

**SHORT PAPERS ON
SOME FUNDAMENTAL
TRUTHS**

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The Inspiration of Scripture

IN all matters of interpretation, words are of the utmost importance. A lawyer, in interpreting the document before him, is not guided by what it is suggested the person concerned intended, but by what he actually has written. The words of the document count for everything; all else for nothing.

This is so in interpreting the Scriptures of Truth. Its words, the numbers of the words, whether singular, dual or plural, the tenses, genders and every other detail have to be weighed and considered. Conclusions reached should be deduced from what the Scriptures say, not from what others say of them. Seeing, therefore, that life's real success and security for the eternal future are contingent upon obedient observance of the words of Scripture, it becomes a matter of vital importance to be assured that such words are accurate and dependable, that they are free from all error, and that they really present perfectly the message of God to man.

It is not sufficient to affirm that *the thoughts* are inspired though the words are not, for if the words be faulty the thoughts cannot be accurately conveyed. Nothing short of verbal inspiration will suffice. Plenary inspiration is essential. Precise thought can only be conveyed in precise words.

It needs, however, a *properly adjusted mind* to receive the revelation, for precise thoughts conveyed in precise words to a distorted or darkened mind fail to achieve anything of lasting good. The message can only be discerned by those who have the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 2. 14).

their unity is, indeed, remarkable. This itself testifies to their divine origin. The absence of any contradiction, notwithstanding the fact that there was no collusion on the part of any of the writers, attests the same.

Yet another evidence is the *effect of the Scriptures upon human lives* and their general good effect on communities where-soever they are acknowledged. This declares indubitably that over the whole book may be inscribed the words 'Thus saith the Lord' (see 1 Peter 1. 23). It has turned savages into saints.

EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

To what extent are they inspired? As was said earlier, nothing short of verbal inspiration will satisfy the case. Inspiration of ideas but not of words will never give assurance to a reader that the book is accurate. Doubtless there was divine wisdom in using *languages* which are now dead in the composition of the Scriptures. Being dead they are static; the meaning of their words does not change with the passing of time. The Lord Jesus declared that not one jot or one tittle (peculiarities of Hebrew letters) will pass away, by which we may infer that He taught the inspiration of the words, which, of course, are made up of letters. He pointed out that the Scriptures spake of God thus: 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' and, emphasizing the present tense, He drew from it the conclusion that 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living: for all live unto Him!' So that He taught that *the tenses* also are inspired.

Let the reader examine *the citations* from the Old Testament in the New and especially the emphasis which the writer of the Hebrews lays on particular words (e.g. the words 'once more' (12. 27) and the word 'new' (8. 13)) and also the quotation in Rom. 10. 6-12, and he will find that he cannot escape the conclusion that the Scriptures are verbally inspired. Observe, too, that Paul extracts an important doctrine from the word 'seed' used in Genesis, noting the fact that the word is singular not plural, and refers to Christ (Gal. 3. 16).

The New Testament is in no way inferior to the Old. It was to be read publicly in the churches (1 Thess. 5. 27 and Col. 4. 16) as the Old Testament had been in the synagogues. Paul's writings are ranked with 'other scripture' (2 Peter 3. 16) and the words of the gospel of Luke are cited as Scripture by Paul in 1 Tim. 5. 18.

MISTAKES

It has, however, been seriously asserted by some that *mistakes* are to be found in the Scriptures. This assertion emanates not merely from those who are hostile to the book but also from those who read it devoutly and more than superficially. Whatsoever admissions may be made concerning the few apparent discrepancies which exist, they do not affect the general teaching of verbal inspiration, or the reliability of the book as a whole.

Mistakes in translations there have been, of course. Inspiration is not claimed for translations, though translators have in many cases been given divine help in their work. Inspiration is claimed for the original writings only.

Mistakes of copyists do not adversely affect it: they are so very few and unimportant that only the most obstinate would make capital out of them. The remarkable thing is that they are not more numerous. Why, it may be asked, has God been pleased to preserve the book as a whole and yet failed to preserve the original writings so that the matter of copyists' errors could not have arisen? 'His ways are past finding out,' but is it not more than likely that man would have done with the originals what he did with the Brazen Serpent? Would he not have been likely to make them an object of worship, or superstition, or what not?

Alleged *scientific mistakes* have been dealt with by competent scientific men. He who is not versed in scientific matters is not well advised to attempt to deal with the alleged scientific inaccuracies. Let all such objectors be sure, however, that they discriminate carefully between theory and fact; and let them see that they do not base their objections on manners of speech and commonly understood phrases which actually define phenomena although they do not define scientific process.

Most alleged historical errors vanish on closer investigation. Matthew Henry was correct when, dealing with the alleged discrepancies in the records of the miracles of the Lord Jesus, he observed that "if there were two men there must have been one." No one quarrels with the photographer who produces a profile photograph showing one eye and a full-faced view showing two. Which is correct? Moreover, the inspired evangelists wrote on a principle of selection. They mentioned things which were pertinent to their aim. The Spirit of God through Moses omitted certain details concerning the person of Melchizedek to make his recorded history an apt type of the Lord Jesus, as to Whom the omissions were actual matters of fact (Heb. 7. 1-4). Adolph Saphir has said

that "The silences of Scripture are like the pauses in music: they add to its harmony." What destruction of harmony is effected by attempting to harmonize the four gospels! How much sweet music is lost if the blanks are filled up by careless hands! He whose heart is opposed to God, looks for mistakes; he will find plenty of what he regards as such; but such supposed errors are, in many cases, evidences to the illumined mind of the superintending control of God which adds lustre to the written text.

AVOID RASH CONCLUSIONS

As to the small residue of *unresolved alleged errors* we may safely await more information. In the absence of all the data rash conclusions should be avoided. The writer arrived home early recently though the train was late! Here is an apparent contradiction, but the facts of the case were that he was able to catch an earlier train which itself was late instead of the one after it. Consequently coming by the train that was late he arrived home earlier than he would have done had he caught his usual train which was on time. But the statement "The train was late, although I am home early" seems, in the absence of more details to be contradictory and stupid.

Capital has been made out of the fact that the New Testament passages *quote citations differently from the original text*. But the objection is ill-founded. The word of God is so full that often the quotation in the New Testament brings into prominence a hidden meaning latent in the passage but not apparent in its Old Testament setting. Sometimes God puts His seal of approval on a Greek mistranslation of the Hebrew text with which the Septuagint abounds, and uses such erroneous reading to good purpose (cf. e.g. Gen. 5. 22 and Heb. 11. 5). (Also Psa. 40. 6-8 and Heb. 10. 5-8).

Moreover, it is the moral right of any author to cite his own former writings in a subsequent writing; he does no wrong if he misquotes, amplifies or uses to another purpose what he has hitherto written. It is his own writing; he may do what he will. But may Paul so use what Isaiah wrote? When it is apprehended that all scripture is that of the Holy Spirit and not of mere human origin, it will become plain that the Holy Spirit infringes no moral right when He cites differently one of His own earlier writings. It is the Spirit Who wrote: it is the Spirit who cites. It is not the blunder of a subsequent human writer.

A COMPLETED BOOK

The matter of the *Canon of Scripture* is far too large a subject to be dealt with adequately in this paper. At this late date we may rest content that in our Bible we have all the word of God: no volume outside of that book can seriously claim a place within it. The Lord Jesus in His day had the Old Testament as we have it to-day: its divisions then into the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets, being the divisions which are found current among the Jews to-day. Deut. 31. 24 gives assurance as to the completeness of the Pentateuch. Col. 1. 25 gives assurance as to the completeness of Paul's revelation and Rev. 22. 6 forms a most suitable conclusion of the whole volume. The word of God is 'faithful'—it can be relied upon. It is 'true' in all material matters of fact. It is authoritative for the 'Lord God of the Holy Prophets' is the speaker; and its foreshadowings are inevitable—they 'must come to pass.' Woe be to him who adds to them or who takes from them! They are not deficient; they are not in any part redundant. They are 'perfect and entire, wanting nothing.'

Though written by men it is *free from human infirmity*. John in his advanced years was not hindered by the common infirmities of old age, viz. mental feebleness and defective memory. The Spirit of God, in accordance with the promise of the Lord Jesus, 'brought all things to remembrance' and, as with all others, assured to us an accurate written statement of God's revelation of the past, operations in the present and purposes for the future.

It behoves us all to "give attendance to reading" (1 Tim. 4. 13), to "search the scriptures" (John 5. 39) and to "give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest we should slip by them." (Heb. 2. 1).

Our Lord and His Bible

AFTER our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, He opened the Scriptures to the understanding of His people, revealing Himself to them in "the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets." This was, then, and still is, the recognised division of the Old Testament Scriptures which constituted our Lord's Bible. Obviously, in the days of His flesh, none of the New Testament was written.

The fact that the Lord Jesus taught, obeyed, read and explained the Scriptures is, in itself, a certificate of the highest authority of their validity and accuracy. He was eternal in His Being, and therefore was at the time when all the recorded events happened. He, in Manhood, was omniscient and, therefore, knew whether or not the records were accurate, distorted, exaggerated, or fabricated. Since His endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures is absolutely unequivocal they may, with good reason, unhesitatingly be accepted by all in their entirety.

The allegation that the Lord Jesus shared the ignorance common in His day is blasphemous, and cuts right across the Deity of our Lord.

HE SIMULTANEOUSLY WAS GOD AND MAN

His affirmations concerning the Old Testament Scriptures are, therefore, the competent assertion of their reliability by One entitled to speak, and were in no way assertions made according to the alleged ignorance of His day.

The human parents of our Lord Jesus were, each of them, devout adherents of the Scriptures. Mary's Song in Luke 2 is a wonderful example of a Spirit-given extempore utterance made up

of extracts from sundry parts of the Old Testament such as Genesis, Job, Samuel, The Psalms, Isaiah and Micah. This maiden's mind was stored with the Scriptures, the result of a diligence exerted before domestic duties made increasing demands on her time.

Joseph's cogitations by reason of the difficulties in which he found himself concerning the birth of Mary's child (*i.e.* whether to put her away or to make her a public example) were not the product of his own ideas, but the alternatives prescribed in the Holy Scriptures by which alone he desired to be guided. Would God that all Christian homes were marked by such Bible-reading, -memorising, -conversant and -obedient parents!

AT the age of twelve our Lord was found in the Temple, with the doctors, hearing them and asking questions, such was His keenness for Bible knowledge. To His parents, who were disturbed because they had lost Him, He said, "Wist ye not that I must be in the things of My Father?" or paraphrased, "Are you surprised that I am reading, meditating in, and enquiring concerning the Scriptures which are My Father's things." Oh, that God would stir up the youth of our day to adopt a similar attitude despite the exacting claims on time which studies, duties and business make. "I must get at my Bible" — "I must hear my Father's voice" — "I must learn my Father's will" should be the attitude of all His children.

This is essential, for it is acquaintance with the Scriptures that furnishes a safeguard in the hour of temptation. This the Lord Jesus proved. Thrice to the devil He said "It is written." If the devil in his subtlety misquoted Scripture the Lord bound Himself by "It is written," knowing full well that no two scriptures contradict each other or justified opposing courses. He was the true David who took out of the brook of Scripture the five smooth stones of the Pentateuch (the Law) and slinging but one of them (Deuteronomy) stunned the devil (who "departed from Him for a season") only later to take his own sword (death) and by it to slay him.

To the Father's voice, in the Scriptures of truth, He opened "His ear morning by morning" (Isa. 50). In His heart, as the unbroken tables of stone in the ark, He hid God's word that "He should not sin against Him." "By the words of God's lips He kept Him from the paths of the destroyer." He was the "godly man" who "meditated in God's law day and night." Finally, when on the cross, having regard to the accomplishment of all the

things that had afore been written concerning His sufferings, He cried, "It is finished," and on the completion of the foreshadowed word concerning Himself He lay His His head down to rest.

IF the Scriptures played such an important part in the private life of the Lord Jesus, they no less figured in His public ministry.

In Nazareth, His native city, he read the word of God reverently (He stood up) and intelligently (He knew where to finish the reading for His immediate purpose) and enforced His comments thereon by citing Old Testament examples which, He made plain, were historical records and not mythical compositions. To the dead rich man in Hades it is said concerning his living brothers, "They have Moses and the Prophets — let them read them," for they are more powerful than the visible resurrection of a man from the dead. To the Pharisees He says, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." He certified the origin of the human race by saying that in the beginning "God created male and female." Thus He branded the evolution theory as a lie. He speaks of the flood, Lot's wife, Jonah and the fish, Daniel the prophet, Abel's sacrifice, Moses and the bush, etc., etc., as historical events, the inspired record of which was altogether trustworthy. It was He who said

"THE SCRIPTURES CANNOT BE BROKEN"

—it all hangs together, is an united whole, binding on its readers from which they cannot free themselves.

Of what use indeed is he, either to God or man, who assuming the place of a public preacher, has misgivings concerning the accuracy of the Scriptures? If one of its links is unsound then the whole chain is broken.

But not only did the Lord Jesus use the Scriptures for Himself personally, and to the outside world, He also expounded them to His own followers.

To His disciples He explained that He had not come "to destroy the law and the prophets," but contrariwise "to fulfil." The Sermon on the Mount must not be read as if it was a setting aside of the Old Testament and the bringing in of a new teaching: it is the amplification, the filling up of that which had been sketchily furnished before. After His resurrection, He expounded the true meaning of the Old Testament to His own. He was the

centre of that book and the key to its proper understanding. In Him the types had their fulfilment. Adam's coat, Abel's lamb, Noah's ark, the son on the altar, Joseph in the pit, the blood on the door post, the animal on the altar, David in the valley, etc., etc., all become plain when Christ is known: all is dark and without significance when Christ is unknown. By the presence of the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer the book becomes "opened" and its inner meaning is available for the soul's enjoyment.

That a further volume was to be added to the Old the Lord foreshadowed. "When the Spirit is come He will bring "all things to your remembrance" which He has now done in the gospels: "He will take of my things and show them to you" which is effected in the Epistles: and He will "show you things to come" which we have in the Revelation.

Paul and the Hebrew Scriptures

PAUL, notwithstanding his unique position in the Church, was "a man of like passions with ourselves," whose attitude toward his Bible becomes, in consequence, of added interest.

Both in his unconverted days and his later converted days the Scriptures played an important part in his life, although it is true that once he was blindly fanatical as to them, but later he became an inspired expositor thereof, revealing the meaning hidden beneath the letter.

I.—THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES WERE THE BASIS OF HIS EARLY TRAINING

Listen to him as he says, "I am verily a man, which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the *law of the fathers*, and was zealous toward God as ye all are this day." And again, "After the most straitest sect of *our religion* I lived a Pharisee." And yet again, "As concerning *the law*, blameless." Being, as he says, "the Son of a Pharisee" he would have had the advantage that he refers to when writing to Timothy "that from a babe he had known the *sacred letters*," albeit that all the while the "veil" was on the book and on his heart, so that it was the letter (which kills) which engrossed him, and not the spirit thereof.

Nevertheless, such a sub-stratum in early life could not have been without its advantages when the Spirit of God began to deal with him. The importance of having the mind stored with the letter of the Word of God is not adequately estimated in these days!

2.—IT WAS THE GUIDE OF HIS PRIVATE LIFE

In order to be effective in the ministry of the Word of God to others, its power and comfort, its searching and cleansing character, must all be known in the private life and be matters of personal experience. Otherwise, the ministry of that Word becomes merely a theological exercise, and is devoid of living power

There is an excellent example in Acts 18, verses 9 and 10 of how an Old Testament Scripture came to the heart of the Apostle with divine power when he was in difficult circumstances. In verse 9 the words "Be not afraid" can be read "Fear not," and these two words linked with the first five words of verse 10 make the very well-known passage of Isaiah 41. 10, "Fear not for I am with thee." This is an instance of the Spirit of God applying the Scripture to the circumstances in which the Apostle then was, a thing not unknown by His people to-day. "The Lord spake" to Paul from this scripture. "Fear not"—that meant that he was to "speak and hold not" his "peace." "For I am with thee"—that meant "No man shall set on thee to hurt thee." The Lord thus applied this passage to Paul's heart when he was "in fear and trembling" at Corinth. "Fear not" enjoined on Paul boldness. "I am with thee" assured to Paul security.

Not only did he derive comfort from the scriptures, he also sought to guide his conduct thereby. When (Acts 23) he inadvertently spake improperly to the high priest he explains, "I wist not brethren that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people," by which he gave those to whom he was speaking to understand that in no case would he wittingly and deliberately infringe the will of God as contained in those writings.

His faith in the scriptures was unreserved. He affirmed he "believed all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." In his unconverted days, so blinded was he that, although he might not have thought it to be the case, he only believed some of the scriptures, and had, for example, no room in his mind for a suffering Messiah or for Gentile blessing. He did not then believe *all* that was written. It was otherwise after God had dealt with him in saving grace. He believed it all, let the rationalising Greek or blinded Jew say what they would concerning the histories and prophecies of the volume.

Happy the believer who to-day derives from his Bible comfort in the midst of troubles: guidance in the midst of opposition: and confidence despite alleged scholarly criticism.

3.—IT WAS THE TEXT-BOOK OF HIS EVANGELICAL MINISTRY

Paul knew the difference between chaff and wheat: the one light, dead and non-productive; the other having weight, life, and the power of propagation. In consequence we find that everywhere in his evangelistic labours "he preached the Word of God," both in the synagogues of the Jews, and to the Gentiles. It is true that to the Jews he quoted and read the scriptures, for they had the book—it was their national volume—and to a large extent were acquainted with its letter. But it is equally true, that although in Acts chapters 14 and 17 Paul does not appear to quote the Scriptures to the Gentiles, yet his remarks are based thereon and embodied as part and parcel of his own sentences.

At Antioch Paul alleges that the scriptures which were read weekly in the synagogues were not understood, and as a direct consequence of this ignorance the nation became guilty of the murder of Him of whom they spake. He shows that the death and resurrection of Christ were the fulfilment of those scriptures, and when met with Jewish opposition cites the scripture as his authority for going to the Gentiles (ch. 13, v. 47).

In Acts 14. 15 Paul before a Gentile audience states in the very words of scripture, "God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all things therein." In chapter 15, verse 15, the scripture is cited as justifying the course of evangelism among the Gentiles adopted by Paul. In chapter 17, verses 2 and 3, Paul uses the scriptures as the basis of his arguments concerning the identity of the Hebrew Messiah with the Man Jesus who had been crucified but was now risen again. In the same chapter before a Gentile audience, he does not read the scriptures, or indeed say that he was quoting them (for what did they care for the Jewish sacred book), but he none the less embodies in his own remarks the words of scripture, as will be seen in verse 24 and verse 25, where respectively he states, "God made the heaven and earth and all things therein," and it is He who "giveth breath" to man. The allusion to Genesis is apparent to any who know their Bible. Indeed in Acts 26 he could affirm before Agrippa that he had said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" and appealed to that King by enquiring, "Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

The preacher to-day who knows his Bible sufficiently to be able to enforce his arguments by its statements, use its phrases in

his preaching, and regulates his evangelistic activities by its precepts, and who does not fail so to do, will surely gain the 'Well done, good and faithful servant' from the lips of his Lord.

4.—IT WAS THE WARP OF PAUL'S EXPOSITIONAL WRITINGS

It was not both 'warp and woof.' It was not the entirety of Paul's writings, for the 'woof' was that new Revelation communicated to Paul and which hitherto had been kept a secret, not to be found in (although space had been left for it) the Old Testament writings. Of the origin of that revelation, of the terms of its inspired communication, and of the means of its explanation Paul speaks at length in 1 Cor. 2.

—But the Old Testament scriptures found a large place in the fabric of Paul's writings, and was entwined with the statements that pertain to the 'mystery' of which he became the chief depository. No one can fail to see how greatly Paul drew upon the Hebrew scriptures, citing them here, alluding to them there, and affirming to his son Timothy that 'they were sacred letters' and in their entirety 'inspired of God.' In every Epistle, except perhaps Philemon, is there one or more verbal quotations from the Old Testament. And if so be the Epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's, his thorough acquaintance with, and understanding of the significance of, the Old Covenant and its Tabernacle is too apparent to emphasize. Surely it is manifest that for sound and profitable oral or written exposition of New Testament doctrine, a knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament scriptures is a *sine qua non*.

Paul's Letters

IF the Epistles of Paul were set out in chronological order, the resulting arrangement would differ somewhat from the order in which they are found in the New Testament. For the *first* recorded letter from his pen is the 1st Thessalonians—not Romans, and the *last* from his pen is 2nd Timothy—not Philemon. Seeing that they form part and parcel of the one Revelation of God to men, it follows that they must have inter-relations, one letter with another, and the object of the present chapter is to ascertain what such subsisting relations are.

Paul's letters may be grouped in three classes:—

Class I. comprises those letters which were written during that section of Paul's life which is covered by the history of the book of the Acts.

Class II. is covered by that period of Roman imprisonment referred to in the closing chapter of the book of the Acts.

Class III. embraces those letters written by Paul during the remainder of his life.

Not that it should be supposed that the letters of Paul preserved in the New Testament are the only letters he wrote, but they are the only letters which the Holy Spirit has deemed it necessary to retain for the use of the Church throughout the Christian age.

Class I. includes Romans, Galatians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, and 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

Class II. includes Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

Class III. embraces 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus.

It has ever been an undecided matter in the mind of Bible Students as to who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. Much thought

and attention have been given to this branch of study but the only result *definitely* obtainable is that "God who spake in times past by the prophets to the fathers" is in this letter continuing to speak by His Son. The authorship has undoubtedly been kept anonymous to impress the reader with the Divine origin of the message.

Nevertheless, the Epistle to the Hebrews stands in conspicuous contrast with that of Paul to the Romans, for in the latter the problem is as to how to get the prisoner out of the criminal court, while in the former it is as to how to bring the once defiled sinner into the sanctuary.

If Peter brought the Gentiles into the light of the gospel it is this anonymous author who brings the Jews out of the shadows of Judaism.

CLASS I.

As one peruses the book of the Acts, an ever pressing question in the mind is "What precisely was the gospel which these early evangelists preached?" and while that question is answered partially by the addresses of Peter and Paul as recorded in Acts 2., 10., 13., and 17., yet nowhere do we find the question so clearly and fully answered as in the Epistle to the Romans. The theme of that Epistle from beginning to end is "The Gospel of God," as it affects sinner, saint, and Jew. Space would forbid an exhaustive analysis of this subject but an examination of that letter will show that Paul names the Central Theme of the Gospel—Christ: His own office in relation to the gospel—a trustee. He defines the need of the gospel in chapters 1. to 3.: he states the facts of the gospel, the condition laid down in it, and the glorious results of the gospel in the lives of men now, and their destinies later.

But in view of God's foreknowledge of the propensity of men in all ages to "boast" in their own works, how wise and gracious it is that He has preserved for us Paul's letter to the Galatians in which the gospel is defended from Judaistic attempts to intermingle law with grace, and works with faith. For if in Romans the gospel is stated, in Galatians it is defended, the lines of defence being historical, logical, and appellative.

This raises another question:—

Seeing that the Gospel was preached, what of those who believe and of those who reject its testimony?

These questions are respectively answered in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. The former shows that the hope of those who be-

lieved, which had hitherto been earth-centred, was now directed heavenward to obtain eternal glory there; they now wait for God's Son from heaven, Who would deliver them from the wrath of God which was coming on the godless world.

In the case of unbelievers, however, the 2nd Epistle reveals the awful doom of such as "receive not the love of the truth" nor "obey the gospel"; that it is "eternal destruction" from the presence of the Lord. It is not annihilation (which is never the thought in the Greek word here translated "destruction") but the eternal shutting out from the light of His presence in the gloom of "the blackness of darkness."

Again, after the gospel had been preached and the preachers had moved on, how did the disciples conduct themselves? This question is fully answered in 1st and 2nd Corinthians. The Jewish synagogue and the heathen temple were abandoned, and they gathered together "in church". These periodical gatherings were for the purposes of observing the Lord's Supper, prayer, ministry, etc., all the details pertaining to which may be ascertained by a careful study of these two letters.

Paul not a few times speaks of "faith, hope and love," and these six letters answer thereto.

In Romans and Galatians the gospel is presented for "faith's" acceptance.

In Thessalonians the "hope" of the believer is presented, a hope which is unaffected by life or death.

In Corinthians "love" is presented as that which tends to make the machinery of "spiritual gifts" work smoothly.

To quote another: There exists "A company brought into touch with God through living faith, their lives illuminated by heavenly hope, and their hearts knit together by holy love."

CLASS II.

While all Scripture is God-breathed, yet some parts of it are on a higher plane than others. So the New Testament generally is on a higher plane than the Old, and so too, this second class is on a higher plane than the first class. For here we find the Lord Jesus Christ as the chief theme of these letters.

In Ephesians, Christ is presented as the One who loved the Church and gave Himself for it. He is "Head over all things," He is the "beloved One." This letter takes us back into eternity past, and carries us on into eternity future, and shows that events on

earth in the meanwhile effect the accomplishing of a purpose made before all ages to be realized in future ages. Its main theme is The Church, that which is dearest to the heart of Christ. Its election, constitution, resources, ministers, individual responsibilities, and conflict form the main themes of its six chapters respectively.

In Colossians the same Blessed Person is presented, only this time in such a way as is calculated to correct the tendency of the believers to adopt the world's philosophical systems, and religionists' veneration of angels. The Lord is here presented chiefly as Head of the Body, and the four chapters of the Epistle may roughly be said to deal with (a) The Person (b) His work (c) His claims, and (d) His people.

These two Epistles have been likened to two great mountain peaks, between which is a deep valley, the Epistle to the Philippians, the famous second chapter of which speaks of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus.

It is an Epistle that shows the effect in the Believer's heart of the truths contained in the other two Epistles. The presentation of Christ in such a way finds a response to such an extent that Paul is able to say "For me to live is Christ: to die gain." "To depart and be with Christ is very far better." Christ was the one object of his life.

Paul is one who gives practical display of what he enjoins. He had a humble mind as chapter 2 shows. He had a heavenly mind as in chapter 3.; and in the midst of all the disturbing events of earth he had a tranquil mind (see chapter 4).

But what shall be said of the short letter to Philemon? Surely it is a concrete case exemplifying the application to life of the truths of the former three Epistles, and that in the case of the least intimate of earth's relationships, viz., Master and Servant. Observe how the Spirit of Christ fills His servant Paul, who is able to say "If he hath wronged thee, put that to my account." This for ever shuts the mouth of objectors who might charge Paul with writing high ideals, but failing to display them in action. Here is a case in point, doubtless one of many.

CLASS III.

While Ephesians speaks of the Catholic Church in regard to the Purpose of God, 1 Timothy deals with the local church as God's witness on earth. His earthly witness in Israel having failed, that people has been temporarily set aside. Meanwhile, another witness

exists. Companies of believers from all races, form on earth God's testimony. Each company should be "the pillar and base of the truth" in the particular place where it is found. Hence in 1 Timothy and Titus much is said concerning "behaving in the house of God," and the ministry of "bishops" and "deacons" therein. They are Epistles which have to do with regulations and conduct "*in the house of God,*" i.e., the assemblies of God's people.

Thus far Timothy and Titus are in accord, though it may be observed that Paul's letter to Titus is wider. In its second chapter he shows the importance of proper "behaviour" *in this present age*. Five definite reasons are given why the Christian should be well behaved, viz:—

That the word of God be not blasphemed.

That he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed.

That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

That we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.

That we might be free from all iniquity.

2nd Timothy is a suitable close to the series, having to do with testimony in the world. In the midst of a cruel, cold, opposing world how refreshing to read from the pen of the veteran Paul—"I am not ashamed": "he was not ashamed": "be not thou therefore ashamed." (Ch. 1 vv. 12, 16, 8). All that is requisite for last days is to be found "in Christ Jesus", a key phrase in this letter. In the midst of foes "God is our Saviour."

Paul, the warrior, has been contesting in respect of a good cause: the runner has not fainted but "finished his course": the trustee has not proved unworthy but has "kept the faith." He now confidently awaits "the victor's crown," which the Righteous Judge will award Him in the day of His appearing.

Thus he looks on to the next great thing on earth — the Kingdom.

May God enable us to "follow Paul" in these matters, and to "love His appearing". The danger is ever-present that we may be like Demas who forsook the spiritual and ardent servant, "having loved this present world."

Paul's Doctrine

Illustrated in Luke's Gospel

PAUL and Luke were often fellow travellers. Some of their journeys are recorded in the 'we' section of the book of the Acts. Doubtless they frequently spoke together of divine things.

Luke had made thorough search into those things that were commonly taught about Jesus and, having satisfied himself as to the accuracy of his findings, recorded them in his gospel. Paul, on the other hand, had many visions and revelations from the Lord, and his epistolary doctrine is the result.

The chapter is designed to show the accord that exists between the doctrine of Paul and the researches of Luke.

THE INCARNATION.—An analysis of Gal. 4. 4, 5 reveals:

(a) The control of God in earth's affairs: His Son was born at the time intended. "In the fulness of the time." Caesar Augustus, Luke tells us, made a decree that all the habitable world should be registered. Its enforcement, however, in Judea, appears to have been delayed. When it did become operative, Joseph and Mary had, in consequence, to proceed to Bethlehem where the Child was born. God governmentally controlled the enactments of world rulers for His own ends.

(b) A divine mission explained His presence on earth: 'God sent forth His Son.' Luke informs us that Zechariah affirmed "the dayspring from on high" had visited God's earthly people (Luke 1. 78). Heaven's light was brought into earth's darkness. Mary's child was of heavenly origin: He had a divine mission: God had sent Him.

How fully Luke accords with Paul!

(c) He became incarnate through a woman — "made of a woman." Contrary to nature the Lord Jesus was born not having

human father. The details which Luke had ascertained from Mary he recounts. He gives historically what Paul summarizes in four short words.

(d) He came into the Jewish fold, being subject to the divine law which had been entrusted to them: "made under the law." Pursuant to the rites of the Mosaic law He was taken to the temple and on the eighth day was circumcised "after the custom of the law," and was presented to the Lord "as it is written in the law of the Lord"; later a sacrifice was offered "according to that which is said in the law of the Lord" (ch. 2. 22, 24, and 27). He came, in grace, into that particular race in order that He might dwell with them representatively and thus give all the world hope.

(e) The object of His advent was "to redeem them that were under the law." This Anna understood and for Him gave thanks to God and spake of Him to "all them that looked for redemption in Israel." She knew He had come "to redeem." God had visited and "sent redemption to His people" (1. 68).

THE GOSPEL. Romans 10. 12 summarises in significant words the gospel which Paul preached everywhere, to the Jew first and to the Gentile. God, having made of one blood all the nations of the earth, all like the first man were sinners. Notwithstanding, salvation was available to all if each appealed to the Lord therefor. Restricted national privileges no longer obtain. All barriers are removed. Divine sovereignty discussed by Paul in Rom. 9 does not annul man's responsibility implied in chapter 10. The two principles cooperate together as Paul shows in chapter 11. Universal guilt is met by universal grace.

This Luke illustrates. He records the visit of the Lord to the Nazareth synagogue where he reminded the people of the widow of Sarepta and Naaman the Syrian. Israel's famine would have been removed earlier had the nation returned to Jehovah, but the whole northern kingdom was steeped in idolatry. No leper in Israel received cleansing in those apostate times: Jehovah had to demonstrate His presence in a Gentile leper. Not even one widow in Israel was willing to open her home to the prophet of Jehovah, but as the result of her welcoming Elijah a Sidonian widow had enough while famine was all around. Thus, when Israel refused Him, His heart of grace and arm of power went out in mercy to the Gentile and the same Lord of All was rich unto all that call upon Him whether it were man or woman, starving or diseased, Sidonian or Syrian.

FORGIVENESS. Paul regards redemption and forgiveness as parallel (Eph. 1. 7). Redemption is freedom from the bondage of

sin : forgiveness is freedom from its guilt. Paul taught the final removal of every sin thereby endorsing the words: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." He was himself a forgiven sinner and wrote from experience as well as revelation on this matter.

Luke dilates upon this. He tells of the woman, who was a sinner, and who came into the house of Simon the leper. To Simon she seemed a five hundred pence debtor: himself he regarded as only a fifty pence debtor, if indeed so much. Certainly she was ten times as bad as he. Both, however, were bankrupt and God was willing to cancel the debt of each. The Lord assured the woman that in her case her sins, which admittedly were many, were all forgiven: the whole debt had been cancelled: she could go in peace. Simon, too, might have done likewise if only he would acknowledge his bankruptcy.

This Paul teaches. He tells the Galatians that Christ paid the price in order that the guilty might be redeemed from the curse imposed by the breach of the law and be put judicially into a position of unassailable righteousness. For the repentant bankrupt sinner the Sinless Saviour has paid the debt and his indebtedness is "remitted."

ACCEPTANCE. Read Eph. 1. 6. The word "accepted" used here denotes that the beauty of the Lord has been put upon the believer. He is 'graced' in the Beloved. Being 'in Christ' God sees no spot in him: he is 'all fair.' Having on the wedding garment he is fit for the King's presence. Not that God conceals imperfections by a covering. "If any man be in Christ Jesus there is a new creation: old things have passed away: all things have become new." God never patches up with new cloth an old garment, nor does He put new wine into old wine skins: He starts completely *de novo*.

The doctrine of acceptance is nowhere better illustrated than in the parable of the prodigal son. Visualize him, having come to himself, returning to his father. When yet a great way off the father, whose heart had longed for his return ever since he left, saw him, ran, fell on his neck and kissed him. The father had determined that the kitchen was no place for his son, but the son knew that the rags were not suitable for his father's home. Yet the father's love had gone out to the prodigal in his rags and sin. It was a love not engendered by the prodigal's repentance but was native to the father's heart. It could not show itself, however, while the prodigal remained at a distance but, immediately he confessed, the father is free to do all his heart yearns for. In quick succession follow the ring, shoes, best robe and fatted calf. The old things were discarded

and the erstwhile prodigal is accepted in the Father's home in all the beauty that he had put upon him.

PROPIITIATION AND JUSTIFICATION. Paul, in Rom. 3. 21-26, expounds the doctrine of justification. He affirms that the Lord Jesus is the antitype of the ancient mercyseat (the propitiatory, as it was called) and that He, by the shedding of His blood, was also the propitiatory offering. The blood shed and sprinkled on and before the mercyseat gives God a righteous ground on which to justify the ungodly, freely, by His grace. This, Paul says, is available to all though the benefits are only conferred upon those who believe.

Luke gives an apt illustration of this in chapter 18.

The Publican could not lift up his eyes to heaven: he dare not face God. He stood afar off: he dare not draw near to God. He smote on his breast for he knew that the real trouble was in his heart. He cried: "God be propitious to me the sinner," whereby he pleaded the benefits of the sacrifice and merits of the blood which God had ordained for the guilty. The Pharisee, on the other hand, pleaded his own worth but received no justification: the publican pleaded the blood and the Lord certified that he went down to his house justified.

It is possible for God righteously to dispense mercy to the guilty because, in Christ, a valid substitute has been found by Whom the claims of divine justice have been met. All may follow the procedure of the publican with like results. Doubtless he did not enter fully into the implication of the words he used: nor is it likely that he could give an ordered exposition of the doctrine of propitiation and substitution, but God knew his heart, and he knew himself: that was enough.

INTERMEDIATE STATE. Paul, in Phil. 1. 23; 2 Tim. 4. 6-8; 2 Cor. 5. 1-9; and 2 Thess. 1. 9, sets out his doctrine in regard to the intermediate state after death. For the believer death is an immediate translation from earth to heaven, into the Lord's presence. There is no hint of a period of unconsciousness or sleep. Bliss is enjoyed immediately. Happy as it is to serve the Lord here, it is far better to be with Him there.

Yet for the unbeliever it is otherwise. He will suffer everlasting destruction (not annihilation but the utter and irremediable ruin of his well-being) from the presence of the Lord. His doom will then be cast: it cannot be altered.

Of this Luke, Paul's companion, writes. Let the reader ponder Luke 16. 19-31. Eternal torment, immediate and unalterable, befalls the unbeliever at death. This has been denied and the meaning

of the Lord's words has been distorted: no wonder. Unbelievers resent it and the devil who is the relentless enemy of Christ, seeks to blind men's minds to it.

On the other hand, Luke tells of the dying robber to whom the Lord said: 'To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' Undeserving and active sinner almost to the last, though he repented at a later than the eleventh hour, he is assured by the Lord that he need not wait for the kingdom, but that immediately death ensued, he would be with Him in Paradise: he would depart to be with Christ which, for him certainly, was far, far better.

Thus Paul and Luke teach harmoniously, the one theologically and the other illustratively: the one characterized by *multum in parvo*: the other writing at length to simplify it.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT. Paul's teaching on this subject is found in Rom. 14. 10-12; 2 Cor. 5. 10; 1 Cor. 3. 10-15.

Both Paul and Luke ever kept before them "the day" when they would each appear at the judgment seat and be examined in respect of the motive and method of his life's work. There was the possibility of all being consumed and lost, save the soul. There was, on the other hand, the possibility of making something for the Lord now and receiving something from Him in return later.

Of this Luke speaks when he records the parable of the pounds entrusted by the nobleman to his servants. During the time of his absence it was the responsibility of all to trade with the pound and to occupy till his return. Idleness and love of ease were to be eschewed: reward would be commensurate with diligence. The napkin, provided for the use of the worker, should not be mis-used to conceal the trust. All would inevitably be revealed later. On his return he would reckon with his servants and any such indolence would involve loss. Then the veneer of any hypocrisy would be removed and the servants would be "manifested" in true colours. None would be exempt from this for "each" of the ten must appear at the Bema. Then the sum total of life's work would be computed and everything done would contribute in arriving at the final assessment. The Lord would pay wages to His servants according to the work done. That which looms large in the sight of men may prove to be combustible in the day of testing, and *vice versa*. Quality will then count.

His awareness of this explains Paul's undeviating and constant devotion to his Lord and ministry. This led Luke to throw his lot in with that noble pioneer missionary. This awareness lies at the back of their journeys, hazards, preaching and writing. They them-

selves had yet to be examined: they must work and do all possible seeing they had but one pound—but one life—and this must be used to the gain of their common Lord.

The Book, The Message and the Power

THREE things are mentioned in this passage: the preacher's book, his message, and his power.

The preacher without "*the Book*" is left to his own ideas, or to the ideas and opinions of others, all of which are of no essential worth, being merely blind guesses.

The preacher without "*a Message*" for the generation in which he lives is but a "vain talker," whose preaching fails to deal with existing conditions and needs.

The preacher without "*Power*" is non-effective, whose energies are expended with no satisfactory results.

The Book, the Message and the Power are, therefore, three essentials to the servant of the Lord wheresoever he labours.

It will be observed that the Lord *refers* His apostles *only to one volume, namely*, the Old Testament, expounding from its three parts the things "concerning Himself." In the Scriptures His servants have all that is requisite for positive preaching. The New Testament has now been added to the Old Testament, and has equal rights to the Old in claiming our submission. In the entire volume known to us as the "Holy Scriptures" is everything which is necessary for authoritative God-pleasing preaching.

From the Scriptures the Lord expounded to His disciples "all things *concerning Himself*"; the *central theme of the Scripture*, around which all else revolves, is Christ. This was entirely new to those to whom He spake. It is important that we should ever keep it in mind, and give Christ the central place in our preaching.

This Book gives perfect assurance. The Lord pointed out to His disciples that "all things written concerning" Him "*must be fulfilled.*" Not one point could fail: He explained to them how its statements had all been accomplished in respect of His death and resurrection, thus demonstrating to them the absolute reliability of the book. It is none the less reliable to-day despite all the attacks which have since been made upon it: it still stands and will stand.

The Lord "*opened their mind* to understand the Scriptures." The Book which hitherto had been wrapt in mystery became now an *open and plain volume*. What a different Book the Scriptures must have seemed to them! Adam's coat, and Abel's lamb, and Noah's ark, and David's psalms, and Isaiah's prophecy, indeed the whole content of the Old Testament became clear with divine light as the mind was opened to HIM.

The mere possession of the Book, however, is not sufficient. its message *has to be heralded*. It is not intended that its contents should be enjoyed only by the few in secret. It should be announced to all.

The message is *authoritative*: it is "*upon His name*" — this preposition being used to indicate that the Name, the Person, is the foundation upon which the superstructure of the declared message is built. He authorises its dissemination; He commands His servants to go forth "in His name," supported by His sanction and His presence.

The *message is scriptural* for the heralding of the good news to all nations was, as the Lord states, foreshadowed in the Old Testament writings. This was the imperative issue of His death and resurrection. It is not optional whether or not we declare the gospel: we *must*: the Old Testament Scriptures foretold such propaganda, and the Lord commands it.

The *message is comforting*: note what its terms are. They are (a) That *God hates sin* and calls upon all men to repent. It is not the sin of rejecting Christ which is in view, but it is sin in general which requires repentance. Here the preacher is apt to fail and in his zeal to spread the news of the love of God he is apt to omit to emphasize the holiness of God and His hatred of sin. This hatred was, then but so recently, seen in its fulness at the Cross: for that Cross clearly manifests what God thinks of sin.

The next item of the message is that (b) *God remits sin*. Not merely does He forgive it, but, as the words used both in Old Testament and the New Testament imply, He removes it irrecoverably and eternally. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what

they do" reminds us of this. Further, (c) *That God is ready to forgive the sin of anyone* irrespective of the nation to which he may belong, for the apostles were enjoined to go to "all nations". The cases of the sons of Shem, Ham and Japheth in Acts, chapters ix., viii. and x., confirm this. Lastly, (d) *That God forgives the worst of sinners*, as indicated by the phrase "beginning at Jerusalem," where the actual murderers of His Son were living.

Nor must we omit to observe that the very preachers themselves were *living witnesses* of the truth of their preaching, for they themselves were forgiven sinners, forgiven in virtue of the death, proved efficacious by the resurrection, of their Lord.

In view of the immensity of such a task, a task of convicting men of the heinousness of sin, and of opening their eyes to the redeeming love of God: a task the geographical extent of which is worldwide: a task which involved dealing with all races, kinds and dispositions of both men and women, one may well ask, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" The task is too great for the men themselves, they need an external source of power to enable them to undertake it. Such power the Lord asserts would be available.

It was useless to start work without it. "*Sit*" here (as the word literally is) until ye are "clothed with power" is the command.

The servant's need of Divine power is provided for by the *three persons of the Holy Trinity*, who work harmoniously for the eternal good of the sinner. *The Father* promises to send the Spirit: *the Son* says, "I will send Him," emphasizing the pronoun "I," thus manifesting His interest in the work to be done: and the *Spirit Himself*, Who would make His abode on earth, enabling and co-operating with the Lord's servants.

The word "*endue*" is instructive. The Spirit of God clothes the individual whom He takes up and thus enables such individual to effect things which are ordinarily outside of the power of man; in the Old Testament the case of Samson is to the point: "the Spirit of the Lord clothed him"; in the New Testament the Book of the Acts is full of exemplary cases.

The words "*from on high*," too, are instructive. They show that the source of power is not discoverable on earth, or in any of the schemes of men. This we ever do well to remember; it would save wastage of energies by adopting worldly methods. The power must come from another source: "FROM ON HIGH."

On Belief in God

OF the wicked the inspired Psalmist has said, "All his thoughts are, there is no God" (Ps. 10. 4 R.V.): and again: "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 14. 1). Yet neither such thoughts nor such words can banish God from the Universe, or destroy the fact that "He is". (Heb. 11. 6). Not all unbelievers are atheists; not all avowed atheists are serious; but those atheists who profess sincerity would, if they could read themselves aright, discover that the thought is the child of the wish. To banish God from one's life-sphere springs from the consciousness of guilt.

GOD INSCRUTABLE

The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, of course, necessarily believes in God, for He is the Son of God, and the Revealer of the Father. Not that anyone is able fully to comprehend the Godhead, seeing "No man knoweth the Son save the Father: neither knoweth anyone the Father save the Son and He to Whomsoever He will reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 27).

The Godhead is a trinity—a unity of Three Persons—each in every respect equal with the other, though differing in respective operations. As a cube is of equal height, breadth and length, each of these dimensions being equal to the other, yet there is but one cube, so, too, is the Godhead. This, when it is a matter of Persons, is confessedly a difficulty to the natural mind, but what is difficult to reason is not ipso facto contrary to reason. The Scriptures abound in evidence that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are the equal possessors of all the divine attributes, in eterniy of being and all other things which are the peculiar properties of the Godhead. Man must not only believe that God is, but he must also exercise faith in respect of the mode of the being of the Godhead, accepting divine revelation while recognizing inability to offer a rational explanation thereof.

HOLY SCRIPTURE

Scripture assumes the being of God. It does not attempt to give proofs of His Being but opens with the majestic words 'In the beginning God,' and at once proceeds to show God at work. This working is later shown to be the harmonious working in respective proper parts of the Three Persons as One God. The whole book has to do with the relation of man to God and of the attitude of God to man. The Scriptures themselves are a very striking and conclusive evidence of the being of God while at the same time they assert it. By them God speaks.

CONSCIENCE

Further, the fact that man has a conscience is itself proof to all who think of the existence of a Superior Power to whom the owner of the conscience is responsible. David, the king, was responsible to no superior ruler in his realm, yet when he sinned he recognized it was "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned" (Ps. 51. 4). His conscience smote him, and, instead of being indifferent to the wrong done to two of his subjects whom, in heartless despotism, he could have ignored, he had dealings with God in regard to it, he being subordinate to and responsible to Him. This candle of the Lord is within every man, though sometimes its light is not discerned; or, to change the figure, the pricks of this inward goad are not always felt. Yet, why is a man inwardly troubled because of wrong done, although he is aware that no earthly power can deal with him in respect of it? Why does the "dart strike through his liver," unless it be that, smother it as man may, he is responsible to God Who 'is'?

MAN

Again, if man examines himself, he may learn that God is. His very being presupposes a prototype after Whose image and Whose likeness he has been made (Gen. 1. 26). He possesses spirit, soul and body and is himself a trinity in unity. So is God. He possesses faculties and powers that the rest of creation has not. While it is true there are evidences of a fall, yet he is plainly still superior to the brute creation around. The anthropomorphic terms used in relation to God which indicate that He can see, speak, think, remember, plan, feel, has hands and fingers, etc. etc. all show that man is created after the likeness of God, and by his existence declares that God 'is.' As man in creation is lord, notwithstanding his fall, so, too, God is the supreme Ruler of all.

THE UNIVERSE

The universe itself is a further evidence that God is. The existence of the universe, of which both the world in which we are found and ourselves, too, are a part, demonstrates the prior existence of a Maker. Moreover, its orderly continuance demonstrates the existence of a sustaining God. God, by the agency of the Son, made "all things" (a term denoting the universe) and by Him it is held together (Col. 1. 17. Heb. 1. 3).

DESIGN

Yet again: the perfect and harmonious working of the universe demonstrates further that there must be a purpose and intention for which it was made, and this in turn presupposes One who purposed. The Scriptures reveal that "Apart from Him (that is, the Son of God) was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 3), that is to say, the Universe was not only made 'By Him' but 'For Him,' and He is the great Object that the Godhead had in mind when creation was formed.

PROVIDENCE

Finally, the manifestation of providence in history proves the being of God. This is far too large a subject to deal with adequately in this paper, but the honest reader of Biblical history (which, after all, is the only perfectly unbiased and reliable history of any of the happenings in the world we possess) cannot suppose the disasters which befell the wicked and adversities which befell the righteous and the deliverances received in response to prayer (not to mention a host of other phenomena) were all merely matters of blind chance, and not of Personal intervention.

MONOTHEISM

There is a further thing which must be observed, namely that there is but ONE GOD. This is categorically taught in Scripture (Rom. 3. 30; Gal. 3. 20; Deut. 6. 4; Mark 12. 32), although it is denied by man. Idolatry has long been practised, and man has devised claims in support of his multitudinous gods, but an examination of Isaiah ch. 42 and 44 and 2 Kings 19 will assure those who are open to be convinced that although "there be that are called gods," yet actually "there is but one God the Father, of Whom are all things" (1 Cor. 8. 5). Someone has written: "God is infinite in His being, and in all of His perfections. But the infinite, by

including all, excludes all others. If there were two infinite beings, each would necessarily include the other, and be included by it and thus they would be the same, one and identical." These are weighty words and well worth pondering: it is conclusive evidence of the unity and singleness of the Godhead. This, of course excludes polytheism, pantheism, atheism and all cognate errors. There are not many Gods: creation itself is not God: the universe is not devoid of God: there is only one God. There are Three Persons, indivisible, without discord, or disagreement in either thought, word or action.

GRAMMAR

It may be further remarked that sometimes a singular verb is used with a plural noun: e.g. 'In the beginning God (Elohim—a plural Heb. noun) created (a verb in the singular) the heaven, etc. This shows unity of action by a plurality of Persons. Sometimes a plural first person pronoun is used as in Gen. 1. 26, 3. 22, which demonstrates a plurality in agreement in the Godhead. Again, the singular pronoun is used with a plural noun: thus "Thou" is used as referring to Elohim (plural). Space forbids tracing throughout the Scriptures the harmonious working of all Three Persons, but Luke 15 is a splendid example, where the shepherd who seeks the sheep denotes the Lord Jesus; the light used for the recovery of the lost silver denotes the Holy Spirit and the Father welcoming the Prodigal denotes God, the Father. All these three are thereby shown to be actively engaged in perfect harmony, in respective parts for the ultimate good of 'publicans and sinners.' As another has written: "Each Person possesses the whole essence and is constituted a distinct Person by certain incommunicable properties not common to Him with the others."

DIVINE NAMES

God is made known to man by several names which Bible students can trace out with the aid of a good Lexicon. Such names afford an insight into the nature and power of God.

Notwithstanding all the foregoing, the being of God is altogether beyond the full apprehension of any man. "He only hath immortality (that is, essentially so) dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see; to Whom be honour and power eternal, Amen" (1 Tim. 6. 16). Nevertheless, "The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of His Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1. 18), and the possessor of eternal life has a capacity

to know God which all others lack. "This is eternal life, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." (John 17. 3).

GOD REVEALED IN CHRIST

The believer has evidence far stronger and more convincing than the revelation of God in nature, in the world and in providence. He is not left to gather his knowledge of God from description; God has become personally manifest in His Son. The Lord Jesus is the 'Image of the Invisible God.' "We are not furnished with a written description of Who and What God is, but God in Christ has become His own Revealer, in personal, living action, by His own sayings and doings — that simplest and surest way of making Himself known."

He who knows Christ — not as a Man of history but as a Present Living Saviour—needs no other evidence that God is. That is sufficient, final and irrefragable.

The Atonement

UNDER the item of "Atonement" in a famous Encyclopaedia the following remarks appear:—

"Atonement is the name given in (English) Christian theology to the work of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. The word occurs only once in the New Testament (A.V. Rom. 5. 11 and there the more correct rendering is "reconciliation" as in the R.V.); another important Biblical term is propitiation. It is common, however, in the sacrificial language of the Old Testament law; and the New Testament looks back to that language when it treats the death of Christ as a sacrifice—and an atoning sacrifice."

This statement is good.

What the "work" is to which the comment refers, whether it is His life, or His death only, or both combined, we shall ascertain later, but whatever the way, the Person Who effected atonement is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The passage alluded to, Romans 5. 11, is interesting as showing an earlier use of the word "atonement." Actually the word rendered in the A.V. "atonement" should read "reconciliation" (as given in the R.V. and all good translations). The matter is not disputable, though it is interesting to enquire why the scholarly translators of the A.V. used the word "atonement" there instead of "reconciliation." When they translated, the word etymologically meant at-one-ment (a meaning which it does not possess to-day) and it will readily be seen that since "at-one-ment" was equivalent to "reconciliation", the translation then made was correct. The English language has changed in its meaning of this word, as in the case with other words, since the production of the A.V.

In confirmation of this we may cite Archbishop Trench:—

". . . from the fact that the word 'atonement' by which our translators have rendered 'katalage' on one of the four occasions

upon which it occurs in the New Testament, namely Rom. 5. 11, has gradually shifted its meaning. It has done this so effectually that if the translation were now for the first time to be made, and words to be employed in their present sense and not in their past, it is plain that it would be a much fitter rendering of 'Hilasmus,' the notion of propitiation which we shall find the central one of this word, always lying in our present use of 'atonement.' It was not so once; when our Translation was made it signified, as innumerable examples prove, 'reconciliation,' or the making up of a foregoing enmity; all its uses in our early literature justifying the etymology now sometimes called into question, that 'atonement' is 'at-one-ment' and therefore — reconciliation; and consequently then, although not now, the proper rendering of 'katalage.'"

Indeed, a reference to a good dictionary will show the verb "atone" to be compounded of "at" and "one" often found in such phrases as "to be at one"—"to set at one," and its meaning is given as "to agree or accord; to make reparation, amends, or satisfaction as for an offence or crime; to expiate; to answer or make satisfaction for; to reconcile, as parties at variance."

The reader has but to spend a few moments in considering these various meanings in relation to the Cross of Christ to discover what a wondrous work it is: it is the basis of the reconciliation of the sinner to God; it is the means by which the damage of sin has been undone; where satisfaction has been made both for God and for the believer; it is there where expiation for man's guilt was accomplished; and the Sinless Lamb of God answered for, and made satisfaction in respect of, the guilty and condemned sinner.

But it is not from a word dictionary that we can discover the Bible doctrine of the Atonement, though it is ever necessary to be assured that we rightly understand the meaning of any English term we employ.

A comprehensive view of the matter is to be obtained by a consideration of the various Hebrew and Greek words employed, and the way they have been translated into English, and the circumstances of their occurrence.

This we will do, but before embarking thereon it may be observed that, perhaps the

CLEAREST TYPE OF ATONEMENT

is to be found in Gen. 3. where the word is not actually used. The guilty pair had attempted to cover themselves with aprons of fig

leaves, which covering was both inadequate and corruptible; but God in His mercy replaced them with coats of skin, which were both sufficient and durable. From whence was the "skin" obtained? Was it not the result of the death of an innocent victim which occurred in the interests of the guilty pair? Here is substitution and atonement.

For the Hebrew word "kaphar" translated "to make atonement" actually means "to cover," and wherever atonement is found in the Bible a covering of one sort or another is in view. In Genesis 3. the "covering" was of man's nakedness from the searching eye of a holy God, and of the person from the wrath of a righteous God. This covering was provided by death and that the death of the guiltless. Could type of the Cross and its wondrous issue be clearer?

But a little closer investigation reveals the fact that this Hebrew word "kaphar" is used in a variety of ways in the Old Testament.

In Gen. 6. 14 this verb occurs—

TRANSLATED BY THE WORD "PITCH"

and the circumstances are illuminative considered typically. The "windows of the heavens were opened" and "the fountains of the deep were broken up" and the ark was exposed to the fury of both. But Noah and his, inside that which by faith he had "pitched," were effectively covered from both. The "windows of heaven" doubtless tell of the wrath of God, and the "fountains of the deep" speak of the malice of men. The ark speaks of Christ, in Whom all who by faith place themselves are effectively covered. He was exposed to both.

This same verb occurs again in Gen. 32. 20, "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me."

THE VERB "APPEASE" IS

the English translation of the Hebrew word "kaphar." It has been rightly observed that whilst we cannot over-estimate the love of God, oftentimes we have under-estimated the anger of God. He is "angry with the wicked every day," and He looks not indifferently at man's disobedience to His laws, defiance of His claims, and repudiation of His rule. It angers Him. Something of that anger against sin is to be witnessed at the Cross, when He Who was God's greatest delight was forsaken by Him, and His sword was unsheathed against Him. If, then, God is angry at sin, how can the sinner be covered therefrom? Or, how can God be appeased?

What—to use Jacob's word—"present" can we bring? Surely no better "present can be brought than the antitype of that which Abel brought (the word "offering" in Gen. 4. 3 is the same Hebrew word as that rendered "present" in Gen. 32. 20) namely, our Lord Jesus Christ in the efficacy of His death.

Another English translation of

THE WORD "KAPHAR" IS "RANSOM,"

found in such phrases as that of Job, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," and again, "Because there is wrath beware, lest He take thee away, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee," and again, "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him." It is this word that is used in connection with the half shekel of silver paid by all Israel as a "ransom" for them, calling to mind Peter's famous passage "Ye have not been redeemed with corruptible things such as silver or (even to go on a higher plane) gold, but with blood, the blood of Christ." In all of these instances the thought of Judgment obtains and a costly covering against it. So too, the death of Christ who gave Himself a "ransom" for all is an effective covering against the Judgment of God in the case of all who believe.

Light is thrown on this word by considering Exod. 21. 30. In the case of the owner of an ox "which was wont to push with his horns in time past," he is held responsible for the death of a man killed by his ox. The ox is to be stoned and the owner thereof is to be put to death. But "if there be laid upon him a sum of money (the phrase 'sum of money' representing the Hebrew word kaphar—covering, or atonement) then he shall give for the ransom of his life whatsoever is laid upon him." That sum of money becomes the covering or protection of his life. It is a ransom or an atonement given to the one who has been wronged in lieu of the life of the one who was guilty.

Then too, this word "kaphar" is frequently translated by the

ENGLISH WORD "ATONEMENT"

Why did the translators translate this word so, since, as we have already seen, when the Authorised Version was produced, the word atonement meant at-one-ment? Surely the reason is, that the translators mentally argued that he who was covered from God's judgment must be at-one with God, and in consequence they put the result (at-one-ment) instead of naming the cause (viz. covering). Take but one of a multitude of instances, Lev. 1. 4. "And it shall

be accepted for him to make atonement for him." This might better read "And it shall be accepted for him to cover him." The victim dies in his stead and the offerer is covered. He is at one with God since the substitute offered has been accepted.

Another translation is by

THE WORD "SATISFACTION"

found in Num. 35. 31. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer." Nothing that the criminal might do or pay was to be accepted in lieu of the victim. Life for life. The murderer himself must die. What a contrast when at Calvary Barabbas, a murderer, was spared, the Central Man being accepted for him as a "satisfaction." The passage cited from Numbers is Law. This incident from the Gospels is Grace.

Yet another English word used to denote the Hebrew word

KAPHAR IS "BE MERCIFUL"

found *e.g.* in Deut. 21. 8: "Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel." This prayer is found in the circumstances of the discovery of one slain in the field. An heifer is taken, brought into a rough valley, is slain, and thereupon we read "All the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley. And they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel whom thou hast redeemed and lay not innocent blood unto thy people.'" In fine it is—the heifer has been slain—spare us! the heifer has suffered the wrath: be merciful to us! the heifer was exposed, cover us.

It is the Greek equivalent of this word which the publican used when, standing afar off conscious of guilt and deserving God's wrath, he smites his breast and says "God be merciful to me the sinner." Cover me.

Now these are some of the shades of meaning of the word used to denote Atonement: a covering, security against a storm, an appeasing of anger, a ransom to deliver from liability, a satisfaction to both God and man, and the righteous ground whereby mercy can be dispensed to the undeserving.

It has sometimes been rashly asserted that seeing that the word "atonement" is not rightly found in the New Testament the doctrine is not there, but that it is a distinctly Old Testament doctrine.

But this assertion falls on two counts at least.

First, the absence of a specific word does not prove the non-existence of a thing in the New Testament. For example, the word "trinity" is not found there, but surely the doctrine is there.

Secondly, the basis for the conclusion is erroneous. It is supposed that in Old Testament days God merely covered sins, but did not remove them, whereas in New Testament days he forgives and removes forever our sins. But this is not so. Equally in Old Testament days as now God forgave, removed, and finally freed the sinner who was forgiven from his sins. Psalm 32. 1 is a case in point where both the words "cover" and "forgive" are employed. The literal meaning of the Hebrew word "to forgive" is "to take away." In Old Testament times God blotted out as with a thick cloud man's sins; He cast them behind His back, and with Him is no shadow of turning; He cast them into the depth of the sea; and removed them as far as the east is from the west. It is true that he covered them, but the thought is not that they were merely out of sight though in fact existent, but that they were put out of sight by being put far away.

There is a vital difference in this respect that, in Old Testament days God forgave a sinner anticipating the Cross, but in the present days He does so because of the Cross. Then He looked forward to it, now He looks back upon it. But the deed done in forgiveness was the same. It was complete, final and needed not repetition.

Therefore we may come to the New Testament confident that we shall discover therein not only the doctrine of the atonement but this doctrine set in a clearer light.

In the LXX and in the New Testament the equivalent of the Hebrew word "kaphar" is the Greek word "hilasteerion" or "hilasmos" or its cognate words. There are four notable occasions on which it occurs.

In 1 John. 2. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins." Here the word "propitiation" is hilasmos.

In Heb. 2. 17. "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," here the word is hilakesthai.

In Rom. 3. 25. "God set forth a propitiatory"—here the word is Hilasteerion.

In Luke 18. 13. "God be merciful to me the sinner" here the word is Hilastheti.

Now it will be apparent that all these four words are cognate, related to each other by a common root.

It is as though the four passages answer four questions:—

(a) To whose offering do all the Old Testament sacrifices point? John answers: *Christ*, is the atoning offering.

(b) Who is the priest set forth in Old Testament days who made atonement? The answer is the same. *Christ* makes atonement for the sins of the people.

(c) Who is the person who is set forth by the ancient mercy seat? The answer is the same. *Christ* is the mercy-seat, predetermined to be so by God, upon whom God looks and is satisfied, and on whom man also may look and be satisfied.

(d) For whom does that Person who is Offering, Offering Priest and Mercy-seat act? The answer is, any one who will take the place which the publican took.

Thus the publican's cry which preceded the Cross was amply responded to in the provision God made.

One cannot fail to notice that under the old economy atonement was made for the most part by blood. There was the exception of the "atonement money," but Peter settles that once and for all when he rules out "silver and gold" as a means of redemption and insists on blood. And it is clearly emphasised in Hebrews that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

NOW WHY WAS THIS SO ?

Surely it lies just here, that "the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls." Man had forfeited his life by reason of sin; "The wages of sin is death." "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." If then man is to be spared another must die, and that other must be a valid substitute. Blood must be shed. As another has written "It is not the warm life-blood coursing through the veins, but the life poured out unto death that effects propitiation. The death of the offering represents the forfeited life of the offerer. He lays his hand upon the victim's head (see Lev. 4. 29) and by this typical action (answering to faith) he transfers his guilt to his substitute, and its death is accounted to be his, as with his own hand he slays it."

It is that shed blood which is represented by the wine on the Lord's table—blood apart from the body—which denotes death.

But if in the Old Testament it is clear that atonement is solely by blood, in the New Testament it is equally clear that atonement is solely by the death of Christ. Let us reverently ask

WHY SHOULD IT HAVE BEEN HE?

Why not another?

Surely the answer is that, whoever makes atonement must be One who possesses moral capability, and personal authority. Since it involves substitution for the guilty, the substitute clearly must be guiltless. Since it involves voluntary self-sacrifice, by death, clearly the substitute must possess authority to lay down his own life. Now who else possesses these two qualifications other than Christ?

Certainly He was sinless: He is declared to be the "one who knew no sin"; "who did no sin:" "in whom was no sin"; and positively He is announced as the "Holy One of God." He alone among men was sinless, being Himself more than man. Thus He answers one qualification.

Furthermore, He plainly stated "No man taketh My life from Me; I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it again"—and, were the source of such authority asked for, the answer is "This commandment have I received of my Father." All other men have forfeited their life by reason of sin and they do not possess authority to lay it down. Suicide is but a crowning sin to a life of sin. But He who was sinless had authority to lay down His life for the sinful, and this He did. He thus fulfils the second qualification.

Neither angel nor man possessed these two features of sinlessness and authority. Christ alone did, hence He alone could make atonement for man.

Accordingly all the Old Testament types of atonement by blood may be re-read with that Person in view, and His death may therein be discerned to be foreshadowed. The various offerings afforded types of different aspects of that sacrifice, each one having its own distinctive feature.

For His death was unique, both as to the fact itself and as to its efficacy. No other death incurred such activities all at once as did His. No other death solved so many otherwise insoluble problems nor had such momentous and lasting issues.

There are at least four ways of regarding the event itself, namely,

- (a) As a foul murder on the part of wicked men.
- (b) As a conflict between Himself and Satan.
- (c) As the infliction of Divine wrath upon an innocent substitute.

- (d) As a willing self-sacrifice on His own part in the interests of others.

Consider these seriatim:—

That it was

A FOUL MURDER

on the part of men is apparent from Peter's words to the Jewish people whom he addressed in Acts chapters 2 and 3, wherein he charges home their guilt and their crime. "Ye with wicked hands, took Him and slew Him" and again in chap. 10, referring to the same fact "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree." Blindly and thoughtlessly did they cry "His blood be on us and on our children." Although they may have supposed He had blasphemously and wrongly claimed to be the Son of God, yet their clamour for His death was against all sane judgment. "Away with Him, crucify Him, we will not have this man to reign over us" was the adopted attitude, irrespective of the conviction expressed by Pilate, "I find nothing worthy of death in Him." The record read without bias must inevitably lead the reader to the conclusion that is stated by Stephen "The Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7. 52).

Let the reader peruse Psalm 22 and then observe what another has written. "In this passage the Lord compares His murderers by whom He was at the moment surrounded to those wild animals in whom are combined all the most strongly developed qualities of violence, brutality, blood-thirst and uncleanness." And again "The Cross of Christ thus revealed in hideous reality the true extent of human depravity. The veil of civilisation drops. The mask of social refinement is removed, and man in his highest natural estate of Roman civilisation and Jewish religion is exposed in naked brutality, the murderer of his Benefactor,—untried, unconvicted, uncondemned."

Secondly, it was a

CONFLICT BETWEEN HIMSELF AND SATAN

That Satan was the dark instigator of the foul deed is evidenced in that "He entered into Judas." Playing on his hitherto encouraged greed he prompted him to betray the Lord Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. It was the crowning act of an enmity and hostility of long duration. Prior to and throughout the Lord's earthly course Satan had been his bitter foe, but finding himself

hitherto thwarted in every attempt, at length in sheer desperation he succeeds through a man in securing His murder. That appeared to be his triumph. But less than three full days have to run their course for proof to be furnished that Christ "arose a victor o'er the dark domain." The tables had been turned; Satan and his hosts were conquered and Christ was gloriously triumphant.

His own ascension far above all principalities and powers demonstrated it, for then it was that "He led captivity captive" and "He made a show of them openly, leading them in triumph" (Eph. 4 and Col. 2).

The fact of this conflict between Satan and Christ had early been foreshadowed by God, and had long stood on the page of Holy Writ. It was in the garden of Eden, where the tragic introduction of sin into the world occurred, that God Himself furnished the one gleam of hope that, though the Serpent would bruise the heel of the Woman's seed, yet that Seed would bruise his head. In other words, that while some injury would be inflicted on the Seed yet a final defeat would simultaneously be dealt to the serpent.

Doubtless it was with the view of defeating this purpose that he all along sought first to prevent the advent of the Coming One, and having therein failed, sought secondly to turn Him aside from the path of uprightness, and having therein further failed, he thirdly sought and succeeded in obtaining His death.

But it was in that very occurrence that his own defeat was achieved. "By death He destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil." The only Man Who trod this earth who could legitimately claim exemption from death, willingly experienced it that by so doing He might effectively grapple with him who had its power, and wrest it from Him. Resurrection tells the tale of the magnificent victory.

Hark to His words of anticipated success: "The prince of this world is judged"—words uttered before He died though just about as He was to do so. It is the confidence of the triumph of Right over Might; Truth over Evil; Light over darkness, and Life over death.

Yet thirdly, it was the

INFLECTION OF DIVINE WRATH

upon an innocent substitute. If the contemplation of man's crimes makes us abhor ourselves who once were among them who concurred in that foulest of deeds, and if the contemplation of the devil's malice with its resultant defeat fills our hearts with mingled

indignation and boasting, surely this aspect of the Cross must melt our hearts and moisten our eyes. For He who was the object of that wrath, forsaken of God, and on Whom fell the sword of judgment was none other than His only Son, the Man who was His equal, the darling of His heart, His chiefest joy.

What it cost God to inflict the punishment on Him none can tell, nor indeed can any tell what it was for Him to bear it.

Listen to the words: "The Lord caused to meet on Him the iniquity of us all"—or as an alternative reading "The Lord caused to fall on Him the punishment of us all." He became surety for another, and in result "smarted for it." Against Him were the words uttered "Awake, O Sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is mine equal, smite the shepherd."

The Psalmist had said "I have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken." Here, however, is the only perfectly righteous man that ever lived "forsaken of God." Well may the cry be raised "Why"?

Note such passages as these; "It pleased *the Lord* to bruise Him, *He* hath put Him to grief: when *Thou* shalt make His soul an offering for sin, etc" "*Thou* hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. *Thy* wrath lieth hard upon me, and *Thou* hast afflicted me with all *Thy* waves. *Thy* fierce wrath goeth over me; *Thy* terrors have cut me off. *My God, My God*, why hast *Thou* forsaken Me?" And yet once more: "The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ to do whatsoever *Thy* hand and *Thy* counsel had determined before to be done."

Why was this? Because the Lord Jesus had voluntarily taken the place as substitute, and God had certain irrevocable claims against the sinner which justice demanded should be met. As substitute, therefore, He met those claims. It was in the heart of God to spare the sinner, and therefore He accepted the Substitute and poured on His only Begotten Son what the Sinner deserved that he might go free.

That "God so loved the world that He gave His Son" is a truth only to be surpassed by this that He loved the sinner sufficiently to give *Up* (Rom. 4. 25; 8. 32) His Son. There is much difference in GIVING and GIVING UP.

Such a theme might well occupy space and pen much longer, but we must forbear.

Yet there is the fourth aspect of the matter. In certain circumstances the infliction of punishment upon a substitute is not proper, but grant that

THE SUBSTITUTE IS PERFECTLY WILLING

and desirous that it should be so, it is a glorious example of self-sacrifice and disinterested devotion to the welfare of others. Such was the case with our Lord Jesus.

Frequently do we read in the New Testament "He gave Himself" — a voluntary self-surrender. Behold Him enquiring of the mob "Whom seek ye?" Having obtained their answer, He says "If ye seek me let these go their way." What is that but self-surrender? Note His loud cry on the cross; not the groan of a weak, dying man but the triumphant cry of a victor followed by a voluntary yielding up of the ghost. Witness His deliberate bowing of His head when the work was accomplished. All this tells of a definitely intended, purposed, voluntary act.

It was the accomplishment of the words before uttered: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." He saw the wolf coming, and, rather than allow the sheep to fall victim. He met the wolf, and laid down His own life for the sheep. Not that He was overpowered. "No one taketh it from me: I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down: I have authority to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father."

There are, however, other features which should not pass unnoticed.

And first we may notice that the death of Christ was the subject of

ETERNAL DIVINE COUNSELS.

Peter speaks of "the lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." Early believers were saying "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Seeing that the Church was elect before the foundation of the world it follows as a necessary corollary that the death of Christ must also have been a thing predetermined before the world's foundation, since apart from it there could have been no church.

The introduction of sin into Eden did not take God unawares. No sooner was it brought in, than God revealed that He had in mind and in store the Man who would effectively remedy the damage wrought, and that in such a way as to glorify Himself and to secure for man far greater blessings than those he lost.

Further, the death of the Lord Jesus was

IMPERATIVE.

It was a necessary course. There was no other way by which the end in view could be reached. "He *must* die" stands as the first of four imperatives concerning Him who "*must* be raised," and Whom the "heavens *must* receive" and Who later "*Must* reign." If to Nicodemus the Lord had said "Ye must be born again" it was necessary further to emphasise that, in order to the accomplishment of this, "The Son of Man must be lifted up." Let the reader take note of such words in Luke 24. as "behooved," "ought" and "must" and recall that they represent but one Greek word which simply translated is MUST.

Yet we may ask wherein lay the necessity? Why "must"?

One answer may be given, viz.: Sin, but this answer when analysed divides itself into three parts.

(a) Plainly He must die *because of God's character*—He is holy—He cannot by any means clear the guilty—He cannot wink at sin. It is an outrage of His law and government, and punishment *must* be brought upon the evil doer, or His substitute for *He CANNOT ignore sin*.

Again: *because also of His word*. Types and prophecy had all foreshadowed the death of the coming one, as the remedy for earth's disorder, and apart from this historical counterpart the types would have been meaningless and the prophecy would have had no proven validity. But God had forecast that so it should be, and for that reason He MUST die.

And yet again: *because also of His heart*. In His heart was golden love, warm and constant for His rebellious creatures, and He longed for their good to be established on a righteous basis. "He loved the world." "He wished all men to be saved." And if the flood-gates of that love within His heart were to be opened, and the rivers of mercy were to flow free and boundless to whosoever will, His Son MUST die. There was no alternative.

Oh! wondrous necessity, which brings us to yet another feature.

The death of the

LORD JESUS WAS SUBSTITUTIONARY

This is so well known that it is hardly necessary to emphasise it, but perhaps the eye of an unsaved person will peruse this page, and in case it should be so we may be permitted to emphasise it: the fact is that Christ died, and the explanation of the fact is that it was for the good and eternal blessing of sinners. "Christ died for the ungodly" said the evangelist. "Christ died for our sins" explains the teacher. "Christ loved me and gave HIMSELF for me" says the individual believer. The word "for" is the key-word of all.

This is not the place to speak at length of the various Greek prepositions which are used to denote specific aspects of the death of the Lord Jesus as a substitutionary sacrifice, but the reader may examine Romans 8. 32; Matt. 20. 28; 1 John 2.2, and Rom. 4. 25 to discover there are in each of these verses different prepositions employed, each with its own distinctive shade of meaning, a careful study of which will be well repaid.

Remark further that the death of Christ is

UNIVERSAL IN ITS SCOPE THOUGH RESTRICTED IN ITS APPLICATION

The evangelist may intelligently preach "Christ died for the ungodly." That there is efficacy to cover the needs of all is true; that it is only applied in the case of each believer is equally true, else how is it that the doom of unbelievers is to experience eternal punishment themselves in Hell?

FAITH INDEED IS THE ONE CONDITION

It is the reversal of man's distrustful attitude in Eden. God requires that man shall change for He has not changed. Man at the beginning disbelieved and distrusted God, and thereupon brought in the ruin which now prevails. God says, if that condition for the individual is to be altered his attitude of unbelief and distrust must be abandoned, and be replaced by faith and trust.

This is the sole condition.

**IT IS THE DEATH OF CHRIST WHICH EFFECTS
ATONEMENT, AND NOT HIS LIFE.**

Had that Sinless Man lived here a spotless life and returned to heaven minus death He would have left the world, not as He found it, but with the awful added responsibility of having given evidence of what man's life here should be, yet affording no power to man to achieve the ideal, nor making any provision for the failure which He thereby threw into relief. His life would have been as the Tabernacle's Veil, keeping man from God and God from man.

The Resurrection of Christ

CHRIST is alive! This is not only the basic item of the Christian faith; it is the essential factor to proper Christian living. As a tenet it is well known and acknowledged: as a vital force, has it full sway with us?

Christ is alive! The Holy Spirit's presence on earth attests His presence in heaven. The grave is empty. Hades no longer holds Him. The Spirit of Christ indwells every believer, linking each effectually by a living bond, even while on earth, to the Risen Head in heaven. His risen life is imparted to all who believe. Because He lives, we live also. He is much more than Hero and Exemplar. He is Head.

Christ is alive! Therefore His interest in us did not cease when He died: it is continued now: it is operative although in another sphere.

His resurrection opened up the way for the full accomplishment of all the foreshadowings of God concerning His Son. His promises, too, which seemed doomed to failure by His death, are now assured. His resurrection proved once and for all that the bonds of death which appeared to be unbreakable could be torn away. It furnishes comfort to the bereaved, and hope to the dying saint. It promises peace and blessing to the war-stricken earth. All nations are to benefit under the righteous rule of the Risen King. Creation itself will be delivered from its bondage of corruption. The ruin of the fall is undone by the resurrection-triumph of the Cross. The removal of sin and the complete justification of the believing sinner are guaranteed by it. It affects everything.

It is incontrovertibly true. *Christ IS risen!* His Apostles saw Him. His voice was heard. His scars were seen. At morning, noon and night He appeared to His own, either singly or in small companies, or to a throng of some hundreds. Tangible, visible, audible. The same as He was hitherto known, yet manifesting Himself in

ways not hitherto employed. It is surpassing strange that any should doubt. Yet in Paul's day there were such. For which cause he devotes a long chapter to discussing the general topic of resurrection. The resurrection of Christ out from the dead is his evidence: its evidences, its implications, and its glorious final result (I Cor. 15). Scientists may read that chapter and find food for thought; doubters may read it and find a basis for their faith. The bereaved may read it and find balm for their wounds. All may read it and find hope despite the hopelessness of all else. The manifestation of this Risen Man converted Paul. His appearances emboldened the erstwhile timid Peter. It made the fearful band of eleven men a mighty host for God.

The fear of His possible resurrection disturbed the religious leaders of His day. Vainly, however, did they employ the means proposed to keep Him in the grave. Seal the tomb they may: His resurrection ensures that He will later seal the Devil himself under eternal doom. His resurrection turned the tables. It was God's reversal of man's decision. It was God's approval of Him Whom men "disapproved" and "rejected."

The rulers may try to spread a false explanation of the unusual phenomenon, but their credulity must have been immense. Did they really suppose they would get away with that incriminating statement? If the disciples actually stole the body they were indeed extraordinary men. Some strange emboldenment must have come over them who, a very little time before, were fleeing for fear. Why not have the matter settled once and for all if their theory were true? Make them produce the body if they had stolen it. The authorities alleged they knew who were the thieves. Then make them forfeit the body. Why did they not insist on their so doing, unless it be they knew the falsity of their "explanation." Yet to this day men do not believe that *Christ is alive!* Some still believe the false report. How easy it is to foist a lie on a gullible and unbelieving public!

Over five hundred saw Him on earth after He was raised: three men, Stephen, Paul, and John, saw Him in heavenly glory, and left on record in inspired writ what they saw. Could evidence be stronger? He Who wrought physical miracles when here below, is the same Who after His death, from above, wrought similar miracles on earth through His Apostles. *Christ is alive!*

The evangelists all record it: the early preachers without exception preached it: the inspired Apostles erect their doctrinal structures upon it: the Seer in his Unveiling begins with it (Rev. 1: 5-7). It is central: basic: essential.

The resurrection of Christ made a new book of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. It reconciled otherwise unreconcilable passages. It bridged gaps which seemed to be unbridgable. It explained statements which manifestly were not true of the actual speaker, but were true of Him that was to come (*e.g.* Psa. 16). It shed its light on the meaning of ancient Jewish history. Such events as the sparing of Abraham's son (Gen. 22) receive new significance. The strains of the prophets, which misled interpreters to postulate two Messiahs, by the resurrection are all seen to refer to One.

By His resurrection the darkness of the night had passed: the dawn of a new era synchronised with the dawn of a *new day*. Old Covenant things had passed away. An era of New Covenant blessings commenced with the commencement of the *new week*. Many a solitary soul like Mary have, since her, heard His voice calling them by name. Many gathered companies of the saints, besides the first band of fearful disciples, have realised His presence in the midst. To Israel will yet be given the manifestation of His wounds, calling from them as from Thomas of old, the exclamation of reverent worship.

He still feeds His people with sweet and nourishing dainties (John 21). He still entrusts to His special friends the care of His sheep. He still walks with His own. He opens the Scriptures even now, and He warms the believing heart of the traveller on life's chilly road. All His bygone activities on earth He continues now from heaven.

The promise of salvation is contingent on belief of the fact that *Christ is risen!* God hath raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10: 9). Unbelief is the despairing admission of the eternal triumph of sin and death. By His resurrection His claim to deity was justified. By it He was inaugurated into the office of High Priest on behalf of His People. By it He was made Head over all things on behalf of the Church.

Christ is risen! This was one of a series of necessities. He must die: He did. He must be raised: He was. The heavens must receive Him: they have. He must reign: without doubt He will. Heaven would be empty and earth would be hopeless had He not been raised. Death would have triumphed. His prophetic claim would have been falsified. His promises would have been void. In a word, all would have failed had Death conquered Him. But this Good Shepherd of the sheep, Who laid down His life in their interests, took it again. For that He had His Father's authority. His Father, Whom He had pleased (never more than in earthly life and death) signified His pleasure by raising Him from the dead.

And what shall I more say? Space forbids a more elaborate statement. Human thought cannot fully apprehend all the bearings of this wondrous event. Not until we are in the presence of the Risen Lord shall we be able fully to apprehend the heights and depths, the breadth and length of the wrought-out scheme which seemed to be thwarted by His death, but was given an irresistible impetus by His resurrection.

Opposers may argue, dispute and deny. The evidence of history and Scripture may be rejected, but personal experience is undeniable. Millions there are who have such an experience: their lives manifest it.

“You ask me how I know *He lives?* *He lives* within my heart.”

The Resurrection of the Saints

THE subject matter of 1 Corinthians 15 is not the Resurrection of Christ in particular, but resurrection *in general*. It was written because some of the Corinthians asserted that "the dead rise not at all" (v. 12). Paul deals with the matter by

1. Citing a historical case of resurrection (vv .1-11).
2. Detailing logical deductions from such case (vs. 12-34).
3. Furnishing a prophetic forecast of the future resurrection (vs. 35-end).

THE HISTORICAL CITATION

It is not possible to hold a universal negative while claiming as an exception a single positive; in other words it is not correct to say that "the exception proves the rule." for as a matter of fact it destroys the rule. If it is possible to show that only one person was raised from the dead, that suffices to establish the general principle of resurrection, which would prove false the contention that there is not such a thing.

Now this Paul does in citing the resurrection of Christ in verses 1-11. He affirms that that resurrection was the subject of *Old Testament prophecy* ("according to the Scriptures"); it was a matter of *actual accomplishment*, attested by over five hundred and thirteen witnesses, most of whom were alive and available for confirmation of the fact in the day when Paul wrote (indeed, Paul himself had seen Him and so was not dependent on second-hand information) it was the subject of *Apostolic preaching*, and it was the subject of the *Corinthian faith*, unless, Paul adds, "ye believed in vain," that is, unless they believed not taking thought as to whether what they believed was true or not, which it was incredible to suppose.

"RESURRECTION" was not an idea of Paul's innovation: it was in the Scriptures. It was not a wild fancy impossible of realisation; it was an historic accomplishment. That being so, Paul preached it when at Corinth, and the evidence being so convincing, the Corinthians had believed it.

LOGICAL DEDUCTIONS

In verses 12 to 34 Paul makes certain logical deductions. An examination of verses 12-19 will reveal that there are seven deductions on the supposition that there is no resurrection. If the errorists are correct, then:

1. Christ has *not been raised*, for the exception cannot be held if the universal rule is true.
2. Paul's *preaching was vain*, there was nothing in it.
3. Resultant thereon, the Corinthians' *faith was vain*, it was equally empty.
4. A more serious aspect of the matter is that the apostles had become *false witnesses of God* in attributing an action to Him which never occurred.
5. Moreover, instead of faith being effectual in securing for the believer the removal of his sins, they were "*yet in their sins*," if Christ was still in the grave; their faith was vain.
6. Furthermore, those that had "*fallen asleep*" had perished.
7. Paul and his associates were of *all men the most to be pitied*, for they had lost the good things of this life on the supposition that there was another, which was a delusion, "if the dead rise not at all."

Thus the error affected God, Christ, the apostles and the Corinthians.

In vs. 20-28,

CLEAR DECLARATIONS

consequent upon the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead are stated. They may be stated thus:

1. That Christ is the *firstfruits* of them that sleep, that is, He is the first from Whom all the harvest of risen believers is to take its stamp.

That His resurrection is the guarantee of the *resurrection of all others*, believers and unbelievers alike. The word "*all*" in verse 22 is co-extensive in each of its two occurrences: all Adam's race

were affected by the first Adam: all Adam's race will be affected by the last Adam, and because He was raised, all others will be raised. That there are differences in the order the following verses teach, but the fact is universally true.

3. The ultimate issue will be the *abolition of death* itself. Death is that state of dissolution wherein the soul and spirit of man are separate from the body. The abolition of death for any individual is the reunion of the soul and spirit with the body. That is resurrection. When this is accomplished for all, death as a principle will be totally abolished. The Lord Jesus by His own resurrection "abolished death and brought life and incorruptibility to light." Thus the foundation was laid: v. 26 of this chapter speaks of the final issue. Believers, in resurrection bodies, will spend eternity with Christ; unbelievers raised will spend eternity with Satan.

POINTED APPEALS

In vs. 29-33 the Apostle appeals to the Corinthians interrogatively thus: if there is no resurrection, what can be the *significance of baptism*, since the emergence of the candidate from water denotes resurrection? If there is no such thing, what can such emergence mean? (v. 29).

Again, why are we in jeopardy every hour? Why do we risk our lives and lose our earthly comforts if there is nothing beyond?

Such "evil communications" (v. 33) would corrupt all the good manners and customs inculcated by the belief in resurrection and its issues; while the reception of such a false doctrine reveals the Corinthians to have been asleep. Therefore Paul enjoins them to "awake righteously and sin not" (v. 34). To doubt the possibility of the resurrection betrays the fact that the doubter "knows not God," with Whom all things are possible. The opposition of Science does *not* hold the field when the power of God is owned.

PROPHETIC FORECAST

From v. 33 to the end of the chapter the Apostle furnishes a prophetic forecast. His double question, "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" is answered in the reverse order, vs. 35-49 dealing with the "*body*," and 50 to the end with the "*how*?"

Illustrations are drawn from botany, biology, and astronomy, showing that "nature itself teacheth" such a thing as resurrection. As the flower is infinitely more beautiful than the grain, so the resurrection body will be related to the former, but excel in glory,

for it will be "fashioned like unto His body of glory." As the flesh of men, birds, beasts and fishes all differ, so the resurrection body will differ from the natural body which is now the habitation of the earthly life. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." As the sun, moon, and stars differ from each other, and as each star differs the one from the other in glory, so, too, is the resurrection of the dead. *Related to, different from, better than* the earthly body will the resurrection body be.

Weakness, dishonour, corruption marked the natural: strength, glory, incorruption will mark the spiritual. It will take its mark from the last Adam, the Lord from Heaven; and as He is from Heaven, so, too, the body that shall be will be a Heavenly one as the first one was earthy.

But how will this be? This is just the question the rationalist and the scientist ask. Paul in reply says that *a change is essential*, since flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom. Moreover, he adds that *a change is certain*. "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall *all be changed*" (v. 51). The sleeping believer whose body has been corrupted will be raised incorruptible. The living believer whose body is mortal will assume immortality. These two things will be effected in the minutest conception of time at the moment known only to God. Then death will have been finally conquered: then sin, its cause, will have been altogether removed, and the Risen Christ Who, by His death and resurrection, conquered these things potentially, will then be seen by all to be the Victor over them actually.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast" of your own will. "immovable" when others seek to impose their will on you, "always abounding" (not casually engaging in) "the work of the Lord," knowing that there is a resurrection when all such labour will be rewarded.

Eternal Punishment

DR. A. T. PIERSON, opening a sermon entitled "The inevitable alternative" remarked:—having read Matthew 25, 46: "This is, without exception, the most unpopular text in the Bible. There is no one text upon which ministers of Christ so infrequently preach, and from which the bulk of hearers so constantly shrink as from this verse. Yet we are bidden to declare the whole counsel of God, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. And if for no other reason than this, that the declaration of the entire message of God is the essential condition of freeing our own garments from the blood of lost souls, there is no minister of Christ that ought to preach without at times calling attention to a subject like this."

This remark will furnish sufficient justification for dealing exclusively with such a solemn theme in a special chapter. For it is important that believers should be established in this Fundamental doctrine, and unbelievers should be apprised of it that they may thereby be driven to seek the way of escape which is not far off.

An initial consideration of no small importance is that outside of the Scriptures nothing is known as to this matter. Men may speculate, but nothing can be affirmed unless it be based upon God's word. For that reason, the first article of this series related to the Inspiration of the Bible, since unless one is assured that the Bible is God's Word nothing will convince, seeing in this chapter the Bible will be the alone recognised source of authority as to Death and After.

Accordingly, let us raise the question first of all, Is Eternal Punishment (or to use an equivalent term Eternal Judgment) a Bible doctrine?

A reference to Matt. 25, 46, and Heb. 6, 2, will immediately reveal two facts:—

- a. That Eternal Judgment is a Bible doctrine, taught by the Lord Jesus and His inspired penmen.
- b. That it is a fundamental doctrine, being amongst the foundation truths (see Hebrew 6. 1).

It is certainly named in the Bible.

But we should consider the three terms that are in these two phrases, viz.: (a) Eternal (b) Punishment (c) Judgment.

ETERNAL.

That this is a correct English translation of the Hebrew and Greek words cannot be seriously contested.

Paul speaks of the "things which are seen as being temporal and the things which are not seen as being eternal": from which it is evident that the antonym of "temporal" is "eternal": the one is limited: the other is unlimited. The one lasts for a specific period: the other, for ever.

Dr. Pierson writes:—

"For example, it has been said that the word translated 'eternal' does not mean 'eternal' at all. It is a Greek word 'ainios.' That word is from the Greek word aion, which is the same as the English word eon or age; and it has been said that this word means age-long, that it is a punishment that reaches through a definite period, but not necessarily through eternity. But the same word precisely is applied to life in the other section of the verse: 'but the righteous unto life eternal.' Though the word is translated everlasting in the first part of the verse, and 'eternal' in the last part of the verse, it is the same original word in both; and if the word means age-long as to punishment, does it not mean agelong as to life? And if that be the case, then there is no guarantee in this verse here for the everlasting punishment of the wicked, there is no guarantee here for the everlasting life of the righteous."

"But then notice that, while that word does mean age-long, so does the word 'eternal'. The word 'eternal' is from the Latin word aetas, an age, which is the exact correspondent of the Greek word aion, an age; so that our word eternal means nothing but age-long. We have to take words to express ideas that are far beyond us. We have to take words that fall within the compass of our experience. We have never known a life that did not end, nor a life in which there was no succession of days and hours, years and centuries; and so when we try to express the idea of a life that is not bounded by those limits, we take the longest period of which

we know anything—an age. Take the most indefinite period of which we know anything—an age; and we use that word to express the conception of eternity. Now, if you will stop a moment you will see the reason of this. Suppose the word that is here translated eternal meant year-long. A year is a definite cycle of time, 365 days. It marks the period of the revolution of the earth round the sun in its orbit, and so a year means a definite period. But the word 'age' means an indefinite length of time, and so we have no word that comes so near to eternity as the word age, for there are no limits to mark the beginning, no limits to mark the end, and that is the characteristic of eternity . . . And so the Greek, having no other word, said 'ainios' age-long and the Latin having no other word, compounds one from the word 'aetas' age, and we take our word eternal from the same Latin word 'aetas.'"

Added to the foregoing, we may observe that this word "eternal" is applied to life in such famous passages as John 3. 16 and 10.28. To God Himself in Romans 16. 26. To the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 9. 14. Also it is a characteristic word in Hebrews where the eternal blessings of Christianity are contrasted with the temporal blessings of Judaism in 5. 9; 9. 12; 9. 15 and 13. 20.

Then we may call attention to the use of the same word in more solemn instances and the reader should himself examine Matt. 18. 8; 25. 41; 2 Thess. 1. 9; Heb. 6. 2 and Jude 7.

Were it not for the objection of the opposers this point could the more speedily be disposed of, but since there are those who will oppose we would ask:—

1. Were the scholarly translators of the A.V. ignorant of the true force of the original words and blundered in their translation?
2. Did the various scholars who sat on the Revisers Committee make the same error or is their translation in the text intended to be a confirmation that the A.V. in this matter is correct?

Indeed etymologically the Greek word 'age' is compounded of two other Greek words, one being 'aie' meaning always, and the other being the present participle of the verb "to be," i.e. "being," and together they mean "always being." Not that etymology can always determine the meaning of a word in its usage, but here certainly it is useful.

As to the expressions "for ever and ever" which some translate "unto the age of ages" or "unto the ages" we may quote the words of the late J. R. Caldwell:

“It is useless to argue that the words imply a limited though an extended period. An ‘age’ with God is at least a thousand years. ‘Ages’ must be much longer. But the expression ‘ages of ages’ what can it mean but that which exceeds human conception, in short, eternity?”

This is an expression used of God Himself, and the duration of His throne, and is frequently found in ascriptions of glory to Him. Similarly the precisely same expressions are employed in Rev. 14. 11; 19. 3; and 20. 10, in relation to the subject before us, viz.: that of Eternal Punishment.

We shall later on see that, in the nature of things, nothing but Eternal punishment is possible for the Unbeliever, and that apart from the words themselves, it is an integral part of the doctrine of Scripture. But the words are definite and only they who are wilfully blind, having an unscriptural theory to support, deny the true meaning of these terms.

PUNISHMENT

Our next enquiry is as to the meaning of this word. It is a good translation of the Greek word which it represents, and ordinarily is clearly understood. The prisoner who is imprisoned for a term of say, “seven years” has to undergo “seven years’ punishment,” and such a one would surely understand correctly the plain English expression “eternal punishment,” for like as his punishment on earth is for a term of seven years, so the punishment referred to in Matt. 25. 46, is for ever. He would not quibble as some have that “eternal punishment” does not mean “eternal punishing.”

It has been asserted by those who teach “Annihilation” that when a sinner dies he ceases to be. This annihilation of his being, it is claimed, is tantamount to “eternal punishment.” But were this so, surely it would be called “summary punishment” or some such equivalent term. Certainly the term eternal punishment would be misleading. On this reasoning, Eternal punishment is inflicted on the murderer who goes to the gallows, or on the ox which is destroyed because of his goring a man.

But the fact is that the Greek word here translated “punishment” denotes a process, and would equally well be rendered by the English word “punishing,” for what the Lord Jesus here affirms is that the wicked go away into an endless term of conscious punishing.

This same word occurs in 1 John 4. 18, translated by the word "torment," "fear hath torment." Another has written "The use of it here is conclusive; it cannot bear any rendering other than that given. The torment of fear is intensely real, and implies of necessity consciousness in its fullest sense." And again "It would be perfectly allowable therefore to render Matt 25. 46, as in 1 John 4. 18, 'these shall go away into everlasting torment.'"

These are the only two places where the Greek word 'kolasis' occurs, though its cognate verb occurs in Acts 4. 21 in a corporeal sense, where its meaning is plain. If, then, the meaning of the word is clear here, why seek to confuse its meaning in Matt. 25. 46 and 1 John 4. 18, unless it be that the doctrine is found unpalatable and there is no sense of salvation therefrom possessed.

Trench, speaking on Timoria and Kolasis in his Synonyms writes:—

"It would be a very serious error, however, to attempt to transfer this distinction in its entirety to the words as employed in the New Testament. The Kolasis ainos of Matt. 25. 46 as it plainly itself declares is no corrective and therefore temporary discipline; it can be no other than endless punishment; with which the Lord elsewhere threatens finally impenitent men; for in proof that Kolasis had acquired in Hellenistic Greek this severer sense, and was used simply as 'punishment' or 'torment' with no necessary underthought of the bettering through it of him who endured it, we have only to refer to such passages as the following" (and here he enumerates quotations from classical Greek).

So far, then, we gather that the term "Eternal punishment" means Punishment which never ceases.

JUDGMENT

Next we have to consider the word Judgment found in Heb. 6. 2. It is a word which suggests many questions e.g.—

Who is the Judge?

Who are they who are judged?

What is the crime, or what are the crimes which form the subject of judgment?

What is the verdict?

What is the punishment?

We will answer these seriatim.

THE JUDGE

is clearly God Himself. Abraham called Him the "Judge of all the

earth." Solomon says it is He "who will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing whether it be good or evil." It is He with whom the writer to the Hebrews says "we have to do," or otherwise read "To whom we have to give account." The whole tenor of scripture makes it plain that God will judge.

Man has disputed the justice of this, asserting that his difficulties can only be appreciated by one who himself has trodden the same path, and therefore he ought to be judged by a man.

For this reason, *inter alia*, God has designed that All judgment is to be given to His Son, because He is Son of Man, and that He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world by that *Man* whom He hath ordained. Man will thus be deprived of any alleged ground of complaint. He will be judged by a Man who by His life here has shown what man's life should be.

WHO ARE THESE THAT ARE JUDGED?

It is not our purpose to broaden the issue by speaking of the final doom of Satan nor of the judgment of angels, in which saints are to take part. But concisely answered, those who are to be judged are Unbelievers, amongst others. For confirmation see Rev. 21. 8.

The believer in the Lord Jesus has total exemption from judgment, John 5. 24, says he will not stand in the dock for trial. Romans 8. 1, that there is no judgment awaiting him after death, and 1 John 4. 17 that "as He is so are we in His world." The Lord Jesus is the resurrection side of Divine Judgment, it being all past for Him: and the believer is in a like case.

But the one who has heard the gospel, and refused to believe it, is in the list of those who being judged, will be eternally punished in the lake of fire.

We speak not here of the heathen who have not heard of the name of Christ. They are responsible to God for the witness they have in creation and conscience. The Judge of all the earth will do right in their case. But those whose opportunities have been greater, and whose responsibilities are therefore proportionately increased, will have to endure proportionately increased punishment.

THE CHARGE

It has sometimes been said that Man will not be judged for his deeds, but will be judged for rejecting God's Son. Now this needs to be modified as it does not accord with Scripture.

Time and again we read that man will be judged "according to his works." See in particular Rev. 20 vv. 12, 13. Again Jude 15 speaks of "all the ungodly deeds and all the hard speeches" which will form the subject matter for judgment. Man has to give account of every idle word spoken and wrong deed done.

It is true that of all things done by man, the rejection of God's Son is the most serious, for it is not only the greatest insult man could give God; it is also the greatest injury man can do himself.

But this, though the gravest, is but one of a long series of grave charges which are brought against the unbelieving sinner.

That "God will bring *every work* into judgment with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" is the answer to our third question.

THE VERDICT

The result of this judgment is, to use legal phraseology, that a conviction is obtained. The person is not charged and condemned, merely, but he is charged, convicted of the justice of both charge made and punishment about to be meted out, and is then condemned. From another point of view "he is condemned already," but we here refer to the ultimate issue of the judgment of the Great White Throne.

It has been rare, but not altogether unknown, for the innocent to be charged, condemned and imprisoned. Such a case occurred in this country not long ago. When justice was done, the prisoner was released and handsomely compensated.

Such a prisoner must have held in his bosom all through the trial and punishment, the conviction that he was right, and his accusers and punishers were wrong. They might charge, try and punish him; but never could they convict *him*, seeing his conscience testified within to his own innocence.

But such a case cannot occur at the Great White Throne, for then God will Judge through His Righteous Son, and the issue will be that all will be *convicted* of their guilt (See Jude 15). None will ever hold it in his breast that God is wrong; he is right; and he does not deserve what he is experiencing.

WHAT IS THE PUNISHMENT?

In dealing with this question we will arrange our remarks under three headings:

(a) The immediate experience of a sinner who dies in his sins.

(b) The Great White Throne.

(c) The Lake of Fire.

Immediately a sinner dies he enters on an experience which is described by the Lord Jesus Himself in the last part of Luke, chap. 16. Read either as history or parable it is terrible.

All is perfectly clear. The departed individual has not ceased to be, but has entered on a new phase of experience, in a new, a disembodied state, consciously under punishment, called here by the term "Tormented."

The locality of the person concerned is termed "Hades" (here the word "Hell" should be so read)—the place of departed and disembodied spirits. It is not heaven. It is not Hell (Gehenna) the lake of fire.

The condition of the person is irrevocable. It is not possible for an alteration to take place. "A great gulf is fixed"—transference to Abraham's bosom is impossible. The condition is hopeless.

It is evident the Lord wished His hearers to understand that it is in lifetime that the issues of eternity are settled, and that once a person passes the thin line which separates this world from the next, locality and condition are eternally settled. Alteration and transference are alike impossible.

This is not an isolated passage suggesting these things. Were it so it would suffice, but the general tenor of Scripture is that once a person dies he enters on a new condition of conscious experience, either of bliss, or of torment—and that once entered upon, it is fixed.

Oh! That God would impress our hearts with the fact that every unbeliever's funeral is a reminder of a fresh addition to the lost who might have been saved if only they had believed the gospel which far too many of us preach but half-heartedly!

"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus ensures the resurrection of every man, believer or unbeliever (1 Cor. 15. 21). That the times of their resurrections differ is true, but the fact is universal.

The sceptic may scorn and question the possibility of such an event, seeing that the bodies of the departed have long since corrupted, gone off into gases, or have become chemical constituents of the soil in which they have been placed and such like objections. To all such the reply is "Ye know not the Scripture nor the power of God." Certainly He who called a universe into being by His word and who has since maintained it through countless ages, and

who from the dust created man, is able to raise from the dust of His creation.

Raised from the dead they will stand before the Great White Throne, there to be judged "according to their deeds." The Books are opened in which is contained the detailed record of the person's earthly course—"all his hard speeches and all his ungodly deeds." The book of life is opened, also. The *books* contain mention of unbelievers: the *book* of life omits mention of them, and the inclusion in the one, and the omission from the others, constitutes double ground for the infliction of punishment upon them.

THE LAKE OF FIRE

Surely in no part of Scripture appears a more solemn and awful passage than Mark 9. 43-50.

He who was full of grace was also full of truth, and He who spake as none other, excelled all in candour, simplicity and faithfulness.

The reader should peruse before a thrice holy God the solemn statements, and allow the words to rest in the memory: "Gehenna, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

Listen to what another has written of Gehenna:—

"It was still within less than 30 years of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans that the idol—the hideous ox-headed human figure of Moloch — and its accessories were swept away from the valley by the good Josiah, and the place was so defiled that it could never again be desecrated by the frightful worship. But so deeply had the horrors of the past printed themselves on the popular mind that henceforth the spot bore the name of Tophet—the abomination—the place to be spat upon; and in later times the very words Gehinnom — the Valley of Hinnom — slightly changed into Gehenna became the common name for Hell." And again:—

"After King Josiah had defiled the place it became the open sewer of the city. Fires were kept continually burning to consume the filth and impurity of the place. Worms fed on garbage out of reach of the fire. Vultures gloated in crowds over the horrid scene. Stenchful smoke rose continually from the valley.

"Well might our Lord use it as an emblem of hell, and stamp the usage of the word with the hall-mark of His authority. But let it be carefully noted that the Lord in speaking of Gehenna never referred to the place outside Jerusalem, but used it to designate

that place of eternal torment which is prepared for the devil and his angels, and to which the impenitent will be consigned."

Another scholar has stated that the word "Tophet" means a drum and says: "Drums were continually being beaten in this awful place to drown the cries of the helpless children who were constantly thrown alive on the flames; thus a fit emblem of that awful place where the unsaved must spend their eternity."

A careful analysis of the Lord's words reveal the following facts:—

(a) The person is in a hopelessly lost condition.

(b) He is conscious—the worm dieth not.

(c) The condition is interminable—the fire is not quenched.

Were the person annihilated then one may ask what need is there for "unquenchable" fire?

(d) The very element in which he is, "fire," a term descriptive of Divine judgment and wrath, is the very element which will preserve him in conscious existence therein (see v. 46).

Through the Spirit John calls it the "lake of fire" which burneth with fire and brimstone. Revelation is a book of symbols and the language here, therefore, may be read symbolically. Literally it would denote acute suffering; symbolically it lacks nothing of its horror.

Oh! God save us all from indifference in this matter. The believer is entrusted with the only effective panacea for sinful man, and the only means of rescue from such a terrible doom. "Sermons" will never save souls, but whole-hearted Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered preaching of the glad tidings of Christ who died to save perishing man will.

Objections, however, have been raised by those who believe not, and it may serve a useful end to name at least three of them in order that the reader may be forewarned thereof, and thus be forearmed there against.

OBJECTION I.

It has been alleged that this doctrine lacks valid authoritative support. Now if the Bible be rejected as God's word, then clearly, this doctrine does lack such support, for apart from His revelation in the matter nothing reliable or authoritative is known. But once the Bible is accepted as valid then abundant support is found therein.

Not only did the Lord Jesus teach it as in Mark 9.; Luke 16.; John 5., etc., but Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude all refer to it.

Paul speaks of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" and like phrases.

Peter speaks of the day of the Lord and man's liability to perish, though God's wish is that he should not.

James speaks of the "fire of Gehenna."

Jude speaks of "the judgment of the great day."

John speaks of the "lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone."

The anonymous author of the Hebrews epistle speaks of "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

OBJECTION II.

It has been alleged that *eternal* punishment is not commensurate with *temporal* sin: that sin committed during the brief span of man's life cannot merit eternal punishment. But this objection is invalid because it pre-supposes a right apprehension of the gravity of sin which God alone can estimate.

A crime against an infinite Person is an infinite offence meriting an infinite punishment.

To slap one's own child in the face would hardly call forth anyone's comment: to do the same thing to another person's child would be a more serious affair; to do the same thing to a policeman would be still more serious; whilst to do the same thing to the King would be a grave insult calling forth severe punishment. The dignity of the person gives gravity to the crime.

Furthermore, in nature one may sin which, in its performance, takes but a small fraction of time, but in its consequence lasts for, it may be, a whole life-time. None argue against this: It is a hard indisputable fact; it is a law of the God of Nature.

Besides which, who is the creature, the thing formed, that he should say to the Creator, the One who formed him, What dost thou? in the matter of the duration of punishment as in other matters.

Added to which, it may be observed that there are degrees of punishment. Not all suffer alike during eternity. He who knows the privileges, circumstances, environment, upbringing, etc., of the individual, knows rightly how to apportion punishment.

Lastly, it may be remarked that since man is an eternally existent being his birth, being the commencement of eternal existence, it follows as a necessary issue that nothing but eternal punishment can possibly be for the one who fails to avail himself of the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. No neutral position is possible; it is either salvation or wrath. "Believers" will accept unquestioningly God's utterances.

OBJECTION III.

It has been alleged that this doctrine is incompatible with a God of Love. But to this we may reply, that God is both Light and Love concurrently; and He has not lavished His love on man irrespective of righteousness but consistently therewith. This enables God righteously to accept the believing sinner, and the knowledge of this gives the sinner rest. Had God not satisfied His righteous claims, but dispensed mercy regardless thereof, it might ever be held as a contingency that could occur, that justice would put in a claim despite mercy, and force the issue against the believer. But such a possibility is not existent, for justice has been met, whilst mercy can flow consistently therewith.

God is righteous as well as merciful, and the one who will not have love and mercy must have the execution of judgment without mercy.

What would one think of a monarch who, through kindness, failed to deal punitively with rebels in his realm? or a father who, loving his children, permitted them to do as they liked all unchecked? And is God below this standard? Will He allow His law to be despised, His word to be contemned, and His rule to be ignored, without rising up to Judge the offenders?

God has gratuitously provided a way of escape and it is for all to avail themselves of it on the simplest condition, i.e., faith. How then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

* * * * *

We should now mention those things taught by false teachers, which altogether lack Biblical support.

ANNIHILATION.

Those who teach this error cite such passages as 2 Thess. 1. 9, "eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord" and again Matt. 10. 28, "Fear Him who is able to destroy both body and

soul in Hell," assuming the word "destruction" means annihilation. But in neither case is this so, as an examination of their use in the New Testament will clearly show.

The word in 2 Thess. 1. 9 means "disaster or ruin" and the word in Matt. 10. 28 translated "destroy" means "spoil," "mar" or "to render unfit for its original purpose," as a broken cup is rendered unfit for its original purpose of containing liquid. So the man who is "lost" (as this word is also translated) is rendered totally unfit for the original purpose for which God created him. The reader can readily check that this is so by the use of an English-Greek Lexicon.

Further the doctrine of annihilation is contradictory to the whole tenor of Scripture, which reveals that the believer is destined to eternal bliss whilst the unbeliever suffers "eternal death" and all are included in one class or another. If some object that body and soul united could not eternally exist in the lake of fire, they should recall the bush which was not consumed; and the three men in the fiery furnace, preserved despite its fierceness. They also should note that the "beast" and the "false prophet" after being there for a thousand years are still spoken of as there (Rev. 20. 10) from which it follows that if they can survive its flame for one thousand years there is no logical reason why they should not survive eternally.

The reference in 1 Cor. 15. to the last enemy "death" being destroyed constitutes no difficulty if regard is had to the context. The word "destroyed" means here "to put out of action" (it is a different word from that in 1 Thess. 1. 9, and Matt. 10. 28), and refers to the time when death will no longer hold men's bodies, when soul and body will no longer be separate, but both united will be disposed of by God according to his own revealed plan. Death and Hades will be superseded by Gehenna.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION

It would seem too evident to need emphasis that this is an unscriptural doctrine. What surely can Rev. 21. 8 mean if all ultimately will be saved? Is the lake of fire remedial? If so, where is the hint in Scripture to that effect? Paul says that "God will have all men to be saved," but negatively, Peter says, "God willeth not that one should perish"; that is His wish. It is not His counsel that so it shall be. In His ways He has placed man on his own responsibility. Manifestly the plain teaching of the Bible is that some will be saved eternally and some will be lost eternally.

PURGATORY.

This is a doctrine invented and propagated by money-making priests with intent to exploit ignorant souls and constantly to hold them in mental suspense for the sake of base gain.

Clearly the time of "testing" is in life; not after. Probation is now: final issues are settled at death, not probationary ones.

Whatever 1 Peter 3. 18-23 means it certainly cannot teach the general doctrine of purgatory for all, since that passage only relates to those to whom Noah preached, and who in his days were disobedient.

1 Cor. 3. lends no support to the theory. "Saved so as by fire" is not indicative that the person undergoing a period of suffering is saved out of it, but that though his lifework may be consumed by the fire of judgment he himself is saved despite it.

Neither Hades nor Gehenna are remedial; they are final; once entered the person is hopelessly lost. May God imprint these words on our hearts by His Spirit.

Finally, **ERRONEOUS VIEWS CONCERNING THIS DOCTRINE AFFECT THE PERSON OF CHRIST.**

We ask the annihilationist: Was our Lord Jesus annihilated when He died? For verily He was Man.

We ask the Universalist: If all men ultimately will be saved why then did Christ die at all? What made His death imperative?

Of the one who claims limited and not eternal duration of punishment, we enquire: Was not the Lord Jesus an infinite substitute for sinners? For we have seen that sin is an infinite offence against an infinite God demanding infinite punishment, or in the alternative an infinite substitute. And logically if the punishment be finite, and of limited time, then the substitute equally must be finite, which means he is man and not God, which is a lie.

May God in His mercy spare writer and reader from any error on this profound and mysterious doctrine and give constant grace simply to bow to what is written, seeking to understand those things which are revealed, and leaving the rest to a Just God and a Saviour.

Redemption

THERE were two contingencies which were likely to occur to an Israelite: the one was that, under the necessity of raising ready money, he might have to dispose of his property; and the other was, for the same cause, he might have to forfeit his liberty: he might be compelled to sell himself to another. God, however, in His mercy, made provision whereby such a condition of loss and bondage was not to be permanent, for in the year of Jubilee the property was to be returned to its original owner and the individual was to be granted his former liberty. The legislation touching these matters is contained in Leviticus 25. If, however, in the interim, a person were able to raise sufficient funds he was permitted to redeem his property, and/or to redeem himself. The likelihood was remote, but the law provided for such an eventuality. Note the words of vv. 26 and 49: "If he be able," and observe how the R.V. gives them: "If he be waxen rich and find sufficient." It demonstrates the kindness and fairness of God.

In spiritual affairs man has lost the possessions with which the Creator originally endowed him, and he also has

FORFEITED HIS LIBERTY

so that he is now a "slave" of sin (John 8.34 and Rom. 7). God does not desire that that condition should abide for ever. He intends to restore to man his property and liberty, but if anyone could find the requisite sum — the redemption price — he himself is at liberty to take steps to achieve the desired end. Failing his competency so to do an alternative provision was made: one of his kinsmen of the nearness indicated might exercise the right of redemption on his behalf. But natural relationship in the matter of spiritual redemption is of no avail, for all alike are in the same position and each needs redemption for himself, which manifestly precludes his redeeming another.

A further duty of the "kinsman" was to avenge the blood of one of his relatives who had been slain (see Num. 35. 19). This was not optional: it had to be done.

Thus, three things are predicated of the kinsman-redeemer. (1) He must be a blood relation; (2) He has the right to restore lost property and lost liberty; (3) He must avenge blood. This is the law of the matter.

Now in Ruth, chapter 4, we have a test case. Notwithstanding the case is hopelessly complicated through legal breaches, the kinsman is offered the opportunity of redemption which he declines because of those legal complications. Twice he says: "I cannot redeem it," thus setting forth typically the incompetency of blood relations, in the spiritual sphere, to redeem another. How many parents would redeem their children if they could: and children parents: and uncles nephews, and so on? Who has not prayed long and fervently for the conversion of relations? "I cannot redeem" is heard on every hand, and we have to leave it to Another.

Indeed, universal human incompetency in this matter is categorically stated in Psalm 49, 7-8: "None can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him," and the cause allocated is "For the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be let alone for ever" (see R.V. reading). Moses, with the best of intentions, expressed his readiness to be blotted out of God's Book if the people could be spared. Paul, also, expressed his readiness to become accursed from Christ on behalf of his brethren, but in neither case could the offer be accepted because of the ruling of Psalm 49. 7-8. The longest purse and the best will in the world are altogether inadequate for the accomplishment of the redemption of the soul.

If, then, the individual cannot redeem himself, and if (as Ruth 4 shows) no relative can do it, and if indeed (as Psalm 49 shows) no one anywhere can do it. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or shall the lawful captive be delivered"? (for law is on the side of the captor). Is the case hopeless? Thank God, no! For listen to the divine promise: "I the Lord am thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (see Isa. 49. 24-26).

He promises to do what none other can.

But here lies a difficulty. Jehovah is not flesh and blood, yet as we have seen, a requisite of the kinsman is that he must be a blood relation. How, then, can Jehovah be a kinsman in accordance with His promise? That mystery remained unsolved for ages until—in the temple in Jerusalem Simeon took the "babe" in his arms and blessed God because he had "seen His Salvation," and Anna

who came in that instant and saw the babe, spake of Him to all that looked for "redemption" but could not undersand how it was to be effected. Here, indeed, was Jehovah manifest in flesh—here the problem was solved, and God had become man so that He could be the Kinsman Redeemer.

Another difficulty, however, was now created. How could this babe effect deliverance? How can He take the "prey from the mighty?" In His poverty how could He pay the requisite price? For in contrast to having "waxen rich" this One, though originally rich, had become poor. Time will reveal.

For when the Lord Jesus had become full-grown man He defined

THE INTENTION OF HIS ADVENT

thus: "The Son of Man is come, not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20. 28). The price to be paid (not to the Devil but to Justice) was His own life—a greater price could never be paid: not silver (as the half shekel redemption money), nor even gold, but His precious Blood. The beneficiaries were many (not *all*), limited, as the later Scriptures reveal, to those who believe. It is true that "He gave Himself a ransom for—in the interests of—all" (1 Tim. 2. 6), but the actual application of the redemption is only in respect of "many."

Later events revealed how He voluntarily gave Himself to His enemies, Son of God though He was, the then Possessor of deity and all its attributes, and "willingly died in our stead." No man took His life from Him: He had authority to lay it down and so He did. Evidences in support of the voluntary nature of the death of the Son of God are conclusive, though space forbids their enumeration.

He died: He died voluntarily: but because neither its purpose nor meaning was understood, His death was the temporary end of all the hopes that had been entertained by the godly few who were expecting Redemption in Jerusalem. "We supposed it was He who should have redeemed Israel, and besides all this, to-day is the third day." Their redemption hopes had vanished, but not for long.

His death, indeed, was the very means by which the Kinsman fulfilled His office, as the writer to the Hebrews (ch. 2. 14) explains. Listen to his remarks:

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same," shows that by His incarnation He fulfilled the requisite of blood relationship.

“That through death, He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is the devil,” shows that another requisite is fulfilled—He was the avenger.

“And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”—so that yet another requisite is fulfilled—He recovered liberty “to the bound.”

It is a fruitful way of studying the Scriptures to search out all that they have to say on a particular topic and, if the reader will do this in respect of the matter now under review, he will make many discoveries of detail. He will find that the different words which are used in the Hebrew and Greek throw a great deal of light on the subject. He will learn that Christ has found “eternal redemption” for us: that it is “through His blood”; it involves the “forgiveness of sins”: it begins with the soul but extends ultimately to the body, and so on. Pursuing such a research the student will at length exclaim with the heavenly host: “Thou art worthy to take the book and to loose the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast

REDEEMED US TO GOD

by Thy blood” (Rev. 5. 9). *We* are not worthy, for we could not redeem ourselves: nor can worthiness be claimed for any other. That honour is reserved exclusively for Christ—the Son of God Who became the Son of Man.

Blessed Redeemer, wonderful Saviour,
 Fountain of wisdom, Ancient of Days,
 Hope of the Faithful, Light of all Ages,
 Jesus my Saviour, Thee will I praise!

Sanctification

THE understanding of this doctrine of Holy Scripture would be facilitated if it were borne in mind that *sanctification does not of itself necessarily effect any change* in the thing or in the person sanctified. For example, under the law the seventh day was sanctified, but it was not thereby changed. The Lord Jesus sanctified Himself (John 17: 19), but, of course, He was not thereby changed in any way. That which was put on the altar of the tabernacle was sanctified, but though its use was changed, its substance remained the same. Sanctification is the setting apart of a thing or a person for a specific purpose. Reference to the occurrences of the word in both the Old and the New Testaments will make this clear (see, for example, Matt. 6: 9; 23: 17; John 10: 36; 1 Peter 3: 15; and 1 Cor. 7: 14).

Sanctification is not a synonym for sanctimoniousness. The scriptures know nothing of the latter but they contain many references to the former. God does not encourage sanctimoniousness in His saints for it emanates from the flesh alone.

Moreover, *sanctification is not "sinless perfection."* The Scriptures make it perfectly plain that, whereas the believer possesses the power within to enable him to overcome the flesh, the flesh in him ever "lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," so that the believer "may not do the things he would," whether such things be good or bad (Gal. 5: 17). This conflict continues throughout life.

Sometimes, *Sanctification denotes the act of setting apart for holiness*, and includes also full provision for following after it. True sanctification is always accompanied by holiness, and the Greek word is sometimes translated as 'holiness.'

Sanctification sometimes denotes the position into which the believer is brought, or it may signify the responsibility which devolves upon him. The context of the passage in which the word

occurs must determine the particular sense in which it is used by the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Peter 1: 2, the *order of the steps* is indicated. The saints were 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God; then they were sanctified in the Spirit'; with the view of their 'obedience' to the gospel, as the result of which 'obedience' the 'blood of Jesus Christ' was 'sprinkled' upon them, thus rendering them clean. That is to say, God the Father, in a past eternity, foreknew the man who should be saved, and in accordance with that foreknowledge elected him. Pursuant to this election, the Spirit of God set him on one side, as it were, from the mass of mankind with the view of his hearing and believing the gospel. Upon his obeying the gospel the merits of the blood of Jesus Christ were imputed to him.

Paul refers to the same three steps (2 Thess. 2: 13). "God chose us from the beginning unto salvation, in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth . . . to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Sanctification is thus *an integral part of a process* in which each Person of the Godhead is engaged, the grand result of which is the eternal blessing of the believer.

The 'sanctification of the Spirit,' therefore, is a moral prerequisite, from one point of view, for the salvation of the believer.

It is also true that the *Lord Jesus is the 'Sanctifier.'* He and His people 'are all of one (Father), for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren' (Heb. 2: 11). His people were sanctified 'by His blood' which was shed outside the gate of Jerusalem (Heb. 13: 12). The Lord Jesus died there because it was His design to set apart His people from the 'Ichabod' system of Judaism which God had abandoned. By that means the saints were separated from religious evil.

According to Paul's statement to the Corinthians 'Christ is made unto us wisdom from God, both righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1 Cor. 1: 30). 'Righteousness' has to do with the past: guilt is cancelled. 'Sanctification' has to do with the present: holiness is to be pursued. Redemption envisages the future: liberty will be enjoyed. Saints are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus' (see 1 Cor. 1: 2; Acts 20: 32; and Heb. 10: 14). Their standing is one of holiness because of Him (1 Cor. 1: 30), and they have been 'washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God' (1 Cor. 6: 11). For that reason they are called 'saints.' To that position they were 'elect' or 'called' hence they are saints by 'calling.' That privileged position must take expression by their 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God' (2

Cor. 7: 1). Position must be accompanied by a corresponding condition: holiness in Christ must be evidenced by holiness in life.

Believers cannot, of course, perfect their position because it has already been made perfect (see Heb. 10: 14). Their position is one of deliverance from evil which has been judicially effected by the Lord Jesus. Believers must, however, perfect their deliverance from evil by practical separation therefrom and must 'cleans themselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit.'

It is this which is spoken of in Romans 6: 19. Formerly, those addressed had been in the habit of yielding their members unto uncleanness and to iniquity; but in view of their knowledge of the work of the Spirit and their appreciation of the work of Christ they are expected not to continue living in bondage to sin, but to devote their energies in the pursuit of holiness.

Such *practical sanctification* is effected by diligent application of the word of God on the part of the saints (John 17: 17). The Lord Jesus sets Himself aside for their sake now, whilst He is in heaven, in order that they may be 'sanctified in the truth,' that is, by the action of the word of God upon them. They cleanse their way by 'taking heed to that word.' He Who loved the assembly and 'gave Himself for it' now sanctifies it, having cleansed it, through the washing of the water in the word (Eph. 5: 26). By this means the Father keeps them from the evil that is in the world (John 17: 15). "Sanctification" may therefore signify holiness, for holiness is the setting apart from all evil.

The believer is to "abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thess. 5: 22). There are numerous species of evil. One may appeal to the spirit; another to the soul; and another to the body. For this reason Paul prays that the 'God of Peace' Himself would '*sanctify wholly*' the saints at Thessalonica and that their "spirit, and soul and body might be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The 'wicked person' who assembled with the saints at Corinth had not kept his body under control: consequently he was made the subject of disciplinary action in order that the spirit might be saved in the day of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 5: 5). The believer is in a happy condition when his whole being is sanctified.

Sanctification is mentioned in the Scriptures *in three tenses*. 1 Cor. 1: 2 relates to the past; Eph. 5: 26 relates to the present; and 1 Thess. 5: 23 relates to the future. Sanctification may not only be viewed as a thing already perfected having been brought about "through faith that is in" Christ (Acts 26: 18), but also as a process

which is going on in the life of the believer, and also as that which will be brought to completion in the future.

A '*sanctified vessel*' is a believer who purges himself from all iniquity (lawlessness) and such complete purgation can be attained only by constant watchfulness. The Lord Jesus never ceases to do His work on behalf of the saints, and the saints should never cease to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. It is only those who are practically sanctified who are 'fit for the Master's use.'