen from chance or from things of which the outward human eye takes cognisance.

But this to a certain extent is negative.

Before we pass on to the first example of these elders -- to the faith of Abel -- we must go deeper, and seek for some positive information as to the origin of "such a faith as this."

This is something beyond the definition of faith or its nature, characteristics, results, and manifestations.

Whence does it come?

To this question there is only one answer,
IT COMES FROM GOD

We read in Eph. ii. 8: "For by grace ye are saved through (i.e., by means of) faith: and this not of yourselves. [It is] God's gift; not of works, in order that not any one might boast."

This language is unmistakable, and will be thankfully received by those who do not stumble at the freeness of that grace (Matt. xi. 6).

If we go further, and seek to know how this gift comes from God, then we find the answer in Romans x.17, and here we have no verb. The A.V. and R.V. both supply the verb "cometh" in italics; and probably no better could be supplied.

The see the argument of the context of Romans x.17 we must go back to verse 13 ff. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear apart from one proclaiming? And how shall they preach if they be not sent? According as it standeth written, 'How seasonable [are] the feet of those announcing glad tidings of good things.'! [Isa. lii.7]. But not all obeyed the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith [ch. liii.1] 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' So then, faith [cometh] by hearing [the report], and the hearing [cometh] by means of the word of God."

Thus the manner in which faith cometh is graphically explained and illustrated. It believes that which comes from God. Hence it comes as "the gift of God."

In this seventeenth verse (of Rom. x.) there are three words which call for further notice.

The word rendered "hearing" is not the sense of hearing, or the act of hearing, but it is the matter which is heard. Hence in verse 16 it is rendered "report." "Who hath believed our report?" i.e., what they have heard from us.

The word is akoe. And what they had heard was concerning Christ, as is clear from the concluding words of the previous chapter (Isa. lii. 15). "That which they had not been told them shall they see (or perceive). And that which they had not heard shall they consider."

That which they had been "told" was about Christ,¹ and it came from God.

In Hab. iii. 2, we have the same word: "O Lord, I have heard Thy speech"; i.e., what Thou hast said. The Heb. is Thy hearing. (See margin).

In Gal. iii. 2., the Apostle asks, "Received ye the spirit? (i.e., the New nature) by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" i.e., by believing what ye heard from God through me (compare v. 5).

The next sentence tells us that, that which faith ("such a faith as this", Heb. xi. 2) believes cometh by hearing the "word of God".

The word rendered "word" here is not logos but rhema. This is important, and significant: for these words must be distinguished from each other.

The former means a word which is made up of letters; while the latter is an utterance which is made up of words. Hence it means saying, and includes the whole of what is spoken.²

Finally the word "by" in Rom. x.17 is not the same in both parts of the verse: "Faith [cometh] out of hearing." Here the word is ek, from or out of, denoting the source whence it comes. But when it says: "Hearing [cometh] by means of what God has said," the word is dia with the Genitive case, which denotes the cause, or instrumentality. We have no need to alter the translation so long as we understand and remember the significance of the two words, thus rendered "by".

From all this we learn that the faith that saves comes from God, because there can be no such faith at all apart from what He has spoken.

He is the first great cause of faith. Unless He had spoken there could have been no place for faith.

Now from Heb. i.1 we learn further that God has spoken "at sundry times and in divers manners." Or, according to the R.V., "by divers portions and in divers manners."

We may render the opening words of Hebrews thus: the Epistle begins: "In many parts and in many ways, of old, God, having spoken to

the fathers by the prophets, at the end of these days He spoke by His Son."3

This statement finds its illustration and explanation in our chapter.

God spoke to Abel, to Enoch, to Moses's parents, to Rahab and others, of which speaking we have no historic record given. We know that He must have spoken, or there would have been nothing for them to believe.

Furthermore, what He spoke to each was not the same; God spoke of many matters, as well as at many times and in many parts, and many ways.

What God spoke to Noah He spoke not to Abraham. He did not tell Noah to get him out of his own country and go into another. Nor did He tell Abraham to prepare an ark.

God spoke on many subjects, and each one who heard His words, and believed what He said, exercised saving faith and pleased God. For "without faith it is impossible to please Him."

We all love to be believed in what we say; and there is no surer way of giving offence to others than by disbelieving their word.

Now had we been called to make a list of the elders of old who had "such a faith as this," it is certain that we should not have selected the names as given to us in this chapter. We should probably have left out some whose names are here given; and we should have included others which the Spirit of God has omitted.

Our list would differ, because our object in forming the list would not be the same as the Divine object.

God, in His infinite wisdom, has caused the Chronological order to coincide with the Experimental order.

The Chronological or Historical order in which these elders lived, coincides with the Experimental order in which they are presented to us, because that is the order in which we are to learn the great lessons thus set before us.

Abel's faith is put first, not merely because he lived before the others, but because he believed God as to the first great fundamental truth that comes before all others: peace with God; access to God; worship of God; and all this through the blood of an accepted substitute.

We will not anticipate what we have to say on this; but mention the great salient points which distinguish this first group of three.

Enoch's faith comes next, not because he lived (for other of the Patriarchs must have had "like precious faith"), but because we are to learn the experimental truth that "two cannot walk together except they be agreed" (Amos iii. 3); and that we walk with God unless we can worship Him. We must know what it is to have "peace with God" before we can enjoy "the peace of God." Hence Atonement comes before Communion. Worship comes before Walk.

Noah's faith comes next, not because no others after Enoch believed God, but because we are learn, experimentally, that we cannot witness for God, unless we know what it is to walk with God.

It was because of this great eternal principle that we read of the Lord Jesus, that "He ordained twelve that they should BE WITH HIM -- and -- that he might send them forth to preach" (Mark iii. 14).

None can be "sent forth" by Him till they have been "with Him." We must know what it is to walk with God, before we can witness for God.

Thus, this first group of three elders lays down for us these three eternal principles. They are "written for our learning."

In Abel we have faith's WORSHIP.

In Enoch we have faith's WALK.

In Noah we have faith's WITNESS.

This order cannot be reversed or changed without disaster. Many try to walk with God who do not know what it is to enjoy peace with God: hence they try to be saved by their walk, instead of by faith through God's grace. Many try to witness for God who do not know what it is to enjoy a "walk with God."

But all this is doing; and it ends in death.

It is works, and not grace.

It is sight, and not faith.

Let us learn these great lessons which lie at the threshold of Hebrews xi. so that we may better understand the examples and illustrations that are given.

Before we consider these we have to look at the second part of Romans x. 17.

We have learned that "faith [cometh] by hearing." We have yet to learn that hearing [cometh] by means of what God has spoken.

1 Hence the various reading in Rom. x. 17, which the Revisers have adopted, and hearing [cometh] by the word concerning Christ". This reading is support by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregeller, and Alford.

2 See Luke i.38; ii.29; iii.2; v.5. John iii.34; v.47; vi.63,68. Acts v.20. II Peter iii.2.

3The Article not being necessary after the Preposition en, by.

4. Hearing (cometh) by the Word of God

In speaking of old times to the fathers by the prophets, God spoke in many parts and in many ways. He spoke in command, in warning, in expostulation, in reproach, in encouragement, in judgment, in prophecy, in promise, and in grace

Of those who heard, "some believed the things that were spoken, and some believed not," some obeyed and some were disobedient.

God also spoke at many times and on many subjects: and the faith of each one who believed what He said was exercised in a different direction.

In the case of Enoch we are not told what God said to him. From the remote context, the last Epistle of the New Testament (Jude 14), it would seem that it was about the coming of the Lord with all His saints. Whatever it was, Enoch believed God; and from the still remoter context, the first book of the Old Testament, we learn that His faith in this blessed fact resulted in His walk with God (Gen. v.21).

In the case of Abraham, God spoke in command and in promise. The command was to leave his own country; and the promise was that he should have a son.

In the case of the parents of Moses, God must also have promised a son; and must have so described him, that, when the child was born, they knew that it corresponded with what God had said.

In this way each speaking of God was the occasion of hearing, the hearing of faith.

The responsibility of each was to believe what was heard. The record concerning Abraham "the father of the faithful" is that, "by the hearing of faith... Abraham believed God, and it was accounted (or, imputed) to him for righteousness" (Gal. iii.5,6).

This must be the experience of all true believers. They must "believe God," and not man. They must believe what God says and has said; and not the traditions of men.

To "believe God" is not necessarily to believe or rehearse a "Belief."

The popular question, "Do we believe?" is thus seen to be as absurd as it is meaningless.

If we answer this by asking, "Believe what? Believe whom?" the emptiness of the question is at once exposed.

These are the questions for us to-day.

"ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD."

Do we believe God?

God has told us that there is "no good thing" in man (Rom. vii.18). Pulpit, Platform and Press, with one voice declare that there is some good thing in man. Whom do we believe?

God has told us that He created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein (Gen. i., Isa. xlv.18). Man tells that it was all evolved, apart from God. Whom do we believe?

The Lord Jesus said "no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John vi.65). Man says every man can come. Whom do we believe?

The Lord Jesus said, "God is spirit: and they that worship Him MUST worship Him in spirit " (John iv.24). Man says that worship must be by "acts of worship" which the flesh can perform. Whom do we believe?

The Holy Spirit declares that "there is one Body" (Eph. iv.2-4). Man makes and insists of having many bodies. Whom do we believe?

The Holy Spirit gives the solemn charge by Paul. "Preach the word... for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine" (II Tim. iv.2,3). That time has come, and man says that "Preachers must find something that man will endure," and "must preach something other than 'the Word.'" "We can afford to pay for it, why should we not have it?" Whom do we believe?

God declares that these last times are "perilous times" when "evil men and deceivers shall wax worse and worse" (II Tim. iii.1,13). Man says the times were never more full of promise for good; and are getting better and better every year. Whom do we believe?

"The spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons" (I Tim. iv.1). Man, in these "latter times", tells us on every hand that these are not "spirits" (i.e. evil angels) or "demons," but the "departed spirits" of human beings and we are exhorted and invited on every hand to "give heed" to them. Whom do we believe?

God said to our first parents "ye shall surely die" (Gen. ii.16). The old serpent said "ye shall not surely die " (Gen. iii.4). And all his "ministers" today with one voice repeat that lie, and teach it as God's truth. Their creed is expressed for them in the words --

"There is no death,
What seems so is transition."
Whom do we believe?

The Prophetic word declares concerning the resurrection of "the rest of the dead" that they "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Rev. xx.5). Man declares they are alive all the time without any resurrection. Whom do we believe?

The Holy Spirit declares that this world is a dark place, and that, the prophetic word being the only light in it, we "do well that we take heed" to it (II Pet. i.19).

The vast majority of preachers declare that the prophetic word is the "dark place" and we do well to avoid it. Whom do we believe?

God declares that " If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (I John i.9). The majority of Christians, though they habitually say with their lips, "I believe in the

forgiveness of sins," yet refuse to believe God, and tell us that "no one can ever know that he is forgiven." Thus, they "make God a liar," and say, practically, "Lord, I am not going to believe what Thou sayest in I John i.9, until I have some evidence in my own feelings, that what Thou sayest is true!"

They thus believe their own feelings, but refuse to believe God's pledged Word.

Which are we believing?

These examples might well be extended, and other illustrations might be found (notably I John v.12). For, inasmuch as Isaiah lv.8 is true, and man's thoughts and ways are the opposite of God's, we may always ask: Whom do we believe?

This was the question for Israel at Kadesh-Barnea. Moses had told the people how God had said: "Go up and possess the land which I have given you, but ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice" (Deut. ix.13).

We seldom think of the awe-inspiring solemnity of the words: "So we see that they entered not in because of unbelief" (Heb. iii.19).

God spoke to Israel and said: "Go up and possess the Land. Go up over the hill-country of the Amorites." It was a solemn moment; ever to be remembered.

"TO-DAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE"

They heard His voice that day. He said: "Go up. Enter into My rest. Yet, in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God" (Deut. i.32).

As those words of Psalm xcv. (called the Venite) are sung week by week (generally as rapidly as the words can be got out of the mouth), how few stop to think of the solemnity of their meaning! "Forty years long was I grieved with that generation!"

Yes! Forty years of wandering. And why? Because they believed the evil report of ten men, instead of two who witnessed to the truth of God's good report which HE HAD ALREADY GIVEN OF THAT LAND.

True, they did enter at last. After long years of wandering they crossed the Jordan on the East when they might have entered by the hill-country of the Amorites from the South 37½ years before!

And when Peter made the proclamation in Acts iii.19-21 and called on the nation to "Repent;" and gave God's promise that He would send Jesus Christ, and times of refreshing should come from the presence of the Lord; the people were at another Kadesh-Barnea! They were, again, face to face with another command, and promise of the Lord. And a way was open over (as it were) "the hill-country of the Amorites." This was the Parousia or Coming of the Lord, made known to faith in the first and earliest of all the Epistles of Paul, and made known by a special revelation in I Thess. iv.13--v.11.

This was something better than "the hill country of the Amorites," and it was far, far better than crossing by Jordan. For, this would have been a going up indeed! It was entering the heavenly Canaan without going through Jordan, "the grave and gate of death" to resurrection. This was a hope for those who were alive and remained.

That is why the Apostle could say: "WE, which are alive and remain": for, how was he to know but what the nation would Repent; and that he would really be among those who were alive, and would go up over the hill-country, yea, in the clouds of heaven, without dying, or crossing Jordan?

As I Thess. iv. was the Kadesh-Barnea of believers in that day, and Israel as a people did not thus "go up." So is Phil. iii.10,14,20,21, our Kadesh-Barnea "to-day, if we will hear His voice."

Thousands of Christians refuse to believe His voice. They agree in affirming that the only way of entering Canaan is by crossing the Jordan, the river of death. Some few of them go on to believe that it is by death and resurrection. But how few believe that "God has prepared some better thing for us."

In writing to the believers in Thessalonica in A.D. 52, while Peter's offer of the kingdom, made in Acts iii.19-21, was still before the nation, and before its formal withdrawal, in Acts xxviii.23-28, nothing could be added to the revelation then made in I Thess. iv.

But after that withdrawal of the offer from Israel, and the sending of the Salvation of God to the Gentiles, the question is, was any further revelation to be made? Had God exhausted the riches of His grace and of His glory? Had He nothing more to make known to His children?

May we not gather our answer to these questions from our Lord's words in John xvi.12, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Why could the disciples not bear them at that time? Because He was still alive. The corn of wheat had not yet fallen into the ground and died (John xii.24). Because He had not yet risen again from the dead. On those facts rested important doctrines. Until therefore the events had taken place, those doctrines could not be made known.

Was it not even so in the case of I Thess. iv? Had not certain events to take place before any fresh revelation of truth would be made known? Had not the formal withdrawal of Peter's offer to take place? and then, would not the way be open for further revelations to be made? Ought we not, reasoning from John xvi.12, to look for something fresh from the treasures of God's grace and glory? Surely we ought. And, if we do, we find that, when the Apostle was in prison in Rome, those revelations were given to him; secrets hidden from men for generations, and "hid in God," were made known: The great mystery or secret concerning Christ and the Church.

In that Roman Prison precious secrets were revealed for the Apostle's, and for our own comfort and faith and hope. And the question again arises:

DO WE BELIEVE GOD?

Shall we be like Israel at Kadesh-Barnea? Shall we believe God speaking through Paul as He spoke through Caleb and Joshua? Or shall we believe the majority, as Israel believed the majority of the spies?

Shall we say that when Paul wrote I Thess. iv. God had nothing fresh to reveal, in the face of the fact that up to that time we have not a breath of the mystery? Not a word as to the revelation and teaching given to us in Ephesians?

Did Paul himself know anything about it until he was inspired to inscribe it in his book and his parchments (II Tim. iv.13)?

Does not this tell us that the objects of our faith are WRITTEN DOWN in the Scriptures of truth, and not handed down by the traditions of men?

And did the Epistle to the Ephesians contain all that God had to reveal?

Is there nothing new in Philippians?

What is the resurrection and translation in Phil. iii.10, at which the Apostle so desired to arrive?

What is the "prize" of the "calling on high" (v. 14). The A.V. and R.V. have obscured this by translating it "high" as though it were an adjective; whereas it is an adverb, and should be rendered upward (as

R.V. margin) or on high. Was not the Apostle's goal conformity to Christ in glory?

Is this the same as I Thess. iv? or, Is it something additional? The whole context seems to show that the Apostle was reaching forth to something set before him, and forgetting the things behind him. He did not reckon that he had laid hold of it; but he pressed toward the goal. He had not already reached it, but he was following on so that he might lay hold of that, for which he was himself laid hold of by Christ Jesus

If we read carefully verses 10-15, may we gather that we have some fresh revelation of glory hinted at? and, Is it because we have been trying to identify it with I Thess. iv. that the passage (Phil. iii.) has always been more or less of a difficulty with all of us?

If, then, Faith cometh by hearing, what God hath spoken, let us "to-day hear His voice," that we may enter into His rest.

Chapter 1. Abel: Faith's Worship of God

1. The Two Ways of Access

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God Himself bearing witness to his gifts: and by it [i.e., by means of his faith which led to his martyrdom] he, having died, yet speaketh."

As "faith [cometh] by hearing " (Rom. x.17), Abel and Cain must both have heard what sacrifice they were to bring.

As hearing [cometh] by, and consists of, what we hear through the Word of God, Abel and Cain must both have heard from God.

Otherwise it would have been by fancy, and not by faith; and there would not have been room, either for obedience on the one hand, or for disobedience on the other.

We find further particulars on this matter in the history, as recorded in Gen. iv.

But first we have to notice the place where the history is written.

In the first chapter of Genesis we have the creation of man.

In the second chapter we have man in communion with God.

In the third chapter we have the Fall of man; and, at the end (v.24), we see man driven out from the presence of the Lord God.

In the fourth chapter we have the way back made known. This is the first thing that is revealed after the Fall. It stands on the forefront of revelation. It is no mere fragment of Hebrew folk-lore to be dismissed as an "old-wives'-fable." But it takes its place here, in God's revelation, as being the first and earliest event, not only in Chronological or Historical order, but as being the first in Experimental order also. It is the first great lesson that is written down in the Scriptures of truth -- " for our learning."

God must have spoken (as we have said) to Cain and Abel, concerning the manner in which He would be approached. He must have spoken of the way in which those who had been driven out might return back, and have access to Himself.

The lesson which is taught us by this first example of faith is that, Abel believed that which he had heard from God on this all important subject, and Cain did not believe God.

It is worthy of remark that in the Historical order in Gen. iv.3,4, Cain is mentioned first, and in the Experimental order in Heb. xi.4, Abel is mentioned first.

Cain is mentioned first, in the history, for he was the elder. He brought his "offering unto the Lord." He was not godless, as is often

represented. On the contrary he was most "religious," and the offering which he brought cost him much more than Abel's did. He sought access to the same Lord and looked for the same blessing as Abel did.

But the point is, that the way back which he took, was his own way: while the way which Abel took was God's way, which He had revealed and laid down.

Cain had heard the "report" as well as Abel, but he did not believe God. He invented what he must have supposed to be a better, or more excellent way.

"Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto Jehovah" (Gen. iv.3). But, that ground the Lord God had just before put under the curse for man's sin, and had said to Adam "cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. iii.17).

Cain, therefore, brought, as his offering to the Lord that which He had pronounced to be cursed."

Abel, on the contrary, brought of the firstlings¹ of his flock, and the fat thereof.

What was it that made Abel's a more excellent² sacrifice than Cain's?

Commentators have speculated much, and differed widely as to this. A variety of causes has been assigned.

But there is no room for more than one interpretation the moment we remember what the words "by faith" mean.

They mean that God had spoken; that Cain and Abel had heard; that Abel obeyed God and Cain did not!

The whole matter is perfectly simple. And the lesson it brings home to our hearts to-day is just as simple and clear.

It was a question, as we have seen, of believing what had been spoken as to

THE WAY BACK TO GOD

God's way back (which Abel took) was by sacrifice, by the death of a substitute, by the blood of Atonement.

Man's way back (which Cain invented) was "without blood"; and a way which he had devised out of his own heart. But, "without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin" (Heb. ix.22).

Cain might have brought his sin offering just as easily as Abel. It lay at his door (Gen. iv.7). (See R.V. margin); it was ready to his hand. If he "did well" he needed no sin-offering; and he would have been "accepted." If he did not well, and sinned, then God would have had respect to his offering as He had to Abel's.

No! it was the "New Theology" of his day: and it consisted in not believing what God had spoken; and in inventing a "New" way of his own.

In this lay his sin.

This is why God "had not respect" to his offering, however much Cain may have worked to produce it. The "sweat of his brow" could be no substitute for the "blood of the lamb."

In all this we are shown the great fact that there never have been but these "two ways" in the world's history.

However many and however various may be the religions of the world, all may be reduced to these two. Whatever may be the excrescences and eccentricities of man's imagination, there is always this "reversion to type" (as Evolutionists say).

Here we have the typical embryo of all the subsequent "History of Religions."

Man may hold his "Parliament of Religions," but when all his talking is done, there is a reversion to type, and we come back to these two primal facts, and to these two ways.

One is God's way, the other is man's,
One is by faith, the other is by fancy,
One is of grace, the other is of merit,
One is of faith, the other is of works,
One is Christianity, the other is Religion.

The one rests on what God has said, the other rests on what man thinks.

The one rests on what Christ has done, the other rests on what man can do.

These two words sum up and embody the two ways -- "DONE" and "DO."

As to what man is to "do" there is no end to the variety. In no sphere is evolution seen to such a remarkable extent.

Evolution is a solemn fact, but it is seen only in human affairs, because man has departed from God.

Nowhere else is evolution seen. Outside human affairs the evidences of evolution are non-existent: but it is, undeniably, the order of this present evil world where evil is found; for evil, like evolution, is not found outside man's world. There is no escape for man but God's appointment for him, and that is death. This is why it is Christ's work to "deliver us from this present evil world" according to the will of God, our Father" (Gal. i.4).

Evolution consists in unbelief and in departure from God. Hence it is that we see its germ first exhibiting itself specially in the religious sphere of human affairs. In the Divine sphere, whether in the animal or vegetable kingdoms, we look in vain for any trace of its action.

We see it working in the medical, legal, military, naval, artistic, and in every department of the scientific spheres, but it is in the religious sphere that it was first seen; and it is in Genesis iv., in the history of Cain and Abel, that God shows us its beginning. Jabal and Jubal, and Tubal-Cain and a generation of artificers soon followed in "the way of Cain" (Gen. iv.20-22).

"The way of Cain" was the first step in the evolution of Religion. Its developments and ramifications are to-day innumerable.

But in the way of Abel there has never been any evolution. Substitution and the shedding of blood remain the only way for "the remission of sins" to this present moment; and will remain the same to the end.

These are the Two Ways which are set before us here in Cain and Abel.

In the one no change has ever taken place; it is the only way back to God. Christ suffered "the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. iii.19) This is its end, and it is headed up in Christ. In the other, there has been nothing but change. Evolution has run its constant and persistent course, and will continue so to do until it reaches its end in the deification of man, and is headed up in Antichrist.

All who are in "the way of Cain" are labouring on behalf of man, and for man's improvement. They are ready with their own ideas as to what man must DO to be saved.

Whatever may be the varieties evolved from man's imagination they are all one in asserting that man MUST do something. Whatever their differences or their controversies, they all agree in that. Man must DO SOMETHING.

Man must be something, feel something, experience something, give something, pay something, produce something. He must be called and "registered" something. He must DO something.

They all insist on the last, however they may differ about the others. Where they do differ is only in what the something is to be. It is this which accounts for the vast number of different systems of religion which have been evolved in the world's history. All these are rightly called Religions. Even the Christian Religion is only one of them; and has as many Sects and Divisions as any of the others.

However many may be these differing forms, they are all one in Doing, while in true Christianity they are all one in Christ only.

Christianity is of God; and consists in a Person -- Christ; Religion is of man, and is carried on for man, and in his interests. It consists of men's Forms, and Rites, and Ceremonies, Articles, Creeds, Confessions, Doctrines, and Traditions, Churches and Chapels, and Synagogues, Halls, and Rooms.

If your something does not agree with that of others, then be careful, or you may be killed, as Abel was, by one of these Cains. For there is nothing in the world so cruel as Religion.

It was Religion that murdered Abel. It was Religion that killed the Prophets, Crucified Christ, and produced the noble army of Martyrs.

It was Religion and the strife of religious sects that delivered Jerusalem to the sword and power of Rome.

It was Religion that afterward wrested Jerusalem from Rome, and terrified Europe by the threatened advance of the Saracen's sword.

It was Religion that deluged the Holy Land with the blood of the Crusades.

It was the Religion of Pagan Rome that cried the Christians to the Lions.

It was the Religion of Papal Rome that gave Christians to the Stake; that invented all the tortures of the Inquisition; that sent forth Armadas with its instruments of torture, and has even since been engaged in foul Conspiracies, Plots, and Knavish Tricks in order to obtain and secure its ascendancy.

It is Religion to-day that lies at the root of, and pervades the world's political strife: and it is in the struggle for Religious supremacy in Rome Rule and Education that the greatest bitterness, envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness, are manifested and exhibited in the political controversies in the present day.

The question of I John iii.11,12, brings out the contrast between Christian love and Religious hate.

This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain [who was] of that Evil one, and slew his own brother. And on what account slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Cain's works were evil, because they were his own, and of the Evil one, who (in the previous chapter) had ruined his parents by the same unbelief in God's words. Abel's works were righteous, because they were "by faith," and according to what God required.

Hence Cain's hatred, and hence Cain's murder.

It will be found that Religion has shed more blood, and produced more sorrow and crying than all the wars and desolations caused by the politics and dynasties of the world put together. There have been, and still are, the wars of Creeds, as well as of Races.

There is more in the Margin of Gen. iv.10, than appears on the surface. The words of the Lord to Cain are full of significance: "What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's bloods crieth unto me from the ground." We must need explain this plural, "bloods."

In the ancient Jewish Commentary [The Mishna. Sanhedr. Cap. iv.,5.] we read: "He says not blood, but thy brother's bloods, i.e., his blood, and the blood of his posterities, his seeds."

The Targum of Onkelos explains it as "the voice of the blood of the generations which were to come from thy brother."

The Jerusalem Targum says "the voice of the blood of the multitude of the righteous who were to arise from Abel thy brother."

It seems, almost, as though the Lord Jesus meant the same when He said: "That upon you might come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias."

Whether these interpretations be correct or not, the fact remains most solemnly true that all these various Religions are one, in origin, in character, and outcome, and also in cruelty.

In the vital matter of Salvation they unite, and are ONE, in saying with one voice: --
SOMETHING in my hand I bring.

Whereas, in true Christianity, which is Christ, the convicted sinner proclaims the existence of the great dividing gulf, and says: --

"NOTHING in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

This puts nothing between the sinner and the Saviour; whereas it is the essence of all Religions to put something, whether it be a Priest, or Sacraments or Creeds, or Ceremonies of some kind or other. Something has to be said, or done, or believed, or felt, without which, they, as one Creed puts it,
"Cannot be saved."

This is the first great lesson which we learn from Abel's faith: --
" The Two Ways of Access."

In one of those two ways, each one who reads these lines, stands, to-day.

Either he is trusting to something instead of Christ, or to something in addition to Christ; or, he is trusting wholly in the merits of that Substitute whom God has provided, even the precious blood of that Lamb which "speaketh better things than that of Abel " (Heb. xii.24).

Footnotes:

1 This was the law of redemption, which was afterwards laid down in the Israel's legislation. See Exod. xiii.12; xxxiv. 18-20. Num. iii.46,47; xviii. 15,16, etc.

2 See Heb. iii.3, and compare Matt. v.20; vi.25; xii. 41,42. Mark xii.33; Luke xi.31,32; xii.23.

3 This is according to English Civil Law, and it is carried out except when a census is made. Then, Religious enmity and hatred step in, and will not allow it lest it should be shown that one predominated over the other. Without a census, each may make its own boast.

4 It was not the ungodly rabble, but the Chief Priests and the leaders of the religious party.

2. The Two Ways of Worship

The Faith of Abel shows that, beside the Two Ways of Access to God, there are Two Ways in the Worship of God.

Both are "by Faith;" In both, we see that faith cometh by hearing, and the hearing cometh from what God hath spoken.

As there are only Two Ways of Access, one the true way, and the other the false way, with many varieties, so there are only Two Ways of

Worship; and the False way with as many varieties and differences, each claiming to be the right way.

It is as important for us therefore to learn the true Way of Worship, taught us by this aspect of Abel's Faith, as it was to learn the lesson of the True Way of Access; especially in the present day when Ritual occupies such a large place in public opinion, and in the conflicts and controversies which rage between the opposing Religions, and clamouring Sects.

In both cases, believing, or not believing what God has spoken lies at the foundation of all.

As to the only way of Access, and the only offering that was to be brought, the command of God must have been the same for Abel and Cain then, as it was for Israel afterward when the law was put into writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the pen of Moses. The Book of Leviticus (which is the book of worship) opens with the words, which give it its name in the Hebrew Canon.

"AND JEHOVAH CALLED

and spake unto Moses out of the Tabernacle of the Congregation saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, IF ANY MAN of you bring an OFFERING UNTO JEHOVAH ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock."

Observe, that the command was not that they should bring an offering, but that, if any man brought one, the command was as to what he should bring.

This agrees with, and explains Jer. vii.22-24: "I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices;

"But this thing commanded I them, saying

OBEY MY VOICE

and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People, and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But THEY HEARKENED NOT

nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward."

This is precisely what took place at the gates of Eden. There the Lord God spoke. Cain and Abel heard. Abel believed what he heard. Cain (like Israel afterward) hearkened not nor inclined his ear, but walked in the counsel and imagination of his own evil heart. This is the essence of the whole matter.

God spoke. He spoke to Israel "out of the Tabernacle," to all who would approach Him there; and laid down, as He had a right to do, how He would be worshipped.

It is the same principle which prevails to day.

Man himself acts on this principle. If any seek him it is he who appoints the time and place and determines as to when and where he will be seen.

So, God laid it down from the first that, if any man would bring an offering to Him, it must be such and such an one, and it must be offered in such and such a way.

"And He (the offerer) shall put his hand upon the burnt offering: and IT SHALL BE ACCEPTED FOR HIM to make atonement for him" (Lev. i.4).

But Cain hearkened not to the voice of God; and, instead of bringing what God had appointed, he brought an offering out of "the counsel and imagination" of his own evil heart (Jer. vii.24).

And, not only so. Not only was it something, other than what God had approved, but it was the product of that which God had laid under a curse: "cursed be the ground for thy sake" (Gen. iii.17).

So that there was a double affront in Cain's offering and being not "of faith," it was "sin" (Rom. xiv.23).

Hence, it standeth written:

"Jehovah had respect
Unto Abel and his offering;
But unto Cain and his offering
He had not respect."

And to-day, the Question comes to us: --

To what will Jehovah have respect?

What offering will He accept?

Not the blood of bulls and goats; for all these types have been fulfilled in the antitype. Now, Christ's blood is that which speaketh better things than that of Abel; no one can be accepted but through its merits.

And as to worship: What is it that Jehovah now accepts? What voice do we hear coming from Him who tabernacled among men? What does the voice say which we are to obey? What are the words to which we are to hearken?

They come from the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. And God, who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by HIS SON: and the Son hath said:

"God is spirit
and they that worship Him
MUST
worship Him in spirit
and in truth."

These are the words to which we are to hearken, as written down for us from the lips of the Son, in the Scriptures of Truth.

We have no liberty; no choice in this matter. It is useless to follow the counsels and imaginations of our own hearts. That one short word

"MUST"

settles everything.

It tells us that God will not "have respect" to anything but what is spiritual in our worship of Himself.

The SON, who hath spoken from heaven, has declared that "the flesh profiteth nothing" (John vi.63).

It is useless therefore for us to bring unto the Lord anything that is of the flesh; or anything that the flesh can do.

It must all be "spirit"!

The flesh is under the curse. "The mind of the flesh is death" (Rom. viii.6).

To bring anything, therefore, of the flesh, or that the flesh can do, is to be exactly like Cain, when he brought the fruit of the ground, of which God had said: "cursed be the ground."

All the senses are of the flesh. The mind of the flesh is sensual.

"The works of the flesh" are the opposite of "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. v.19-25).

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and desires."

Acceptable worship therefore, MUST be the "fruit of the Spirit" and not "the fruit of the ground": or in other words, not the works of that flesh, which is under the curse.

We cannot worship God, Who is spirit, with our eyes, by gazing on a sacrament or anything else.

We cannot worship God, Who is spirit, with our ears, by listening to music, however beautiful it may be, or whether "rendered" by ourselves or others.

We cannot worship God, Who is spirit, with our noses, by smelling incense, or anything else.

We cannot worship God, Who is spirit, with our throats by singing hymns or Anthems, Solos, Quartets, or Choruses.

The only singing that goes beyond the ceiling or roof and enters heaven "MUST" be of the spirit, and from the heart. The command is "singing and making melody IN YOUR HEART to the Lord."

Singing, not to one another, not to an audience, not to a congregation, but

"TO THE LORD."

What is needed in true worship is not "an ear for music," but a heart for music.

If we are "filled BY the Spirit," our singing will be of the Spirit, from the heart. For "that which is born (or produced) by the Spirit, is spirit." (John iii.6).

We shall say with Mary,
"My SOUL doth magnify the Lord
My SPIRIT hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."
Nothing short of this is the worship to which God will have respect.

All else is waste of time, waste of trouble, waste of money, waste of strength, waste of breath; and,
"IT PROFITETH NOTHING"

It is useless for any one to say "I like such and such a service." "I like to hear, or to do, this or that." "It creates such nice feelings in me." Or, "I dislike this or that in Divine Service."

It matters nothing whatever what any one may like or dislike, think, or feel. It is not a question of what I may like or dislike: The question is

WHAT does GOD LIKE?

What does God require?

To what will God "HAVE RESPECT"?

Divine Service is supposed to be, on the face of it, service or worship rendered to God.

It is for Him to say therefore what He desires.

Public worship is not a Service offered to or for the public, but by the public, for or to God.

It does not matter, therefore, how beautifully a Solo, or an Anthem or a Hymn may be "rendered" (that is the correct expression); but it does matter whether God will "have respect" to it.

It does not matter how beautiful the voice may be to which we hearken, but it does matter whether we hearken to God's voice, and whether we obey HIS voice.

The SON of God hath spoken (John iv.24). We have heard His words.

The one question is Do we believe Him? Do we remember that "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin" (Rom. xiv.23).

WILL WE OBEY?

Will we worship "by faith," as Abel did? or will we worship by works as Cain did?

Do we desire to obtain God's approval with Abel? or, do we desire to hear God's words to Cain "cursed art thou from the earth" (Gen. iv.11).

When Cain saw that God "had not respect" to his offering, he was "very wroth." And there will be many who read these words, who will be also "very wroth "; and wroth with us for writing them.

For this cuts at the root all man's accepted traditions, his cherished practices, and his boasted capabilities .

It cuts off from him the praise and applause of man. It writes folly on his vain counsels and imaginations. It makes an end of his attainments and ambitions.

He may, and doubtless will, go on in "the way of Cain," just the same. But it all counts for nothing. "It profiteth nothing." It is "labour in vain."

God has no respect to it.

It would be folly for us to dwell on the faith of Abel, without seeking to learn this great lesson which is thus "written for our learning" and stands on the very forefront of God's revelation, in Gen. iv.

If we learn not the "obedience of faith" in this matter, it is vain for us to go further with our studies of this subject of Faith. For it all turns on this:

DO WE BELIEVE GOD?

He hath "in these last days spoken unto us by His Son."

His Son hath said: "They that worship Him MUST worship Him truly in spirit."

Do we believe what He has said?

This is the one final question, the true answer to which does away with all that passes as "current money with the Ishmaelite merchantmen," who make a gain out of so-called, "public worship," to day, just as the Ephesian silversmiths made theirs out of the shrines of their goddess Diana.

It puts an end to all the tricks and contrivances of the Christian "Religion," all the new fashions, and modern methods, bands and songs and solos, and orchestral services, cantatas, which are all to do with the "Flesh," and are all for the praise and glory of the choir; and no longer, as the simple worship of our fathers was -- "to the praise and glory of God."

This is the lesson of Abel's faith, as it touches on the one and only true way in the worship of God.

3. Abel's Faith: The Witness God Bore

By which [faith] he obtained witness that he was righteous, God bearing witness to his offering" (Heb. xi. 4).

Here we have two statements in one, for it is the same verb in each clause. The A.V. renders the first "witness" and the second "testimony."

The R.V. renders it: " Through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts." On this, there is a marginal note: "over his gifts. The Greek Text in this clause is somewhat uncertain."

The uncertainty referred to is about the word God": as to whether it should be the Genitive case, or the Dative: i.e., whether it should be as it stands in both Versions, or whether it should be bearing witness by his gifts to God." (Lachmann, & Tregelles).

But the scope of both the clauses is the same. It is the witness that Abel obtained and that God gave. God gave it... not Abel obtained it by."

In other words, Abel obtained the witness, because God gave it. He received what God gave.

How this was done is not explained in the history of Gen. iv. There, the whole act is condensed and summed up in the words "God had respect to" his offering: but we are not told how God manifested this respect.

It must have been shown in such a way that there could be no mistake about it; and that Cain could just as evidently see it, as Abel; and knew that the opposite was true in his case; and that to his offering, which he brought, God "had not respect."

It is the word upon (which the R.V. margin renders over), which gives us the key to the solution, by reminding us of the subsequent fact revealed in connection with all Sacrifices: viz., that those which God accepted were never consumed by fire emanating from this earth, or kindled by fire made with hands"; but by God-made fire descending from heaven.

In Gen. xv., 17, Abram, in his deep sleep, saw a smoking furnace; which, beside being typical of Israel's affliction in the "iron furnace" of Egypt, was doubtless the material agency by which the sacrifices, which Abram had so carefully prepared and arranged, were consumed.

In Gen. xxii., 6,7, when Abram "took the fire in his hand" we have the Figure Metonymy, by which the fire" is put for that which would set light to the wood which was consumed; as when we say we light the fire" we do not light the fire but we set fire to the wood. If the fire is literal then the "hand" is literal, and Abraham took the fire in his natural hand": which is absurd.

In Lev. ix., 24, on the occasion of the first formal offering on the Altar of burnt-offering, we read: "There came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering, and the fat, which when all the people saw, they fell on their faces."

When Gideon prepared his offering in Ophra "the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up a fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes" (Judg. vi., 21).

This was no fire kindled by Gideon, or "made with hands" of man. It was supernatural fire produced by the miracle wrought by Jehovah's messenger, to show that He had accepted Gideon's offering.

When Manoah made his offering and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord, the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground" (Judg. xiii; 19, 20).

Here again was miraculous fire from the Lord, consuming and accepting their offering. It was no fire kindled by human hands.

When David offered his offering on the altar which he built on the site purchased from Ornan the Jebusite, The Lord answered him by fire upon the altar of burnt offering" (I Chron. xxi., 26).

At the dedication of the Temple, when Solomon had ended his prayer, we read that the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house... and when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, that they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground, upon the pavement, and worshipped (2 Chron. vii., 1-3).

When Elijah would offer a sacrifice away from the Temple where Jehovah had caused His name to be placed, and where the fire which had fallen from heaven was kept continually burning, fire had to fall from heaven specially for the occasion. After the prophets of Baal had in vain tried to produce the phenomenon by appeals to their god, and after Elijah had soaked the wood and the offering with water we read: "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said: The Lord, He is the God; The Lord, He is the God" (I Kings xviii., 38, 39).

Add to all these examples the words of Psalm xx, 3, The Lord remember all thy offerings and accept thy burnt sacrifice." Here, in the margin of the A.V. we read, against the word accept," that the Hebrew means turn to ashes.

Why? Because this was always the way that Jehovah did accept offerings made to Him. By "fire from heaven" He turned them to ashes, and thus showed that He had respect" unto them, and accepted them as the substitute of him who offered them.

How else did Abel "obtain witness that he was righteous"?

How else did God testify of his gifts?

How else did Cain know that God "had not respect unto his offering"?

Surely there can be no doubt whatever as to the force of the word upon, for it was the fire that descended upon the sinner's substitute instead of upon the sinner; upon Abel's lamb instead of upon Abel.

Thus the doctrine of substitution was the very first doctrine taught to mankind; the first that is recorded in the Scriptures of truth; the first with regard to which man was required to believe what he had heard from God.

God had spoken. What he had said may be summed up in the words afterwards recited to Israel, Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix., 22). "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii., 11). The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi., 23).

This was the pronouncement for the sinner in Gen. iii., 17. And it is in Gen. iv. that we have the further revelation that God provided a substitute whose death He would accept in the sinner's stead.

That is why the acceptance must be God's own act.

All that the sinner could do was in faith to bring his offering and lay his hand upon it and confess it as his substitute. (Lev. i, 4.) It was for God to give His testimony that He had accepted it.

It is even so to-day.

It is ignorance of this great first lesson that is the source of much of the quite modern evangelistic phraseology of the present day.

Man's conventional talk of this twentieth century (of the present era) is about the sinner's acceptance of Christ. God's Word, for nearly sixty centuries has been about the sinner believing what He had said.

God has spoken. He has told us that He cannot and will not accept the fallen sons of men in their sins. In ourselves we are not only ruined sinners because of what we have done, or not done; but we are ruined creatures because of what we ARE. The question is, Do we believe God as to this solemn fact?

What God accepted was Abel's "gifts" (Heb. xi. 4); Abel was accepted only in his gifts (Gen. iv. 4).

So, God has told us that He can accept us, as such, only in the merits and Person of that perfect Substitute -- His Christ -- whom He has provided. Do we believe Him as to this?

If we do we shall by faith lay our hand on Him, confess our belief in God as to our own lost and ruined nature, and as to Christ as God's provided Salvation; knowing that, by this faith, God pronounces us righteous, accepts us in the person of our Substitute; and declares us as accepted in the Beloved," because God accepted His one offering when He raised Him from the dead.

Christ's resurrection is the proof and evidence that God has accepted Christ. Christ risen is the sinner's receipt which God has given to show that He has accepted Christ's payment of the sinner's debt.

There is no other receipt.

Christ's blood is not the receipt. That is the payment.

The sinner's faith is not the receipt. It is no use for a man to go to his creditor and say he believes he has paid what he owes. He must produce the receipt.

What is the receipt which we can produce to God which will prove that our debt is paid?

Nothing but the blessed fact that God's Word assures us that He has accepted payment on our behalf in the person of our Substitute, when He raised Christ from the dead.

We are to believe what He says when He assures us of this, and He is pleased to accept us in Him.

It is always the Creditor who accepts the payment which the debtor makes. And, when payment has been once accepted, no further demand can be made upon the debtor.

This is how Abel was accepted; and this is how the sinner is saved to this day.

By the same faith in what God has said, we lay our hand on that Lamb of God as our substitute; and we obtain God's witness that we are righteous. God bears His testimony to this in that He raised Christ from the dead, and has accepted the believing sinner IN HIM.

It is not a question of whether the sinner accepts Christ, but whether he believes God when he says that He has accepted Christ.

It may be said that, the same thing is meant, in modern phraseology; then, Why not say so? Why not keep to Scripture language? Why alter it? Why make it all to stand on what man can DO, instead of believing what God has SAID. Why make it all turn on man's accepting, instead of man's believing?

God has shut up the sinner as to the uselessness of his bringing any thing of his own by way of merit.

It is useless for him to bring or plead any substitute other than that one whom God hath appointed. It would be the same as saying it is not necessary.

It is useless to bring anything in addition thereto, for it would be the same as saying that it is not sufficient.

In either case it would be a proof that God's command had been unheeded; that His word had not been believed; and that His provision had been slighted and rejected.

All are to-day either in Abel's way, or Cain's: in God's way, or man's.

All are trusting either to that Substitute whom God has provided, or they are labouring to provide one for themselves.

This is why such stress is laid on this matter of faith, in Rom. x. "The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise... But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thine heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach [is nigh thee]: that, if

thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [as thy Substitute]
and shalt believe in thine heart that
GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD
thou shalt be saved."

Thus it is that "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing [cometh] by
the Word of God" (Rom. x., 6-11, 17)

But instead of believing the report of what God has said, sinners
are taught to-day to believe in what they can do. As though they were
the Creditor, and would fain make God their Debtor!

And all this, because they do not see or understand that all is of
God"; and all is of
GOD'S FREE GRACE

There is no merit in faith, of itself. It is not considered as merit
among men, when one man believes what another man has said. How then
can there be any merit in believing what God has said? It is our first
bounden duty, without which all is "sin."

But, instead of this, the sinner tries to make God believe in him;
and that it is possible for him to DO SOMETHING.

In his blind ignorance he practically tells God that he, the
sinner, is pleased to accept the payment which Christ has made to God!

But all this is only salvation "by works" in its most subtle form.
So subtle that thousands are misled on the very threshold of their way
back to God.

Hence it is that while the multitude are still taught to do
something, many would shrink from doing certain things as "works"; and
would be ready to confess, and say: "not the labour of my hands." Yet
they do not see that this acceptance of Christ is a work, after all:
when it is thus put in the place of believing God.

True, it is "not the labour of my hands." Nothing "made with hands"
can obtain a footing in God's new creation, where "all things are of
God": for new creation ground is the ground of resurrection.

Though they would shrink from making a god with their hands, they
make their god out of their own heads, and out of the imagination of
their own hearts.

But "the God of our Salvation" is the God who hath spoken unto us
by His Son, and left to us the simple duty of pointing the sinner to
what He hath said.

This is why we are to "Preach the Word." This is the first great
lesson of Holy Writ.

It is the oldest lesson in the world.

And, it is to show us that to believe God in this matter of
substitution is the only way of salvation, the only way for man to be
just with God; for "The just, by faith, shall live."

Footnotes:

1Compare chap. x., where Nadab and Abihu used, not this fire from
the brazen altar to kindle the incense in their censers, but took other
fire: i.e., emanating from this earth, or kindled by man's hand. This
was called "strange fire," and the consequence was that, "there went
out a fire from the Lord and devoured them and they died before the
Lord (Lev. x., 2).

When we reflect that the incense of worship on the golden altar
must be kindled with fire taken from the brazen altar of atonement we
can understand the sin of offering in worship to-day the "strange fire"
of that which is produced by the flesh, and not by the Spirit of God."

2It is in imitation of this that the Church of Rome pretends to
keep the perpetual light before their altars, in spite of the fact that

it is kindled by man's hands and consumes nothing but their own pretensions.

4. Abel's Faith: The Witness Abel Obtained

Though rendered "obtained witness" and "testifying," the verb is the same in both clauses.

"By means of which [faith] he was borne witness to as being righteous; God bearing witness to His gifts."

We have spoken of the witness which God gave; we have now to speak of the witness that Abel obtained: viz., that he was righteous.

We have already emphasised the fact that both Abel and Cain had heard what God had spoken, as to what both men were, by nature, in His sight. Both were exactly the same; both were equally begotten by Adam "in his own likeness" (Gen. v. 3).

They were "sons of men" and not (as Adam had been) sons of God: that is to say, sons of Adam, and Eve, as fallen. There was "no difference" (Rom. iii. 21).

It is true that Adam had stood in a different category. He had been created (not begotten) in "the likeness of Elohim;" and created in Paradise: but these had both alike been begotten in Adam's own likeness; and were begotten outside Paradise.

From this point therefore our object-lesson begins. This is why it is the first great lesson set before us. This is why it stands on the forefront of God's revelation.

There had been "some good thing" in Adam, though he was human. But there was "no good thing" in Cain, or Abel. "That which is begotten of the flesh IS (and remains) flesh." And even Paul in later days had to learn the all-important lesson, and confessed "I know (as a solemn reality) that there does not² (as a matter of fact) dwell in me, that is, in my flesh, good" (or with A.V. "any good thing").

Thus, boldly and plainly is man's gospel of humanity, and the "Divine immanence" in man, set aside as having no part or place in God's sight.

All who are born in the fallen likeness of our first fallen parents, are born with "no good thing abiding in them."

It is not a question here, or indeed elsewhere, about what man has done. It is wholly and altogether a question only of what man IS.

The most ungodly man that ever lived will regret, and repent, and be very sorry for many things he has done, or left undone. The vast majority, to-day, will own that they are sinners.

But, this is only a very small part of the whole matter; so small as to be hardly a part at all.

It is an ancient Pagan confession to say "humanum est errare," "it is human to err." It is equally human to regret it.

But, here, it is a question NOT of what man had done. Very probably both Cain and Abel had sinned, but it was a question of what they WERE, by nature.

As it was with Isaiah, when he saw himself in the presence of God, and in the presence of all that was thrice "Holy"; so it will ever be with all who thus become acquainted with the true character of their human nature. Isaiah's words were

"I AM

undone." It was not like our "general confession": "We have left undone those things we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done."

There may be all this and more; but there is something behind, and something beneath, and something far beyond all this, and that is: "THERE IS NO HEALTH IN US."

This is the confession that, we are not only lost sinners; but that we are fallen creatures.

We are not only "sons of men," begotten by Adam, but we are born of Eve. She it was who was in the Transgression. Adam was not (I Tim. ii. 13, 14).

So that we are doubly ruined: ruined sinners, and ruined creatures. Ruined, not because of what we have DONE, but because of what we ARE.

If we had never done anything, good, bad, or indifferent, we should still have no right to re-enter the garden, or to go into the presence of God. We should have no "right to the tree of life," but should be subject to death. We should still need at least a forensic righteousness: that is to say, we should need to be acquitted; to be pronounced "not guilty;" and to be put into a position where our sins would not be imputed to us (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2).

But this is, surely, very different from having a Divine righteousness imputed to us!

The one is negative, and the other is positive.

What we have to ask is: Was the righteousness of Abel the same as that of Abraham's? We read that Lot was "a righteous man" (I Pet. ii. 7, 8), and yet he is not included in this chapter.

Abraham himself, from the time of his call in Gen xii., was surely, as righteous as Lot who left him and went toward Sodom. Surely he was, like Abel, forensically, that is, judicially acquitted. In Gen. xiii. God made him further promises, and in Gen. xiv. God had been with him, prospered him, and sent Melchisedek to bless him. But it is not till Gen. xv., that we read of a very different righteousness, which was imputed to him.

This was no mere negative blessing of non imputation of sin. It was no mere pronouncement of "not guilty," but it was the positive reckoning to Abraham, as actually having righteousness imputed to him.

It was on the occasion of God making a further promise of a son, in his old age, and under very special circumstances which were all contrary not only to reason, or to sight, but to all the laws of nature.

THEN, it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." What this meant for Abraham in the way of blessing in God's sight we are not told. But it must have been a distinct advance in Divine favour; and it accounts for much that we read of Abraham which we do not find in the case of others who are mentioned in this chapter.

This positive reckoning of righteousness is revealed only in connection with Christ in the Gospel. This is why Paul announces his readiness to preach this good news in Rome.

For this readiness to announce this good news he adduces four reasons: each introduced by the word for:

1. FOR I am not ashamed of the Gospel.

2. FOR this reason: It is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes God.

3. FOR this further reason: viz, that in this Gospel a righteousness is revealed "from faith to faith": i.e., God has made fresh revelations for the objects of man's faith; and has revealed how man may not only be acquitted but justified.

4. FOR, the conclusive reason which constitutes this as being such good news: that, not only is a righteousness from God revealed, but

wrath from God is revealed also, from which this gospel brings the good news of complete deliverance.

This is a3 righteousness revealed in the Gospel. It is more than a forensic righteousness. It is something given and received by imputation on the principle of faith. And it is this righteousness, which is imputed to believers now. It is not God's attribute of righteousness; nor is it His acting in conformity with that attribute; but, it is something which He imputes or reckons to the believer. In other words, it is imputed righteousness.

In Rom. iii. 25, 26, we find both aspects of the word righteousness, with reference (1) to the time past (in the Old Testament), and (2) now "at this time" (in the Gospel).

(1). As to the time past, God was acting righteously in passing over sins, in His forbearing grace, i.e., in judicially acquitting those who believed Him when He spoke at sundry times and in divers manners."

(2). As to the present, "at this time." He declares that He is equally just in justifying: i.e., in actually imputing righteousness to him who believeth in Jesus;" who believeth what He has made known about the Saviour.

Hence in 2 Cor. v. 21, we advance to a further revelation, viz., that those who believe God now in what He has revealed of Christ are made Divinely righteous in Him.

Therefore to believe God in what He says now, in His Gospel, concerning His Son, is not only to be saved from wrath by His power, not only to be acquitted as "not guilty" but to be accounted as positively righteous, by His grace.

Romans iv. is therefore a distinct advance in the argument and treats of this imputed righteousness.

But all is by faith; i.e., by believing what God has revealed.

Abel believed God, and he was judicially acquitted. God bore witness to his gifts by accepting the death of the substituted lamb, instead of the death which Abel deserved as a sinner. Hence Abel was righteous; and stood judicially acquitted before God.

But this brings us to a further question, as interesting as it is important. Why is this righteousness, whether forensic or imputed, all made to depend on our believing what God says? Why was not some other condition laid down by God? Out of all the many things which God might have required of man, why is "faith" singled out as the one and only ground of justification, and this, for all time, from that day till now? Is not this question worth asking?

From Gen. iv. we see the condition in action; and in the Epistle to the Romans we see it stated and defined Moreover a reason is given that "it is of faith that it might be by grace," but nowhere is any explanation given as to why it should be so, and why faith should be the reason why man should be either judicially acquitted of his sin; or why Divine righteousness should be imputed and reckoned to him.

THE EXPLANATION

is not given in so many words; but it is placed very clearly before us on the opening pages of the second, third and fourth chapters of Genesis.

Faith is made the condition, because unbelief was the cause of Man's Fall, of Sin's entrance, and of Death's appointment for man.

This lies on the surface of the history.

Eve fell by not believing what God had said. She tampered with the words which God had spoken.

She dealt with those words in the only three ways in which man can deal deceitfully with them.

(1) She omitted the word "freely" in Gen. iii. 1 .(See Gen ii, 16).

(2) She added the sentence "neither shall ye touch it" in Gen iii. 3. (See Gen. ii. 17).

(3) She altered the certainty "thou shalt surely die," (Gen. ii. 17), into the contingency "lest ye die" (Gen. iii. 3).

Satan's two assurances,
"Ye shall not surely die,"
"Ye shall be as God,"

were believed; and God's words, having been omitted, added to and altered, were in the end not believed.

Thus, by believing Satan's words, was sin brought into the world, "and death by sin." Hence, only by believing God, can man regain life, and sin be put away.

(1) Only by believing God in what He has thus revealed about man himself, can the sinner be acquitted, and pronounced "not guilty," and, in this sense (forensically) righteous.

(2) Only by believing God in what He has revealed concerning Christ, can man be reckoned as being actually righteous, in Christ, and as having a divine righteousness actually imputed to him.

This is
THE REASON WHY

believing what God says is made to be one necessary condition of justification.

Man MUST BELIEVE GOD in what He says in His Word; and he must believe ALL that God says.

In what sharp contrast does this set all that goes to make up religion! Religion occupies man entirely with himself: with what he has done, with what he can do. and with what he must do. God would occupy man with HIMSELF, and with what He has said.

This it is which gives its character to all "religion" in the present day; "Man's Day." Man is exalted, and God set aside. Man's doings are substituted for man's believing. This is why, on all hands, man's words are substituted for God's words. And as the importance of man's works increases in his estimation, so God's Word decreases.

This is why, in the religious world the two great questions which occupy man are: (1) what he must do to be righteous, and (2) what he must do to be holy. It is all "DOING," from first to last, instead of believing God.

But the modern, social gospel of humanity is the gospel of the Old Serpent. It is based on faith indeed; but it is faith in the devil's two lies

"Ye shall be as God"

"Ye shall not surely die."

So subtle is the poison of the Old Serpent, that not only does man, to day, in this his "new theology" not believe God's words; but he does not believe in God's Word. This is why he puts forth his utmost efforts to get rid of all that is supernatural in the Scriptures of truth.

Here God steps in with His irreversible decree. He lays down the one indispensable condition on which He will ever have any respect to man's doings: or alter His sentence of death on account of man's own self-undoing.

MAN MUST BELIEVE GOD

Here, in Abel's faith, we have the Way back to God's favour unalterably laid down at the fountain-head of God's revelation of Himself, and of humanity.

The only way of access to God is "by faith," i.e., by believing what He has said.

Whosoever does that; and takes that first simple step, stands judicially acquitted, as Abel stood.

Whosoever believes what God has further promised, in, by, and through Christ, "his faith is counted (reckoned, and imputed) to him for righteousness," as it was to Abraham. "Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but FOR US ALSO, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe in Him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered on account of our offences, and raised on account of our justifying " (Rom. iv. 22-25).

Abraham and David believed God concerning His promises in Christ. Hence it is written that righteousness was imputed to them (Gen. xv. 6 and Rom. iv. 3); Ps. xxxii. 2 and Rom. iv. 6). God preached, before, the Gospel unto Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), David spake of Christ (Acts ii. 31); and both believed God.

DO WE?

Do we believe what God has said about ourselves as ruined creatures; and, are we thus pronounced righteous being judicially acquitted?

And, do we go on to believe all that God has said about His promises in Christ, as risen from the dead? and are we thus justified on that account, our faith being reckoned to us for righteousness, yea, a Divine righteousness which is imputed and reckoned to us, so that we are made Divinely righteous in Christ?

These are the questions which are solved by the consideration of Abel's faith. It leads us on from "non-imputation of sin," to the imputation of righteousness.

It takes us beyond the doctrine of substitution; beyond the sacrifice of an animal for man's sin; and leads the sinner, into the far higher doctrine of his identification, as a saint with Christ.

The one remaining question is: Do we go on "from faith to faith"? (Rom. i. 16, 17).

Abraham went on. In Gen. xii., xiii, and xiv. he believed God in many things about himself. But in Gen. xv. he went on from faith to faith. He believed God, in another thing: viz., about the promised Seed! It was this faith that was imputed to him for righteousness. Do we thus go on to believe God?

We may believe what He has revealed of Christ in Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians but, do we go on "from faith to faith," and believe God in what He afterwards revealed concerning Christ in Ephesians. Philippians and Colossians, and thus "give glory to God"?

Is not all this something far beyond mere theological reasonings and scholastic arguments as to what is "the righteousness of God?"⁴ and about the "law-keeping righteousness of Christ," which were very rife among Brethren a few years ago? Those controversies created much bitterness, and left much confusion behind. But, our subject takes us far beyond all this and reveals to us the blessed fact that Christ Himself, in all that He IS, and HAS, and HAS DONE, is, of God, made unto us who believe Him,

"RIGHTEOUSNESS"

Instead of rejoicing in this blessed fact, and praising God for all the great things He has done for us, many of His children are engaged in a kind of post mortem controversy; and are dissecting Christ's life and sufferings. Hence, instead of "holding the Head" and living in the "bond of peace," they are biting, rending and devouring each other, the "members."

Oh that we may go on "from faith to faith," and believe God in all that He reveals to us as to our identification with Christ, in having His righteousness, His holiness, His perfections, reckoned to us; and all of His boundless grace!

Footnotes:

1The verb is oida and it means to know, as a matter of absolute knowledge. Not ginosko, to get to know, by effort or experience.

2The negative is ouk and denies objectively and absolutely, as a matter of fact. It is not mç which denies subjectively, and hypothetically. Moreover, the negative ouk here, is connected with the verb "dwell," and not with the noun "good": "There does not DWELL any good"; not "there dwells not good (or any) good."

3There is no article here, in the Greek.

4 As though the definite article were used in the Greek of Rom. i. 17 and 2 Cor. v. 21.

5. "The Blood of Abel" and "The Way of Cain"

We have seen, in our last chapter, why Faith, i.e., believing what is heard from God, is the only ground of acceptance with God, and the only ground of being judicially acquitted in His sight.

The blood of Abel yet speaks to us.

This is the last of these Divine words written for our learning concerning Abel.

"HIS BLOOD YET SPEAKETH"

This is not the crying of his blood to God. This is the speaking of his faith to us. "By it (i.e., by this faith) though he is dead he continues to speak" (v.4).

The cry of his blood from the ground was for vengeance on Cain (mentioned in Gen. iv. 10).

This, is a speaking, in the Scriptures, for our learning.

His faith speaks to us to-day. "It" tells us that it is not something else as a substitute for faith: "it" tells us that it is not something in addition to faith.

It is not works. It is not feelings. It is not experiences. It is not repentance. It is not love. But it is faith and faith only.

It is not reasoning, or intellectual assent to something about God. But it is believing what He has told me about myself, not only as a ruined sinner but as a ruined creature; not only about what I have done. but what I am. It is believing what He has told me about Christ, the Saviour Whom He has provided, and anointed, and given and sent; and that this Saviour is able to save.

Faith has to do with what we hear from God; not with what we feel in ourselves. Our feelings do not connect us with God, but only with ourselves. Whatever they may be, they do not affect our relation with God, or alter our standing before Him.

They are only human at the best. But, Faith is Divine and has to do with God.

Faith, of course. produces its own feelings, but only as its own precious fruit; but feelings will never produce faith. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Rom. v. 1).

This "peace" is felt. It is the blessed feeling of "peace with God." But it comes from faith in what God has said; and not from any feeling that originates in ourselves.

Thus, the blood of Abel continues to speak to us, though Abel is dead.

But the blood of Christ speaks also. It speaks of "a better thing than that of Abel" (Heb. xii. 24).

If Abel's blood cried for vengeance, Christ's blood speaks of peace.
If Abel's blood speaks of non-imputation of sin, Christ's blood speaks of the imputation of righteousness.

If Abel's blood speaks of judicial acquittal, Christ's blood speaks of a Divine justifying.

This, surely, is "a better thing."

Abel had to do only with a good thing -- the type, but we have to do with the "better thing" -- the antitype; we have that which the type prefigured, even the precious blood of Christ. If the former was able to procure a forensic righteousness, the latter is surely able to procure a righteousness which is Divine. Thus the faith of Abel continues to speak to us.

But Cain also speaks. He spoke to Abel. What he actually said seems to have dropped out of the primitive Hebrew Text. The Hebrew verb in Gen. iv. 8 is not "talked with" but "said," and ought to be followed by what he said. But the words having dropped out, the rendering "talked with" is only a make-shift due to the accident. Correctly rendered the printed Hebrew Text reads, "Cain said unto Abel his brother, and it came to pass, etc." In the A.V. there is a colon after the word "brother." In some of the MSS. there is a break; in others there are asterisks * * * indicating the omission.

But the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Jerusalem Targum, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions contain the actual words, which originally stood in the primitive text.

What Cain "said unto Abel" was "Let us go into the field."²

It was part of Cain's plot, to get Abel to go alone with him into the field; and when there, together, "he rose up against him, and slew him." His words, and actions, show the deliberateness of his plans.

The carnal mind of a ruined creature at once displayed its enmity. "He was very wroth" when he saw that God did not accept his offering by consuming it with fire from heaven.

While Abel's faith filled Abel with peace, Cain's unbelief filled Cain with "wrath."

Here we have part of "the way of Cain." Here we have, on the forefront of the Bible, the manifestation of what "religion" really is.

Cain was a religious man. He came to worship Jehovah. He brought his gifts and his offering. He brought it "unto Jehovah." but his works were evil; and he slew his brother (I John iii. 12).

This is the essence of all "religion" from that day to this.

This is "the way of Cain": and all who possess religion instead of Christ (Who is, in His own blessed Person, the essence and centre of true Christianity) are treading in that "way" to-day.

All religions are alike in this. And the "Christian Religion," as such, is no different in its spirit, and manifestations.

Speak of Christ, to anyone who has only "Religion," and at once his countenance will fall, as Cain's did (Gen. iv. 5).

But, with Cain, the Lord at once put the matter on its true ground. "If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?" (Gen. iv. 7). This is rendered in the Septuagint translation "if thou offer correctly."

This is what it means. "If Cain offered correctly;" (i.e. what God had told him, he would have done "well," and his offering would have been accepted.

There was "no difference" between the two men. All the difference lay in their offerings, which proved that the one believed God, and that the other did not.

Abel "did well" because he believed, and hence, obeyed God -- Cain did "not well;" because he did not offer correctly, though a sin-offering lay at the door ready to his hand.

He was without excuse.

Oh! how many millions have since trodden "the way of Cain."

They are like Paul himself, who at the very time when he was most religious was all the while "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (I Tim. i. 13): at the very time when he was as "touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless" he was "persecuting the Church." If any one ever had a standing in the flesh, and in religion, Paul could say "I more" (Phil. iii. 4-7)

All such are like the Athenians who were "very religious" (Acts xvii. 22 R.V. margin).

It is not a question of earnestness, or zeal, or even of sincerity. Sincerity will not help us, unless, what we sincerely believe, is what God has spoken.

Man, with all his religious zeal, loves to offer God something. As one once remarked, "It seems so mean" not to do so!

Hence it is that so many strive to present to God "the labour of their hands;" and, being ignorant of what God has said, or not believing it, their one great effort is not only to improve themselves but to improve the world.

They see that all is not what they would have it to be; but, instead of believing God as to His remedy for it, they seek to substitute their own.

Even where their religion includes a belief that Christ is coming again, they think the world is not yet good enough for that, being ignorant that God has said it is not yet bad enough for His judgment (2 Thess. ii. 3).

Hence, man still treads to-day "the way of Cain," and follows him when he "went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. iv. 16). Man cannot endure that presence. He seeks to get as "far off" from God as he possibly can (Eph. ii. 13).

His one effort is to make that "far country" as delightful, and himself as happy, as possible. Like Cain, he builds his cities, and multiplies his luxuries.

The busy labours of "artificers in brass and iron" drown the cries of Abel's blood (Gen. iv. 22).

The noisy handlers of "the harp and organ" stifle spiritual worship and drown the voice of Abel's faith (Gen. iv. 21). So that man, to-day, is surfeited with music not only while he eats and drinks, but even while he worships!

Such is "the way of Cain." It is the way of persecution, but not of peace. It is "the way of religion" but not of Christ. It is the way of death, and not of life.

Yes, man, like Cain, is "very religious." But notwithstanding all, the earth which Cain sought to beautify was stained with his brother's blood.

And, as then, so it is to-day, the world which the Churches are seeking to improve, is stained with the blood of Christ.

As the blood of Christ speaks of a better thing than that of Abel for the believer; so it speaks also of a more terrible vengeance for the unbeliever.

It is in the last Epistle in the Canon of the New Testament that we read of "the way of Cain," and it is there associated with "the error of Balaam," and "the gainsaying of Korah" (Jude 11).

This connection is full of significance. These three downward steps are thus put together for our comparison and contrast: and they speak to us, if we have ears to hear.

Unbelief characterises all three.

The first is unbelief as to the WAY of access which God revealed: "the way of Cain."

The second is unbelief as to the WORKS of our lives which God requires: "the error of Balaam."

The third is unbelief as to the WORD which God has given: "the contradiction of Korah."

The first is necessarily followed by the second, and these are consummated by the third.

"The way of Cain" was not believing God's Word as to the way in which He would be worshipped (Gen. iv.).

"The error of Balaam" was despising God's Word, and following the counsel which Balaam gave, as to the idolatrous licentiousness of life, and the sin which brought down the plague and judgment of Baal-peor (Num. xxv. and xxxi. 16).

"The gainsaying of Korah" was the contradiction of God's Word (Num. xvi.) The word rendered "gainsaying" (antilogia) means contradiction. And though connected with "the way of Cain" in Jude 11, it occurs three times in this Epistle to the Hebrews (viz., in Heb. vi. 16; vii. 7, and Heb. xii. 3). It is "the contradiction of sinners against Christ."

So the third and last of these three stages amounts to the contradiction of the Living and the written Word of God. It is exactly what we see to-day in the contradictions of the "Higher" Criticism, and in the blasphemies of the "New Theology."

The entrance on "the way of Cain" is a deliberate going. "They have gone" (R.V. they went).

Into "the error of Balaam" they rush (A.V. they ran." R.V. "they ran riotously").

In "the contradiction of Korah" they perish!

This is the end!

Though they pursue their own separate courses, to a certain stage, there is an evolution from one into the other, and they end alike in judgment.

Cain's was a punishment greater than he could bear (Gen. iv. 13).

Balaam's was a plague from the fierce anger of the Lord (Num. xxv.)

Korah's was the pit which opened its mouth and shut them up in the blackness of darkness for ever (Jude 13).

What a solemn lesson for all who refuse to believe God.

What an end to "the way of Cain."

What a contrast between the two ways.

The one is God's revelation; the other is man's imagination.

The one begins with God; gives peace; and ends in glory.

The other begins with man; goes on to persecution; and ends in the pit!

Footnotes:

1 All the Critical Greek Texts and R.V. read the Singular: "thing" instead of the plural "things."

2 The Jewish Commentators, of course, enlarge on this, and tell us a great deal more. Some indeed give us the whole conversation, which, strange to say, is largely imbued with later errors about the future state, and smacks of Babylonish tradition. With all this we have nothing to do: we only note the correction needed, and which is supplied by some of the Documentary evidence.

Praise for Divine Goodness

by E.W. Bullinger

"Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:3). This sacred exclamation, this devout desire is repeated four times in this Psalm. It seems as though, when God had heard the cry of His people and had delivered them, they failed to glorify Him for it. Like their forefathers they were a faithless and thankless generation. This lack of gratitude seems stamped on human nature. Hence when the Lord had healed ten lepers of their despised, loathsome and incurable disease, only one came back to give God thanks: out of the ten, only one cried out, "O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness." May we learn this lesson ourselves. May our hearts be roused to thankfulness, that we may be uplifted by the spirit of our text to give thanks to His name for His wonderful works to the children of men. God's people are here regarded as crying to Him in their trouble, when in the hand of the enemy, when hungry and thirsty, when their soul fainted within them, when exceedingly depressed, when wandering in the wilderness, but when the time of deliverance came, their praise was silent. There was need for the exclamation of the text, "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness... Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."

Two subjects of praise

There seem to be two subjects of praise here; the goodness of God, and His wonderful works, and both these are blessed subjects of meditation, as well as of praise. We are not sufficiently accustomed to dwell on God's attribute of goodness. Sometimes we dwell on God's mercy, and love, and holiness, but our text invites us to contemplate this glorious declaration, His goodness. In all that He has revealed of Himself in His Word what else can we discover? Yes, even in His judgments on sinners we can see it; for if He be not able to manifest His abhorrence of sin, where is His goodness in having mercy on sinners?

He will not overlook sin, "He will by no means clear the guilty," then how good is He in providing a surety for sinners and a saviour for the lost, and an atonement for the guilty. He will not overlook sin in His people; this Psalm is a witness of how He brought trouble on them, and chastened them sore, brought them low and afflicted them. Was this goodness? Yes, for if He had not thus visited them they would have gone on from iniquity to iniquity, and have never cried out for mercy. So would you, so would I. Oh, what goodness there is in thus bringing us back from our wanderings, our rebellion, our ingratitude and our departure from God!

Note David's words, "Thou Lord hast made me glad through Thy work" (Psalm 92:4). "Thy work," not "my work." This will indeed make us glad and ready to praise the Lord. That is why he says in the last verse of our Psalm, "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." See the work of God in Hannah after her prayer! She went home with her countenance no more sad, but with a blessed song in her mouth. See the work of God with Naomi, she went out contrary to faith in God. Though chastened sore she was not given over to death. God loved her the same in Moab as in Judah, and He made her glad through His work. In one Psalm David says,

"I am shut up, I cannot get forth" but in another "Bring my soul out of prison." Why? "That I may run after the vanities of the world? No! "That I may praise Thy name." This is the burden of this Psalm (verses 6, 13, 19, 28). And so, whether we look at the Lord's power, omniscience, omnipotence, immutability, compassion, or faithfulness, we find the goodness of God exhibited in all. If His mercy were exercised at the expense of His justice, His faithfulness would be violated, His truth would be broken. But God is good in all the perfection of His nature, and in all His attributes.

God's purposes

We specially behold His goodness in His purposes. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all Thy pleasure." Just think for a moment of these purposes:

(1). He purposes to have a family as His own distinct from the world, distinct from angels, and to make them partakers of the Divine life. Was there not goodness in this? The whole posterity of Adam had perished but for the goodness of this purpose.

(2). Moreover He purposed to adopt them as sons, to give them into the hands of a Surety under solemn responsibilities. He purposed that this Surety should deliver them from the guilt of sin, from the dominion of sin, and from the power of Satan, and to be "zealous of good works." Oh, the goodness of this wonderful purpose!

Man can speak about the goodness of God in creation, how His sun shines on the evil and the good, how His showers descend on the just and the unjust, how He giveth food to all flesh, and the fruits of the earth in due season. All has been His own doing, and it excites our wonder! Others can speak of His goodness in providence, how He has protected righteous kings, delivered them from their enemies, and caused the winds to blow and change for this purpose. But only those who know His goodness as displayed to His living Church can really enter into the words of our text and say "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

You may view it as "putting down the mighty from their seat, and exalting the humble and meek." You may view it as overturning empires and kings; there is goodness in all this, but it pales before that which is connected with the salvation in Christ Jesus. All the purposes of redemption, satisfaction, substitution, all the purposes of operation upon sinners' hearts in their calling, justification, sanctification, preservation and glorification, all were purposed in the goodness of God, and therefore cannot fail. You could not talk about goodness if all these things were matters of chance and might all fail. If all were left to the caprice of man, and the decision of carnal worms of the earth. But when we see all that pertains to the salvation of a sinner as settled and secured in the eternal purpose of God, then we exclaim, "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"
Goodness in the Saviour

Then look at it as displayed in the Saviour Himself. All is goodness here. Had all this purpose to save and pardon been left to the individual transactions of carnal men, to the efforts of mortals all must have been a failure! But when we look at this eternal purpose, anointing, ordaining, appointing, providing, giving, sending a Saviour in the person of Christ, constituting Him as the Covenant Head, making Him "head over all things to His Church," constituting every individual believer a member of His Body, trusting them all to His care so that He

should not lose one even in death, numbering them every one into His hand, then we see the goodness of God who purposed all this in Christ. Then we see the goodness of our precious, glorious Saviour in accomplishing all that he undertook. "Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:7,8). Oh, what goodness! "Lo, I come" equal with the Father, sharing the eternal glory. He looked down as it were and saw the fallen, apostate race, the devil leading them captive, and He undertakes to rescue His own sheep. He saw the depravity of man's heart, and He undertook to subdue its enmity, conquer its rebellion and fit His arrows sharp and fast in men's consciences. Was not this goodness? Then it is not as if He left them alone! If so, they would have destroyed themselves every one. God's goodness to the Church

We pass over the goodness of His earthly life and sufferings and death, all was goodness in the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep, but let us turn our thoughts to Him now. Ascended up again to the right hand of the Father, ever living to make intercession for us, not tired of His work, not leaving us ever, when He has bestowed upon us the spirit of prayer -- no, for we use His name and plead His merits and He intercedes and prays for us Himself. Oh, what goodness! And while our souls are overwhelmed with it, hear him saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

And not only individually, but collectively we see this goodness to His Church. The members thereof could not exist a day without His own preservation. They must be ruined by their own depravity. The devil would destroy them if it were possible, but Christ preserves them; their preservation is in Christ Jesus. So with the increase of His Church. The Lord is the great Worker, and whilst He works, there is no rebel so proud, no enemy so stout, no infidel so bold, no sinner so vile, but Christ can conquer him and His goodness can lead him to repentance.

God's goodness in His gift

Then mark the goodness of God in the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is now the Doer of those wonderful works to the children of men. What a wonderful work when He creates in a depraved heart a capacity for the enjoyment of God. When He makes the dead to hear the voice of the Son of God, and gives him life to praise God. It is this that makes all the difference between carnal men and spiritual men, between the world and the Church of God, between believers and the ungodly. No one can enjoy God but living souls, those into whom the Spirit of God has breathed the breath of life, and who have become "living souls" in this new creation. Apart from this the duties of religion (so-called) are an irksome task, but with it they are real Christianity, the soul's meat and drink. Then His wonderful works are manifested in His comforts, His consolations, His implanting of graces, fulfilling of promises, providing strength equal for the day, and taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to His people. It was the contemplation of all this that established the confidence of St. Paul: "Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it into the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Where this goodness is realized, and these wonderful works experienced the praise will be real. It will not be the repetition of

prayers, it will not be mere sounds of harmonies correctly sung, it will not consist merely in a bright service, a pretty tune and appropriate words, but these precious truths will be the experimental expression of the heart. Oh that men -- ! What men? Find the answer in verse 2. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." No other men can say so. Say what? "Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever (verse 1). Because the Lord hath forgiven their iniquity, redeemed them from the hand of the enemy, from the curse of the law, from the power of Satan, from the thralldom of sin; because He hath redeemed them with His precious blood.

Are there any who disobey the exhortation of this Psalm, and have never praised God for His great salvation? Man can glorify man, glorify himself, glory in his possessions, his acquirements, but forget to glorify God. Let us rather be of the number of those who cry with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

The Bible text in this publication, except where otherwise indicated, is from the King James Version. This article appears on the site: <http://www.posword.org/>

The Ground is Thirsty

by Dr. E.W. Bullinger

A figure is simply a word or a sentence thrown into a peculiar form, different from its original or simplest meaning or use. These forms are constantly used by every speaker and writer. It is impossible to hold the simplest conversation, or to write a few sentences without, it may be unconsciously, making use of figures. We may say, "the ground needs rain": that is a plain, cold, matter-of-fact statement; but if we say "the ground is thirsty," we immediately use a figure. It is not true to fact, and therefore it must be a figure. But how true to feeling it is! how full of warmth and life! Hence, we say, "the crops suffer"; we speak of "a hard heart," "a rough man," "an iron will." In all these cases we take a word which has a certain, definite meaning, and apply the name, or the quality, or the act, to some other thing with which it is associated, by time or place, cause or effect, relation or resemblance.

Some figures are common to many languages; others are peculiar to some one language. There are figures used in the English language, which have nothing that answers to them in Hebrew or Greek; and there are Oriental figures which have no counterpart in English; while there are some figures in various languages, arising from human infirmity and folly, which find, of course, no place in the word of God.

It may be asked, "How are we to know, then, when words are to be taken in their simple, original form (i.e., literally), and when they are to be taken in some other and peculiar form (i.e., as a Figure) ?" The answer is that, whenever and wherever it is possible, the words of Scripture are to be understood literally, but when a statement appears to be contrary to our experience, or to known fact, or revealed truth; or seems to be at variance with the general teaching of the Scriptures, then we may reasonably expect that some figure is employed. And as it is employed only to call our attention to some specially designed emphasis, we are at once bound to diligently examine the figure for the purpose of discovering and learning the truth that is thus emphasized.

From non-attention to these Figures, translators have made blunders as serious as they are foolish. Sometimes they have translated the figure literally, totally ignoring its existence; sometimes they have taken it fully into account, and have translated, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit; sometimes they have taken literal words and translated them figuratively. Commentators and interpreters, from inattention to the figures, have been led astray from the real meaning of many important passages of God's Word; while ignorance of them has been the fruitful parent of error and false doctrine. It may be truly said that most of erroneous and conflicting views of the Lord's People, have their root and source, either in figuratively explaining away passages which should be taken literally, or in taking literally what has been thrown into a peculiar form or Figure of language: thus, not only falling into error, but losing the express teaching, and missing the special emphasis which the particular Figure was designed to impart to them.

This is an additional reason for using greater exactitude and care when we are dealing with the words of God. Man's words are scarcely worthy of such study. Man uses figures, but often at random and often in ignorance or in error. But "the words of the Lord are pure words." All His works are perfect, and when the Holy Spirit takes up and uses human words, He does so, we may be sure, with unerring accuracy, infinite wisdom, and perfect beauty.

We may well, therefore, give all our attention to "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Introduction

Jehovah has been pleased to give us the revelation of His mind and will in words It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should understand not merely the meanings of the words themselves, but also the laws which govern their usage and combinations.

All language is governed by law; but, in order to increase the power of a word, or the force of an expression, these laws are designedly departed from, and words and sentences are thrown into, and used in, new forms, or figures.

The ancient Greeks reduced these new and peculiar forms to science, and gave names to more than two hundred of them.

The Romans carried forward this science: but with the decline of learning in the Middle Ages, it practically died out. A few writers have since then occasionally touched upon it briefly, and have given a few trivial examples: but the knowledge of this ancient science is so completely forgotten, that its very name to-day is used in a different sense and with almost an opposite meaning.

These manifold forms which words and sentences assume were called by the Greeks Schema and by the Romans, Figura. Both words have the same meaning, viz., a shape or figure. When we speak of a person as being "a figure" we mean one who is dressed in some peculiar style, and out of the ordinary manner. The Greek word Schema is found in I Cor. 7:31, "The fashion of this world passeth away"; Phil. 2:8, "being found in fashion as a man." The Latin word Figura is from the verb fingere, to form, and has passed into the English language in the words figure, transfigure, configuration, effigy, feint, feign, etc.

We use the word figure now in various senses. Its primitive meaning applies to any marks, lines, or outlines, which make a form or shape. Arithmetical figures are certain marks or forms which represent numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). All secondary and derived meanings of the word "figure" retain this primitive meaning.

Applied to words, a figure denotes some form which a word or sentence takes, different from its ordinary and natural form. This is always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling, and greater emphasis. Whereas to-day "Figurative language " is ignorantly spoken of as though it made less of the meaning, and deprived the words of their power and force. A passage of God's Word is quoted; and it is met with the cry, "Oh, that is figurative" -- implying that its meaning is weakened, or that it has quite a different meaning, or that it has no meaning at all. But the very opposite is the case. For an unusual form (figura) is never used except to add force to the truth conveyed, emphasis to the statement of it, and depth to the meaning of it. When we apply this science then to God's words and to Divine truths, we see at once that no branch of Bible study can be more important, or offer greater promise of substantial reward.

It lies at the very root of all translation; and it is the key to true interpretation... As the course of language moves smoothly along, according to the laws which govern it, there is nothing by which it can awaken or attract our attention. It is as when we are travelling by railway. As long as everything proceeds according to the regulations we notice nothing; we sleep, or we read, or meditate as the case may be. But, let the train slacken its speed, or make an unexpected stop; -- we immediately hear the question asked, "What is the matter?" "What are we stopping for?" We hear one window go down and then another: attention is thoroughly aroused, and interest excited. So it is exactly with our reading. As long as all proceeds smoothly and according to law we notice nothing. But suddenly there is a departure from some law, a deviation from the even course -- an unlooked for change -- our attention is attracted, and we at once give our mind to discover why the words have been used in a new form, what the particular force of the passage is, and why we are to put special emphasis on the fact stated or on the truth conveyed. In fact, it is not too much to say that, in the use of these figures, we have, as it were, the Holy Spirit's own markings of our Bibles.

This is the most important point of all. For it is not by fleshly wisdom that the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" are to be understood. The natural man cannot understand the Word of God. It is foolishness unto him. A man may admire a sun-dial, he may marvel at its use, and appreciate the cleverness of its design; he may be interested in its carved-work, or wonder at the mosaics or other beauties which adorn its structure: but, if he holds a lamp in his hand or any other light emanating from himself or from this world, he can make it any hour he pleases, and he will never be able to tell the time of day. Nothing but the light from God's sun in the Heavens can tell him that. So it is with the Word of God. The natural man may admire its structure, or be interested in its statements; he may study its geography, its history, yea, even its prophecy; but none of these things will reveal to him his relation to time and eternity. Nothing but the light that cometh from Heaven. Nothing but the Sun of Righteousness can tell him that. It may be said of the Bible, therefore, as it is of the New Jerusalem -- "The Lamb is the light thereof." The Holy Spirit's work in this world is to lead to Christ, to glorify Christ. The Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit; and the same Spirit that inspired the words in the Book must inspire its truths in our hearts, for they can and must be " Spiritually discerned " (I Cor. 2:1-16).

On this foundation, then, we have prosecuted this work. And on these lines we have sought to carry it out.

We are dealing with the words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth." All His works are perfect. "The words of the Lord are pure words"; human words, indeed, words pertaining to this world, but purified as silver is refined in a furnace. Therefore we must study every word, and in so doing we shall soon learn to say with Jeremiah (15:16), "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart..."

It is clear, therefore, that no branch of Bible-study can be more important: and yet we may truly say that there is no branch of it which has been so utterly neglected.

A figure is, as we have before said, a departure from the natural and fixed laws of Grammar or Syntax; but it is a departure not arising from ignorance or accident. Figures are not mere mistakes of Grammar; on the contrary, they are legitimate departures from law, for a special purpose. They are permitted variations with a particular object. Therefore they are limited as to their number, and can be ascertained, named, and described.

No one is at liberty to exercise any arbitrary power in their use. All that art can do is to ascertain the laws to which nature has subjected them. There is no room for private opinion, neither can speculation concerning them have any authority.

It is not open to any one to say of this or that word or sentence, "This is a figure," according to his own fancy, or to suit his own purpose. We are dealing with a science whose laws and their workings are known. If a word or words be a figure, then that figure can be named, and described. It is used for a definite purpose and with a specific object. Man may use figures in ignorance, without any particular object. But when the Holy Spirit takes up human words and uses a figure (or peculiar form), it is for a special purpose, and that purpose must be observed and have due weight given to it.

Many misunderstood and perverted passages are difficult, only because we have not known the Lord's design in the difficulty.

Thomas Boys has well said (Commentary, I Pet. 3), "There is much in the Holy Scriptures, which we find it hard to understand: nay, much that we seem to understand so fully as to imagine that we have discovered in it some difficulty or inconsistency. Yet the truth is, that passages of this kind are often the very parts of the Bible in which the greatest instruction is to be found: and, more than this, the instruction is to be obtained in the contemplation of the very difficulties by which at first we are startled. This is the intention of these apparent inconsistencies. The expressions are used, in order that we may mark them, dwell upon them, and draw instruction out of them. Things are put to us in a strange way, because, if they were put in a more ordinary way, we should not notice them."

This is true, not only of mere difficulties as such, but especially of all Figures: i.e., of all new and unwonted forms of words and speech: and our design in this work is that we should learn to notice them and gain the instruction they were intended to give us.

The Word of God may, in one respect, be compared to the earth. All things necessary to life and sustenance may be obtained by scratching the surface of the earth: but there are treasures of beauty and wealth to be obtained by digging deeper into it. So it is with the Bible. "All things necessary to life and godliness" lie upon its surface for the humblest saint; but, beneath that surface are "great spoils" which are found only by those who seek after them as for "hid treasure."

Ethelbert W. Bullinger.
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The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament

Originally by E.W. Bullinger, revised by Bill Powell

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This work is a brief summary and revision of Bullinger's work on "The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament".

The division of the Bible into the Old and New Testaments employs misleading terminology, incorporates a wrong division of subject matter and implies a wrong number of covenants made by God. The word testament is substituted for the word covenant. The Hebrew root word for covenant meant "cutting" and referred to the blood that was shed when a "blood covenant" was made. This type of covenant was irrevocable. Once a blood covenant was made, neither party could make alterations without breaking the covenant. In the Bible God made three covenants with man, not two. He made a covenant with Noah regarding the earth's protection from future floods, a covenant with Abraham as *El Shaddai* and a new covenant in the future, ratified with the blood of Jesus Christ and confirmed in a future administration. The "New Testament" has not yet begun but will begin after the return of Christ. In the Greek Church the term "Old Covenant" was used (from Jeremiah 31:32, Exodus 24:7 and I Corinthians 3:14). "Old Covenant" was popular in the second century and through the Vulgate has come down to us as "*vestus testamentum*" or "Old Testament".

In assessing the value of early church fathers, one must keep in mind their foundations as described in the scriptures:

Acts 20:29-31

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

II Timothy 1:15

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

By the end of the first century the only apostolic procession was by these grievous wolves. We must look to the scriptures themselves, not the church tradition laid by grievous wolves in sheep's clothing.

There is no scriptural authority for the modern terms "Bible" either. In fact, in the time of Christ the common terms were:

- The Scriptures or The writings (Matthew 22:29, Acts 18:24)
- Holy Scripture (Romans 1:2)
- Sacred Letters (II Timothy 3:15)
- The Four and Twenty Books (the true number of books from Genesis to Malachi)
- The Reading (Nehemiah 8:8)

In Luke 24:44, Jesus Christ divided the Old Testament scriptures into three groups: The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. The Hebrew names for these three divisions are: *Torah*, the Law; *Nebee-eem*, the Prophets; and *Kethuveem*, the Writings (called Psalms or *Hagiographia* by the Greeks). The initial letters of these three words spell *T'nach*, which is a common word used

by Jews much like the English word Bible is used by Christians. The fact that the other writings are called “the” other writings indicates a fixed and well-known set of writings. When Christ references Abel and Zechariah together, He refers to the first and last books of the Hebrew Canon (Genesis and Chronicles) as including all the blood shed between these two men.

In comparison, with the revelation of the great mystery that had been kept secret, the word of God was made complete. The particular Aramaic word used for complete is in the extensive intensive form indicating that the revelation was completely, completely absolutely complete. New revelations are specifically precluded by this as well as other scriptures. The believer’s greatest need then is not to discover new views and opinions in search of the “present truth” but to read and understand what God has already revealed in his Word.

Colossians 1:25,26

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (complete) the word of God;

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

Based on Zechariah 1:4 and 7:7,12 the Prophets could be further divided into the *Former Prophets* which were chiefly historical (Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings) and the *Latter Prophets* who were chiefly predictive.

Zechariah 1:4

Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom **the former prophets** have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the LORD.

Zechariah 7:7

Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by **the former prophets**, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?

Zechariah 7:12

Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by **the former prophets**: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

The Torah

- 1) Genesis
- 2) Exodus
- 3) Leviticus
- 4) Numbers
- 5) Deuteronomy

The Prophets

The Former Prophets

- 6) Joshua
- 7) Judges
- 8) Samuel (One Book)
- 9) Kings (One Book)

The Latter Prophets

- 10) Isaiah
- 11) Jeremiah
- 12) Ezekiel
- 13) *The Minor Prophets* (One Book) *Minor referring to size, not significance*

The Writings (In the order given in the earliest version of the Five Megilloth)

- 14) Psalms (One Book)
- 15) Proverbs

- 16) Job
- 17) Song of Songs
- 18) Ruth
- 19) Lamentations
- 20) Ecclesiastes
- 21) Esther
- 22) Daniel
- 23) Ezra-Nehemiah (One Book)
- 24) Chronicles (One Book)

Genesis - “B’resheeth”, the book of the beginning.

The word “Genesis” is a transliteration from the Greek word “*genesis*” used by Alexandrian philosophers for *the origin of the universe*. The original title was *B’resheeth* means “*in the beginning*”.

Genesis contains the beginning of not only the earth, life, man, sin, death and Israel, but the beginning of the subject of the whole Bible: The enmity between the two seeds: the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, who is Christ. This conflict begins in Genesis, continues throughout the Old Testament, Gospels and Acts, and is resolved in Revelation. What begins in Genesis, ends in revelation. The book of the beginning points to the fact that without what is called the New Testament, the divine revelation is incomplete. It has been rightly called the seed plot of the whole Bible.

Exodus - “V’elleh Shemoth” - the Book of the Names

While Genesis began with man Eden and perfection, Exodus begins with Egypt and ruin. It shows how man outside of Eden is going to be redeemed. First God reveals His own name (3:13-15); further reveals it (6:3, 33:19 and 34:5-7).

He knows his redeemed by name. (33:12, 17) The names of the redeemed are on the shoulder stones (28:9-12) and on the breastplate (28:15-21). The names of the redeemed were carried into the Holy of Holies before the Mercy Seat covered with the blood of the lamb.

Redemption is first mentioned in Exodus. (15:13) The name of the Redeemer “*Jah*” is first revealed in Exodus. All this indicates redemption is specific and particular and that God’s people are redeemed by name. Redemption out from Egypt and into the land is described as beginning with a cry unto the Lord based on the covenant and God hearing that request according to His will and raising up Moses in response.

Leviticus - “Vayichrah” - the Book of the Calling

The English name Leviticus is from the Latin “*Leviticon*” or relating to the Levites. The Hebrew word “*Va-yich-rah*” means “*And He Called*”. This book shows, not just the activity of the Levites, but that access of the redeemed to the sanctuary of Jehovah in worship is predicated on God’s calling. No one can approach and truly worship without being called by the Father who is seeking them to worship him. (John 4:24)

The title begins the book when it says “*And the Lord called unto Moses*” and goes on to reveal how offerings are to be brought in worship if someone were to bring an offering. The “*calling*” then is for worship. Leviticus is the book of access, the book of the sanctuary and the book of worship.

No other book records so many of the words recorded by the Holy Spirit as spoken directly by Jehovah himself. He alone determines how He is to be approached, who should approach and how He is to be worshipped. Nothing is left to human discretion, no choice is given to man, every detail is prescribed. The most descriptive word is “**must**”. All exercise of the senses is contrary to spiritual this worship, and all exercise of the will or “*will-worship*” is branded as “*the way of Cain*” (Genesis 4, Jude 11) as opposed to the way of God (Acts 18:26).

John 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth.
Even in outward matters of worship Jehovah gave the pattern of the tabernacle and temple.
(Hebrews 8:5, I Chronicles 28:19).

Numbers - “B’midbar” - The Book of the Wilderness

The title “Numbers” is from the Latin *numeri* in the Vulgate which is from the Greek *arithmoi* in the Septuagint. The idea of “numbers” is from the numberings in chapters 1-3 and 26. The book covers how Jehovah led his people by the right way through the wilderness.

It is not the shortest way, most direct way, the most logical way, the easiest way or the most pleasant to the flesh; but it is the way directed by God and protected by God and where God was the sufficiency and divine instruction and reproof were experienced. It was the right way, that ended right, as opposed to all other ways.

Deuteronomy - “Elleh Haddevareem” - the Book of the Words

The word Deuteronomy is from the Greek *deuteros* (second) and *nomos* (law). Man saw this as merely a second repetition of law to a new generation. The Hebrew title **“Elleh Haddevareem”** means “These are the Words”. It contains the words, testimonies, statutes and judgments of Jehovah. Christ refers to Moses as the author of the Torah twelve times.

Joshua - “Y’Hoshua” - The Inheritance Possessed

This book is not named Joshua because he was necessarily the author but because he is the Prophet (speaking God’s words for God) that makes up the subject of the book. The Talmud asserts that Joshua wrote all but the last 8 verses. The book shows both the conquest of the land and the partition of the land. The object of the book magnifies the inviolable covenant faithfulness of Jehovah in the fulfillment of His promises.

He promised in Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 31:7

And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

He fulfilled it in Joshua:

Joshua 21:43-45

And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.

And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.

The inheritance is possessed because Jehovah promised and was faithful to his Word that those that believed and acted on the promise would receive the blessing.

Judges - “Shopheteem” - The Deliverers

The Hebrew word *“shopheteem”* does not mean to subjugate and then rule, but to set upright, put right and then to rule. This type of judge was a deliverer to those people that called upon Jehovah based on the covenant promises. The office is peculiar to Israel and stands alone in the history of the world. The function of the office of the judge is described in Judges 2:7-19. Joshua begins “Now after the death of Moses” and Judges begins “Now after the death of Joshua”. The book shows that despite Israel’s failure and lack of faithfulness, that anytime there was a call to God based on His covenant, that He would be faithful to His Word.

Judges 2:1

And an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

In contrast to God's faithfulness to his covenant, Israel is described with the words "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." So even though they had all gone astray, God was faithful to His Word. In Exodus and Deuteronomy God had revealed that He was to be their King, but Israel did not believe the covenant.

The path away from Jehovah taken by Israel is described in detail:

- 1) The house of God is so neglected its position must be minutely described. (21:19)
- 2) Man makes his own "house of God" (17:5 *margin*) and depends on the power of shekels for its production.. He sets up his own gods and his own priest. (17:6-13)
- 3) He pays his priest a fixed salary, ten shekels a year, a suit of clothes and his board, which proves poor pay.
- 4) The blessing he "knew" he would get (17:13) does not come, he is robbed of the whole thing including his gods and his priest.
- 5) The priest gets a promotion and becomes priest to a whole tribe instead of a family and open idolatry continues the whole time the true house of God is neglected in Shiloh. (18:31)
- 6) Man's religion ends in reducing the three feasts of Jehovah to one, the chief feature of which was girls dancing. ((21:19, 21)

Israel is stamped with the description "No King" while Jehovah is described as "faithful to His covenant". In that condition the people were so lawless that every form of error was to be tolerated at the expense of the truth and union is to be based on social and secular considerations instead of the revelation of truth. Those that have ears to hear will recognize the accepted religion of tolerance and secular humanism our day.

As Shiloh was lost in those days, so the true Shiloh is lost today.

Genesis 49:10

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Unto Christ shall the gathering of the people be when he returns and we are to wait up for it. But for many the house of God can not be found, man has made his own houses, with his own priests and ministers, who he pays with a fixed salary, and a special suit, which proves poor pay and the whole thing is steeped in idolatry marked by music and dancing and watering down the Words of God into the summarized and reduced pre-digested pabulum of theories and opinions.

Samuel - "Sh'muel" - Heard of God or Asked of God

The *Sedarim* numbers I and II Samuel as one book. The Septuagint divided it into two. This division was followed by the Vulgate and the Hebrew Bible and into the modern translations and versions. The book of Samuel is composed of the ministries of Samuel, Nathan and Gad.

I Chronicles 29:29

Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, The two great requests heard or asked of God are Hannah's request for a son answered in Samuel and the people's request for a King. Saul afterwards asked for Samuel, but did not ask of God (I Samuel 28). The people's request for a king answered in Saul and David. Saul showed what Man's king was and David showed what one "after God's own heart" was. Saul finds Samuel to help him seek his father's asses that he could not find, while David had to be found of God as he was busy keeping his father's sheep that he had never lost. Asking is the great key to the book especially in the light of I Samuel 8, 9, 16 and I Samuel 7.

Kings - "V'Hamelech David" - King David

First and second Kings are one book in the Hebrew manuscripts and *Sedarim*. In the title "Now King David" we have the key to the whole book. David, the King chosen by God, is the standard by which all kings are measured. Their character is tested by the manner in which they approach or differ from David, their lives are portrayed according to how they followed or diverged from

David. They are viewed as David's successors, not as independent kings. It shows man's failure as king which came on the heels of man's failure as prophet, which was on the heels of man's failure as priest. The True David is The Prophet, The Priest and The King. Kings opens with the Temple of God built and closes with it burnt. It begins with King David and ends with the King of Babylon.

Isaiah - The Salvation of Jehovah

Isaiah lived midway between Moses and Christ. He prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, four kings ultimately associated with the ruin and hope of the nation.

Uzziah apostatised and was "cut off from the house of the Lord" (II Chronicles 26:21). Jotham "entered not into the temple of the Lord" (27:2). Ahaz "shut up the doors of the house of the Lord" (28:24). Hezekiah "opened the doors of the house of the Lord" 29:3. In no other book of the Old Testament (except the Psalms) is the word "salvation" so frequently found. The book prophesies of the coming of Him who should be Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth. (49:6). This is set against the backdrop of Israel's condition of degradation in their religious zeal for ritual observances. Isaiah sees the king of Judah driven from among men, smitten with leprosy and cut off from the house of the Lord; and he beholds another king "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple". Isaiah himself confesses that he is a man of unclean lips, but immediately upon that confession it is written, "the cherubim did fly" and cleanse his lips. Several important things are mentioned for the first time in Isaiah: "the Day of the Lord", a definite "Messiah", the Bride, the new heavens and the new earth. The coming messiah is shown to be the coming salvation of the Jehovah.

Jeremiah - Whom Jehovah Launches Forth

Jeremiah is the one raised up by Jehovah to be his witness against man. The more faithful God's witness is, the more he will be hated by man. Jeremiah was persecuted by kings, fellow-townsmen,

and by his own family. The chief priest put him in the stocks, he is falsely accused by the priests and according to tradition he was stoned in Egypt by his own countrymen and later on his grave was stoned in Cairo. Jeremiah is the witness sent by Jehovah. During Jeremiah's time the scriptures were found in the debris of the temple and he declared "Thy words were **found** and I did eat them, Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart". He was the first launched forth by Jehovah. The coming Messiah is shown to be a suffering witness.

Ezekiel - Whom God Strengthens

The compound is with El, God (not Jah, Lord). El is the mighty God. God is referred to as strengthening Ezekiel. God, the strong one, strengthens His messenger against the face of his enemies and uses him to strengthen the souls of the faithful, who would see in his name and his mission and his message the blessed hope that the strength of God would bring future and final redemption for His people. Ezekiel's begins this strengthening when God tells him to eat the words of God. The coming Messiah is shown to be the ruling with God's authority, subduing all enemies under his feet, reigning in glorious peace with the ministry of "Jehovah Shammah" - "the Lord is there" - which are the closing words of Ezekiel.

There are then two captivities that occur: the Assyrian and Chaldean and then finally a "post-exile"

period. The minor prophets can be divided into those periods. These twelve books are always in one book in all manuscripts, *Sedarim*, Ginsburg and the St. Petersburg Codex and early printed texts

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah and Nahum occur during the Assyrian period

Habakkuk and Zephaniah occur during the Chaldean period.

Zechariah and Malachi occur during the post-exile period.

Hosea: Salvation or Deliverance

Hosea announces ruin and destruction and ends with Israel consoled with a promise of abundant

fruitfulness.

Joel: Whose God is Jehovah

Joe describes the terrors of the “day of the Lord” and points out the blessing for those whose God is Jehovah. (2:18,19) It begins with a call to repentance at a time of dearth and ends with Jehovah roaring out of Zion and uttering his voice from Jerusalem. (3:16)

Amos: Burden Bearer

Amos bears the burden revealed in Joel onward. Joel opens his prophecy with the same words (1:2) and then foretells that the tabernacle of David shall be built again “that they may possess the remnant of Edom”. (9:11-13)

Obadiah: The Servant of Jehovah

Obadiah repeats those words and unfolds the prophecy. “We have heard a rumor, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen”. Obadiah gives an expansion of Amos 9:11-12

Jonah: A Dove or Pigeon

Jonah is that ambassador revealed in Obadiah. (1:2) Jonah declares Jehovah (4:2) as described in the law (Exodus 34:6,7). The Dove is fleeing from all unpleasantness so it is a harbinger of peace where it is found. Jonah is willing to lay his life down because he loves Israel. He does not want the gentiles blessed because he knows they will be instruments of judgment against Israel.

Micah: Who is like Jehovah?

Micah takes up the attributes of Jehovah (Exodus 34:6,7) where Jonah left off. (7:18). He declares

the word against Samaria and Jerusalem (North and South Israel). His prophecy is three parts each beginning with “Hear”. (1-chapters 1&2, 2- chapters 3 through 5, and 3- chapters 6&7). This is similar to Micah in Kings (I Kings 22:28)

Nahum: Consolation or Comforter

Nahum takes up the theme where Jonah left off. (c.f. Jonah 4:2 & Nahum 1:2). Nahum is a burden depicting the judgment of Nineveh. The burden against Nineveh (1:2) is a consolation to Israel. (1:7)

Habakkuk: An Embraced One

Two thirds of the prophecy is a conversation between God and the prophet written as discourse between friends. It is here we see the justification by faith principle (2:4) which was alike the possession Abraham the friend of God (James 2:23, II Chronicles 20:7) and all his spiritual seed. The just shall live by faith is quoted (each with emphasis on a different word) in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38). Habakkuk is a burden concerning the Chaldeans who executed that judgment on Nineveh. Habakkuk calls for silence on account of the presence of the Lord. (2:20)

Zephaniah: Jehovah Protects

Zephaniah repeats the call for silence (2:20 and 1:7) The coming judgment of God is described as well as how His people would be hidden, protected and saved. Jehovah is revealed three times as “in the midst” of his people. (3:5, 15, 17). They are hidden in him, he is amidst them, and therefore they are protected. Zephaniah 3:8 contains every letter of the Hebrew alphabet including the five finals. The Massorah calls attention to this fact.

Haggai: My Feast

There were 70 years of captivity and the prophecies of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel between Zephaniah and Haggai. The time had come for the temple to be rebuilt and the feats of Jehovah restored. His mission and prophecy correspond to the name.

Zechariah: Jehovah Remembers

Zechariah shows that the prophecies of the coming glory for Israel are ALL based on Jehovah’s remembrance of His covenant. Again and again He promises to return and will yet comfort Zion, and will yet choose Jerusalem. (1:3, 16, 17; 2:5,8,10,11; 6:12,13; 8:3; 9:9,10,16; 12:10; 13:9;

14:3,4,9)

Psalms: Kethuveem - The Other Writings

The book of Psalms Hebrew title is *T'hilleem*. It is derived from a noun that also forms part of the English word hallelujah - praise to Jehovah. The root meaning is to jump or dance about as light does, then to throw light on anything so as to illuminate it or glorify it. The transition then is easy to praising and praising by setting anything in the light. The Psalms set forth God's purposes in the light and illustrate them by causing them to shine forth to His praise. They cover the entire field of Old Testament revelation.

The Massorah, Talmud, Septuagint and other ancient manuscripts divide Psalms into 5 books:

Book I 1-40 Genesis Book ***The Book of the beginning***

Adam, Man, Creation, Christ and

AntiChrist

Book II 41-72 Exodus Book ***The Book of Redemption***

Ruin, Redeemer, Redemption

Book III 73-89 Leviticus Book ***The Book of The Sanctuary***

Congregation, Sanctuary

Book IV 90-106 Numbers Book ***The Book of the Wilderness***

The earth, mountains, hills

Grass. Blessing for the earth is needed, anticipated and enjoyed

Book V 107-150 Deuteronomy Book ***The Book of the Word***

Blessing and ruin to man, Israel

and earth based on adherence to or departure from the Word

The Proverbs of Solomon - "Mishlai" - The Rules of Life

The title is from the Hebrew word *Mashal* - to rule, to have or exercise rule. They are words that are to govern or rule the life. It is the book of God's moral government of the earth. Man under rates the power of the tongue, the power of fools and the power of women. God shows the power of each and warns of their dangers. Wisdom is personified throughout Proverbs. God's wisdom is a faithful and virtuous woman while world wisdom is a strange woman. Christ is the Wisdom of God and is shown in Proverbs through a double personification.

Job - "Ey-yon": An Oppressed One

The name is the masculine for which the feminine is the enmity of Genesis 3:15. As a passive participle, the name implies that Job is one on whom the enemy seeks to put forth his power, an oppressed one. Job was delivered when he realized he was vile and abhorred himself and did not think of himself more highly than he ought to think but rather started thinking soberly according to God and what God has done. When took his eyes off of himself and his good works, realized his true condition as a sinner, in spite of good works and put his eyes on the immense greatness of God and his power, he was delivered.

The Song of Songs - "Sheer Hasheereem" - by the figure Enallage, the Most Beautiful Song, or Most Excellent Song

Three individuals are the principal persons, and not two as is generally supposed; a shepherd, a shepherdess, and a king. The shepherd is the object of the maiden's affection, and not the king. This song records the real history of a humble but virtuous woman, who, after having been espoused to a man of like humble circumstances, had been tempted in a most alluring manner to abandon him, and to transfer her affections to one of the wisest and richest of men, but who successfully resisted all temptations, remained faithful to her espousals, and was ultimately rewarded for her virtue. The maiden is the one who is beloved; the shepherd is the one who loves her; and the king, the one who would come between with temptations and allurements. While this is the interpretation, the application is varied. The Jews read it at the Passover and apply it to

Israel going forth to the one described as “He loved the people”, and despising all the riches and treasures of Egypt. A general application may be to the Church of the Bride of Christ and the Bridegroom.

Ruth - A Friend

The book tells how Jehovah delighted to take this Moabite stranger and bring her into blessing with His chosen people when one condition was met - her believing. Ruth becomes the ancestress of David as well as David’s son and Lord despite her inherent unworthiness as a Moabite gentile. She like Habakkuk and Abraham become friends by believing. Being read at Pentacost it intimates how Jehovah would pour out His spirit upon all flesh (Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:16-21) and in so doing bring the gentiles into the blessing of Abraham. The offer of Acts 3:19-26 was rejected by the time of Acts 13:45-52. The Mystery or secret of the Church was revealed about this time. Acts 13 was about fourteen years before II Corinthians 12:3 when Paul had received the abundance of the revelation. The Mystery was not made known in writing until after the final rejection of the offer in Acts 28:30-31. Ephesians was probably written during the house arrest in Rome in Acts 28:30-31

Lamentations - “Ey-chah” - Alas! Or O How!

This is an exclamation of pain and grief - a howling, a wailing cry. It is preserved in our word jackal. It is the first word in the book and aptly describes its character. The word is used by three prophets:

- 1) Moses, of Israel in her glory and pride. (Deuteronomy 1:12)
- 2) Isaiah, of Israel in her dissipation and sin. (Isaiah 1:21)
- 3) Jeremiah, of Israel in her desolation. (Lamentations 1:1)

It is read on the fast of the 9th

of Abib. Five great calamities are commemorated on that day.

- 1) The return of the 12 spies, and the decree of the 40 years’ wanderings in consequence of the rebellion of the people
- 2) The destruction of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.
- 3) The destruction of the second Temple by the Romans under Titus.
- 4) The taking of Bethel by Romans under Hadrian, when 580,000 were slain.
- 5) The ploughing of Zion like a field, in fulfillment of Jeremiah 26:18, &c.

The first two chapters consist of 22 long verses of three lines each, each verse respectively commencing with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The third chapter consists of 66 verses (3x22), each triad of verses commencing with the same letter; e.g. the first three lines commence with *Aleph*, the next three with *Beth*, and so on through the 22 letters of the alphabet.

The fourth chapter is arranged in 22 long verses of two lines each, also arranged acrostically.

The fifth lamentation (chapter 5) is resolved into a prayer, and the acrostic arrangement gives way before the outburst of emotion. The only connection with the alphabet is that the number of the verses corresponds with the number of letters (22).

Ecclesiastes - “Cohemoth” - The Assembler

The assembler collects persons, especially for religious purposes. The assembler is “an assembler of scattered people into the more immediate presence of God; a gatherer of those that are far off from God. Solomon did thus gather the people in I Kings 8:1,2,5. This book is read at the feast of Tabernacles. Here, under the sun, we dwell only in tabernacles and wait for the greater realities when the “greater than Solomon” will assemble and gather His people unto himself.

Esther - A Star

The book begins with the phrase “*va-yehee beemai*”, the first of these words means, “now it came to pass”. A tradition from the time of the Great Synagogue says that whenever a scripture commences with those words it always marks impending catastrophe. Five scriptures are pointed

out that begin with this phrase that commence an impending catastrophe but that end in blessing.

1) Genesis 14:1 War and blessing by the Priest of the Most High God

2) Ruth 1:1 Famine and the joy of marriage

3) Isaiah 7:1 Way and “behold a virgin shall conceive...Immanuel”

4) Jeremiah 1:3 The carrying away captive and promise of restoration

5) Esther 1:1 Threat of being cut off and joyful deliverance

The blessing stands out more glorious against the trouble that preceded. Luke 2:1 is a 6th

example

of this. The name of God is not written in Esther. According to Deuteronomy 31:18, “I will surely hide my face”. In Esther the people had forsaken God and God’s face was hidden from them. His name is hidden in the book in the form of four acrostics which are also the pivots on which the whole history of turns. These are explained in detail in the Companion Bible by E.W. Bullinger.

Daniel - God will Judge

Dani-el means God is Judge or God will judge, *Bab-el* means the judgement of God. The part dealing especially with Gentiles and the course and character of Gentile power is written, not in Hebrew but in *Chaldee* (2:4-7:28). So also Ezra 4:8-6:19 and 7:12-27, where Israel is under Gentile power; and Jeremiah 10:11 which is a message to the Gentiles.

The book reveals God’s judgment of Israel and Jerusalem in delivering them into the power of the

Gentiles; and God’s judgment of the Gentiles as given into the hands of the son of man. (7:9-13,22). The title carried by the coming Messiah is “son of man” because that is his title as the judge and second Adam. Daniel is referred to by Ezekiel (14:14-20) and by Christ (Matthew 24:15). As other scriptures, Daniel is genuine and authentic.

Ezra-Nehemiah - The Protection and Consolation of Jehovah

These two books are always presented as one in the manuscripts and early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. The Massorah treats them as one book with the title of Ezra. The *Sedarim*, or order

of sections for public reading are ten in number run from Ezra 1:1 through Nehemiah 1:1 to the end.

Ezra means surrounded, protected or helped, while Nehemiah means comforted by Jehovah, or the consolation of Jehovah. These books record the events which show how Jehovah protected and comforted His people in times of trouble and difficulty, delivering them out of the hand of all their enemies.

Chronicles - “Divrai Hay-yahmeem” - The Lords Words on Man’s Works

The two books of Chronicles (like Samuel, Kings and Ezra-Nehemiah) form a single book in the manuscripts and early printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. The enumeration of the *Sedarim* runs through both books without a break. It is named from the principle subject matter. There is no indication of who named it. The title comes with the same authority as the text. The title literally means “The words of the days”, somewhat similar to “the course of events” or “current events” or “annals” but with the added notion that these are divine words concerning those events. This book

contains the divine comment and judgement on those works, rather than a mere historical chronicle of them.

In Samuel and Kings we have the same events recorded as facts of the history and from mans standpoint. In Chronicles we have those events from a different perspective, a different stand point or point of view. In Chronicles you have Divine words and thoughts about those facts from God’s point of view. In I Samuel 31 you have the facts of Saul’s death, but in I Chronicles 10:13,14 we have the Divine words on that event. “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and laso for

asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it and enquired not of the Lord; therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.”

In Samuel we have the bare facts, in Chronicles we have the truth behind the facts revealed. Actions of kings are represented in connection with the Lord or with His service. In Kings the religious reformation of Hezekiah is briefly mentioned in three verses’ while the secular history has eighty-eight verses, or three chapters devoted to it (II Kings 18:7-30, 19 and 20).

In Chronicles it is just the opposite. Three chapters (II Chronicles 29-31) or eighty-four verses are devoted to the great religious reformation; while one chapter (32) records the secular history. The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. (I Samuel 16:7).

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