

E.W. Bullinger's, HOW TO ENJOY THE BIBLE

PREFACE

It will add greatly to the interest of this work if I briefly describe the circumstances to which, under God, it owes its origin. Nothing will so clearly show its aim and object, or so well explain its one great design as embodied in its title: *How to Enjoy the Bible*.

In the autumn of 1905 I found myself in one of the most important of the European Capitals. I had preached in the morning in the Embassy Chapel, and at the close of the service, my friend, His Britannic Majesty's Chaplain, expressed his deep regret at the absence of two member of his congregation, whose disappointment, he said, would be very great when they discovered they were away on the very Sunday that I was there.

As it was a matter which I could not possible alter I was compelled, perforce, to dismiss it from my mind with much regret, and returned to my hotel.

In the afternoon a visiting card was brought to my room, announcing a gentleman holding a high Government position.

In explaining the object of his visit he began by saying that he had been brought up as a Roman Catholic; and that, a few years ago, there came into the office of his department a copy of *The Illustrated London News*. As he was learning English at the time, he was naturally interested in reading it. The number contained an account of the funeral of the late Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the illustrations of which attracted his attention. The letterpress made some reference to Mr. Spurgeon's sermons and the world-wide fame which they had obtained. This led him to procure some copies of the sermons, and these, by God's grace and blessing, were used for his conversion.

He was at the time thinking of marriage, and felt the importance now of finding a Christian lady for his wife. At the same time he began to attend my friend's English Services, and before long he found an English lady, residing at that time in ---, and in due course the engagement ended in marriage.

The lady, however, was, she told him, and "Anglican;" and saw no necessity for her future husband to make any formal recantation, but for private and public reasons advised him to make no change in his religion.

But grace had changed him so completely, that is was not a case, merely, of his holding the truth, but of the truth holding him: consequently he could not rest until he had renounced not only his former Roman Catholic religion, but all religion that had anything to do with the flesh; for he had found his all in Christ, and was satisfied with the completeness which God had given to him in HIM.

After their marriage they began to read together the sermons which had proved, under God, so great a blessing to himself; and, before long, the same happy result took place in his wife's case, and they rejoiced together in the Lord.

They soon however began to find that they had much to learn. Reading the sermons and the Word of God they felt that there were many subjects in the Bible which they found little of in the sermons. True, they found the same sound doctrines and useful teaching, and spiritual food; but, they found also the absence of other truths which they longed to know.

They spoke to my friend their minister, and told him of their trouble. He lent them my book on *The Church Epistles*. This book they began to study together, and as the husband told me, "we went over it, three times, word by word." This they did to their great edification. "But," he said, "we soon discovered that *you* did not "tell us everything, and there were many things which you assumed that we knew; and these we naturally

wished to learn more about. So, a few weeks ago, we resolved to take our holiday in London; find you out; and talk over with you the things which filled our hearts.”

“In due course we went to London; ascertained your address on inquiry at the office of *The Christian*, and made our call. We found, to our disappointment, that you were here, in the very place from which we had set out to seek you.”

“So we returned here at once, and arrived only last night, but were too tired to get from our suburb to the service this morning.”

Not till that moment did I discover that these were the same two persons to whom my friend the chaplain had referred when he spoke of his regret at their absence from the service that morning, and of the disappointment which he was sure they would experience.

“I have lost no time in searching you out (he said), and am delighted to find you. You must come out to us and see us in our home tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow (I replied) I am going to P---.”

“Oh, you cannot go,” he said; and in such a tone of voice and manner as made me really feel I could not.

I said, “I am not traveling alone, but my friend is standing near in conversation; I will go and speak to him on the subject.”

We soon concluded that as our proposed journey was only for pleasure, it was clearly my duty to remain for a day, so we postponed our projected journey to another season. I returned to my new friend, and said we would gladly go out to him on the morrow.

At this he was very pleased; and spoke, now, freely, of the great desire of himself and his wife to know more of God’s Word.

“We want (he said) to study it together, and to be as independent as possible of the teaching and traditions of men. In fact,

WE WANT TO ENJOY THE BIBLE.

We want to read it, and study it, and understand it and enjoy it for ourselves!”

This, of course, sounded very sweetly in my ears; and it was arranged that he should come into the city, the next morning early, and fetch us out to his home in the suburbs.

He arrived soon after 8 o’clock, and by 9 o’clock we were sitting down together over the Word of God. There we sat till noon! In our preliminary conversation reference had been made to some work the lady had undertaken in the village. So we opened our Bibles at Matt. 10:5, 6, where I read the following words:—

“Go not into the way of the Gentiles ... but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

I did not know until a year afterwards that my friend naturally held the usual anti-Semite views of the governing party, or this would probably have been the last Scripture I should have quoted. But though, at the time, I little thought of what I was doing, God was over-ruling all to the accomplishment of His own purposes.

The lady, at once, very honestly exclaimed, “Oh, but I do go to the Gentiles.”

I replied, “But you see what this Scripture says.”

She said, "Is there not another passage which tells us to go into all the world?"

"Yes" (I replied); and, finding that passage, I asked, "What are we to do with the other?"

She confessed her perplexity and asked me to answer my own question.

I replied, "Both are the words of God, and both must be absolutely true. We cannot cut one passage out of the Bible and leave the other in. Both are equally true, and we may not use one truth to upset another truth."

I proceeded to explain, alluding to the universally acknowledged fact - that "circumstances alter cases."

The circumstances connected with the former passage showed that the Lord was sending forth the twelve to *proclaim the King, and the Kingdom at hand*: while those of the latter showed that the Proclamation had been unheeded; the Kingdom rejected, and the King crucified. And I asked "Were not the circumstances so different in character and time as to fully account for the fact that the former command was no longer appropriate to the changed conditions?"

I pointed out that there was a precept which specially set forth our responsibility to the Bible as being "the Word of Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), and that was that it must be *rightly divided*. This command to rightly divide, being given us in connection with this special title "the Word of truth," spoke to us, if we had ears to hear, and told us that unless we rightly divided the Word of Truth we should not only not get the truth; but, as God's workmen we should indeed have need to be "ashamed."

I showed that, if we would indeed *enjoy the Bible* it was absolutely necessary that we should rightly divide all that it contained, in connection with its subject matter, as well as in connection with its times and dispensations.

In illustration of this important duty I pointed to such passages as Luke 9:2, 3, compared with chap. 22:36, where the words "BUT NOW" gave the Lord's own example; showing how He distinguished the difference between the two occasions.

I also referred to Rom. 11. And showed how, by "rightly dividing" the subject-matter, the great difficulty was avoided of supposing that those who were assured in Rom. 8:39 as to the impossibility of their separation from the love of God, could ever be addressed in chap. 11:21, 22 in words of threatening and warning lest they "be cut off." The key to the solution of the difficulty was in chap. 11:13, where the Apostle distinctly states that he was addressing "Gentiles," as such, and of course as distinct from the Jews, and, the Church of God:

"I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES."

I also illustrated the subject by a reference to Heb. 6:4—6; and 10:26—30. But, as these and other passages are all dealt with at length in the following pages I need not do more now than refer my readers to them.

Our conversation continued (as I have said) till noon; and, as it proceeded, my friends could hardly contain themselves for joy. As for myself I began to see in what form I should respond to my friend's desire to "enjoy the Bible."

On my journey home to England I thought much, and long, and often, of my pleasant intercourse with my new friends: and I was impressed by the thought that *what they needed, thousands needed*: and that the vast majority of Bible readers who were filled with the same deep desire to "enjoy the Bible" were beset by the same difficulties in attaining that desire.

Shortly after my return to England my thoughts began to take shape, and finally resolved themselves into what now appears in the "Table of Contents," and which in the following September I had the great joy of going over with my new friends.

I visited them again in their home this September (1907), and had the pleasure of reading over with them the proof of this "Preface," so that it might faithfully record all that had so happily taken place.

This explanation of the origin of this work will show that no better title could be chosen, or would so well describe its object, and explain its end. My prayer is that, the same Spirit who inspired the words in the Scriptures of Truth, may also inspire them in the hearts of my readers and may cause each to say (with David), "I rejoice in Thy words as one that findeth great spoils" (Ps. 119:162): and to exclaim (with Jeremiah), "Thy words were found and I did eat them, and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16.)

It was this combination of the "WORD" and the "WORDS," both here and in John 17:8, 17, that suggested the sub-title: *"The Word and the words; how to study them."*

Part I. Deals with the "Word" as a whole. Part II. Deals with the "words;" and, under twelve cannon, gives the important methods which must be observed and followed if we would understand, and enjoy them. A varying number of illustrations is given under each division; these are by no means exhaustive; and are intended only as a guide to further study.

This work should be gone carefully through, with Bible in hand, in order to verify the statements put forward, and to enter on the margins of the Bible notes for future use.

This may be done individually; but, better still, in small classes meeting for the purpose, when each point could be made clearer and more profitable by mutual study and conversation.

With the hope that this course will be adopted by its many readers in many countries and climes, this work is at length sent forth.

My thanks are due to all those who, on hearing of its projection, volunteered their financial help to ensure its publication: and, above all, to "the God of all grace," and "the spirit of wisdom and understanding" for bringing it to a happy issue.

ETHELBERT W. BULLINGER.

INTRODUCTION

"Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Jehovah doth man live." — Deut. 8:3.

Thus is it asserted that the WORD and the WORDS of Jehovah constitute the food of the New nature.

As in the natural sphere so in the spiritual, the desire (or appetite) for the food which is the proper support of each respectively, is the sign of natural and spiritual health.

Attention to *diet* is becoming more and more recognized as essential to nutrition and growth.

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

The Root of all the evils which abound in the spiritual sphere at the present day lies in the fact that the Word and the words of God are not fed upon, digested, and assimilated, as they ought to be.

If we ask the question, Why is this the case? the answer is, The Bible is not enjoyed *because the Bible is not understood*. The methods and rules by which alone such an understanding may be gained are not known or followed; hence the Bible is a neglected book.

The question Philip addressed to the Eunuch (Acts 8:30, 31) is still greatly needed:

Understandest thou what thou readest?

An the Eunuch's answer is only too true today:

How can I, except some man should guide me?

The following pages are written with the object of furnishing this "guide." Certain canons or principles are laid down, and each is illustrated by applying them to certain passages by way of examples. These are intended to be taken only as examples; and the principles involved are intended to be used for the elucidation of other passages in the course of Bible study.

The Word of God is inexhaustible. It is, therefore, neither useful, nor indeed practicable to extend these examples beyond certain limits.

By the aid of these twelve simple canons or rules, other passages and subjects may be taken up and pursued both with pleasure and profit - subjects which are even yet matters of controversy and of conflict.

We have to remember that the Bible is not a book of pure Science on the one hand, nor is it a book of Theology on the other. Yet all its science is not only true, but its statements are the foundation of all true science.

And, it is Theology itself; for it contains all that we can ever know about God.

The cloud that now rests over its intelligent study arises from the fact that it is with us today as with the Jews of old — "The Word of God has been made of none effect by the traditions of men" (Matt. 15:1—9).

Hence it is that on some of the most important questions, especially such as Biblical Psychology, we are, still, in what the great Lord Bacon calls "a desert." He alludes to those "deserts" in history, where discovery or research comes to a stand-still, and we get schoolmen instead of philosophers; and clerics instead of discoverers.

The Reformation came as an oasis after one of these deserts. Men were sent from the stagnant pools of tradition to the fountain-head of truth. But within two or three generations the Church entered the desert again; Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms took the place of the open Bible; the inductive method of Bible study was abandoned, and today it is scarcely understood.

One party abides by "Catholic consent" or the "Voice of the Church." Other parties in the same way abide by the dicta of some who had stronger minds. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Darby, and Newton would be surprised today to find that those who question what they believed are treated as guilty of presumption, and of a sin to be visited with excommunication!

These good men little thought that the inferences which they drew from the Bible would be raised to a position of almost equality with the Bible itself.

The result of all this is too painfully evident. Controversies, bitterness, strife's have been engendered. These have taken the place of simple Bible study. If studied at all it has been too much with the view of finding

support for one or other of the two sides of these controversies, instead of with the object of discovering what God has really revealed and written for our learning.

Failing to understand the Scriptures we cease to feed on them; then as a natural consequence and in inverse proportion, we lean on and submit to “the doctrines of men,” and finally reach a theological desert.

Bishop Butler has pointed out the way back to the land of plenty and of delight. He has shown that the only way to study the Word of God is the way in which physical science is studied. He says: ¹ “As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood, so if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interposition’s, *it must be in the same way* as natural knowledge is come at, by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, and which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world.”

On this another writer ² has remarked, “Thus, the way of discovery still lies open to us in Divine things if we have only the moral courage to go to the fountain-head of truth, instead of filling our vessel out of this or that doctor’s compendium of truth ... Were Bishop Butler’s method of inductive research into Scripture more common than it is we should not have stood still so long, as if spell-bound by the shadow of a few great names. ‘It is not at all incredible,’ Bishop Butler adds, ‘that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.’ Such a saying is worthy of Butler. It is only a philosopher who can allow for time and prescription. The majority of mankind think that they think; they acquiesce, and suppose that they argue; they flatter themselves that they are holding their own. So it always was, and so it will ever be. The Divine things of the Word are no exception, but rather an instance. The more difficult the subject, and the more serious the consequences of error, the more averse the majority are to what is called ‘unsettling men’s minds’; as if truth could be held on any other tenure than the knight’s fee of holding its own against all comers. Protestantism has brought us no relief against this torpid state of mind, for, as the error is as deep as the nature of man, we cannot expect any deliverance from it so long as the nature of man continues the same, and his natural love of truth almost as depraved as his natural love of holiness.”

But the way of discovery, as Bishop Butler has pointed out, still lies open before us; and it is our object in this work to enter on that way, and study the Bible *from within* and not merely from without.

We believe that only thus we shall be furnishing just that help which Bible students need.

It may be the work of others to explore Geography, History, Natural History, Chronology; the antiquities of Assyria, Palestine, Egypt, and Babylon; all these are legitimate subjects of systematic research, which cannot but help us in understanding more of the Word of God.

But our object is to “Open the book;” to let it speak; to hear its voice; to study it *from within itself*; and have regard to other objects and subjects, only from what it teaches about them.

The method of the “Higher” criticism is to discredit a Book, or a passage on *internal evidence*. Our method is to establish and accredit Holy Scripture on internal evidence also, and thus to derive and provide, from its own pharmacopoeia, an antidote to that subtle and malignant poison.

This method of study will reveal more convincing and “infallible proof” of inspiration than can be adduced from all the reasoning and arguments of men.

Like Ezra of old, our desire is to

¹ *Analogy*, Part II., ch. 3.

² Rev. J.H.B. Heard, M.A., *Tripartite Nature of Man*, p. 358.

“OPEN THE BOOK”

and let it speak for itself, with the full conviction that if this can be done it can speak more loudly, and more effectively for itself, than any man can speak on its behalf.

May the Lord deign to use these pages and make them to be that “guide” to a better understanding and a greater enjoyment of His own Word.

E. W. B.

HOW TO ENJOY THE BIBLE: A Guide to Better Understanding and Greater Enjoyment of God’s Word

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

A Revelation in writing must necessarily be given in “words.” The separate words, therefore, in which it is given must have the same importance and authority as the revelation as a whole. If we accept the Bible as a revelation from God, and receive it as inspired by God, we cannot separate the words of which that inspired revelation is made up, or admit the assertion “that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, but *is not* the Word of God.” The position conveyed by such an expression is both illogical and impossible.

As we design this work for those who accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, we do not propose to offer any arguments in proof of its inspiration.

The Bible is its own best proof of its inspiration. It claims to be “the Word of God;” and if it be not what it claims to be, then it is not only not a “good book,” but is unworthy of our further attention.

We cannot understand the position of those who assert and believe that many of its parts are myths and forgeries, while at the same time they continue to write commentaries upon it, and accept their emoluments and dignities for preaching or lecturing about it.

If we were told and believed that a bank-note in our possession is a forgery, we certainly should take no further interest in it, beyond mourning the loss which we had sustained: Our action would thus be consistent with our belief.

We write, therefore, for those who, receiving the claims of the Scriptures as being the Word of God, desire to study it so as to understand it and enjoy it.

When this claim is admitted, and a course of study is undertaken in this spirit, we shall be at once overwhelmed with proofs as to its truth; and on almost every page find abundant confirmation of our faith.

The Bible simply claims to be the Word of God. It does not attempt to establish its claim, or seek to prove it. It merely assumes it and asserts it. It is for us to believe it or to leave it.

Hence we do not now attempt to prove or establish that claim; but, believing it, our aim is to seek to understand what God has thus written for our learning.

Nor do we attempt to explain the phenomena connected with Inspiration. We have no theories to offer, or suggestions to make, respecting it.

We have the Divine explanation in Acts 3:18, where we read:

“Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets ... he hath so fulfilled.”

The particular “things” referred to here are “that Christ should suffer;” but the assertion is comprehensive and includes all other things “showed” by God.

Note, that it was God who, before, had showed them. It was the same God who had fulfilled them. The “mouth” was the mouth of “all His prophets,” but they were not the prophets’ words. They were the words of God.

Hence, concerning other words, it is written:

“This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas” (Acts 1:16).

It was David’s “mouth,” and David’s pen, David’s vocal organs, and David’s hand; but they were *not David’s words*. They were the words “which the Holy Ghost spake before concerning Judas.” David knew nothing about Judas, David could not possibly have spoken anything about Judas. David’s “mouth” spake concerning Ahithophel; but they were the words “which the Holy Ghost spake concerning Judas.”

David was “a prophet:” and, being a prophet, he “spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Hence, in Psalm 16, he spake concerning the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:30, 31). In the same way he “spake before concerning Judas.”

In like manner, in the Book of Exodus Moses wrote about the Tabernacle, but he himself did not and could not know what “the Holy Ghost signified” (Heb. 9:8).

Here, then, we have all that God condescends to tell us about the phenomena of inspiration.

This is the Divine explanation of it; and this is all that can be known about it.

It is not for us to explain this explanation, but to receive it and believe it; and there leave it. It is enough for us that God speaks to us; and that He says “Thus saith Jehovah.” We do not question the fact; we believe it; and only seek to understand it.

We desire to be in the position of those Thessalonian saints who, in this, “were ensamples to all that believe,” and to whom it was written: “For this cause thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe” (1 Thess. 2:13).

The Word of God is thus for those “that believe.” The “*Word*” as a whole; and the “*words*” of which it is made up. They cannot be separated.

It is Jeremiah who says (Jer. 15:16):

“THY WORDS were found,³ and I did eat them;
And THY WORD was unto me the joy and rejoicing of joy heart:
For I am called by Thy name, O Jehovah Elohim of hosts.”

Here again, it is those who are called by Jehovah's name who feed upon His “words,” and rejoice in His “Word.”

³ (*mātzā'*), to discover. Gen. 2:20. Here referring to the historic fact (2 Kings 22:8. 2 Chron. 34:14, 15) of the finding the book of the Law by Hilkiah in the reign of Josiah.

The same distinction is made in the New Testament by the Lord Jesus in John 17:

“I have given unto them the WORDS which thou gavest me” (v. 8).

“I have given them thy WORD” (v. 14).

Those who are referred to in the word “them” are described seven times over, as having been “*given*” to Christ by the Father.⁴

These had “received” the words; these had “known surely;” these had “believed” (v. 8).

It is for such as these we now write, who receive, believe, read, and desire to feed upon the “*words*” of God; that the “word” of God may become “a joy, and the rejoicing” of the heart (Jer. 15:16, R.V.).

True, this joy within will be tempered by trouble without. Jeremiah prefaces the statement, quoted above, with the words immediately preceding it in verse 15:

“For Thy sake I have suffered rebuke.”⁵

And the Lord Jesus after saying (John 17:14):

“I have given them Thy WORD”

immediately adds,

“And the world hath hated them.”

Those who thus feed upon and rejoice in God’s Word will soon realize their isolated position; but, in spite of the “reproach” and “hatred” of the world, there will always be the “joy and rejoicing” of the heart.

It was so on another occasion when the neglected Word of God was brought forth,

“AND EZRA OPENED THE BOOK,”

the people were assured that “the joy of the LORD was their strength” (Neh. 8:5, 10, 12, 17). And we are told:

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (v. 8).

It must be the same with us if that “Word” and those “words” are to be the cause of our joy and rejoicing. And this is our object in writing now. We do not write for casual readers, or for those who read a daily portion of the Word merely as the performance of a duty and as a matter of form, but for those who “search the Scriptures,” and who seek, in them, for Him of whom the Scriptures testify (John 5:39).

Such a one was the eunuch who went up to Jerusalem from Ethiopia in Acts 8. He sought the Saviour, but he did not find Him in Jerusalem. He found “religion” there, and plenty of it; but he did not find that Blessed One; for He had been rejected, “crucified, and slain.” So the eunuch was returning, and was still seeking for the *Living Word* in the *Written Word*; “and, sitting in his chariot, read Isaiah the prophet.”

Being directed by the Divine Angel-messenger, Philip “ran thither to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said

⁴ See verses 2, 6, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24.

⁵ (*cherpāh*), *reproach*; and so nearly always rendered.

UNDERSTANDEST THOU WHAT THOU READEST?

And he said:

“How can I except some man should guide me?”

“And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him” (Acts 8:27—31).

Philip's question (v. 30) implies (in the Greek) a doubt on Philip's part as to whether the eunuch did really understand. And the eunuch's reply (v. 31) implies a negative answer. It begins with the word “for,” which is not translated either in the A.V. or R.V. If we supply the ellipsis of the negative which is so clearly implied we can then translate the word (*gar*), *for*; thus;

“[No]: for how should I be able unless some one should guide me.”

Of course, the Holy Spirit Himself is THE guide and teacher of His own Word. But sometimes, as in this case, He sends a messenger, and uses human instruments and agencies.

The word to guide is (*hodêgeô*), *to lead or guide in the way*.⁶ It is this guidance which the ordinary reader stands in need of today; and never more than today, when so many would-be guides are “blind leaders of the blind.” On all hands there are so many attractions to draw readers out of “the way” altogether; and so many “good” books and “helps” to lead them astray.

We cannot pretend to be a Philip, or to have his special commission. But, without assuming to teach others on such an important subject we may at least tell them what lines of study we have ourselves found helpful; and what principles we have found useful in our own searching's of God's Word.

But these will be useless unless we are first prepared to unlearn.

If any think they know all, or that they have exhausted the Divine Word; or that what they set out to learn is only to be in addition to what they already know, instead of sometimes in substitution for it, then we shall be of little service to them: and they need not follow us any further.

When we come to ask ourselves, and say, “Where did I learn this?” “How did I get this?” “Who taught me this?” It is astonishing to find how much we have imbibed from man, and from tradition; and not directly and for ourselves, from the Word of God.

All that we have learned from our youth up must be tested and proved by the Word of God. Where we find it is true we must learn it over again, from God. And where it will not stand the test of His Word we must be not only content, but thankful to give it up; and receive Divine revelation in the place of man's imagination.

With these introductory remarks we shall proceed to divide what we may call our essential and fundamental principles of Bible study into two parts:

First: those connected with THE “WORD” as a whole; and

Second: those connected with THE “WORDS” of which the Word is composed.

⁶ From (*hodos*), *a way*; and (*hegeomai*), *to lead*. It occurs only in Matt. 15:14. Luke 6:39. John 16:13. Acts 8:31. and Rev. 7:17. It is used both in its literal or proper sense (Exod. 13:17; 32:34. Num. 24:8; Deut. 1: 33); and in a Tropical sense (Ps. 5:8; 23:3; 25:5, 9; 77:20, etc.).

Part I: THE WORD

I. THE ONE GREAT OBJECT OF THE WORD

The first great and essential principle which must be ever present with us, when we study the Word of God, as a whole, is not to treat it as something which we have to interpret, but as being *that which God has given in order to interpret Himself and His will to us.*

i. This applies to Christ; as the Living Word.

When we speak of the “Word” we can never separate the *Living Word*, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the *written word*, the Scriptures of Truth.

Each of these is called the “Word,” because the Greek word *Logos* is used of both.

Logos means the spoken or written word, because it makes manifest, and reveals to us the invisible thoughts.

It is used of Christ, the Living Word, because He reveals the invisible God. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, He being in the bosom of the Father, This one [hath] declared [Him]” (John 1:18).

It is not that we have to explain Christ, but that His mission is to explain God to us. He interprets the Father. And we have to believe Him.

The word “declare” in John 1:18 is important in this connection, and deeply interesting. It is from (*ek*), *out of, or forth*, and (*hêgeomia*), *to lead*. Hence the whole compound verb means *to lead forth, to make known, to guide, interpret, unfold, reveal, and expound* (Luke 24:35).⁷ It is from this verb that we have the cognate noun *Exegesis* which means *Exposition*. Wycliffe renders it “He hath told out.” The best meaning is *to make known*.

This is why Christ is called “The word o God,” because He makes known, reveals, and explains the Father.

This is why the Scriptures are called “the Word of God,” because they make known the Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit, the author of the Word.

Christ is “the Way” to the Father (John 14). He makes God known to us in all His attributes, will, and words. “I have given them Thy Word.” It is always “THY Word” (John 17:8, 14, 17).

ii. In like manner the Written Word, the Scripture, is given in order to interpret, and to testify of Christ; and this is why (as we shall see as our next essential principle) Christ is the one great subject of the Word.

This is why the Holy Spirit is the interpreter of both. His mission is to glorify Christ (John 16:14). He receives and shows the “things of Christ” (John 14:26). But He shows them in the written Word (1 Cor. 2:9—14). And this is why it must be He and He alone who enables us to preach that Word.

Thus we have the Word in three manifestations: —

The Incarnate Word,
The Written Word,
The Preached Word.

⁷ The word occurs only in Luke 24:35. John 1:18. Acts 10:8; 15:12, 14; 21:19.

There is no other. Christ reveals the Father. The Scripture reveals Christ. The Spirit reveals both in the written and in the preached Word (1 Cor. 12:7, 8).

How wonderfully does this magnify the preached Word; and show the solemnity of the charge in 2 Tim. 4:2, "Preach the Word."

It shows how small and worthless are all the schemes, tricks and contrivances of present-day evangelists and mission preachers with their ever-new fashions and modern methods, when we see what a high and dignified place God has given to the Preached Word.

How careful should we be that nothing in our manner or matter should lower that dignity, or imply in the slightest degree that the Written Word has lost any of its power; or needs any handmaids or helpmates.

"I HAVE GIVEN THEM THY WORD"

is the all-sufficient assurance of the Lord Jesus Christ, speaking to the Father. He did not say I have given them Aids to devotion. He did not say I have given them a Hymn-book, or I have given them thy Word AND something else.

He did not give anything instead of, or in addition to, that Word.

And that being so, we are assured that the Word which He gave is all-sufficient, in itself, to accomplish all the purposes of God.

The Word that is preached makes known the Written Word; the Word that is written makes known Christ the Living Word; and Christ makes known God our Father.

iii. Hence it is, that the same things are stated of both the Living and the Written Word, as it is well put by Joseph Hart: —

The Scriptures and the Word
Bear one tremendous name,
The Living and the Written Word
In all things are the same.

This may be seen by noting carefully, in our reading, how precisely the same things are predicated of both one and the other.

We give a few by way of example:—

SIMILAR PREDICATES OF "CHRIST" AND "THE SCRIPTURES."

"His name is called THE WORD OF GOD"	Rev. 19:13.
They "pressed upon Him to hear THE WORD OF GOD"	Luke 5: 1.
The <i>Prince</i> of PEACE	Isa. 9:6.
The <i>Gospel</i> of PEACE	Rom.10:15.
<i>Jesus</i> said, ... "No man cometh unto the Father, but BY ME"	John 14:6.
"Make me to go in the PATH of Thy <i>Commandments</i> "	Ps. 119:35.
" <i>Jesus</i> saith unto him, I am THE WAY"	John 14:6.
"Teach me, O Lord, THE WAY of Thy <i>Statutes</i> "	Ps. 119:33.
"I am ... THE TRUTH"	John 14:6.
"Thy Word is TRUTH"	John 17:17.
<i>Christ</i> — "Full of grace and TRUTH"	John 1:14.
"All Thy <i>Commandments</i> are TRUTH"	Ps. 119:151.

“These things saith He ... that is TRUE”	Rev. 3:7.
“The <i>Judgments</i> of the Lord are TRUE”	Ps. 19:9.
“ <i>Jesus Christ</i> . This is the true God, and eternal LIFE”	1 John 5:20.
“Holding forth the <i>Word</i> of LIFE”	Phil. 2:16.
“A bone of Him shall not be broken”	John 19:36.
“The scripture cannot be broken”	John 10:35.
“I am the Living Bread ... if any man eat of <i>this Bread</i> he shall LIVE for ever”	John 6:51.
“Man shall not LIVE by bread alone, but by <i>every Word of God</i> ”	Luke 4:4.
“With <i>Thee</i> is the FOUNTAIN OF LIFE”	Ps. 36:9.
“Thy <i>Law</i> ... is a FOUNTAIN OF LIFE”	Prov. 13:14.
Jesus said, “I am the LIGHT of the World”	John 8:12.
David said, “Thy <i>Word</i> is a LIGHT unto my path”	Ps. 119:105.
“The <i>Life</i> was the LIGHT”	John 1:4.
“The <i>Law</i> is LIGHT”	Prov. 6:23.
“ <i>Thou</i> art my LAMP, O Lord”	2 Sa. 22:29.
“Thy <i>Word</i> is a Lamp unto my feet”	Ps. 119:105.
“I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of FIRE”	Zech. 2:5.
“Is not My <i>Word</i> like as a FIRE saith the Lord”	Jer. 23:29.
“The <i>Light of Israel</i> shall be for a FIRE”	Isa. 10:17.
“I will make <i>My Words</i> in thy month FIRE”	Jer. 5:14.
“To you which believe, <i>He</i> is PRECIOUS”	1 Peter 2:7.
“Exceeding great and PRECIOUS <i>Promises</i> ”	2 Peter 1:4.
“ <i>My beloved</i> is ... chiefest among ten THOUSAND”	Song 5:10.
“The <i>Law of Thy mouth</i> is better unto me than THOUSANDS of gold and silver”	Ps. 119:72.
“ <i>His Mouth</i> is most SWEET”	Song 5:16.
“HOW SWEET are <i>Thy Words</i> unto my taste”	Ps. 119:103.
“His <i>Name</i> shall be called WONDERFUL”	Isa. 9:6.
“ <i>Thy Testimonies</i> are WONDERFUL”	Ps. 119:129.
“ <i>Christ</i> , the Power of GOD”	1 Cor. 1:24.
“The <i>Gospel</i> is the POWER of GOD”	Rom. 1:16.
Lord, “ <i>Thou</i> art GOOD, and doest <i>Good</i> ”	Ps. 119:68.
“GOOD is <i>the Word of the Lord</i> ”	Isa. 39:8.
“Ye have known <i>Him</i> that is FROM THE BEGINNING”	1 John 2:13.
“Thy <i>Word</i> is true FROM THE BEGINNING”	Ps. 119:160.
“From Everlasting to EVERLASTING <i>Thou</i> art God”	Ps. 90:2.
“The righteousness of Thy <i>Testimonies</i> is EVERLASTING”	Ps. 119:144.

“Thy throne, O God, is FOR EVER AND EVER”	Heb. 1:8.
“Thy <i>Testimonies</i> , ... Thou hast founded them FOR EVER”	Ps. 119:152.
“The <i>Lord</i> shall ENDURE for ever”	Ps. 9:7.
“The <i>Word of the Lord</i> ENDURETH for ever”	1 Peter 1:25.
“Christ ABIDETH for ever”	John 12:34.
“The <i>Word of God</i> ... ABIDETH for ever”	1 Peter 1:23.
“Worship <i>Him</i> that LIVETH for ever”	Rev. 4:10.
“The <i>Word of God</i> LIVETH for ever”	1 Peter 1:23.
<i>Christ’s Kingdom</i> “shall STAND FOR EVER”	Dan. 2:44.
“The <i>Word of our God</i> shall STAND FOR EVER”	Isa. 40:8.
The STONE ... “on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder”	Luke 20:18.
“Is not <i>my Word</i> ... saith the Lord, like a HAMMER that breaketh the rock in pieces?”	Jer. 23:29.
<i>Christ</i> , “A STUMBLING Stone”	Rom. 9:33.
They “STUMBLE at the <i>Word</i> ”	1 Peter 2:8.
“Lo, <i>I am</i> with you ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world”	Matt. 28:20.
“Thy <i>commandments</i> ... are EVER WITH ME”	Ps. 119:98.
“ <i>Christ</i> may DWELL in your hearts by faith”	Eph. 3:17.
“Let the <i>Word of Christ</i> DWELL in you richly”	Col. 3:16.
<i>Christ</i> said, “ABIDE in me, and I IN YOU”	John 15:4.
“If ... my <i>Words</i> ABIDE in you”	John 15:7.
“Hereby we know that he ABIDETH in us”	1 John 3:24.
“The <i>Word of God</i> ABIDETH in you”	1 John 2:14.
<i>Christ</i> called, “FAITHFUL and true”	Rev. 19:11.
“Thy <i>Testimonies</i> ... are very FAITHFUL”	Ps. 119:138.
“Out of <i>His mouth</i> goeth a sharp SWORD”	Rev. 19:15.
“ <i>The Word of God</i> ... is sharper than any two edged SWORD” Heb. 4:12. ⁸	
“The <i>Lord</i> TRIETH the Righteous”	Ps. 11:5.
“The <i>Word of the Lord</i> TRIED him”	Ps. 105:19.
<i>Christ</i> a “TRIED Stone”	Isa. 28:16.
“The <i>Word of the Lord</i> is TRIED”	Ps. 18:30.

SIMILAR EFFECTS ATTRIBUTED TO “CHRIST” AND “THE SCRIPTURES.”

We are “BORN OF <i>God</i> ”	1 John 5:18.
“BORN ... by the <i>Word of God</i> ”	1 Peter 1:23.

⁸ Heb. 4:12 probably refers to *both* the *Living Word* and the *written Word* also.

“BEGOTTEN ... by ... <i>Jesus Christ</i> ”	1 Peter 1:3.
“BEGOTTEN ... through <i>The Gospel</i> ”	1 Cor. 4:15.
“The <i>Son</i> QUICKENETH whom He will”	John 5:21.
“ <i>Thy Word</i> hath QUICKENED me”	Ps. 119:50.
“You hath <i>He</i> QUICKENED who were dead,” &c.	Eph. 2:1.
“ <i>Thy Precepts</i> ... with them thou hast QUICKENED me”	Ps. 119:93.
“He that <i>eateth</i> me, even he shall LIVE by me”	John 6:57.
“Desire the sincere milk of <i>The Word</i> , that ye may GROW thereby”	1 Peter 2:2.
“Christ hath made us FREE”	Gal. 5:1.
“The <i>Truth</i> , shall make you FREE”	John viii. 32.
“The <i>Blood</i> of Jesus Christ ... CLEANSETH us from all sin”	1 John 1:7.
“YE are CLEAN through the <i>Word</i> which I have spoken”	John 15:3.
<i>Christ</i> “is able also to SAVE them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him”	Heb. 7:25.
“Receive ... the engrafted <i>Word</i> , which is able to SAVE your souls”	James 1:21.
“SANCTIFIED in <i>Christ Jesus</i> ”	1 Cor. 1:2.
“SANCTIFIED by the <i>Word of God</i> and prayer”	1 Tim. 4:5.
“SANCTIFIED through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”	Heb. 10:10.
SANCTIFY them through THY TRUTH. Thy Word is truth”	John 17:17.
“ <i>Christ Jesus</i> , who of God is made unto us WISDOM”	1 Cor. 1:30.
“The <i>Holy Scriptures</i> ... able to make thee WISE unto salvation”	2 Tim. 3:15.
<i>Christ</i> “HEALED them”	Matt. 4:24.
“He sent His <i>Word</i> an HEALED them”	Ps. 107:20.
“Striving according to <i>His Working</i> which WORKETH in me mightily”	Col. 1:29.
“The <i>Word of God</i> which effectually WORKETH also in you that believe”	1 Thess. 2:13.
“The <i>Lord Jesus Christ</i> ... shall JUDGE the quick and the dead”	2 Tim. 4: 1.
“ <i>The Word</i> that I have spoken ... shall JUDGE him”	John 12:48.
“I will go unto <i>God</i> , my exceeding JOY”	Ps. 43:4.
“ <i>Thy Word</i> was unto me the JOY and rejoicing of my heart”	Jer. 15:16.

Thus we see that the Living Word and the Written Word cannot be separated. And we can understand also why they cannot be separated in the preaching of the Word.

To preach the Written Word without preaching Christ is not preaching at all. Neither is it done in the power of the Spirit.

When Paul went to Thessalonica, he (“as his manner was”) “reasoned with them out of the SCRIPTURES” (not as is done today, out of the newspapers, or out of the preacher’s own head or experience); but he did not end there. We are immediately told that this preaching consisted in “opening and setting forth that

CHRIST (the Living Word) must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ (the Messiah)” (Acts 17:1—3).

If the Living Word and the Written Word cannot be separated, we learn that in sitting down to the study of the Word and Words of God it is to hear His voice, to choose that “better part;” to sit at Jesus’ feet, and hear HIS word (Luke 10:39).

And it is only a “part.” The best is to come; when we shall “behold His glory” (John 17:24), the glory of our Ascended Lord; as the glory of our Incarnate Lord was beheld when on Earth (John 1:14). Then, in the future, as in the past (as now by the Holy Spirit), the wonderful “Word”—our Glorified Lord—will continue the blessed work which He began as our Risen Lord, “expounding in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself;” and will declare and make known the Father to the Saints, who shall then have been gathered together unto Him (2 Thess. 1:10; 2:1).

II. THE ONE GREAT SUBJECT OF THE WORD

i. CHRIST IN THE WORD AS A WHOLE.

The one great subject which runs through the whole Word of God is Christ: the promised seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15.

This verse marks the depth of the ruin into which man had descended in the Fall; and it becomes the foundation of the rest of the Bible.

All hope of restoration for man and for creation is centered in Christ; who in due time should be born into the world, should suffer and die; and, in resurrection, should become the Head of a new creation, and should finally crush the head of the Old Serpent, who had brought in all the ruin. Christ, therefore, the King, and the Kingdom which He should eventually set up, become the one great subject which occupies the whole of the Word of God.

Hence, He is the key to the Divine revelation in the Word; and apart from Him it cannot be understood.

The contents of the Bible must therefore be seen and arranged with reference to Him. The counsels and purposes of God are all centered in Christ.

1. *In the Old Testament* we have the King and the Kingdom in Promise and Prophecy, Illustration and Type.

2. *In the Four Gospels* we have the King and the Kingdom presented and proclaimed by John the Baptist, and by Christ Himself. And we see the Kingdom rejected, and the King crucified.

3. *In the Acts of the Apostles* we have the Transition from the Kingdom to the Church. The Kingdom is once again offered to Israel by Peter; again it is rejected, Stephen is stoned, and Peter imprisoned (ch. 12).

Then Paul, who had been already chosen and called (ch. 9), is commissioned for His Ministry (ch. 13), and on the final rejection of his testimony concerning the Kingdom, he pronounces for the third and last time the sentence of judicial blindness in Isaiah 6,⁹ and declares that “the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles” (Acts 28:25—28).

In his final communication to Hebrew believers it is written that while in God’s counsels all things had been put under Christ’s feet, “we see NOT YET all things put under Him” (Heb. 2:7—9).

The Kingdom thenceforth is in abeyance.

⁹ The other two citations of Isa. 6 were by our Lord, in Matt. 13:14, 15, and John 12:40.

4. *In the Epistles* we have the King exalted, and (while the Kingdom is in abeyance) made the Head over all things to the Church, during this present Interval; the Dispensation of the grace of God.

5. *In the Apocalypse* we have the Revelation of the King in judgment; and we see the Kingdom set up, the King enthroned in power and glory, the promise fulfilled, and prophecy ended.

We may exhibit the above to the eye in the following Structure:—¹⁰

The one Subject of the Word as a Whole.

A | The King and the Kingdom in Promise and Prophecy. (*The Old Testament.*)

B | The King presented, proclaimed, and rejected. The Mysteries (or Secrets) of the Kingdom revealed. Matt. 13:11, 34, 35. (*The Four Gospels.*)

C | Transitional (*The Acts*). The Kingdom again offered and rejected (*The earlier Pauline Epistles*).

B | The King exalted and made Head over all things to the Church, “which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22, 23). The Great Mystery revealed (*The later Pauline Epistles*). The Kingdom in abeyance (Heb. 2:8).

A | The King and the Kingdom unveiled. The King enthroned, and the Kingdom set up with Divine judgment, power, and glory (Rev. 19—20). Promise and prophecy fulfilled (*The Apocalypse*).

Here the correspondence is seen between these five members.

In A and A we have the King and the Kingdom.

In B and B we have the King and the mysteries (or secrets) of the Kingdom (Matt. 13).

In C, the central member, we have the present Interval, while the King is absent, the Holy Spirit present, and the Kingdom in abeyance, and the mystery of the Church revealed (Eph. 3).

It may be illustrated also by the diagram on the opposite page.

From the Structure, and from this illustration, it will be seen that the great subject of the whole Book is one. From Gen. 3:15 to Rev. 22 “THE COMING ONE” fills our vision.

This teaches us that the Coming of Christ is no newly invented subject of some modern faddists or fanatics, or cranks; but that Christ’s coming *has always been the Hope of his people*.

In “the fullness of time” He came: but having been rejected and slain He rose from the dead, and ascended to Heaven. There He is “seated” and “henceforth expecting until His enemies shall be placed as a footstool for His feet” (Heb. 10:13).

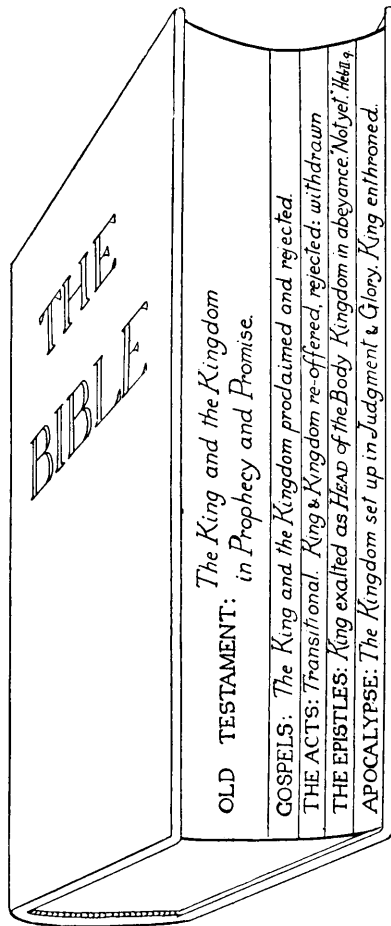
Hence, Christ, “the Coming One,” is the one all-pervading subject of the Word of God as a whole.

He is the *pneuma* or life-giving spirit of the written Word, without which the latter is dead. “As the body without the *pneuma* is dead” (Jas. 2:26), so the written Word without the *pneuma* is dead also. Christ is that *pneuma* or spirit. This is the whole argument of 2 Cor. 3.¹¹

¹⁰ See Part II., Canon II.

This is why the Lord Jesus could say of the Scriptures: “They testify of ME” (John 1:45; 5:39. Luke 24: 44, 45).

Their one great design is to tell of the Coming One. All else is subordinated to this. This is why we see the ordinary events in a household combining with the grandest visions of a prophet to testify of Him who fills all Scripture. It may be said of the written Word, as it is of the New Jerusalem, “The Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev. 21:23).



Apart from Him, the natural eye of man sees only outward historical details and circumstances; some in themselves appearing to him trifling, others offensive, and pursued at a length which seems disproportionate to the whole; while things which “angels desire to look into” are passed over in a few words, or in silence.

But once let “the spiritual mind” see Christ testified of “in Moses and all the prophets,” then all assumes a new aspect: trifles that seem hardly worth recording fill the whole vision and light up the written Word and make it to shine with the glory of the Divine presence.

Then we see why the Inspired writer dwells on a matter which to the outward eye seems trivial compared with other things which we may deem to be of world-wide importance.

¹¹ See *The Giver and His Gifts*, republished as *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*, by Kregel Publications, pp. 135-141.

Then we observe in an event, seemingly casual and unimportant, something which tells forth the plans and counsels of God, by which He is shaping everything to His own ends. Nothing appears to us then either great or small. All is seen to be Divine when the Coming One is recognized as the one subject of the Word of God.

This is the master-key of the Scriptures of truth.

“These are they that testify of ME.” Bearing this key in our hand we can unlock the precious treasures of the Word; and understand words, and hints; apparently casual expressions, circumstances, and events, which in themselves, and apart from Him, are meaningless.

It is the use of this master-key and this first great foundation principle which is to be observed in the study of the “Word” and “words” of God. It is when we, in every part, have found “HIM of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write” (John 1:45), that we can understand those parts of Scripture which are “a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense” to many; that we can explain much that is otherwise difficult; see clearly much that before was obscure; answer objections that are brought against the Word; and “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

The moment this master-key is used types will be seen foreshadowing the Coming King, and showing forth His sufferings and His Glory. Events and circumstances will show forth His wondrous deeds and tell of the coming glory of His kingdom.

ii CHRIST IN THE SEPARATE BOOKS OF THE WORD.

In GENESIS we shall understand the record of Creation (ch. 1), for we shall see in it the counterpart of our new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17).

In the light which shined out of darkness (Gen. 1:2, 3) we shall see the light which has shone “in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (or person) of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). No wonder that those who know nothing of this spiritual light of the New Creation know nothing of the light that was created on the first day as revealed in the record of the old creation.¹² The natural man sees only a myth and an old wives’ fable in the Creation record, and seems actually to prefer the Babylonian corruption of primitive truth. These “other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17, 18). Woe be to those who follow these blind leaders, for “they shall both fall into the ditch” they have prepared for themselves by their fleshly knowledge and worldly wisdom.

In the Creator we shall see Christ (John 1:3. Col. 1:16).

In the first Adam we shall see the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45. Rom. 5:14). In the first man we shall see “the second man, the Lord, from heaven” (1 Cor. 15:47).

In the “seed of the woman” (Gen. 3:15) we shall see the coming son of Abraham, the son of David, the Son of man, the Son of God; while those who are in the black darkness of Rome see either a helpless Infant, or a dead man, and a living woman—the Virgin Mary; having corrupted their Authorized Vulgate Version (in Gen. 3:15),¹³ to make it the foundation of this blasphemy.

¹² Though the recent discovery of *Radium* is beginning to open our eyes and show how light can exist without the sun.

¹³ Where the Hebrew masculine is misrepresented as feminine, and is thus made, as Dr. Pusey has said, the foundation of Mariolatry, and the basis of the Immaculate Conception.

In Abraham's shield we shall see the Living Word, coming, speaking, and revealing Himself to him (ch. 15:1: John 8:56).

In Isaac we shall see Christ the true seed of Abraham (Rom. 9:7. Gal. 3:16). In the Annunciation to the Mother (Gen. 18:10. Luke 1:30—33), the miraculous conception (Gen. 18:14. Luke 1:35) and the pre-natal naming (Gen. 17:19. Matt. 1:21. Luke 1:31; 2:21). In the projected death of the one we see the foreshadowing of the other, two thousand years before, and on the same mountain, Moriah; and this Mount, selected not by chance, or for convenience (for it was three days' journey), but appointed in the Divine counsels as the site of the future altar of burnt offering (Gen. 22:2. 1 Chron. 21:28—22: 1. 2 Chron. 3:1). In the *wood* laid upon Isaac (Gen. 22:6), and not carried by the servants or on the ass, we shall see Him who was led forth bearing His Cross (John 19:17).

In Joseph, of whom the question was asked, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us?" we see Him of whom His brethren afterwards said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). But we see the sufferings of the one followed by the glory, as we shall surely see the glory of the true Joseph following His sufferings in the fullness of time (1 Pet. 1:11), of which glory we shall be the witnesses, and partakers (1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1).

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

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

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

Joseph's sufferings began with his rejection, his own brethren asking, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" (Gen. 37:8). Moses's sufferings began with his rejection and the question of "two men of the Hebrews,"—"Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" (Exod. 2:14). In all this we see the rejection of Christ by a similar question, the thought of their hearts being put into their lips, in the parable, where "his citizens hated Him and sent a message after Him saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us' " (Luke 19:14).

But the issue in all three cases is the same. Of each it is true, as it is said of Moses, "This Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made thee a ruler and a deliverer?' The same did God send to be a ruler and a judge by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35).

Even so will God surely "send Jesus Christ ... whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20, 21).

Thus early, in Genesis and Exodus, we have the great subject of the sufferings and the glory of Christ more than foreshadowed (1 Pet. 1:11; 4:13; 5:1. Luke 24:26).

Exodus tells us also of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb (1 Cor. 5:7, 8); as the true Priest (Exod. 30:10. Heb. 5:4, 5); and the true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not men (Heb. 9).

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

NUMBERS foreshadows the Son of Man come to be “lifted up” (ch. 21:9. John 3:14, 15); the Rock (ch. 20:11. 1 Cor. 10:4); the Manna that fed them (ch. 11:7—9. Deut. 8:2, 3. John 6:57, 58); and the future Star that should arise “out of Jacob” (ch. 24:17. Luke 1:78. 2 Pet. 1:19. Rev. 2:28; 22:16).

DEUTERONOMY reveals the coming Prophet “like unto Moses” (ch. 18:15. Acts 7:23—26); the Rock and Refuge of His people (chs. 32:4; 33:27).

JOSHUA tells of “the Captain of the Lord’s host” (ch. 5:13—15. Heb. 2:10; 12:2) who shall triumph over all His foes; while Rahab’s scarlet cord (ch. 2:12—20) tells of His sufferings and precious blood which will shelter and preserve His people in the coming day of His war.

JUDGES tells of the Covenant Angel whose name is “Secret,” *i.e.* “Wonderful” (ch. 13:18, margin; compare Isa. 9:6, where the word is the same).

RUTH reveals the type of our Kinsman-Redeemer, the true Boaz; and the question of ch. 2:10 is answered in Prov. 11:15.

SAMUEL reveals the “sufferings” and rejection of David, who became a “Saviour” and a “Captain” of his followers (1 Sam. 22:1, 2), foreshadowing David’s Son and David’s Lord, “the Root and the Offspring of David” (Rev. 22:16).

KINGS shows us the “glory which should follow,” and the “greater than Solomon” (Matt. 12:42); the “greater than the Temple” (Matt. 12:6), where everything speaks of His glory (Ps. 29:9 and margin).

CHRONICLES reveals Christ as “the King’s Son,” rescued “from among the dead,” hidden in the House of God, to be manifested in due time, “as Jehovah hath said” (2 Chron. 22:10—23:3).

EZRA speaks of “a nail in a sure place” (ch. 9:8), which according to Isa. 22:23 is used of Eliakim, who typifies Christ.

NEHEMIAH tells of the “bread from Heaven” and “water out of the Rock” (ch. 9:15, 20), which are elsewhere used as typical of Christ (John 6:57, 58. 1 Cor. 10:4).

ESTHER sees the seed preserved which should in the fullness of time be born into the world. His name is there, though concealed,¹⁴ but His will and power is manifested in defeating all enemies in spite of the unalterable law of the Medes and Persians.

JOB reveals Him as his “Daysman” or “Mediator” (ch. 9:33); and as his “Redeemer” coming again to the earth (ch. 19:25—27).

THE PSALMS are full of Christ. We see His humiliation and sufferings and death (Ps. 22), His Resurrection (Ps. 16), His anointing as Prophet with grace-filled lips (Ps. 45. Luke 4:22); as Priest after the order of Melchisedec (Ps. 110. Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21); as King enthroned over all (Ps. 2), and His kingdom established in the earth (Ps. 103:145:, &c.).

PROVERBS reveals Christ as the “Wisdom of God” (ch. 8. 1 Cor. 1:24); the “Path” and “Light” of His People (ch. 4:18); the “Surety” who smarted for His people while strangers (ch. 11:15. Rom. 5:8—10. Eph. 2:12. 1 Pet. 2:11); the “strong tower” into which the righteous run and are safe (ch. 18:10); the friend who loveth at all times, and the brother born for adversity (ch. 17:17).

ECCLESIASTES tells of the “one among a thousand” in the midst of all that is vanity and vexation of spirit (ch. 7:28).

¹⁴ See *The Name of Jehovah in the Book of Esther*, in *Four Acrostics*, by the same author.

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

ISAIAH is full of the sufferings and glories of Christ. He is the “despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (ch. 53:5); wounded for our transgressions, oppressed, afflicted, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter; cut off out of the land of the living (ch. 53:2—9). Yet the glory shall follow. “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied” (ch. 53:11). He will be His people’s “Light” (ch. 60:1, 2. Matt. 4:16); “The Mighty God” (ch. 9:6. Matt. 28:18); Salvation’s Well (ch. 12:3); the King who shall “reign in righteousness” (ch. 32:1, 2); Jehovah’s Branch, beautiful and glorious (ch. 4:2).

JEREMIAH tells of “the Righteous Branch,” and “Jehovah our Righteousness” (ch. 23:5, 6); of the “Righteous Branch” and King who shall reign and prosper (ch. 33:15).

EZEKIEL reveals Him as the true Shepherd (ch. 34:23), and as “the Prince” (ch. 37:25); the “plant of Renown” (ch. 34:29), and “Jehovah Shammah” (ch. 48:35).

DANIEL reveals Him as the “Stone” become the Head of the corner (ch. 2:34. Ps. 118:22. Isa. 8:14. 28:16. Matt. 21:42, 44. Acts 4:11. 1 Pet. 2:4, 6). Also as the Son of Man (ch. 7:13, 16); and “Messiah the Prince” (ch. 9:24).

He is HOSEA’S true David (3:5), the Son out of Egypt (11:1);

JOEL’S “God dwelling in Zion” (ch. 3:17);

AMOS’S Raiser of David’s Tabernacle (ch. 9:11; Acts 15:16, 17);

OBADIAH’S “Deliverer on Mount Zion” (v. 17);

JONAH’S “Salvation” (ch. 2:9); the “Sign” of Christ’s resurrection (Matt. 12:39—41);

MICAH’S “Breaker,” “King” and “Lord” (ch. 2:13; 5:2, 5);

NAHUM’S “Stronghold in Trouble” (ch. 1:7);

HABAKKUK’S “Joy” and “Confidence” (ch. 3:17, 18);

ZEPHANIAH’S “Mighty God in the midst of Zion” (ch. 3:17);

HAGGAI’S “Desire of all nations” (ch. 2:7);

ZECHARIAH’S Smitten Shepherd; The Man, Jehovah’s Fellow (ch. 13:7); Jehovah’s “Servant—the Branch” (ch. 3:8); “the Man whose name is the Branch” (ch. 6:12);

MALACHI’S “Messenger of the Covenant” (ch. 3:1); the Refiner of the Sons of Levi (ch. 3:3); “The Sun of Righteousness” (ch. 4:2).

Thus, the “Word” of God has one great subject.

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

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

Satan's first rebellion is implied between the first and second verses of the first chapter of Genesis, and his final rebellion is seen in Rev. 20:7—9. His doom is pronounced in Gen. 3:15, and is accomplished in Rev. 20:10.

We have the primal Creation, "the world that then was," in Gen. 1:1 (2 Pet. 3:6). "The Heavens and the Earth which are now" in Gen. 1:2, etc. (2 Pet. 3:7). And "The New Heavens and the new Earth" in Rev. 21:1 (2 Pet. 3:13).

We have "night" in Gen. 1:1; and see "no night there" in Rev. 22:5.

We have the "sea" in Gen. 1:10; and "no more sea" in Rev. 21:1.

We have the "sun and moon" in Gen. 1:16, 17; and "no need of the sun or the moon" in Rev. 21:23; 22:5.

We have the entrance of sorrow and suffering and death in Gen. 3:16, 17; and "no more death, neither sorrow nor crying" in Rev. 21:4.

We have the "curse" pronounced in Gen. iii. 17; and "no more curse" in Rev. 22:3.

We have banishment from Paradise and the Tree of Life in Gen. 3:22—24; and the welcome back and "right to it" in Rev. 22:2.

This will be sufficient¹⁵ to show the unity of the "Word" as a whole; and to stimulate Bible students to a further study of it on the line of this great fundamental principle.

III. THE ONE GREAT REQUIREMENT OF THE WORD: "RIGHTLY DIVIDING" IT

The one great requirement of the Word is grounded on the fact that it is "the Word of truth." And this fact is so stated as to imply that, unless the Word is thus rightly divided we shall not get "truth;" and that we shall get its truth only in proportion to the measure in which we divide it rightly.

The Requirement is thus stated in 2 Tim. 2:15: "*Give diligence to present thyself approved to God, a workman, having no cause to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

The word in question here is (*orthomounta*).¹⁶

As this word occurs in no Greek writer, or even elsewhere in the New Testament, we can get little or no help from outside, and are confined to Biblical usage.

It is used twice in the Septuagint for the Hebrew (*yâshar*), *to be right*, or *straight*. In Prov. 3:6; 11:5, the Hebrew is Piel (or *causative*), *to make right* (as in 2 Chron. 32:30. Prov. 15:21. Isa. 40:3; 45:2, 13).

But it is the Greek word that we have to do with here, in 2 Tim. 2:15; and we cannot get away from the fact that (*temnô*) means *to cut*; or, from the fact that we cannot cut without *dividing*. To *divide* belongs to the very nature of the act of *cutting*. Even as applied to *directing one's way*, it implies that we divide off one way from others—because we desire to follow the right way and avoid the wrong.

¹⁵ More instances will be found in *The Apocalypse; or, the Day of the Lord*, republished as *Commentary on Revelation*, by Kregel Publications, pp. 58, 59.

¹⁶ From (*orthos*), *right*, and (*temno*), *to cut*.

The only Biblical guide we have to the usage of the word is in Prov. 3:6:

“In all thy ways acknowledge him And he shall direct thy paths.”

In the margin the R.V. gives, “*make straight or plain*” as an alternative rendering for “direct.” But *our* ways can only be *made straight or plain* by God’s causing us to proceed on our way aright—*i.e.*, by avoiding all the ways that are wrong, and going in the one way that is right; in other words, the right way is divided off from all the wrong ways.

What else can the word mean in 2 Tim. 2:15?

It matters little what others have thought or said. We could fill a page with their names and their views, but we should learn but little and only become confused. The duties of Priests, Furriers, and Ploughmen have been referred to as indicating the correct meaning. But we need not leave the Biblical usage, which associates the word with *guidance in the right way*.

The scope of the verse plainly teaches that:

- (1) Our one great study is to seek GOD’S approval, and not man’s.
- (2) We are to show all diligence in pursuing this study.
- (3) As workmen, our aim is to have no cause to be ashamed of our work.
- (4) In order to gain God’s approval and avert our own shame we must rightly divide the word of truth.
- (5) To do this we must *direct our studies in the right way*.
- (6) This great requirement is associated with the Word in its special character as being the Word of truth; *i.e.*, “the TRUE Word.”

All this tells us that we shall not get the truth if we do not thus rightly divide it; and that we shall get the truth only in proportion to our “rightly dividing” it.

Other titles of the Word have their own special requirements. As “the engrafted Word” it must be *received with meekness* (Jas. 1:21). As “the Faithful Word” we must *hold it fast* (Tit. 1:9). As “the Word of life” we must *hold it forth* (Phil. 2:16).

But, because this is “the Word of truth,” its paths must be well noted, the sign-posts must be observed, the directions and guides which are in the Word itself must be followed.

We are to “give diligence” to this great Requirement of the Word just because it is “the Word of truth.”

It is true that there are many who altogether ignore this precept; and have no thought as to obeying this command in their study of the Word.

There are many who make light of our insistence on obedience to this precept.

On what ground, we ask, are we to treat such a important command as though it had never been given?

Why is not this command as binding on Bible students as any other command in the Word of God?

What motive can such have to blunt the point and dull the edge of this “Sword of the Spirit” in this matter?

Strange to say, those who would belittle our efforts in rendering due obedience to this command, are themselves obliged not only to accept its division into chapters, and verses, and punctuated sentences; but they go further, and adopt the division of its subject-matter which is made by the insertion of chapter-headings and running page-headings according to man's own ideas.

The only question is, Do they divide it rightly, or wrongly?

For example, in the English Bibles which our readers use, over Isaiah 29 we notice the running page-heading "*Judgment upon Jerusalem;*" and on the opposite page, over ch. 30 we notice the page-heading "*God's mercies to His church.*"

Again, over Isaiah 59 we note the chapter-heading "*The sins of the Jews;*" in the chapter-heading of ch. 60 we note "*The glory of the church.*" And this in spite of the declared fact that this book contains "the Vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw *concerning Judah and Jerusalem*" (ch. 1:1).¹⁷

Surely, this is dividing the Word. But the only question for us to ask is, whether it is divided "rightly" or wrongly.

In the consideration of this great and important requirement there are *four principal spheres* in which we are to give diligence so that we may follow the right ways which are so clearly cut and marked out for our studies.

We must rightly divide the Word of Truth:

- i. As to its Literary Form.
- ii. As to its Subject-matter.
- iii. As to its Times and Dispensations.
- iv. As to its Dispensational Truth and Teaching.

We will consider these in their order.

i. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD AS TO ITS LITERARY FORM.

The "Word" comes to us in our English Translation. But it comes with much that is human in its Literary Divisions; and it is far from being rightly divided.

1. *The Two Testaments.*

"THE WORD OF GOD" as a whole comes to us in two separate parts: one written, originally, in Hebrew; the other in Greek. Only in the Versions are these two combined, and bound together in one Book.

These divisions, of course, are not human, though the names are by which they are commonly known.

Up to the second century the term "Old Covenant" was used by the Greeks to describe the Hebrew Bible. This passed into the Latin Vulgate as "*Vetus Testamentum,*" from which our English term "Old Testament" was taken.

By way of distinction, the Greek portion was naturally spoken of as the "New Testament." But neither of these names is Divine in its origin.

2. *The Separate Books of the Bible.*

¹⁷ If these headings are not found in some of the current editions of our English Bibles, it is only a proof that still greater liberties are taken in changes of these headings.

When, however, we come to the Separate Books, though their origin is Divine, the human element is at once apparent.

(a) *The Books of the Old Testament.*—The Books as we have them today are not the same as in the Hebrew Canon, either as to their number, names, or order.¹⁸

The change first came about when the first Translation of the Hebrew Bible was made into Greek in the Version known as the Septuagint.

It was made in the latter part of the third century B.C. The exact date is not known, but the consensus of opinion leans to about 280—285 B.C.

It is the oldest of all the translations of the Hebrew Text, and its Divisions and arrangement of the Books have been followed in every translation since made.

Man has divided them into four classes: (1) The Law, (2) The Historical Books, (3) The Poetical Books, and (4) The Prophetical Books.

The Lord Jesus divides them into Three classes: (1) The Law, (2) The Prophets, and (3) The Psalms. And who will say that HE did not rightly divide them! But His Division was made according to the Hebrew Bible extant in His day, and not according to man's Greek Translation of it—*which was extant* also at that time.

In the Hebrew Canon these three Divisions contain twenty four Books, in the following order:—

(i) "The Law" (*Torah*).

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

These *five* books form
the *Pentateuch*.

(ii) "The Prophets" (*Neviim*).

6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Samuel
9. Kings
10. Isaiah

"*The Former Prophets*"
(Zech. 7).

11. Jeremiah
12. Ezekiel
13. The Minor Prophets

The Latter Prophets.

(iii) "The Psalms" (*K'thuvim*) or the [other] writings.

14. Psalms
15. Proverbs
16. Job
17. Song of Songs
18. Ruth

The Five "*Megilloth*" (or scrolls).

¹⁸ See a pamphlet on this subject, by the same author, entitled *The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament*.

19. Lamentations
20. Ecclesiastes
21. Esther
22. Daniel
23. Ezra-Nehemiah
24. Chronicles

This is how the Books are *rightly divided* in the Hebrew Bible. And it is sad to find so many good men exercising their ingenuity in order to find some Divine spiritual teaching in the utterly human and different order of the Books given in the Translations. One actually manufactures “five Pentateuch’s,” quite dislocating the Books of the Bible; and he arbitrarily rearranges them to suit his theory. Another divides them by rearranging them in what he conceives to be the *chronological*, order, which results, among other calamities, in the Psalms being dispersed among the Historical Books.

The “Higher” Critics would have us make a Hexateuch instead of a Pentateuch.

We fear it is hopeless ever to look for the books to be rightly divided and arranged in the order of the Hebrew Canon; so we shall have to make the best of man’s having wrongly divided the Word of truth from the very outset.

The number of Concordances and Commentaries and general works where reference is made to the present chapters and verses would be sufficient to make such a change impossible, however desirable it might be on other grounds.

Nevertheless, it is well for those who would study the Word of truth to have this information, and to be in possession of the facts of the case, even if the result is only to prevent them from attaching any importance to the present order of the books, and keep them from elaborating some scheme of doctrine or theology based on what is only human in its origin.¹⁹

(b) *The Books of the New Testament.*— As to the Books of the New Testament the problem presented is somewhat different. We find them in the Manuscripts generally in *five* groups: (1) the Gospels, (2) the Acts, (3) the General Epistles, (4) Paul’s Epistles, and (5) the Apocalypse.

The order of these groups varies in certain MSS.; and the order of the books also in the different groups varies. There is, however, one exception which we have elsewhere pointed out:²⁰ the Epistles of Paul which are addressed to Churches are always in the same order as we have them in our English Bible today. Out of the hundreds of Greek MSS. not one has ever yet been seen where the Canonical order of these Epistles is different from that in which they have come down to us.²¹

We can therefore build our teaching on a sure foundation, though we cannot do so on the order of the other New Testament books.

3. *The Divisions of the Hebrew Text*

The Hebrew Text is divided (in the MSS.) into five different forms:—

¹⁹ The *Cambridge Companion* (p. 7) suggests another classification, based on the subject-matter (as is that of the Septuagint): (1) Historical, (2) Prophetical, (3) Poetical, (4) Didactic, (5) Sapiential, (6) Apocalyptic. It is not necessary to indicate the Books under these heads, as the Divisions are so intensely human as to be unworthy of our notice.

²⁰ *The Church Epistles*, p. 13, by the same author. Also Part I., ch. 3, § 6, *f.* below.

²¹ *The Twentieth Century New Testament* has the impertinence to change this into a chronological order!

(a) Into open and closed Sections, answering somewhat to our paragraphs. These were to promote facility in reading.

(b) Into *Sedarîm* or the Triennial *Pericopes*;²² *i.e.*, Portions marked off: so that the Pentateuch is divided into 167 Pericopes or “Lessons,” which are completed in a course of three years reading. There are 452 of these *Seders*²³ in the Hebrew Bible, indicated by “” in the margin.

(c) Beside these the Pentateuch was divided into 54 *Par’shioth*,²⁴ or Annual Pericopes, by which the Law was read through once a year.

(d) The division into *verses*. The verses in the Hebrew Bible are of ancient origin, and were noted by a stroke (T) called *Silluk* under the last word of each verse.

These words were carefully counted for each book. Hence the Scribes were so called not because of their *writing* (from the Latin word *Scribo*), but they were called *Sopherim* or *Counters* (from the Hebrew, *Sopher, to count*). The Massorah gives the number of verses as 23,203.²⁵

4. *The Divisions of the Greek Text.*

In the Greek MSS. of the New Testament there is an indication of sections in the margin, dividing the text according to the sense.

There is also a division of the Gospels ascribed to TITIAN (Cent. II.) called *Kephalaia, i.e. heads* or summaries: these are known also as *Titloi* or titles. AMMONIUS, in the third century, divided the Text according to sections, known by his name: “The Ammonian Sections.” In the fifth century EUTHALIUS, a deacon of Alexandria, divided Paul’s Epistles, the Acts, and the General Epistles into *Kephalaia*; and ANDREAS (Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia) completed the work by dividing the Apocalypse into 24 *Logoi* or paragraphs, each being again divided into three *Kephalaia*.

These dividings of the New Testament can be traced back to individual men, and are all essentially human.

5. *The Divisions of the Versions.*

(a) *The Chapters.*— There are other more modern divisions into CHAPTERS. These are quite foreign to the Original Texts of the Old and New Testaments. For a long time they were attributed to HUGHES DE ST. CHER (Hugo de Sancto Caro). He was Provincial to the Dominicans in France, and afterwards a Cardinal in Spain: he died A.D. 1263. But it is now generally believed that they were made by STEPHEN LANGTON, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1227.

(b) *The Verses.*— Hugo made use of Langton’s chapters and added subdivisions which he indicated by letters. This was in 1248. ROBERT STEPHEN’S, finding these letters inadequate, introduced numbers in their place in his Greek Testament of 1551. This was the origin of our verse-divisions, which were first introduced into the English Version known as the Geneva Bible (1560), and from that into our Authorized Version in 1611. These verses do not correspond always with those of the Hebrew Bible.

²² Greek, from *peri* (around) and *kotô* (cut); a portion or extract. Pronounced Pe-ric’-o-pe.

²³ From (*sadar*), *to arrange in order*.

²⁴ From (*Pârash*), *to divide*.

²⁵ See Ginsburg’s *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 7, Bury Street, Bloomsbury London.

(c) *The Chapter Breaks.*— As to these chapter divisions, they were not of Jewish origin; and were never associated with the Hebrew Bible until A.D. 1330, when RABBI SALOMON BEN ISMAEL adopted the Christian chapters by placing the numerals in the margin, to facilitate reference for purposes of controversy.²⁶

In many cases they agree with the Massoretic divisions of the Hebrew Bible, though there are glaring instances of divergence.²⁷

It will thus be seen how very modern, and human, and how devoid of all authority are the chapter and verse divisions which obtain in the versions of the Bible generally, and in our English Bible in particular. Though they are most useful for purposes of *reference*, we must be careful never to use them for interpretation, or for doctrinal teaching. They seldom accord with the breaks required by the Structure.²⁸ Sometimes they break the *connection* altogether; at other times they materially affect the *sense*.

As examples, where the chapter-breaks interfere with the *Connection* and the *Sense*, we may notice Gen. 1 and 2, where the Introduction (ch. 1:1—2:4) is broken up, and the commencement of the first of the Eleven Divisions (or, “Generations”) is hidden. This wrong break has led to serious confusion. Instead of seeing in ch. 1:1—2:3 a separate Summary of Creation in the form of an Introduction, many think they see two distinct creations, while others see a discrepancy between two accounts of the same creation.

The break between 2 Kings 6 and 7 should come after ch. 7:2; that is to say, ch. 7:1, 2, should be ch. 6:34, 35.

The break between Isa. 8 and 9 is, to say the least, most unfortunate, dislocating, as it does, the whole sense of the passage.

Isa. 53 should commence at ch. 52:13. This agrees with its Structure:

A | 52:13—15. The foretold exaltation of Jehovah’s Servant, the Messiah.

²⁶ This appears from a note appended to MS. No. 15, in the Cambridge University Library. See Dr. Ginsburg’s *Introduction*, etc., p. 25.

²⁷ Up to A.D. 1517 the Editors of the Printed Text of the Hebrew Bible closely adhered to the MSS. and ignored the Christian or Gentile chapters.

The first to reverse this practice were the Editors of the Complutensian Polyglot of CARDINAL XIMENES (1514-1517); but still confining the indications to the margin, in Roman Numerals.

FELIX PRATEENSIS was the first to substitute Hebrew letters for the Roman Numerals in his Edition printed by Boraberg, Venice, in A.D. 1517; though he retained the Massoretic divisions.

JACOB BEN CHAYIM adopted the same practice in his standard Edition (A.D. 1524-5); and it was continued down to 1571, when...

ARIAS MONTANUS actually went so far as to break up the Hebrew Text, and insert the Hebrew Letters (or Numerals) into the body of the Text, in his Edition printed at Antwerp in 1571.

From this, the “pernicious practice,” as Dr. Ginsburg well calls it, has continued in the Editions of the Hebrew Text since printed, though it is discarded in his own Massoretico-Critical Edition, printed in Vienna in 1894, and published by the Trinitarian Bible Society of 7, Bury Street, Bloomsbury, London.

²⁸ See Part II., Canon II.

B | 53:1—6. His rejection by others.

B | 7—10-. His own sufferings.

A | -10—12. The foretold exaltation of Messiah.

Isa. 52:1—12 should have been the concluding portion of ch. 51.

Jer. 3:6 begins a new prophecy which goes down to the end of ch. 6.

Matt. 9:35—38 should belong to ch. 10.

John 3 should commence with ch. 2:23, thus connecting the remarks about “men” with the “man of the Pharisees.”

John 8:1 should be the last verse of ch. 7, setting in contrast the destination of the people and that of the Lord.

In Acts 4 the last two verses should have been the first two verses of ch. 5.

We can quite see that Acts 7 is already a long chapter; still, the break between it and ch. 6 is unfortunate, because the connection between “these things” in ch. 7:1 is quite severed from the “things” referred to in ch. 6.

The same is the case in Acts 8:1. Also in 22:1.

Romans 4 ought to have run on to 5:11, as is clear from the argument, as shown by the Structure.²⁹

In the same way Rom. 6 ought to run on, and end with ch. 7:6, which concludes the subject. The commencement of ch. 7:7, “What shall we say then?” would thus correspond with ch. 6:1.

Rom. 15:1—7 really belongs to ch. 14.³⁰

1 Cor. 11:1 should be the last verse of ch. 10.

2 Cor. 6 should end with 7:1; for ch. 7:2 commences a new subject, and leaves the “promises” of 7:1 to be connected with the rehearsal of them in ch. 6.

In the same way Phil. 3 ought to end with ch. 4:1 to complete the sense.

Col. 3 should end with 4:1. Thus “masters” would follow, and stand in connection with, the exhortation to “servants;” and ch. 4:2 would commence the new subject.

In 1 Pet. 2:1 the word “wherefore” points to the fact that this verse is closely connected with ch. 1.

2 Pet. 2:1, in the same way, concludes ch. 1, and the “false prophets” are contrasted with the Divinely inspired prophets.

In 2 Tim. 4:1 the force of the word “therefore” is quite lost by being cut off from the conclusion of ch. 3.

²⁹ See *The Church Epistles*, by the same author.

³⁰ See Part II., Canon VII, below.

Rev. 3, as a break, ought to be ignored, as it quite dislocates the seven letters to the Assemblies.

Rev. 13:1 belongs to, and is the conclusion of, ch. 12. The break is thus actually made in the R.V., and the correct reading of the Greek MSS. followed shows the close connection of the words “and he (i.e. Satan) stood upon the sand of the sea,” with ch. 12:17, and also with ch. 13 as containing the result of Satan’s thus standing.

In the same way the break between Rev. 21 and 22 is unfortunate, as the real chapter-break should correspond with the Structure and should come between verses 5 and 6 of ch. 22.

Other examples may easily be found, but these will be sufficient to show the importance of “rightly dividing the Word of Truth,” even as to the Chapter Divisions.

(d) The Chapter, and Running Page-Headings.— When these chapter divisions are combined with (1) the *chapter headings*, and (2) the *running page-headings*, they become positively mischievous, partaking of the nature of *interpretation* instead of translation. It is needless to say that we may absolutely disregard them, as always aggravating the chapter-break, and often misleading the reader.

The *running page-headings* are a fruitful source of mischief. Over Isa. 29 (as we have said above) in an ordinary Bible we read “*God’s judgments upon Jerusalem.*” On the opposite page we read over Isa. 30 “*God’s mercies to his church.*” The same may be seen in the concluding chapters of Isaiah, both in the running page-headings and in the chapter-headings. But there is no break or change in the subject-matter. It consists of all “the vision which Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem” (ch. 1:1). Here is a “dividing” of the Word. But, the question is, can it be called “rightly dividing” when God’s “mercies” are claimed for the Church, and His “judgments” generously given over to the Jews? Such “dividing” of the Word can hardly be said to be “without partiality.”

(e) Punctuation.— One other mode of dividing the Word as to its Literary Form is by Punctuation; which is a still more important manner of dividing the Word, as it seriously affects the Text by dividing its sentences, and thus fixing its sense.

The importance of this will be seen when we note that its effect is to fasten the *interpretation* of the translator on to the Word of God by making his *translation* part of that Word. It thus comes to the ordinary reader as part add parcel of the Truth of God, whereas it is absolutely arbitrary, and is wholly destitute of either Divine or human authority.³¹

The Greek Manuscripts have, practically, no system of punctuation: the most ancient, none at all; and the later MSS. nothing more than an occasional single point even with the middle, or in line with the top of the letters. Where there is anything more than this it is generally agreed that it is the work of a later hand.

So that in the Original Manuscripts we have no guide whatever to any dividing of the Text, whether rightly or wrongly. Indeed, in the most ancient MSS. there is not only no division at all, but there is not even any break between the words! So that we can find no help from the MSS.

When they came to be collated, edited, and printed, a system of punctuation was introduced by the respective Editors. Each one followed his own plan, and exercised his own human judgment. No two editors have punctuated the text in the same way; so that we have no help from them.

When we come to the English Authorized Version we are still left without guidance or help.

³¹ Sometimes a change of punctuation may be made through inadvertence or through ignorance. we have heard of 1 Cor. 9:24 being read aloud thus: “They that run in a race, run. All but one receiveth the prize.” The ignorance that perpetrated this failed to see the bad grammar which resulted in the last clause.

The Authorized Version of 1611 is destitute of any authority; for the Translators punctuated only according to their best judgment. But even here, few readers are aware of the many departures which have been made from the original Edition of 1611; and how many changes have been made in subsequent Editions.³²

Some of these differences arise doubtless from oversight, but other changes have been made undoubtedly with deliberate intent. Who made them, or when they were introduced, no one can tell. A few, however, can be traced.³³

The Edition of 1616 was the first edition of the A.V. which shows any considerable revision. The first Cambridge Editions of 1638 and 1639 appear to have been a complete revision, though done without any authority.

The Edition of 1669 added many marginal notes. That of 1701 was the first to introduce the marginal dates, tables of Scripture measures and weights, &c.

The Edition of 1762 contained serious attempts at improvements made by Dr. Paris. He was the first to substitute a full stop for the colon of 1611 in Zech. 11:7, after “staves.” This edition considerably extended the use of Italic type; and incorporated Bishop Lloyd’s chronological notes.

Dr. Blataney’s Edition of 1769 introduced many changes and many glaring errors which, unfortunately, have been followed without inquiry and without suspicion. These imperfections led to a great controversy, and a Public Inquiry, which included the policy of the Royal Patent and the working of the University Presses.

A Revision of the American Bible Society (1847—1851) prepared the way for our English Revised Version (1881—1885).

The “Advertisement” to the Universities’ Edition, called “The Parallel Bible” (of the R.V. and A.V.), fully endorses all we have said:—

“The left hand column contains the text of the Authorized Version *as usually printed*, with the marginal notes and references of the Edition of 1611, the spelling of these being conformed to modern usage. In the left hand margin are also placed, in square brackets, *the more important differences* between the edition of 1611 and the text *now in use*, whether these differences are *due to corrections* of the edition of 1611 or to errors which have subsequently crept in.”

In spite of all these facts many ill-informed renders of the English Bible take the punctuation as “Gospel truth;” and not only build their own theories, and bolster up their traditions upon it, but treat as heretics, and cast out almost as apostates any one who dares to question the authority of this human interference with the Word of truth, if it should run counter to their Traditions, which are generally based on such human foundations.

In view of this indefensible attitude we shall have to show its utter groundlessness.

It is beside our present object to enumerate all the cases where the punctuation has been changed, though all are of interest, and many are of importance.

These changes may be classed under three heads.

³² These changes affect not merely punctuation, but the marginal notes and references. the uses of capital letters and italic type, orthography, grammatical peculiarities, etc.

³³ A full account of these may be seen in the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Queen’s Printers’ Patent, 1859, a Blue Book full of interesting information; also in DR. SCRIVENEK’s Preface to *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible* of 1873.

- (1) Where the Edition of 1011 is to be preferred to the later Editions.
- (2) Where the changes in the later Editions are improvements; and
- (3) Where there are other proposed changes which we suggest as being most desirable.

We shall proceed to give a few examples under each of these three heads.

(1) Changes in punctuation where the Edition of 1611 is certainly to be preferred to the later Editions.

1 Kings 19:5, “And as he (Elijah) lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold then, an angel touched him.” In 1769 this was altered to “behold, then.” This comma after “behold” has continued to the present day.

Neh. 9:4, “Then stood up upon the stairs of the Levites, Joshua, &c.” In the Edition of 1769 this was changed to “Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Joshua.”

Ps. 79:11, “come before thee, according to the greatness of thy power: Preserve thou, etc. :” instead of “come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou.” This change was made in 1769.

Ps. 89:46, “How long, LORD, Wilt thou hide thyself, for ever?” instead of “How long, LORD? Wilt thou hide thyself for ever?” The third comma of 1611 was removed in 1629,³⁴ 1638, 1744, 1769, and in the current editions.

In Prov. 1:27, the final colon of 1611—1630 after “cometh upon you:” is preferable to the present full-stop, introduced in 1629, and retained in the current editions.

In Prov. 19:2, the comma before “sinneth” should be restored, which was discarded in 1762.

In Prov. 21:28, the comma before “speaketh” should be restored, which was removed in 1769.

Hos. 7:11, “a silly dove, without heart” instead of “silly dove without heart,” since 1629; as though the last two words related to the dove, instead of to Ephraim.

John 2:15, “and the sheep and the oxen.” In 1630,³⁵ 1762, and current editions, a comma was introduced after “sheep.”

John 18:3, “a band of men, and officers.” In 1769 the comma after “men” was dropped; hence, the Roman cohort is not distinguished from the Jewish officers.

Acts 11:26, “taught much people, and the disciples were called.” This was so from 1611 to 1630, both clauses being dependent on the verb “it came to pass.” Two things came to pass, (1) that the people were taught, and (2) that the disciples were first called Christians. But in 1638—1743 the comma was replaced by a semicolon, and in 1762 by a full stop: the latter being quite against the Greek.³⁶

2 Cor. 13:2, “as if I were present the second time.” This was so pointed from 1611—1762. But since 1769 a comma is inserted after “present,” connecting “the second time” with the foretelling, instead of with the being present.

³⁴ Not 1630. In 1762 this comma was replaced by a semicolon.

³⁵ Not 1638 and 1743.

³⁶ The R. V. goes back to the semicolon, but not to the comma of 1611.

Col. 2:11. The comma was removed after “flesh,” in 1762, thus making one statement instead of two. The two clauses beginning with (*en te*) - “by the putting off,” and “by the circumcision of Christ.” That is to say: “Is whom [Christ] ye are circumcised with a circumcision not done by hand, by the stripping off of the³⁷ body (*i.e.*, the flesh),³⁸ by the circumcision of Christ.” Thus, this comma after “flesh” makes the last clause explanatory of the one preceding it: and shows that in Christ there is something more than the stripping off the old nature which is *sinner ruin*; even the flesh itself which is involved in *creature ruin*.

2 Thess. 1:8, “in flaming fire, faking vengeance.” By removing this comma in 1769 the “fire” is wrongly connected with the “vengeance,” instead of with the being “revealed” in v. 7.

Heb. 2:9. The comma was removed in 1769 after the word “angles,” compelling us to connect “for the suffering of death” with Christ’s humiliation, instead of with His crowning. If we rightly divide these words, the suffering will be practically put in a parenthesis by the two commas, thus: “We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, (for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor), that he by the grace of God, should taste death for every³⁹ man.” This comma is wrongly replaced in the R.V.

Jude 7, “the cities about them, in like manner.” The comma after “them” was removed in 1638 and 1699;⁴⁰ while in 1762 it was placed after “in like manner,” thus increasing the error.

(2) *Changes in punctuation where the later editions of the A.V. are improvements.*

These hardly need enumeration, seeing that they are not likely to be missed. We may, however, note a few:—

Matt. 19:4, 5. In 1611 the mark of interrogation was placed at the end of verse 4, but for many years it has been removed to the end of verse 5.

John 12:20, “And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the Feast.” This needless comma after “them” was not removed till 1769.

Titus 2:13, “The appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This misleading comma after “God,” lingered till 1769; thus hiding the fact that only one Being is spoken of, viz., “God even our Saviour:” *i.e.* our great Saviour-God, Jesus Christ.

Luke 23:32, “And there were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death.” This of course practically classed the Lord Jesus as being one of three malefactors. But since 1817 a comma has been placed after the word “other,” to avoid this implication.⁴¹

Acts 27:27, “as we were driven up and down in Adria about midnight, the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country.” Not until after 1638 was the comma removed from after “midnight,” and placed after “Adria”—“driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed,” &c.

³⁷ All the textual critics with R.V. omit “of the sins.”

³⁸ Genitive of apposition.

³⁹ *I.e.*, every, *without distinction*, not without exception.

⁴⁰ Not 1743.

⁴¹ This is far better than changing “other” to “others,” as is done in the American Bible, 1867. This antiquated plural is continued in the American Edition of the R.V. of 1898.

(3) *Changes of punctuation which are now proposed as being most desirable.*

These proposed changes we consider to be improvements not only in the punctuation of the Edition of 1611 but of the subsequent editions. These suggestions are made from a better understanding, closer study of, and respect for the Context, as modifying or correcting traditional interpretations.

That we are more than warranted in such an attempt is shown by the Revisers in a note they affix to Rom. 9:5. In this passage, in all the editions, the full stop is placed after the word “ever,” thus: “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”

This text, being so weighty in witnessing to the Godhead of the Lord Jesus, was evidently distasteful to the Socinian member of the Company of Revisers: and, judging from the note placed in the margin, one can imagine what line the discussion had taken. All other marginal notes in the R.V. refer either to alternative renderings which affect the Translation, or to ancient manuscript “Authorities” which affect the Text. There is no example, so far as we have seen, where interpretation has been introduced; or where there is any reference to the interpretations of commentators. But here, there is the following lengthy marginal note, which exhibits the compromise reached by the Revisers and the Unitarian. They evidently declined to touch the Text; and consented to put this note in the margin. Its intention will be at once seen:

Some modern interpreters place a full stop after *Flesh*, and Translate, He who is over all be (*is*) blessed for ever: ⁴²or *He who is over all is God blessed for ever*. Others punctuate, *flesh, who is over all, God be blessed for ever*.

The object of this note is too painfully apparent; but it shows how important is the subject of punctuation. Moreover, it justifies us in not only calling attention to faulty punctuation, but in suggesting changes where improvements may be made, which do not touch vital truth, except to strengthen and enforce it. Whereas, sad to say, some of the changes made by the Revisers are, unfortunately, those which interfere either with the Deity of Christ, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, or the freeness of God’s grace.

In 2 Sam. 23:5, if we make the last clause a question instead of a statement, we get the clue to a better rendering of the verse.

As it stands in the A.V. and the R.V. it is difficult to make any sense of the verse, at all. Not seeing the Structure or the true punctuation, the Translators were obliged to translate the Hebrew word (*ki*), *for*, in four different ways: not that one way is necessary, for its usage is somewhat elastic. It may often connect the hypothesis or condition with the result, either as a reason or conclusion.

If we ask what the word “so” (in verse 5) means in the first line, we have the answer in verse 4, where we have a description of God’s King; and David immediately adds that it will be even so with himself as God’s King and with his house in virtue of God’s covenant (is 2 Sam. 7) with him and of the sure mercies of (or mercies made sure to) David.

In verse 4 we have an alternation, the first and third lines speaking of the shining forth of God’s light from heaven; and is the second and fourth lines, its effect on the earth.

2 Sam. 23:4.

A | And He shall be as the light of the morning,

B | When the sun ariseth,

A | Even a morning without clouds;

B | When, from brightness and from rain,⁴³ the tender grass shooteth forth out of the earth.

⁴² What is to be done with the “Amen,” In this case, is not stated.

Then David goes on to say that, as that is a picture of what it will be, when He that ruleth shall rule righteously among men, ruling in the fear of God; even so will it be with his house and kingdom in virtue of the Covenant of God.

In verse 5 the A.V. renders the word (*ki*) in these four ways:—

“Although,” “yet,” “for” “although.”

The R.V. renders them

“Verily,” “yet,” “for,” “although.”

The Structure of the verse shows that the four lines are arranged as an *Introversion*, in which the first and fourth lines concern *David's house*; while the second and third lines are about *God's covenant*.

Now, if we punctuate the first and fourth lines *as questions* we may have this rendering, which certainly has the merit of consistency and clearness.

2 Sam. 23:5.

C | “Verily, is not my house even so with God?

D | For He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure:

D | Now, this Covenant is all my salvation and all my desire,

C | For, Shall He not make it (my house) to prosper?”⁴⁴

We may take other examples where improvements can be suggested:—

Isa. 64:5, “Behold thou wast wroth, and we sinned: in them have we been a long time, and, Shall we be saved?” In this case the R.V. thus revises the punctuation of the A.V. to its great improvement.

Jer. 3:1. The last clause is evidently another question, repeating a similar question earlier in the verse: “And yet shalt thou return unto me saith the LORD?”

Matt. 19:28, “Ye that have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” This was the punctuation of 1611, which was continued till 1629. But in 1630 a comma was introduced after “regeneration,” which entirely alters the sense. It has, happily, since been removed from our modern editions. This improvement should be noted, and retained.

Luke 16:9, “And I; say I unto you ‘Make to yourselves friends by means of the unrighteous mammon; that, when ye fail,⁴⁵ they may receive YOU into the everlasting habitations?’ [No!⁴⁶] He that is faithful in that

⁴³ So some Codices, with four early-printed editions, and the Sept., Syr., and Vulg. Versions. See Ginsburg’s Heb. Text and note.

⁴⁴ Heb., *to shoot forth*, as the tender grass, as in line *B* above.

⁴⁵ “*When it shall fail*,” according to Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford.

⁴⁶ Beza’s Latin and Grashop’s English Version both put a fullstop after “you.” Beza begins the next sentence “Certe” (surely); Grashop begins it “Wherefore.” We begin it “No!”

which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust in much also. If therefore YE have not been faithful," etc.

The context clearly shows that Christ is *contrasting*, and not identifying, human and Divine modes of judgment. This context (vv. 10—12), and the logical conclusion of the parable, have no meaning whatever unless the commendation of the unjust steward's lord is set in contrast with the condemnation of Christ. These verses (10—12) are no mere independent irrelevant statement, but are the logical conclusion to the whole argument.

The reception into the "everlasting habitations" of verse 9 is set in contrast with the unjust steward's being received "into their houses" (verse 4); the principles which govern admission there, are the opposite of those that obtain admission here.

Hence our Lord follows this up by adding the great lesson in v. 10: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much! and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to you the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will give you that which is our own."⁴⁷

Luke 16:22, 23. As at present translated and punctuated, the words read: "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes." But if we substitute *Sheol* or *Hades* for "hell," then we have (as in Isa. 14:9—20) a representation of dead people talking; as we have of the trees talking in Jotham's parable, (Judges 9:8—15). If we further observe the Tenses and Moods of the verbs, and re-punctuate the passage; we have the result, as follows:

"The rich man also died, and was buried also is *Hades*. Having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he seeth."⁴⁸ There is no "and" before "seeth." It is not an additional statement, "and he seeth;" but it is a second verb, depending on the participle "having lifted up his eyes."

This change in translation is necessitated by the Greek; and the change in punctuation is not suggested as a modern invention to support any particular interpretation: for it is that adopted in the ancient Vulgate translation,⁴⁹ which, though not the original text, and of no authority as a text, is yet evidence of a fact. It is punctuated in the same way by Tatian, *Diatessaron* (A.D. 170) and Marcion (A.D. 145); as well as in the ancient Jerusalem Syriac Version. And the fact is that the first three words of verse 23 form, instead, the last three words of verse 22; a full stop being placed after the word *Hades*: while the word "and" is treated by this as meaning "also." So that the whole sentence would read thus: "But the rich man also died, and was buried also in *Hades*."

"Buried also," implies what is only *inferred* as to Lazarus, meaning that the one was buried as well as the other. Whether the punctuation be allowed, or not, it does not affect the matter in the slightest degree. For that is where *he was buried* in any case. It affects only the place where he is said to lift up his eyes.

This is further shown by the fact that the three verbs "died," "buried," and "he lift up," are not all in the same Tense as they appear to be from the English. The first two are in the past tense, while the third is the present participle, (*eparas*), *lifting up*, thus commencing the 23rd verse with a new thought.

⁴⁷ See R.V. margin.

⁴⁸ For the further interpretation of the parable as a whole, see *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, by the same author.

⁴⁹ "Supultus est in Inferno," *was buried in Hades*.

Those who interpret this passage as though *Hades* were a place of *life* instead of *death*., make it “repugnant” to every other place where the word occurs, and to many other scriptures which are *perfectly plain*, e. g., Ps. 6:5; 31:17; 115:17; 146:4. Eccles. 9:6, 10. (See Canon VII., Part II. below).

Luke 23:43, “Verily, I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

This is the common punctuation, but, Is it correct? We have already seen enough to show us that we are dependent only and entirely on the context and on the analogy of truth.

The word “verily” points us to the solemnity of the occasion, and to the importance of what is about to be said. The solemn circumstance under which the words were uttered marked the wonderful faith of the dying malefactor; and the Lord referred to this by connecting the word “today” with “I say.” “Verily, I say unto thee this day.” This day, when all seems lost, and there is no hope; this day, when instead of reigning I am about to die. This day, I say to thee, “Thou shalt be with me in paradise.”

“I say unto thee this day” was the common Hebrew idiom for emphasizing the occasion of making a solemn statement (see Deut. 4:26, 39, 40; 5:1; 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 11, 19; 9:3; 10:13; 11:2, 8, 13, 26, 27, 28, 32; 13:18; 15:5; 19:9; 26:3, 16, 18; 27:1, 4, 10; 28:1, 13, 14, 15; 29:12; 30:2, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19; 32:46).⁵⁰

“Paradise” was the condition of the earth before the entrance of Satan and the pronouncing of the curse; so it will be the condition of the earth again when Satan shall be bound, and the Lord shall come and reign in His kingdom. It is called in Hebrew “Eden” sixteen times, and “The Garden” nineteen times. The Greek for these is *Paradisos* (which we have Englished “Paradise”). It is never used in any other sense than of a place of beauty and delight *on the earth*. Never of any place *above* or *under* the earth. “The Tree of Life” and “the river of the water of life” are its two earthly characteristics. The traditional idea of any other place is unknown and foreign to Scripture; and is the pure invention of fallen man. It comes down to us from Babylon through Judaism and Romanism.

We see it described in Gen. 2; lost in Gen. 3; its restoration pronounced in Rev. 2:7; and regained and enjoyed in the New Earth (Rev. 22:1—5, 14, 17).

The Lord answered the request of the dying believer, not by promising something for which he did not ask; but by granting him his heart’s desire and giving him the request of his lips.

We therefore suggest the following translation and punctuation: “And he said to Jesus, Remember me, O Lord, when thou shalt have come in thy kingdom. And Jesus answered him, Verily I say to thee this day, with me thou shalt be, in Paradise.”

But there is more to be noted in the word “today” than this. Mrs. A. S. Lewis, of Cambridge, has lately called attention to the reading of the ancient Palimpsest Syriac Gospels at Mount Sinai, in which verse 39 reads, “Art thou not the Saviour? Save thyself alive today, and also us.”

This was the taunt of the other malefactor who thus seems to have used the word “today.” The faith of the other showed that he looked for something more than *present deliverance*: he believed in *future glory* in the coming of the kingdom.

Hence, in the Lord’s reply to him, He takes up this word “today” to show that “today” was not to be the day of deliverance for either himself or others, but the day of death. But though He spoke on that day of death, He gave the promise of future glory, in which the other malefactor had so blessedly confessed his belief.

⁵⁰ See *Things to Come*, Vol. VIII., pp. 41, 128; also *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, pp. 27—29, by the same author.

In this case there was a special reason for the Lord's use of the word "today." It was to correct a mistake; and it was, in spite of *present* circumstances, to give the assurance of the coming *future* glory of the kingdom.

John 7:37—39. As it stands in the A.V. and R.V. this passage is punctuated as follows:—

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Ghost (*pneuma hagion*) was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

We have to notice first that there is no article with the second *pneuma* (or Spirit) in verse 39, which shows that what is "*given*" is the subject of the context, (*pneuma hagion*) and not the Spirit Himself, the giver.⁵¹

Then, we further notice, that the word "should" in the same verse (v. 39) is not the sign of any tense, but is a separate verb, (*emellon*), *to be about to be*. Lit., "*were about to receive*;" (the latter verb "receive" being in the Infinitive Mood). As to the word "belly" it is put, by the figure of speech called *Synecdoche*, for *the whole person*,⁵² which is much stronger than using the mere personal pronoun "him." It is a very emphatic "him."

In this case the "his" is generally taken as referring to the believer, for with our usual selfishness we take every good thing as applying to ourselves. But we submit that it is to be understood of Christ, who is the great fountain from whom the rivers of *pneuma* and grace and blessing flow; and not of the believer, who is only the receiver; and from whom a few drops may go forth, but certainly not "rivers." With these preliminary observations we would punctuate it as suggested by Stier,⁵³ as follows:—

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me; and let him drink, who believeth in Me! Even as the Scripture [concerning Me] hath said 'Rivers out of HIM shall flow, of living water.' "

It is not the one who drinks of Him who becomes the fountain; he is the *receiver* and not the *giver*. The Fountain is the one whom Scripture had already designated as the source of *pneuma*, and the channel whereby the rivers of spiritual grace and blessing should flow. It is not the individual believer who is the subject of the Old Testament prophecies; he, at the best, could only send forth one tiny stream of what he had himself first received; but it is Christ in whom are all our springs, who alone can say, "I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of water of life, freely" (Rev. 21:6). The River proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). In Christ are the hidden reservoirs of blessing, out of whose abundant flow believers receive their graces and gifts.

Not until Christ had risen from the dead, and ascended into glory, could these gifts be given. Hence, the explanation which is added in verse 39.

The Scriptures are many which speak of Messiah as the giver of these spiritual blessings. (Compare Isa. 12:3; 55:1. Ezek. 47:1. Joel 3:18. Zech. 13:1; 14:8.) These "rivers" of blessing flow not from the believer, but from the throne of God, from Zion, and from Him who there will sit as king.

⁵¹ Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort, and R.V. omit (*hagion*), *holy*. Tregelles and Alford put it within brackets.

⁵² See Rom. 16:18: "For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ. but their own belly" (i.e. *their own selves*). Phil. 3:19: "Whose god is their belly" (i.e. *themselves*, and what they can get). Tit. 1:12: "Slow-bellies" (i.e. slow persons, who by reason of large eating have grown stout, and therefore move slowly).

⁵³ *Words of the Lord Jesus*, in loco.

The *pneuma*, or water, of which Christ is the giver, will be “in HIM” a well of springing water springing up, and flowing out as a supply for others (John 4:14). The individual believer receives only enough for his own needs. He has no reservoirs from which rivers can flow forth for the supply of others.

John 12:27, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause came I unto this hour.”

We would translate and punctuate this as follows: “Now am I⁵⁴ troubled; and why⁵⁵ should I say, ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ But for this cause came I unto this hour.”

John 14:2, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.⁵⁶ I go to prepare a place for you.”

But why would He have told them about it if it were not so. The whole statement seems so inconsequent. But, if we punctuate it as a question, and take out the full stop after “you,” we get a beautiful confirmation of what He had said and a further assurance of its truth: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, Would I have told you I go to prepare a place for you?”

John 17:24. Is it clear as to which was “before the foundation of the world?” Was it the gift, or the love? Punctuated as in the A.V. it is the latter. But may it not well be rendered? “I will that they also whom Thou hast given me may be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, because thou lovedst me, before the foundation of the world.” The sentence “because thou lovedst me” thus becomes the basis of the whole petition; and (*hoti*) gets its usual consequential meaning, *because*.

Acts 15:17, 18, should be punctuated, and translated as follows, according to all the critical Greek texts, with which the R.V., J. N. Darby, Rotherham, and other translators agree:

“That the residue of men may seek after the Lord.
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called,
Saith the Lord who maketh these things known⁵⁷ from the beginning of the world.”

From this punctuation we learn that the mystery is not the subject here; for it was not “made known from the beginning of the world;” but was the secret “hid in God,” until specially revealed to the Apostle Paul.⁵⁸

Acts 23:8, “The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit.” The comma after “angel” in the editions from 1611 to 1630, having been removed in editions from 1629 to 1743, was restored in 1762; and should be retained.

Rom. 8:32, 33, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ Jesus that died?”

⁵⁴ The Perfect Tense: “I have been and am.”

⁵⁵ So (*ti*) is rendered 66 times in N.T.

⁵⁶ So the current editions. The 1611 edition has a colon after “you.”

⁵⁷ Margin: “or, *who doeth these things* which were *known*.” The words “unto God are all his works” are omitted by all the critical Greek texts.

⁵⁸ See *The Mystery*, by the same author and publisher.

Here again the R.V. thus amends the punctuation of the A.V. and sets an example which we follow in 1 Cor. 15:29. Our revised punctuation will enable the translation to be made more literal and more in agreement with the sense. A wrong punctuation often leads to wrong translation and necessitates liberties which have to be taken in order to make sense.

“Else what are they doing who are being baptized? [It is] for dead [bodies, or corpses⁵⁹], if the dead rise not at all. Why are they then being baptized for dead [bodies]?”

The argument is here continued and taken up from verse 19, after the digression about resurrection, *viz.*, that if there be no resurrection baptism is worse than meaningless. It was merely baptizing dying bodies instead of believers who were going to live again in resurrection: it was only incurring trouble and suffering and persecution and risk of this life for nothing, if there be no resurrection. This illustration, therefore, takes its place with the other illustrations by which the argument is enforced in the following verses:— the “jeopardy” of verse 30 and the “fighting with beasts at Ephesus” of verse 32, connecting these three illustrations of the “misery” of verse 19.

There are other improvements which might be suggested, of less importance perhaps, but still serving to show the wide range which our subject covers.

Eph. 4:12 has been punctuated in all the editions, “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

This would be quite correct if the word “for” represented the same Greek word in each of the three clauses. But the first is (*pros*), for, marking the *subjective* purpose originating the gifts; the second and third are (*eis*), *for*, marking the *objective* and for which the gifts were designed.

The commas after the words “saints” and “ministry” hide this beautiful distinction, and make three objects instead of one (which is twofold). The punctuation should be as follows: “For the perfecting of the saints, with a view to the work of the ministry, with a [further] view to the building up of the body of Christ.”

So that, instead of three separate propositions, we have only one—“The perfecting of the saints.” And this one is with a twofold end, *viz.*, the work of the ministry; and this work has, for its ultimate end, the building up of “God’s building,” which is the spiritual body of Christ. (Compare ch. 2:21, 22 with ch. 4:2, 3.)

Hebrews 10:12 presents a peculiarly difficult example. In the A.V. from 1611—1630 it reads, “But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” But in 1638 the comma was removed, and placed after the word “sins,” and it read “for ever sat down,” thus going back to the punctuation of the Bishops’ Bible of 1568. This is the punctuation in the Book of Common Prayer to this day,⁶⁰ though the Cambridge Bible of 1858 restored the punctuation of 1611 (“for ever, sat down”).

There is something to be said for the older punctuation: “after he had offered one sacrifice of sins, for ever sat down.” This expression, translated “for ever,” is not the usual (*eis ton aiona*), *for the age*, or *for ever*, but it is (*eis to dienekes*), *for a continuance*, in distinction from *interruptedly*.⁶¹ It is connected not with the offering of “sacrifice,” but with “sat down.”

⁵⁹ (*hoi nekroi*) with the article, as here, denotes *dead bodies*; without the article it means *dead people*. see *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, pp. 34, 35, by the same author.

⁶⁰ The Epistle for Good Friday is so punctuated in the original MS. attached to the Act of Uniformity of 1662, and now preserved in the House of Lords.

⁶¹ The expression occurs only in Heb. 7:3. “abideth a priest *continually*,” ch. 10:1, “offered year by year *continually*,” ch. 10:12, *for ever sat down*” (where it should clearly be *continually*); and verse 14, “hath perfected *for ever*” (where it should be *continually*).

It asserts the fact that Christ's work as a Priest is finished. He has not to stand up again to carry it on and continue it. Earthly priests "stood daily" and all day long, for there were no seats in the Tabernacle or Temple for the priests; but Christ has "sat down" not to rise up again for the purpose of sacrifice, for, having borne the sins of many, He will appear the second time without any reference to sin, but for the complete salvation of His people. Heb. 10:12 does not contradict Heb. 9:28. The scope of Heb. 10:12 is not the coming of Christ, but the sacrifice of Christ; and this leads us to the conclusion that the older punctuation is right, which was, as we have said: "But this man, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down for a continuance on the right hand of God "(i.e., "took His seat once for all" in contrast with the standing of v. 11).

This agrees with the scope of the passage, which is the contrast between the ineffectual sacrifices of the Law and the effectual Sacrifice of Christ; between the "daily standing" of the priests with the continual session of Christ. This may be seen from

The Structure of Heb. 9:25—10:18.

A | 9:25 Yearly sacrifices ineffectual, because "offered often" (*pollakis*).

B | 9:26—28. Christ's sacrifice effectual, because offered "once for all" (*hapax*).

A 10:1—4. Yearly sacrifices ineffectual, because offered "continually" (*eis to dienekes*), for a continuance.

B | 10:5—10, Christ's sacrifice effectual, because offered "once for all." (*ephapax*), v. 10.

A | 10:11. Daily sacrifices ineffectual, because the priest "standeth daily" (*kath hemeran*), "offering oftentimes" (*pollakis*).

B | 10:12—18. Christ's sacrifice effectual, because having offered "one" (*mian*), He sat down "continually" (*eis to dienekes*), for a continuance.

Thus, in the members marked A we have what is ineffectual because temporary, set in contrast with the members marked B, in which we have what is effectual because permanent.

In the A members we have the priests, their sacrifices, and standing

"often"
"continually"
"daily"

In the B members we have Christ, His sacrifice, and session

"once"
"once for all"
"continually."

Indeed, the offering of sacrifices *eis to dienekes* (ch. 10:1) is put in direct contrast with Christ's having sat down *eis to dienekes*, in verse 12.

2 Pet. 2:22. It makes all the difference whether we put a comma after the word "and." If we omit it we make one proverb; if we insert it we get two proverbs. "It is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." The A.V. and R.V. and all the editions have no comma after the word "and;" and thus make only one proverb.

In any case, the contrast is between the *washed sow* at the end of 2 Pet. 2 and the *stray sheep* at the end of 1 Pet. 2. Both “return;” but the sheep, however dirty it has become, returns to its shepherd; while the sow, however clean it is washed, returns to her mire.

(f) *Parentheses*.—The Edition of 1611 abounded in parentheses. In the subsequent editions there has been an increasing tendency to discard them; and to supply their place by commas; or to ignore them altogether.

But parentheses are a means of increasing the emphasis of ordinary punctuation; and, on that account, they require more careful consideration, rather than less; as the meaning can be either destroyed, changed, or made more clear by their use.

We shall class all under one head, without regard to the changes in the various editions; though we will note the changes where we can discover when they were made.

Many are already so marked, so that there is no need for us to notice them. (See Deut. 1:2. Matt. 9:6. John 2:9; 4:8. Acts 1:15. Rom. 3:8; 5:13—17⁶²: 10:6, 7. Eph. 2:5. Phil. 3: 18, 19. Col. 2:21, 22.)

The true Parenthesis is an addition by way of *explanation*, and is complete in itself.

When it is not by way of explanation, but is an independent *additional statement*, complete in itself, the Greeks called it *Parembolē* or Insertion; because it is more in the nature of a digression.

When it was by way of *feeling* they called it *Interjection*. (Ps. 42:2. Ezek. 16:23, 24.)

When it was by way of a *wish*, or *prayer*, they called it *Ejaculation*. (Hos. 9:14.)

When it was by way of *apology* or *excuse* they called it *Hypotimesis*, or under-estimating. (Rom. 3:5. 2 Cor. 11:23.)

When it was by way of *detraction* they called it *Anaeresis*.

When it was by way of *sudden exclamation* they called it *Catapoce*. (Ezek. 16:23, 24. Rom. 9:3.)

All these parenthetical additions are complete in themselves.

But when the addition is *thrown in*, as it were, casually, and is not complete in itself, the Greeks called it *Epitrechon*, or *Running along*.⁶³

In many instances the Structures of Scripture practically place the member in a parenthesis between the two corresponding members; and this, whether it be a large complex member, or whether it be a single sentence.

For example:—

In Gen. 15:13, the words “(and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them)” should be in a parenthesis, as is clear from the Structure.

- a | “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs;
- b | and shall serve them;
- b | and they shall afflict them;

⁶² This was first so marked in the edition of 1769, and is continued in all the subsequent editions, though both the English and American Revised Versions reject it.

⁶³ See *Figures of Speech*, p. 470, etc., by the same author.

a | four hundred years.”

Here, in the extremes, “a” and “a” we have the sojourn and strangership as a whole, while in “b” and “b” we have the servitude in Egypt. It is this servitude which is thrown in parenthetically (“*Epitrechon*,” *i.e.*, *running along*); so that the sense reads on from “a” to “a;” and the *time* is not affected by the addition of what will happen to them in any part of that time.

Gen. 46:26, “All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt (which came out of his loins) besides Jacob’s sons wives, all the souls were threescore and six.” This *Epitrechon* is thrown in to explain the difference between this number (66) and the number 75 in Acts 7:14, which included “all his kindred,” and was necessarily a larger number than that of Jacob’s direct descendants.

Exod. 12:40, “Now the sojourning of the children of Israel (who dwelt in Egypt) was four hundred and thirty years.” This is an *Epitrechon*, or remark thrown in as an additional fact to explain exactly who these people were. It thus saves us from making the mistake of thinking that they were in Egypt during all those 430 years.

Josh. 6:1 is a true parenthesis or an independent statement complete in itself, conveying an additional fact; but inserted in order to explain and introduce the words of the Captain of Jehovah’s host, which are continued in verse 2.

1 Kings 7:19 is a parenthesis and helps us to connect verses 18 and 20.

In 1 Kings 8:39 and 42 we have two complete and separate parentheses.

In 1 Kings, 12:32 the words “so did he in Bethel” should be marked as a parenthesis, as they were down to 1760. It is the Figure *Epitrechon*.

1 Kings 21:25, 26, is a true *Parembolē*, as is Job 31:30, which was rightly marked as such from 1611 to 1744. The brackets were removed in 1762.

In Ps. 68:18 we have an *Epitrechon*—“yea, for the rebellious also”—which marks and magnifies the free grace of God, bestowed not merely on the unworthy, but on those who were rebellious.

In Ps. 109, verses 6 to 19 are to be included in a parenthesis as being the utterances of “the mouth of the wicked,” and the words spoken with a lying tongue; and “the words of hatred” (*vv.* 2, 3).

Then, verse 20 takes up verse 5 and says of all this:—

“This is the work⁶⁴ of mine adversaries (from the LORD)
And of them that speak evil against me (Heb. my soul).”

In Isa. 22, verses 21—24 are to be included within a parenthesis; carrying on the thought to Him of whom Eliakim is only a type; and returning to the type and the history in verse 25.

The Structure of Isaiah shows that chapters 36—39 are a parenthetical parenthesis, being the history of HEZEKIAH’S siege and sickness; corresponding with chapters 7—12, which are also a parenthesis, being historic events and prophecies connected with AHZA.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ The Hebrew is; (*p’ulllah*), *work, labor, acts, deeds*. Not seeing the parenthesis of verses 6—19, both the A.V. and R.V. are driven to render it “reward.” The fact that it is rendered “reward” in no other place shows that our contention is correct. (See all the other occurrences of the word:—Lev. 19:13. 2 Chron. 15:7. Ps. 17:4; 28:5. Prov. 10:16; 11:18. Isa. 40:10; 49:4; 61:8; 62:11; 65:7. Jer. 31:16. Ezek. 29:20.)

⁶⁵ See *The Vision of Isaiah*, by the same author.

Matt. 9:20—22 is more an Episode than a *Parembole*. But it was marked as a parenthesis down to 1762. The Edition of 1762 rejected it.

Luke 1, verses 55 and 70 should each be placed in a parenthesis.

Rom. viii. 20. The words “not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same” are an *Epitrechon*.

The *Ellipsis* must be supplied by the repetition of the verb “waiteth,” in verse 20 from verse 19.

This is shown by

The Structure of Rom. 8:19—21.

a | 19. Expectation.

b | 20-. The reason: Creation made subject.

a | -20. Expectation.

b | 21. Reason: Creation delivered.

This will be seen more clearly if it is set out in full, as follows:—

Rom. 8:19—21.

a | “19. For the earnest expectation |
| of the creature waiteth for the | Expectation.
| manifestation of the sons of God. |

b | 20-. For the creature was
| made subject to vanity, not
| willingly, but by reason of | Reason
| him who hath subjected the
| same;

a | -20. [*waiteth, I say*] in hope, } Expectation.

b 21. Because the creature it
self shall be delivered from
the bondage of corruption | Reason.
into the glorious liberty of
the children of God.”

Rom. 9:2, 3. *The Epitrechon* should be punctuated as follows; noting that (*euchomen*) is put, by the Figure *Hyperbaton*, out of its place, in order to attract and call our attention to the fact that it is in the Imperfect Tense, which is generally well Englished by our word “used,” *i.e.*, “used to wish” (*Lit.*, “was wishing”):

“I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart (for I used to wish, even I myself,⁶⁶ to be accursed from Christ) for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” This shows us that Paul’s sorrow was on account of his brethren; and the *Epitrechon* is thrown in to explain why he had this great heaviness and

⁶⁶ The Pronoun, here, is very emphatic.

continual sorrow. As much as to say, it was because he knew from his own experience their terrible position; for when he was in their condition he knew what he “used to wish.”

In 1 Cor. 10:3—5 there is a true parenthesis; an explanation of what precedes, and it is complete in itself.

“And all ate the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink. (For they drank of that spiritual rock following [*it*]; but the rock was Christ). Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased.”

Here, there is nothing about following “them,” as in the A.V. and R.V. and most translations (some putting it in brackets).

Two miracles are referred to: (1) The giving of the manna (related in Exod. 16:14); and (2) the gift of the water in the FOLLOWING event, or chapter (Exod. 17:5, 6).

This is clearly the obvious meaning of the Greek, both logically, grammatically, and historically. There is no occasion to go back to the Ancient Jewish but childish tradition; nor to charge the Apostle with so doing, as though he were not inspired.⁶⁷

In a succession of miracles, one is mentioned, and then that which followed it.

The verb (*akoloutheo*) is used of any kind of following; and of every mode of sequence. It is used of logical sequence; Aristotle says “If there are two, it follows (*akolouthei*) that there must be one.”

Longinus,⁶⁸ speaking of the Figure *Hyperbaton*, says, “It is a removal of words or thoughts out of their *consecutive* order.”

Thus, it is the miracle and drinking of the water, which *followed* the miracle and eating of the manna; and not the water following the people of Israel throughout their journey. That would be no point in the Apostle’s argument which called for the parenthetical explanation which he gives. His point was that both miracles taught *spiritual* truths, which their fathers did not see, either then, or in the days of John (John 6:47—59).

1 Cor. 15:20—28 is a true *Parembolē*, almost amounting to a digression. It must be carefully noted in order that we may closely connect verses 19 and 29, further consequences being stated if there be no resurrection. (See above, page 53).

2 Cor. 3:7—16 is a *Parembolē* or Digression, concerning the Old and New Covenants, in which the subject is broken off from verse 6 and continued in verse 17. This subject was the fact that “as the body without the *pneuma* (or spirit) is dead” (Jas. 2:26), so the “letter” (or old Covenant) is dead without Christ; for “the Lord (Christ) is its *pneuma*.”⁶⁹

Eph. 2:1 takes up the words in the middle of ch. 1:19, which does away with the necessity of all the italics in ch. 2:1. If we observe this parenthesis concerning the fact and results of Christ’s resurrection (in ch. 1:19—23) we connect ch. 2:1 with 1:19-, and preserve the truth and teaching of the whole passage, thus:—

1:19-, “That ye may know ... what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe (. . .),”
2:1, “even you who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

⁶⁷ As Alford does, but not Ellicott.

⁶⁸ *De Subl.* 8. 22, p. 55, Toup. See also Plato, *Rep.* 332. II.

⁶⁹ See *The Giver and His Gifts*, republished as *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*, by Kregel Publications, pp. 138-141.

Eph. 3. The whole of this chapter is parenthetical; and is a true *Parembole*, being complete in itself. This should be carefully noted, so that we may connect the “Therefore” of ch. 4:1 with ch. 2:22.

There is a smaller parenthesis within the third chapter, *viz.* from verses 1—13, verse 14 taking up the subject (which was broken off in *v.* 1) and repeating the words “For this cause,”

Eph. 4:9, 10 are also two parenthetical verses.

Phil. 1:23 is a true parenthesis, which is an addition by way of *explanation* to show why the Apostle did not know which to choose, “living” or “dying.” The reason was that there was a third alternative, better than either, *viz.*, “the Return” of Christ (*to analusai*), when he would be with Christ. But, as to the other two (which he returns to in verse 24), he concludes that it would be better for him to remain in the flesh than to die; but not better than Christ’s Return.

We must put verse 23 in a parenthesis, and render it, “For I am being pressed out of (*ek*) the two, having as earnest desire for the Return (see Luke 12:36⁷⁰) and to be with Christ, for it is far, far better [than either],” and read on from verse 22 to 24.

Phil. 2 should commence with verse 27 of ch. 1; ch. 1:27—29 being a parenthesis.

Phil. 3:2—14 is also a parenthesis, the fifteenth verse taking up the subject of the first verse.

Phil. 3:8—10 is a *Parembole* within the parenthesis, and commences with the words “for whom I have suffered the loss of all things,” etc., down to the end of verse 10. All this is a digression to show what he had gained in Christ Jesus his Lord as compared with what he had lost in giving up the Jews’ Religion. Verse 11 would then read on from the middle of verse 8, thus:

8— “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: (.....) 11 If by any means I might become partaker⁷¹ of the out-resurrection from among the dead.”

From what we have said under Division 4, Section 6, below, the Apostle may be referring to a fresh revelation of truth, which he received while in prison in Rome, concerning the prize of our “calling on high,” and our removal thither; and this may be either explanatory of 1 Thess. 4:13—18 or an additional and subsequent revelation pointing to a prior *removal* (as implied in the word (*ex-anastasis*)).

In any case, it shows that Paul was not desiring to obtain this, or any other advantage, by holiness of life, but by believing God concerning this calling on high (not “upward calling”).

Col. 2:21 and part of 22 are already rightly printed within a parenthesis, which should be carefully noted.

1 Tim. 3 parts of verses 14 and 15 should be read, “These things write I unto thee(. . .) that thou mayest know,” etc.

Hebrews 1, 2, presents us with a beautiful example of the manner in which the Structure of a passage puts its various members into their respective parentheses, showing the true connections and logical continuations.

⁷⁰ These are the only two occurrences of the verb (*analuō*), *to return*. The noun (*analuōsis*) occurs in 2 Tim. 4:6, and is rendered *departure*; but the sense is the same, *return*, *viz.*, the return of the body to dust and of the spirit to God; as in Gen. 3:19. Eccles. 12:7. See *The Rich Man and Lazarus*. pp. 30—33; *The Church Epistles*, pp. 157, 158.

⁷¹ See note on Phil. 1:21, Canon IV. Div. 2, below.

a | 1:1, 2-. God speaking.
b | 1:—2—14. The Son: God. “better than angels.”
a | 2:1—4. God speaking.
b | 2:5—18. The Son: Man. “lower than angels.”

It will be seen from this that the member “b” (vv. 2—14) is practically a digression, concerning the Son of whom God had spoken in v. 1.

Similarly, the member “a” (ch. 2:1—4) is a parenthesis standing between ch. 1:14 and ch. 2:5. So that ch. 2:1 (the word “therefore”) reads on from the word “Son” in ch. 1:2. And ch. 2:5 (the word “for”) reads on from the word “salvation” in ch. 1:14.⁷²

The study of the Structure of God’s Word is therefore necessary, if we would discover its logical divisions, as well as the perfection of its literary divisions.

Heb. 2:9, “But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels (for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor) that he by the grace of God should taste death for every⁷³ man.”

This parenthesis teaches us that the Lord Jesus was crowned with glory and honor for the suffering of death. At His Transfiguration we see Him so crowned (2 Pet. 1:17).⁷⁴

We have already included this passage under the former division on Punctuation.

1 Pet. 1:3—5. These verses are parenthetical, verse 6 being the continuation of verse 2.

In 2 Pet. 1:19 the *Epitrechon* should be thus carefully marked: “Whereunto (*i.e.*, to the prophetic Word) ye do well that ye take heed (as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the Day dawn and the Day-star arise) in your hearts.”

The words “in your hearts” must be connected with the words “ye do well to take heed,” and not with the dawning of the coming Day or with the rising of the Morning Star. That rising will not be in our hearts, but it will be Christ’s glorious manifestation to Israel and to the world (Luke 1:78. Rev. 22:16).

This world is a dark place, and the prophetic word is the only light in it to which we do well to “take heed in our hearts.”

Tradition says that Prophecy is a dark place, and that we do well to avoid it. But this only proves the truth of the Scripture in which Jehovah declares, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD” (Isa. 55:8).

These examples will be sufficient to show the importance of this branch of “rightly dividing the Word of truth,” as to its Literary Form.

ii. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD AS TO ITS SUBJECT-MATTER

It is the common belief that every part of the Bible is to be interpreted directly as referring to the Church of God; or as pertaining to every person, at every stage of the world’s history.

⁷² See Part II., Canon II., below.

⁷³ *Without distinction*, not without exception: this epistle being written to Hebrew believers.

⁷⁴ See separate pamphlet on *The Transfiguration*, by the same author.

This neglect of the precept to rightly divide it is an effectual bar to the right understanding of it, and to our enjoyment in its study.

This non-understanding of the Word is the explanation of its neglect, and this neglect is the reason why so many who should be feeding on the spiritual food of the Word are so ill-fed in themselves; and so ill-furnished for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17).

While the Word of God is written FOR all persons, and FOR all time, yet it is as true that not every part of it is addressed TO all persons or ABOUT all persons IN all time.

1. *The Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.*— Every word is “written FOR our learning,” and contains what all ought to know: yet, its subject-matter is written according to the principle involved in 1 Cor. 10:32, and is written concerning one or other of three distinct classes of persons, separately or combined:—

“The Jews,
The Gentiles, and
The Church of God.”

According to the general belief, everything that goes to make up the subject-matter of the Word of God is about only one of these three: and, whatever may be said about the other two (the Jews and the Gentiles), all is to be interpreted of only the one, *viz.*, the Church of God.

This comes of that inbred selfishness which pertains to human nature: which, doing with this as with all beside, is ever ready to appropriate that which belongs to others.

But no greater impediment to a right understanding of the Word could possibly be devised.

We are quite aware that, in saying this, we lay ourselves open to the charge which has been made by some, that we are “robbing them of their Bible.”

But the charge is groundless; and it arises from a total misapprehension of what we mean, or from a perversion of what we have said.

It is necessary, therefore, for us to repeat, and to state categorically our belief that every word from Genesis to Revelation is written FOR the Church of God. There is not one word that we can do without: not one word that we can dispense with, without loss.

We deprive no one of any portion of the Word of Truth.

We protest against robbery in this sphere, as in all others.

It is not we who rob the Church of God; but it is they who rob the Jews and the Gentiles. We would fain restore stolen property to the rightful owners; property which has been stolen by the very persons who charge us with robbery!

We may indeed retort in the words of Rom. 2:21: “Thou that preachest a man should not steal, Dost thou steal?”

We are prepared to make this counter-charge, and to sustain it.

The charge against us we disclaim; while those who make it are themselves guilty of the very offense for which they condemn us.

We hold that what is written to and about the Jew, belongs to and must be interpreted of the Jew.

We hold that what is written of and about the Gentile, belongs to and must be interpreted of the Gentile.

We hold that what is written to and about the Church of God, belongs to and must be interpreted of the Church of God.

Is this robbery? or, Is it justice?

Is it stealing? or, Is it restitution?

Evidence of the misappropriation (to use a milder term) is furnished by the Bible which lies open before us, to which we have already referred in speaking of the page-headings of Isa. 29 and 30 in our current editions of the English Bibles, in which the former is declared to be "*Judgment upon Jerusalem;*" and the latter, "*God's mercies to his church.*"

What is this but not only wrongly dividing the Word of truth, but the introduction of error, by robbing Jerusalem of her promised "mercies" and appropriating these stolen mercies to the Church? while the "judgments" are left for Jerusalem, just as burglars take away what is portable, and leave behind what they do not want or cannot carry away.

We believe God when He says that the Visions shown to Isaiah were "CONCERNING Judah and Jerusalem"

True, they were written FOR us; and "for our learning" (Rom. 15:4); but they are not addressed TO us, or written CONCERNING us, but "concerning Judah and Jerusalem."

It would be an act of dishonesty, therefore, for us thus to appropriate, by interpreting of ourselves, that which was spoken of Israel.

In like manner, if we take, as some do, the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians as though they were written to or concerning the Gentiles (or the unconverted world), then we not only rob the Church of God of its most precious heritage, but we teach the "universal Fatherhood of God" instead of His Fatherhood of only those who are His children in Christ Jesus.

It will thus be seen that unless we rightly divide the subject-matter of the Word of truth we shall not get the truth, but shall get error instead.

Every part of the Bible is written "concerning" one or other of these three divisions, or classes of persons.

Sometimes in the same passage or book there may be that which is concerning all three.

Sometimes a whole book may be concerning only one of these three, and the other two be altogether excluded. We may all three *learn* much from what is written of only the one; for the inspired, God-breathed Word is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction," FOR all who shall read it (2 Tim. 3:16). That which happened to Israel happened unto THEM for ensamples; "and they are written for OUR admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). "Whatsoever was written aforetime was written FOR our learning" (Rom. 15:4).

But while this is so, and remains true; what we mean is that every Scripture is written CONCERNING one or other of these three classes; and is specially addressed TO that particular class. This class has therefore the prior claim to that Scripture. The *interpretation* of it belongs to that class; while the other two may apply it to themselves, and are to learn from it. But, inasmuch as it is only an *application* and not THE *interpretation*, such application must be made only so far as it agrees with the interpretation of those Scriptures which are specially addressed to and relate to such class. Otherwise we shall find ourselves using

one truth to upset another truth; we shall be setting what is true of one class in opposition to what is true of another class.⁷⁵

All that we are concerned with now is the right dividing of the *subject-matter* of the Bible, which is three-fold. And the great requirement of the Word as to this is, that we should, and must, whenever we study any portion of the Word of God, ask the question,

CONCERNING WHOM IS THIS WRITTEN?

Whichever of the three it may be, we must be careful to confine and limit the *interpretation* of that passage to the class whom it concerns; while we may make any *application* of it to ourselves so long as it does not conflict with what is written elsewhere concerning “the church of God.”

We must not take that which concerns the Jew and interpret it of the Church. We must not take that which concerns the Church and interpret it of the world. We must not take what is said concerning the Gentile and interpret it of the Church.

If we do, we shall get darkness instead of light, confusion instead of instruction, trouble instead of peace, and error instead of truth.

To see this, we have only to notice the effect on such a Scripture as Rom. 11.

2. *The Gentiles*. What child of God who has “access by faith into this GRACE wherein we stand” has not rejoiced “in hope of the GLORY of God” (Rom. 5:2), as he went on to learn, in chapter 8:1, that there is “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus;” and that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38, 39).

But when we turn over one leaf (or two, perhaps in some Bibles), we read, in chapter 11 of the “Olive tree,” and of the solemn threats, and warnings to the branches (that had been grafted into it in place of the natural branches): “If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee” (v. 21); and “behold, therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (v. 22).

Having read these words in the eleventh chapter of Romans, the reader remembers what he had read in the eighth chapter, and is perplexed. He imagines that they are both written “concerning” him, and the result is he cannot understand either passage. God says in chapter 8 that “nothing can separate” the child of God from His love, and in chapter 11. God tells him that if he does not take heed he will be “cut off.”

HOW is the reader to solve the difficulty?

Only by “rightly dividing” this chapter according to the subject-matter; then, and only then, will he not only remove that which is the cause of the trouble, but at the same time he will produce new beauty, light, and instruction, out of the darkness and confusion.

He must ask what the subject-matter is about. Then he will look at the context⁷⁶ to see if he can discover it. He will go back to chapter 8, which he remembers was all about the Church of God; and, on looking at the next chapter (ch. 9) he finds that the subject-matter is no longer about the Church, but about “the Jews;” the

⁷⁵ See further on this subject in Part II., Canon X.

⁷⁶ So that this passage would serve equally well for an illustration of Canon I., Part II.

Apostle's "brethren according to the flesh" (ch. 9:3). He finds it is the same with chapters 10 and 11, and notices that in chapter 11:11, the "Gentiles" are introduced. Indeed, in verse 13 the Apostle distinctly says,

"I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES."

Thus he learns that those warnings and threats of chapter 11:21, 22, are "for his learning;" but that they are neither addressed to him, nor are they written concerning him as a member of "the Church of God."

On following up this clue he begins to notice the figure of the Olive tree, and remembers that it is one of three trees to which Israel is compared in the Old Testament, the Fig tree being the symbol of Israel's national privileges; the Olive tree, of Israel's religious privileges; and the Vine, of Israel's spiritual privileges.

Here he learns that the natural branches are broken off for a season, and the branches of the wild Olive (as the Gentiles are called) are grafted in, also for a season.

Israel is shown to have lost their religious privileges, which have passed over to the Gentiles as such. Israel once had their own land, their own metropolitan city, their own government, their own religious privileges, which are summed up in this context (ch. 9:4, 5), and in chapter 3:1, 2, where the question is asked, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" and the answer is, "Much every way, but chiefly that unto them were committed the Oracles of God."

Up to the rejection (Acts 28:25, 26) of Peter's offer (Acts 3:19, 20) no Gentile could get a blessing except in connection with Israel. In Acts 8, 9, and 10 we have three typical examples grouped together, as though to emphasize the fact by giving one from each of the three great branches of the human family: The Ethiopian (from Ham), Saul (from Shem), and Cornelius (from Japhet).

In the present dispensation no Jew can come into blessing except in Christ, in connection with Gentiles.

But in the New Dispensation of the Acts of the Apostles the Israelite branches were already being "broken off," and Gentile branches were already being grafted in. These latter had no greater privileges as Gentiles as to standing than Israelites (as Israelites). Hence the words of Rom. 11:18—21 applied to all such; for though the doctrinal foundation of the Mystery had been laid in Rom. 1—8, the Mystery itself was not revealed until it was committed to writing in the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians). The Epistle itself was not written until nearly the end of the Acts, and only a short time before Ephesians.

Now we can see the cause of all the confusion. The olive tree is almost universally taken as symbolizing the Church. We know of no commentary where this is not done. The Word of truth is not rightly divided as to its subject-matter; and, though the Apostle says, "I speak to you Gentiles," yet what he says is interpreted as addressed to the Church of God. Hence, the immutable truth concerning the standing of the Church of God in Christ Jesus is overthrown by what is equally true concerning the Gentile; and all this evil comes from not heeding the Divine precept of 2 Tim. 2:15.

True, it is all written *for us, for the Church*, "for our learning." There may be a kind of *general application* for us as to our use of *any* privileges which God may have given us as individuals; but, the true interpretation as it concerns the Gentiles, as such, will alone give us the "truth" of this portion of the Word.

Oh, what confusion is brought into the Word, and what trouble is brought into our minds by not rightly dividing the subject-matter of this Scripture.

We have only to take up almost any commentary on this chapter, and we see at once the struggles that have to be made to bring Rom. 11 into harmony with Rom. 8. It cannot be done; hence it is that the effort is so painfully obvious.

Look, for example, at one of the best commentaries on Romans, by one of the best commentators (the present Bishop of Durham, Dr. Handley Moule). He sees the difficulty, and he grapples with it. He dare not ignore the truth of chapter 8, and yet he treats chapter 11 in a way that practically upsets it. His words are:—

“Here . . . we have man thrown back on the thought of his responsibility, of the contingency, in a certain sense, of his safety on his fidelity, ‘If you are true to mercy, mercy will be true to you; otherwise you too will be broken off,’ . . . Let him put no pillow of theory between the sharpness of that warning and his soul. Penitent, self-despairing, resting on Christ alone, let him ‘abide by the goodness of God.’”

These words would be true if slightly modified and spoken of the Gentile, as such. But they are not true as addressed to “man,” as such; still less as a warning to the individual child of God, who can never be separated from that goodness and love of God by all the powers of earth and hell combined (Rom. 8:38, 39).

We could hardly have a more suitable and powerful example of the importance of attending to the one great requirement of “the Word of Truth;” as to rightly dividing its subject matter.

In the matter of letters, or epistles, it is very important in our social life to carefully observe the *address* written on the envelope. It makes for peace and harmony, and prevents awkward mistakes and misunderstandings.

It is a mistake that is sometimes made, and it may be that when we have opened a letter that is not addressed to us we commence to read it; and as we read on we find things said that are exceedingly interesting and most instructive; but we come upon other things which we cannot make out, and we find references to matters which we do not understand, and to circumstances with which we are unacquainted, because we are not the persons directly written to.

Then, if we are wise, we turn to the address, and there we discover the mistake we have made, and the cause of all our confusion. It is exactly so with

3. *The Epistles to the Dispersion.*—No Epistle has been the source of such confusion, and none has received such treatment as that written by James.

(a) *The Epistle of James is addressed:—*

To the Twelve Tribes which are scattered abroad.

Doubtless they were believers, up to a certain point; but exactly what they believed, or how far they believed we are not told.

They evidently, as Jews, believed that Christ was the Messiah, and had a certain amount of light: but the question is, Did they, as *sinner*s, believe in Christ *as their Saviour*; or know that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?” It is clear from the surface of the Epistle that they did not have the standing of those who were “called to be saints:” or of members of the spiritual Body of Christ, as set forth in the Epistles addressed to the churches of Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse.

They were “Christians” as distinguished from Jews and Gentiles, but were they members of “the Church of God?” Who are the “ye” in chapter 4? Who are the “rich men” in chapter 5:1? The stand-point of the epistle is wholly Jewish. They were monotheists as appears from chapter 2:19. Their place of worship was the “Synagogue” (ch. 2:2, margin).

In chapter 5:12 the prohibition of swearing is according to the Jewish formula; and in verse 14 the anointing with oil is in accordance with Jewish practice at that time.

Spiritual and vital Christianity is nowhere seen. Only twice is “Christ” named at all (ch. 1:1; ch. 2:1). The word “Gospel” is not used, and the “Mystery” is unknown. The fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are not even alluded to: such as Incarnation, Atonement, Redemption, Resurrection, or Ascension.

The Morality of the Law is there (2:8, 13). The coming of the Lord as the Judge is there (ch. 5:8, 9). Justification by works is there (ch. 2:20—26).

All the errors combated refer to Judaism. Religion (*threskeia*) is there, but it is shown that the works of mercy and charity are better than all the outward forms of religious worship. Fatalism, formalism and hypocrisy, arrogance and oppression, are specially dealt with; but surely these are not the sins which distinguish and characterize the Church of God.

All the phenomena are Palestinian or Eastern, as we may gather from the references to the early and latter rain (ch. 5:7); to the fig, oil, and wine (ch. 3:12); to drought (ch. 5:17, 18); to salt and bitter springs (ch. 3:11, 12); and to the hot wind (ch. 1:11).

The Epistle is full of references to the Sermon on the Mount, which (as we shall see below) has reference to the past Dispensation, not to the present.⁷⁷ We may compare

James 1:2; 5:10, 11 with Matt. 5:10—12.

1:4	5:48.
1:5, 17; 5:15	7:7, 11.
1:9; 2:5	5:3.
1:22—25; 2:10, 11	5:19.
1:20	5:22.
1:22; 2:14; 5:7—9	7:21—26.
2:1—3	6:2, 5.
2:8	7:12.
2:10, 11	7:12.
2:13	6:14, 15; 7:2.
2:14	7:21.
3:1; 4:11	7:1.
3:12	7:16.
3:17, 18	5:9.
4:3	7:8.
4:4	6:24.
4:8	5:8.
4:9	5:4.
4:10	5:3, 4.
4:11	7:1.
4:13—16	6:25.
5:2	6:19.
5:10	5:12.
5:12	5:34.

From other parts of the Lord’s teaching in connection with the Kingdom we may compare

James 1:14 with Matt. 15:19.
James 4:12 with Matt. 10:28.
James 5:1 with Luke 6:24.

⁷⁷ See below, No. 4 of these sections.

These phenomena in the subject-matter, when interpreted of the Church of God, and appropriated by those who are “in Christ,” and “complete in Him,” led to such confusion that, though the Epistle was in the primitive Syriac version from the first (cent. ii.), and was quoted as Canonical by the great Greek Fathers of cent. iv., yet there were always great doubts about its canonicity, and delays in receiving it.

These doubts were revived when translations of the Bible began to be made at the Reformation. Erasmus, Luther, and others questioned the canonicity of the Epistle; and it is well known that Luther went so far as to call it “a veritable Epistle of straw.”⁷⁸

The same difficulties and doubts are felt today. But they are all caused by interpreting of the Church of God that which is written to quite a different class of people belonging to “the Twelve Tribes.”

The question is, Do we belong to “the Twelve Tribes?” Do we worship in a Synagogue? Is it our custom, as a People, to anoint with oil? Is not the “Assembly” of James 5:14⁷⁹ identical with the “Synagogue” of ch. 2:2?⁸⁰

The answers to these questions will show that the Epistle is not addressed to us, *i.e.*, to those who are “in Christ,” and who are “the Church of God.”

The moment we discern this, and rightly divide off, the class of persons addressed, there will be an end of all the labored arguments to bring the Epistle of James into harmony with the Epistle to the Romans; and of all attempts to reconcile its teaching with that of Ephesians or Colossians. There will be nothing either to harmonize or to reconcile. James will be seen to be true in what he wrote to those whom he addressed, and Paul will be seen to be true in what he wrote. Both will be seen to be true in what they said to those to whom they were respectively inspired to write, if we rightly divide these portions of the Word of truth.

(*b*) *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.—We have another example, very similar to this, in the Epistle addressed to other Hebrew believers.

These were evidently more advanced than those who were addressed by James, and less, perhaps, than those who were addressed by Peter. All these three belonged to the same class; the *Diaspora*⁸¹ or Dispersion, of Israel.

The epistle of James was addressed to the *Diaspora*. Two were written by Peter (compare 1 Pet. 1:1 with 2 Pet. 3:1); and another was written to them by Paul. This is distinctly so stated in 2 Pet. 3:15, where Peter says “our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written UNTO YOU:” *i.e.*, you believers among the *Diaspora*.

Paul was thus the writer of the Epistle to Hebrew believers among the Dispersion; for no other such Epistle of Paul has ever been heard of. Who these Hebrews were, or what they believed, or what their earlier standing was, may be gathered from Acts 21:20, where James says to Paul on the arrival of the latter at Jerusalem: “Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and *they are all zealous of the law.*” If they were “all zealous of the law,” and continued to offer sacrifices for sins (as it is

⁷⁸ “*Eine rechte stroherne Epistle*” (Ed. of Germ. N.T., 1522).

⁷⁹ Which is translated “church” in A.V. and R.V.

⁸⁰ Which is translated “Assembly” in A.V. and “Synagogue” in R.V.

⁸¹ The word (*diaspora*), a scattering or dispersion. In the Septuagint it was used of Israelites dispersed among foreign nations (Deut. 28:25; 30:4. Isa. 49:6, Heb. “preserved.” Ps. 147:2). In the N.T. *Diaspora* becomes a proper title, *the Dispersion*. See John 7:35 (*dispersed*), 1 Pet. 1:1 (*scattered*), Jas. 1:1 (*scattered*).

clear they did from v. 26), they could not have believed that Christ was “the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:4); and they could not have known their standing in Christ. In Acts 21 they are not distinguished from those who beat Paul (v. 32), and cried “Away with him” (v. 36): and their zeal for the law was so great, that, they not only observed it themselves, but would persecute and destroy those who forsook it (Acts 21:21—24; compare 1 Thess. 2:14—16).

It was to such Hebrews as these, who believed so little, and worked so much, that Paul was afterward inspired to write an Epistle.

It was written to those who had “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth” (Rom. 10:2—4).

To make this known to them the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. For Paul’s name to have been prefixed to it, as it was to all his other Epistles, would have been (humanly speaking) fatal to its acceptance or usefulness, after the events recorded in Acts 21:17—40: events which ended his public ministry.

The Holy Spirit therefore suppressed Paul’s name, and put the name of “God” at the beginning of the Epistle. Thus, “God,” who had given the law, was the God who showed how it had been fulfilled and ended in Christ.

In spite of all this, Christians, today, take the Epistle as addressed directly to themselves; and, when they come to passages like Heb. 6:6, and read about “falling away,” or to ch. 10:26, and read how “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” for those who “sin willfully,” they are naturally greatly perplexed and perturbed: for all this is in direct contradiction to what is written and specially addressed to them concerning their own standing in Christ, in Rom. 8 and the other Church Epistles.

All this confusion comes from not “rightly-dividing” the class of persons *to* whom, and concerning whom, the Epistle to the Hebrews is addressed.

It may be applied by any and all believers who are still “zealous of the law;” and therefore it concerns such, and only such, today, whether Romanists, Romanizers, or Sacramentarians.

Of course it is written “for” us, yea, “for our learning.”

In the Epistle to the Romans we learn the fact, that “Christ IS the end of the law for every one that believeth,” but in Hebrews we learn *how* Christ BECAME the end of the law, and the end of Priests and Sacrifices. We learn the true meaning of the types of Exodus and Leviticus; which we could never otherwise have known.

But to interpret the Epistle to the Hebrews now of, or as addressed to, those who are “complete in Christ,” “found in Him, not having their own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9), is to produce only confusion and trouble. And, to take what was perfectly true of such Hebrew believers who were still “zealous of the law,” and to understand it of those who have died to the law in Christ, is not only to disobey the precept as to “rightly dividing” the Word of truth, but it is to pervert that very Word and make it teach error in the place of truth.

Many other examples might be given; but several others will come better under our fourth division of this ONE GREAT REQUIREMENT.

In 2 Tim. 2:15 God’s children are compared to workmen, whose chief work lies in connection with His “Word of truth.” He who gave that Word has directed them how to work, so as to excel as His workmen; and that they may not be ashamed of their work at His coming. He has sent them a special message showing how they are to work in order to secure this happy result. He has sent them an inspired instruction so that

they may find the “truth” they seek; and at the same time have the blessed assurance of showing themselves and their work, alike, “approved unto God.”

iii RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD AS TO ITS TIMES AND DISPENSATIONS.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; For Jehovah hath spoken” (Isa. 1:2).

1. The Word “Dispensation.”

God hath spoken, “at sundry times,” as well as “in divers manners” (Heb. 1:1).

And, if we are to understand what He has spoken, we must learn to distinguish, not only the various peoples to whom He has spoken, but the “sundry times” at which He has spoken to them, and also the “divers manners.”

It is true that the word (*polumeros*) means strictly, *in many parts*, or *portions*. But it is equally true that these parts were spoken at different, or “sundry times;” so that the rendering of the A.V. is literal as to the fact, and to the sense—though not literal to the *Words*.

The “time” when God spoke “to the fathers” is manifestly set in contrast with the time in which He hath “spoken unto us.” The “time” in which “He spake by the prophets” stands in contrast with the time in which “He spake by His Son.” And the “time past” is obviously distinguished from “these last days” (Heb. 1:1).

So that Times and Dispensations are inseparable from the Divine Word; not only the Times in which the Words were spoken, but the Times of which they were spoken, and to which they refer.

These different times are called Dispensations.

The Greek word rendered Dispensation is (*oikonomia*), and refers to *the act of administering*. By the Figure *Metonymy*, the *act of administering* is transferred to *the time during which that administering* is carried on.

The word itself is from (*oikos*), *house*, and (*nemo*), *to dispense, to weigh, or deal out*, as a steward or housekeeper. Hence the word was used of the management or administration of a household.

Our English word “Dispensation” comes from the Latin: *dis* (apart), and *pendere* (to weigh): *a weighing out*. We still use the word in this particular sense in connection with medicine which is *dispensed, i.e., weighed or measured out*: the place where it is done being called “a Dispensary.”⁸²

The Greek word *Oikonomia* is transliterated in our English word *Economy*; and we still preserve its original meaning when we speak of Political, Domestic or Social Economy, etc. This was its meaning at the date of our A.V. 1611, and it was used in the sense of administration. But, like many other words it degenerated by its usage;⁸³ and, as such *administration* was carried out rather with the view to *saving* than spending, so *Economy* came to mean frugality or thrift.

But the meaning of the Greek in the New Testament is not affected by these modern changes.

It is always *Administration*.

⁸² The Church of Rome uses it of the giving out of privileges called “indulgences;” but as these are generally privileges to *do without* certain things, or to do certain things without incurring the penalties or penance’s, the word comes to have the sense of “doing without” or “dispensing with.”

⁸³ See below, Part II, Canon III., under the Biblical usage of words.

In Isa. 22:21 it is rendered “government,” and in verse 19 it is rendered “station” (R.V. “office”).

In the New Testament it is a question whether the word is used in any other sense than that of *administration*. It is either the ACT of administering or of the TIME during which such act of administration is carried out.

The word occurs in Luke 16:2, 3, 4, where it is rendered “stewardship.”

In four other places it is rendered “dispensation.”

In 1 Cor. 9:17, Paul says that “an *administration* is committed unto me.”

In Eph. 1:10 we learn that God’s secret purpose⁸⁴ which He hath purposed in Himself is with a view to (not “in”) the Administration of the fullness of times (R.V. the times, marg. *seasons*); when He will head up (R.V. *sum up*) “all things in Christ.”

In Eph. 3:2 we learn that the “administration of the grace of God” was committed specially to Paul, that he might be the means of first making known the Mystery (or Secret).

This is further shown in verse 9, where the rendering “fellowship” should be *administration*:— “to bring to light, or enlighten all [as to] what [is] the administration of the Mystery (or Secret).”

In Col. 1:25 we read “I am made a minister, according to the administration of God which is given to me for you, to fully preach the word of God.”

In 1 Tim. 1:4, “neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which bring (R.V. minister) questionings, rather than an administration⁸⁵ of God which is in faith.”

These are all the places where the word *Oikonomia* occurs, and, in each, the idea is the same.

Our use of the term, now, in these pages, agrees with this usage; *i.e.* either the *act of administration*: or, by an easy transition (*Metonymy*), *the time or period* during which any special form of administration is carried on. This transference, however, is not necessary: for we may still think of Dispensational truth as being the same thing as *Administrational Truth*.

It is manifestly clear that God’s principles of administration must always have been perfectly adapted to the “times and seasons” during which they have been respectively carried out.

God’s principles of administration with Adam, before the Fall, must have been quite different from those with his immediate posterity after the Fall.

His administration with Israel “under the Law” was carried out on different principles from those which obtain now, during this present administration of grace.

These again are obviously quite different from those which will characterize God’s coming administration in Judgment.

⁸⁴ This is the meaning of the words rendered, “mystery of His will.”

⁸⁵ It is *oikonomia* in the Received Text (1550), though the Translators of 1611 must have read it (*oikodomia*). For they translated it “edifying.” It is *oikodomia* in Beza’s Text (1565) and Elzevirs (1624).

And these, again, will be necessarily quite different from those which will belong to the administration of glory in “the fullness of times” when all things shall be gathered together in one under the Headship of Christ (Eph. 1:10).

The present administration of God is in Grace; not in Law, Judgment, or Glory. It belongs to the time which is called “the Administration of the Mystery” (or Secret): that Secret (as the word Mystery means in the Greek) “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men,” (Eph. 3:5). It was “hid in God from the beginning of the world” (Eph. 3:9). It “was kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25). But Paul was made the special administrator of all the truth connected with it. It was committed to him by God: and the Word of God could not be “*fully preached*” without it (Col. 1:25, margin). The Word of truth can be preached today, but it cannot be “fully preached” without the truth connected with this Mystery.

Here then, at the outset, we have various administrations suited to the various and corresponding Times and Dispensations, during which they were carried out, and in force. In “other ages” certain truths were hidden, which are contrasted with the truths which are “now revealed.”

In the same way the Lord Jesus said, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

It is clear therefore that, while “God hath spoken,” everything which He has said belongs to its own proper Time and Dispensation. These times in which, or concerning which, He spoke, must therefore be carefully distinguished. “The Word of truth” must be rightly divided in this important matter, or, clearly, we shall *not get the truth*.

If we read into one Time or Dispensation that which belongs to another, we must necessarily have only confusion; and, confusion so great, that it will be absolutely impossible for us to have any idea of the purpose or meaning of what “God hath spoken.”

We are specially enjoined by the Lord not to separate what God hath joined together; and it is equally true that *we must not join together what He has separated*.

If we take what God said and did in one Dispensation, and carry it forward to another in which His Administration was on quite a different principle; or, if we take a truth subsequently revealed, and read it *backward* into the Time when it was hidden from the sons of men, it is impossible for us to understand what we read; we shall find ourselves taking what is quite true of one Time, and using it to contradict what is also true of another Time.

God deals not only with the three distinct classes of persons (the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God), but He deals with them in distinct ages and epochs; and on different principles of Administration. If therefore we mix them all up together, and indiscriminately take what was said of one time and interpret it of another, we only create insuperable difficulties, and make it impossible for us to arrive at the truth of the revealed Word.

When the Lord Jesus in Luke 21:24 speaks of “the times of the Gentiles,” He necessarily, by implication, contrasts these “times” with other times which are, obviously, “times of the Jews.” He thus divides off, in a very marked manner, two of these “times,” and sets one in contrast with the other.

Leaving these to be considered in their proper place and order, we must note that the right division of the subject-matter of “the Word of truth” will thus necessarily lead us in the second place to a right division of

2. *The Seven Times or Dispensations.*

We shall find that there are at least seven distinct Administrations each having its own beginning and ending clearly revealed and marked off.

These seven are, in turn, characterized by the principles of God's Administration, which mark all that He said and did during each special and distinct period.

We have for instance, the Theocratic Administration suited to the time of Innocence before the Fall (Gen. 1 and 2.).

We have the Patriarchal Administration suited to mankind after the Fall, but before the Law was given (Gen. 4—Exod. 20).

We have the Legal Administration suited only to Israel under the Law.

We have the present Administration of Grace which is for Jew and Gentile alike, *i.e.*, for individuals out of both, without the distinction previously made.

After this will come the Judicial Administration preparatory to the restoration of all things which were spoken before by the prophets.

Then will follow the Millennial Dispensation: ending with the Administration of Glory in the Eternal State.

These may be thus exhibited to the eye:

- A | The Edenic State (Innocence)
- B | Mankind as a whole (Patriarchal)
- C | Israel (under Law)
- D | The Church of God. The Secret.
| The Dispensation of Grace.
- C | Israel (Judicial)
- B | Mankind as a whole (Millennial)
- A | The Eternal State (Glory)

We thus see that these times and periods of different Administrations have their correspondence: in which
The *first* corresponds with the *seventh*;
The *second* with the *sixth*;
The *third* with the *fifth*;
The *fourth*, occupying the central position, stands out alone by itself, and has no correspondence with any of the others.

The *first* and *seventh* correspond, each being characterized as Divine, in its origin and principles, God being in direct communion and intercourse with man; the one before the entrance of *sin*, and the other after the ending of *sin*.

The *second* and *sixth* are each occupied with mankind as a whole, the former being Patriarchal and the latter Millennial.

The *third* and *fifth* are occupied with Israel; in the former being governed under Law, in the latter judged "by the law."

The *fourth*, the Church of God, stands alone and by itself, as occupying the great central position, showing the "purpose of God"—round which all His counsels circle, and with reference to which they all exist according to His eternal purpose.

Let us look at them in order:—

(a) *The Edenic Dispensation.*—It is clear that the period beginning with Gen. 1:26 and going down to the end of Gen. 2 is perfectly unique. There is nothing like it until we come to the last, or seventh,

Dispensation, which is the Eternal state. In these two there is only the innocence of man; and both are characterized by the absence of sin and the presence of God. God came down and communed with Adam, revealing Himself to him: and the mark of the Eternal state is given in the words, “The Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them” (Rev. 21:3).

Adam was directly under the Divine administration and tuition of God Himself. God was his Teacher, revealing Himself and His wonderful works to Adam. He visited Adam at certain definite times, with audible sounds by which His coming was known (Gen. 3:8⁸⁶). He came for the definite purpose of teaching man. He brought the animals to Adam to instruct him (Gen. 2:19, 20); He gave him a companion (Gen. 2:21, 22); and we know not what else He did, and would have done, had not all this Divine communion been suddenly snapped and suspended by the Fall. Such direct communion of man with God has, since that moment, been in abeyance, and will continue to be so until the curse shall have been removed, and the Edenic state of Bliss find more than its counterpart in the Eternal state of Glory.

In this first Administration Adam was dealt with as innocent; and man can never be dealt with in a corresponding manner during all the succeeding Dispensations, until the curse and all its effects shall have been done away.

Man was then what is called “under probation.” This marks off that Administration sharply and absolutely; for *man is not now under probation*. To suppose that he is so, is a popular fallacy which strikes at the root of the doctrines of Grace. Man has been tried and tested, and has been proved to be a ruin. Ever since that moment man has been dealt with as lost, guilty, ruined, helpless, unclean, and undone; and all this because of what he is, and not merely from what he has *done*. That is to say, he is not only a ruined sinner, but a ruined *creature*.

Man failed, just as Satan and Angels before him had failed under their trial. Man showed the same result, and proved that, apart from the Creator, no created being could stand. By Christ, the Creator, all things not only exist; but in Him only can they consist (Col. 1:16, 17).

The one test was THE WORD OF GOD. God had spoken; and the question was; Will man believe God or Satan?

This was the one simple test. It was not what men whittles down by his tradition to the “eating of an apple;” but in Gen. 3 the first crucial words are, “Hath God said?” (v. 1).

Satan is introduced to us as using these words, and as substituting *two lies* for what God had said:—

- (1) “Ye shall be as God;”
- (2) “Ye shall not surely die.”

These two lies are the foundation of Satan’s old religion and man’s “New Theology,” and are the hall-marks of the coming Apostasy, under the Beast of Rev. 13.

Our first parents believed Satan’s lies, and their descendants have followed in their steps. Part of them believe neither God nor the Old Serpent; the bulk of them believe only Satan.

The teaching of demons is today embraced by the strictest of Evangelicals and Protestants, as well as by the Heathen, by Romanists, and by Spiritists: and they all unite in endorsing these two great lies of the Old Serpent. They all believe and hold (1) That man has within him the Divine (“Ye shall be as God”); (2) that “There is no death” (“Ye shall not surely die”).

⁸⁶ The Heb. (*chol*), rendered *voice*, means any *sound* or *noise* in an extensive sense; e.g. *crackling*, Eccles. 7:6; *trumpet*, Exod. 19:16; *thunder*, Exod. 20:18; *noise*, 1 Kings 1:45; *sound*, 2 Kings 6:32; *proclamation*, 2 Chron. 24:9.

Man was under probation, and he failed in the proving.

Never again in any succeeding Dispensation has he been, or can he be thus tried.

Popular theology still teaches that “man is under probation.” It is false! Man has been tried, and declared to be, in consequence, utterly ruined, and “at enmity with God;” he is not “subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,” and has “no good thing” in him.

Man needs no further probation to verify this solemn fact.

But we must return to our special point, which is this: All that was said and done by God in that first Administration, the Edenic State, was peculiar to, and appropriate only to that state, and to no other. It can never be characteristic of any other Dispensation.

God was man’s teacher—God was His own Revealer. He gave man his trial and his test, and after these had done their work God pronounced His sentence on men, and his doom on the Old Serpent.

(b) The Patriarchal Dispensation.—In the second Administration, the one great principle on which mankind was treated was as a whole, and as having completely failed under the probation in which man had been placed. Having lost the Divine teaching, the Dispensation is characterized as the “Times of Ignorance” (Acts 17:30).

Mankind fails collectively, as man had failed individually; and furnishes another example of the fact that, no created being or beings can stand, apart from the upholding power of the Creator (Col. 1: 16, 17).

All the words and actions of Jehovah were appropriate to this second Administration.

The “times of ignorance” are contrasted in Acts 17:30 with later times, which are distinguished by the words, “But now.”

In those times God “overlooked” that which He could not overlook after He had given the Law; those things which, before the Law, were “sins,” became afterward “transgressions.”

The principles which governed God’s Administration in those “times of ignorance,” could not be appropriate for the times when He revealed His Law by Moses, and made known His will to the sons of men.

It is clear, therefore, that these Dispensations must be rightly divided; for even the future judgment of mankind is based on the distinction which we must make between these two periods, *viz.*, “without law” and “under law.” See Rom. 2:12.

“As many as have sinned WITHOUT LAW shall PERISH also without law;
And as many as have sinned IN THE LAW shall be JUDGED by the law.”

It is evident that these two principles belong to the two different Dispensations (before and after the Law) respectively. They teach us that the same principles must prevail when the final judgment of those who have lived in both Dispensations shall come.

We may well believe also that the same principle will be acted on in the future judgment of those who are living in this present Dispensation; for there are, today, those who sin without having heard the Gospel, and there are those who have heard it and have not obeyed it (2 Thess. 1:8).

If we rightly divide these, and their judgments also, as announced in Rom. 2:10, 12, we shall have the key to a problem which has perplexed many a child of God.

These then are the great principles which govern God's dealings with mankind; those that were "without law," and those who were "under law:" those that are without the Gospel, and those who are under the Gospel.

It was not merely, or only, that one dispensation was "without law" and another "under law," but that there were those in each who knew the law and those who did not; those who obeyed and those who obeyed not.

And God dealt with mankind on this principle of judgment in all subsequent dispensations: for all were under His administration as to government.

The second Dispensation, that which succeeded the Fall, was governed by Patriarchal Law, as the following one was governed by Mosaic Law.

Both laws were given by God.

It is often supposed that before the Mosaic Law mankind were left to themselves.

But such was not the case. Mankind as a whole was in a sense "under law," but it was "unwritten law;" while Israel was under written law, "written by the finger of God" (Exod. 31:18).

No sooner had our first parents been driven out from their first abode and passed from God's administration which corresponded with and marked their state of innocence, than the different character of His new administration was seen.

His first act was to point out THE WAY BACK to Himself and to peace with God.

Immediately after the Fall, and the loss of God's presence and teaching, the way back to His favor was opened by Himself.

(1) It is evident that *the way back* was declared to be *by sacrifice*, by substitution, and by blood.

Those who believed God obeyed the commands which He must have given and made known.

It was "by faith" that Abel brought his substitute—the Sacrificial Lamb—to suffer in his stead. But "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Abel, therefore, with the rest of mankind, must have heard and known God's command. Abel obeyed it. It was "by faith:" otherwise it would have been by fancy. Hence, Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of His gifts" (Heb. 11:4).

God testified of Abel's offering by consuming it with "fire from heaven."

For only by such fire God "accepted" sacrifice (Ps. 20:3, margin, and compare Lev. 9:24. Judg. 6:21. 1 Kings 18:38. 1 Chron. 21:26. 2 Chron. 7:1): not by any fire emanating from or kindled on this earth. Only by such formal acceptance with "fire from heaven," did God "testify" of and have respect to Abel's gifts. Only by such acceptance did Abel "obtain witness that he was righteous." Only by such witness did God show, and Cain know, that He "had not respect" to the offering that Cain brought unto the Lord.

The fire fell upon Abel's lamb, instead of upon Abel; upon the substitute, instead of upon the sinner.

But it fell not on Cain's offering—for God did not accept it. It was the "fruit of the ground" (Gen. 4:2, 3), the fruit of that which God had only just declared, "Cursed be the ground" (Gen. 3:17).

Thus was the way back to God opened and made clear; and thus was man's disobedience manifested.

There was God's way, which Abel took; and there was man's way, which Cain invented. There have been but those two ways back to God from that day to this.

One was God's, and the other was man's.
One was by faith, the other by works.
One was Christ, the other was Religion.
One was by God's grace, the other was by human merit.

There never have been but these two ways.

This is God's way now, by faith through Grace-faith in Christ the Saviour whom God has provided, which is summed up in the words,

“NOTHING in my hand I bring.”

All other ways are one; for however they may differ, they are all alike in saying,

“SOMETHING” in my hand I bring.

They differ only in what that “something” is to be; and those who differ from them, as Abel did, are ever in great danger of getting killed, as Abel was. For nothing is so cruel as “Religion.”

Thus the first act in God's changed administration after the Fall was to open the way back to Himself; and it is placed unmistakably on the forefront of revelation.

But there are many other marks as to the character of God's administration.

If we will search for its principles we shall find various words, expressions, and hints, casually dropped, which give us some insight into the principles which characterized that administration; for there is no attempt to give a detailed description of them. We are left to note and mark them for ourselves.

(2) It is evident that there was a *Place of worship*, a place set apart where access to the LORD was to be had.

At the moment of the Fall, when man was driven out, the LORD God “placed [as in a tabernacle], at the east of the Garden of Eden, Cherubim” (Gen. 3:24). The word “placed” is (*shakan*), *to place, station or dwell in a tabernacle*. Hence it is used of God's dwelling-place among His people.⁸⁷

Hither Abel and Cain brought their offerings (Gen. 4:3, 4; compare Lev. 1:3). Thither Cain “went out from the presence of the LORD” (v. 16). At its “door” lay the sin offering which Cain might have brought as well as Abel (Gen. 4:7).

Thither Rebekah went to “inquire of the LORD” (Gen. 25:22).

Hence, the statement that certain things were done “before the LORD” expressed a great reality (Gen. 13:13; 18:22; 19:27; 27:7. Compare Exod. 16:9, 33; 23:17; 33:7, etc.).

(3) *Certain persons* evidently had official positions. Shem was one who probably had charge of this tent or tents (Gen. 9:26, 27).

⁸⁷ Exod. 25:8; 29:45, 46. Josh. 18:1; 22:19. 1 Kings 6:13; 8:12. 2 Chron. 6:1. Ps. 68:18. It is from this word that we have the word *shekinah*, that glorious light which was the symbol of God's presence in that tabernacle.

Melchisedek was “a priest of the Most High God” (Gen. 14:18). Heads of families so acted (Gen. 8:20; 12:8; 35:7).

Tithes were already paid (Heb. 7:9).

The first-born evidently had certain privileges, among them the duty of offering sacrifices. Who else can “the young men” be whom we find so acting in Exod. 24:5, before the consecration of Aaron and his sons under the Law, as priests of the nation as such?

If there were priests, so were there preachers also (2 Pet. 2:5), and prophets (Gen. 20:7. Jude 14, 15).

(4) *Certain official garments* appear to have been worn by those who thus officiated. What was the “goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau,” which Rebekah stored so carefully, but clothes or garments afterward used by the priests under the Law? (compare Lev. 21:10. Exod. 35:19. Lev. 10:6⁸⁸). The word “goodly” is also used (though not exclusively) of sacred things in connection with the Temple (2 Chron. 36:10. Isa. 64:11. Lam. 1:10⁸⁹).

If this be so, we can understand why Esau was “profane” when he despised his birthright (Heb. 12:16).

Joseph’s “coat of many colors,” instead of being (according to some) a peculiar coat of “gaudy patchwork,” or, according to others, an ordinary “long tunic” in general wear, seems to have been a special garment by which Jacob designated him for one, at least, of the three parts of the birthright which Reuben had forfeited.⁹⁰ At any rate, the word rendered colors (*passim*) is always used of *colors*⁹¹ and never of *pieces*; and though Aaron’s coat is not actually so called, it was so in fact, as we see from Exod. 39:1 and Exod. 28:4, 39, where it is said to be *embroidered*. The word rendered “coat” (*k’thoneth*) is also associated with the coats of the priests,⁹² or with those of royalty (2 Sam. 13:18, 19).

(5) Again, *certain forms and ceremonies* are also incidentally mentioned, which give us a still further insight into the nature of the administration of that dispensation. Thus we have anointing or consecration with oil (Gen. 28:18; 31:13); building of altars (Gen. 8:20; 12:7; 35:1, 3, etc.); pouring out drink offerings (Gen. 35:14); the making of a covenant by sacrifice (Gen. 15:9—18); the keeping of the Sabbath, before the actual proclamation of the Law (Exod. 16:23; compare Exod. 15:25, and Deut. 5:12); the offering of “seven ewe lambs” (Gen. 21:31); the distinction between “clean” and “unclean” (Gen. 7:2; 8:20); the prohibition of blood as food (Gen. 9:4); the execution of the murderer (Gen. 9:6; 42:22); the prohibition of adultery (Gen. 12:18; 26:10; 39:9; 49:4); the binding nature of oaths (Gen. 26:28); the obligation of vows (Gen. 28:20—22; 31:13); the sin of fornication (Gen. 34:7); marriage with the uncircumcised (Gen. 34:14; compare Exod. 34:16); honoring of parents (Gen. 9:25, 26); purification, or ceremonial cleansing for worship (Gen. 35:2); the birthright of the firstborn (Gen. 25:31; compare Exod. 22:29 and Deut. 21:17); and the marrying of the brother’s widow (Gen. 38:8).

⁸⁸ In all those passages the Hebrew word (*begadim*) is the same; but not so in Deut. 29:5, where Moses says of the ordinary clothes of the people, “your clothes waxed not old.” Here it is. (*salmah*).

⁸⁹ Rendered “pleasant” in the latter passages.

⁹⁰ According to 1 Chron. 5:1, 2, Reuben forfeited his birthright (Gen. 35:22. Compare 49:3, 4). This birthright consisted of three parts. Levi obtained the *priestly* office; as Judah had the part connected with *rule*, indicated by the possession of the tribal “staff” or “sceptre,” and as Joseph had the firstborn’s *double portion*, in Ephraim and Manasseh, according to Deut. 33:17.

⁹¹ Gen. 37:3, 23, 32. 2 Sam. 13:18, 19.

⁹² See Ezra 2:69. Neh. 7:70, 72.

What are all these but so many hints and glimpses which reveal the existence of an orderly administration, which must have been Divinely promulgated, and exactly suited for that dispensation? All was not confusion as the unobservant reader might suppose. Men were not left to themselves during that Patriarchal Dispensation.

But to bring the laws of that administration into another dispensation, either for the purpose of limitation or supplement, is to mix up together things which are perfectly distinct, and to introduce confusion where all is otherwise in perfect order.

(c) *The Israelite Dispensation "under Law."*—In the third Administration we have a totally different principle involved. All is changed by the giving of the law. This third Dispensation stands out in contrast with the previous one, which was "without Law;" as it does from this present Dispensation, which is characterized by Grace.

The communications of God, and His dealings with Israel, were appropriate to, and in harmony with, the principles of His administration "under law."

If we read all that into this present Dispensation, and interpret it of ourselves, we at once place ourselves under a covenant of works, and practically deny our standing in grace.

Unless we rightly divide the Word of truth in this matter we shall be filled with confusion.

It was true, in that Dispensation of Works, to say: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save himself [Heb., *his soul*] alive" (Ezek. 18:27). But to *interpret* that of ourselves, now, is contrary to fact: and to do so is to flatly deny our true church-standing which declares, that we are not saved by works,⁹³ but by grace (Tit. 3:5. Rom. 11:6).

The Ceremonial Law was given to Israel; not to Assyria or Egypt, or any other nation. Any precepts, of course, that may be of universal application will be wisely applied. The commands as to the food to be used or avoided were neither meaningless nor arbitrary, but were given according to the infinite knowledge of God. It will be our wisdom, therefore, if we are guided by them for our health's sake; but in no sense as being "under law."

The Ceremonial Law continued down to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the burning of the Temple, when it ceased absolutely, as it had already ceased relatively, by the death and sacrifice of Christ, which fulfilled the law (Col. 2:14, etc.).

The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles do not belong to this present Gospel Dispensation of Grace, but they rather close up the Dispensation of the Law (the Acts being transitional).

Christ did not come "to found a church" as those assert who do not heed the difference between the various Dispensations. That is man's, and Rome's, constant assertion. But God's revelation tells us that "Jesus Christ was a MINISTER OF THE CIRCUMCISION, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the Fathers, and that the Gentiles (after Israel's salvation) might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15:8, 9).

Christ's coming had reference to the Jew and Gentile, not to the founding of a church.

The Jews rejected the Kingdom and crucified their king. And the Gentiles (as such) have not yet glorified God for His mercy.

⁹³ If any think of Jas. 2 as contradicting this, let them turn to Jas. 1:1, and they will see that the Epistle is addressed "To the Twelve Tribes," and is therefore quite in harmony with that Epistle (see above, p. 73).

A subsequent offer was afterward made by Peter, to whom “the keys of the kingdom” were given (not of the Church, but of the Kingdom). The Kingdom was again proclaimed in the Acts, and the promise of Christ’s return on their national repentance was repeated (Acts 3:19—21, R.V.).

But the command to repent was unheeded by the nation and its rulers; and so, in the Acts of the Apostles, we see the gradual transition taking place, until the final pronouncement of God’s rejection of the nation is formally made by Paul in Acts 28:24—28.

(d) *The Ecclesia: the Dispensation of Grace.*—In this the *fourth* Dispensation neither Jews nor Gentiles are dealt with *as such*: but, individuals, both “transgressors” of the Jews and “sinners of the Gentiles,” are called out, and made into a new body, a third People, called “the Church of God,” in which now “there is neither Jew nor Gentile ... but all are one in Christ Jesus;” being baptized into the Body of Christ, not with the old *material* element of water, but with the new spiritual medium or element of *pneuma hagion* (Gal. 3:27, 28).

All this had been kept secret until it was revealed to Paul and made known by the prophets and apostles in “prophetic writings” (Rom. 16:25, 26).

Had it been made the subject of prophecy the Jew, today, could reply against God and say that, he was obliged to fulfill prophecy. It was therefore “hid in God” (Eph. 3:9). God kept the secret to Himself. What He would have done had the nation of Israel obeyed the command to repent, in Acts 3:19, 20, none can tell. God is sovereign, and we may be perfectly sure that the Scripture would have been fulfilled. Nothing was unforeknown, or unforeseen; for the members of the Church of God were “chosen in Christ BEFORE the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). All we can say is that “the secret things belong unto God.” Those that are revealed alone concern us.

One of these secrets, the “Great” one (1 Tim. 3:16. Eph. 5:32), has been revealed; and we now rejoice in its revelation.

This Dispensation of “the Church of God,” of “the grace of God,” and of the “Spirit of God” commenced outwardly by the ministry of Paul, in the Dispensation or administration committed formally to him; and inwardly by the revelation of the mystery as further set forth in its fullness in those epistles which he wrote from his prison in Rome: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

This Dispensation will end by the members of Christ’s body, the Church of the living God, being “received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16); “caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so to be ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:17. Phil. 3:20, 21). This is called in 2 Thess. 2:1, “our gathering together unto Him;” and this glorious rapture will close this fourth Dispensation.⁹⁴ The one object, therefore, of this Dispensation is not, as is popularly supposed, the conversion of the world; still less its social improvement: but the formation of the one spiritual Body of Christ by calling out those who were chosen in Him “before the foundation of the world.”

To that end, and that alone, is this good news made known today in all the world. In no former Dispensation was such a Gospel ever preached; and in no subsequent one will the good news of such free grace be proclaimed.

Before this Dispensation, and after it, all is connected with man, and what he is, and what he is to do. But in this Dispensation it is a question of what Christ is, and of what He has done.

This Dispensation of grace will be followed by:

⁹⁴ See *The Pauline Epistles* and *The Good Deposit*, by the same author.

(e) *The Dispensation of Judgment*.—In the *fifth* Dispensation, which is characterized by judgment, Israel becomes once again the central object.

When the Church, the mystical body of Christ, has been “received up in glory” the day of grace will be over. And Israel will once more be dealt with, not again under law, but under judgment.

The present Dispensation is (apart from God’s purpose in the election of grace) called “Man’s Day” (1 Cor. 4:3, marg.), because it is during this present period that man is judging. But, the next Dispensation is called “the Lord’s Day”⁹⁵ (Rev. 1:10), because that will be the time when He will judge. Man’s day of judging will be closed and the Lord’s day of judging will begin.

Hence “the day of the Lord” is the day of the Lord’s judging and ruling; and the first occurrence of the expression gives us its essential meaning; and the object and aim of that judgment.⁹⁶ It will be the day when

“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled,
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down:
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.”
(Isa. 2:11, 12, 17).

Whatever may be the dealings of God with men, and whatever may be His judgments, this is the end and aim and object of them all:

The abasement of Man
and
The exaltation of Jehovah.

The whole of that dispensation is called “the Day of the Lord.” It is the day which has to do with “times and seasons;” with Israel and the Gentiles. But which has nothing to do with “the Church of God.”

This is clear from 1 Thess. 5:1—5. That day cannot overtake the Church of God “as a thief,” because the Church has nothing to do with “times and seasons.” That day has to do with those whom it will thus “overtake.”

All that is said and done in that coming dispensation is appropriate to, and in harmony with, the great principle which will characterize God’s administration in that day.

It will then be right for Israel to rejoice over the judgments inflicted on all their enemies.

Then, the “Imprecatory Psalms” will be in their appropriate place.

That dispensation of judgment will have its own peculiar characteristics; and language is therefore used of it which could never have been used in any former dispensation.

Israel will not again be under law; but it will be under a “new covenant,” when the stony or hard heart of flesh will be taken away, and a new heart implanted within them, and a new spirit imparted to them (Jer. 31:31—34. Ezek. 36:24—38), making Israel, then, the only indefectible nation that the world has ever seen.

This belongs, with the Dispensation which follows it, to “the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21).

⁹⁵ See two separate pamphlets on *The Lord’s Day* and *Four Prophetic Periods*, by the same author.

⁹⁶ See below, under Canon I. 5 and Canon V. ii.

So that, here again, we have certain definite times spoken of.

These “times of restitution” include the succeeding, or

(f) *The Millennial or Theocratic Dispensation.*—The *Sixth* Dispensation, in which mankind will again be dealt with as a whole. It will begin with the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1, 2) and will end with the great white throne and the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15). A thousand years will be the period of its duration.

The principle of God’s dealings with men during these Millennial days will be neither Law, nor Grace, nor Judgment; but Righteousness, Power, and Glory. It will be the administration of Righteousness in all its purity. The prayer for the coming kingdom will then, at length, find its abundant answer; the kingdom of God will have come at last; and His will will then be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

That dispensation is characterized by the binding of Satan. It is clear, therefore, that language peculiar to that time would not be appropriate to any other preceding dispensation, in which Satan is not bound.

It stands alone, unique; and it issues in the last or *seventh* Dispensation, which corresponds with the first Edenic state, and may be called

(g) *The Eternal State.*—Very little is said about this last. In this respect it is like the first. It begins at Rev. 21:1, with “the new Heavens and the new Earth,” and nothing is said about its end.

Beyond this, therefore, we cannot go. In these last two chapters of Revelation we have all that can be known.

These, then, are the seven Times or Dispensations; each of which has its own defined beginning and ending; and its own special characteristics. It is necessary for us to rightly divide them, and rightly to divide the Word of truth which tells us of them.

3. *The Special Characteristics of the Dispensations.*

It may help us if we summarize these, by connecting each with a definite characteristic word or thought.

(a) As to *man’s condition* in each, it is, in the

- 1st. Innocence.
- 2nd. Without Law.
- 3rd. Under Law.
- 4th. Under Grace.
- 5th. Under Judgment.
- 6th. Millennial.
- 7th. Glory.

(b) As to the *Crisis*, or Judgment, in which each ends:

- 1st. The Edenic state ended in the expulsion from Eden.
- 2nd. The Period without Law ended with the Flood and the Judgment on Babel.
- 3rd. The Period under Law ended in the Rejection of Israel.
- 4th. The Dispensation of Grace will end in the Rapture of the Church, and “the Day of the Lord.”
- 5th. The Dispensation of Judgment will end in the Destruction of Anti-Christ.
- 4th. The Millennium will end in the Destruction of Satan, and the Judgment of the Great white Throne.
- 5th. Will have “no end.”

It must be evident that, in all these seven Dispensations, we have a variety of different characteristics which demand the utmost care and attention which we are able to give them.

There are, however, two further matters on which to speak; for beside these distinct landmarks by which these dispensations are known, there are larger “times” which embrace or overlap more than one of these divisions.

4. “*The Times of the Gentiles.*”

We have “the times of the Gentiles,” which not only embrace this present Church Dispensation, but stand specially in contrast with the Jews. They commence with Jerusalem falling under the power of Babylon; they continue during the whole period while Jerusalem is “trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24); and they will end only when the Gentiles shall cease thus to tread down Jerusalem, and its streets shall be again trodden by its rightful owners, the People of Israel. Then those “times of the Gentiles” will be changed for the *times of the Jews*.

Those times therefore are not coterminous with any of the seven dispensations mentioned above, but overlap.

They begin before the present Church period, and do not close until after it has ended.

These same times are referred to in Rom. 11:25: “Blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” This is usually spoken of as pertaining to the completion of the Church. But the Church is not in question here at all. It is the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles; and the Church is not composed of Gentiles as distinct from Jews, or of Jews as distinct from Gentiles. For it is made up both of Jews and Gentiles, who, on becoming members of “the Church of God,” lose this distinction altogether, being made members of a Body in which now there is neither Jew nor Gentile. This is expressly stated in Gal. 3:28. Col. 3:11. (Compare Rom. 10: 12. 1 Cor. 12: 13. Gal. 5:6. Eph. 2:15.) This must therefore refer to the fullness or filling up of the *times* of the Gentiles; and the word “Gentiles” must be understood as being put for the “times” which they fill up.

Moreover, Israel will not be saved by the Rapture of the Church, but by the coming of “the Deliverer out of Zion, turning away ungodliness from Jacob.” It is Isaiah 59:20 that is being quoted in Rom. 11:26, and not 1 Thess. 4:16; and there is nothing about the “fullness” or completion of the Church in Isaiah.

Before the Deliverer comes there must be that from which Israel is to be delivered; and that will be the great Tribulation, “when the enemy shall come in like a flood.” (See Isa. 59:19—21).

It is clear, therefore, that Rom. 11:25 refers to the same “times of the Gentiles” of which the Lord speaks in Luke 21:24.

5. *The Parenthesis of the Present Dispensation.*

There is another matter connected with these Times and Dispensations. This is revealed by our Lord’s own action in the synagogue at Nazareth. (Luke 4:16—20.) He stood up and read Isaiah 61:1, 2. He read the first verse; but, after He had read the first sentence in the second verse, “HE CLOSED THE BOOK, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down.” (Luke 4:20.)

Why did the Lord close the book at that point? The answer to this question is the revelation to us of the great principle which we are now, and here, insisting upon. The next sentence belonged, and still belongs, to a yet future dispensation. “The acceptable year of the Lord” had come. But “the day of vengeance of our God” had not (and has not even yet) come. The Lord divided these two Dispensations off by *closing the book*, and that is what we must do if we are not to join together, and thus confuse and confound, to our own great hindrance and loss, that which God has separated and distinguished. But alas! most Christians insist on keeping that book open, and refuse to learn the lesson here emphatically taught and enforced by the Lord.

There is no mark in the Hebrew text to indicate such a break, which involves an interval of nearly 2,000 years: and yet the break is surely there.

As to “the acceptable year of the Lord,” Christ could and did say: “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21). But He could not have said it if He had read the next sentence, “and the day of vengeance of our God.” And yet the whole of this present Church Dispensation, the present interval of the Dispensation of Grace, comes between those two sentences. Only a comma divides them in our English Translation.

This is because the Mystery (or Secret) of the Church was “hid in God,” and had not yet been revealed to the sons of men. How then could mention be made of it? It was necessarily passed over. Hence the Lord “closed the book” and “sat down.”

This was why the prophets who spoke and wrote “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21) “inquired and searched diligently what, or WHAT MANNER OF TIME (concerning Christ) the Spirit which was in them could signify, when it testified beforehand of the SUFFERINGS of Christ, and the GLORY which should follow” (1 Pet. 1:10, 11). There was nothing to tell them what length of “time” should elapse between “the sufferings and the glory;” whether the glory should follow immediately on the sufferings; or whether there should be any interval of time at all between them. Hence, their inquiry, and their search. The prophets themselves revealed the sufferings; they saw them, and, just as it is when one views the outline of a nearer range of mountains, they saw the outline of another range beyond them as they testified of the “glory:” but what distance separated those two mountain ranges, or what valleys and hills, and cities and lakes, lay between them they could not see. In like manner the events which lay between the “sufferings” and the glory that should follow was not revealed either to them, or by them. We know, now, that nearly 1,900 years have passed since the first coming and the “sufferings” of Christ; but the “glory” has not yet been revealed. Notwithstanding this, many treat these times and dispensations as of no account, and of no importance in their study of the Scriptures. The majority of Bible Students do not “inquire” at all; they neither search, nor “search diligently,” as to these times; nay, they even reproach those who would thus search. Those who, like ourselves, would thus humbly search are derided; and this special time between the present and the coming Dispensation has been nick-named by them “the Gap theory.” But it is no theory at all. The action of our adorable Lord in the Synagogue at Nazareth when He “closed the book” was no “theory.” He showed that there was a gap, and that gap was a *fact* and not a fiction.

We are content to follow His example and share His rejection when at Nazareth. We would learn the lesson that He there taught. We would “open the book,” the Bible, like Ezra, and search, and try and find out why the Lord “closed the book” of Isaiah; and, like the prophets of old, would search diligently as to “what manner of time” is taught by the Holy Spirit of God in these Scriptures of truth.

In the English Bible there is only a comma between the “sufferings and the glory” in 1 Pet. 1:11. See also 1 Pet. 4:13; 5: 1; and Luke 24:26, where we have the same two “times” spoken of, with the “gap” of our present Dispensation passed over, as silently as though to the inspired speakers and writers this Dispensation of the Church of God were non-existent.

This is why the closing words of the Four Gospels do not lead us on *into* this present Dispensation, but *leap over it*. Having been occupied with the proclamation of the Kingdom they “close the book,” and when it is opened again, it is opened at the Apocalypse, where we see the Kingdom set up with Divine power and glory.⁹⁷

The period during which the rejected kingdom is *in abeyance* is not taken account of in the four Gospels, for it had not yet been revealed.

⁹⁷ See further on this point in Section II. of Chapter II. of Part I., page 16.

It was one of “the secrets of the kingdom” spoken of by our Lord in Matt. 13:11, and then made known by Him.

The seven parables of the Kingdom in Matt. 13 leap over this present Dispensation, as if it had no existence. They carry over the truths concerning the Kingdom, and continue them as though the Kingdom had never been in abeyance. To understand these seven parables aright we must entirely exclude the Church of God, and the period of its Dispensation, and read them without any reference whatever to it. We can then easily see which part of each parable belongs to the past Dispensation, and which part belongs to the next.

There are many places in Scripture in which this passing over of the present Dispensation is very plainly evident; and where, in our reading, we have, like our Lord, to “close the book.” If we fail to do this, and if we refuse to notice these so-called “gaps,” we cannot possibly understand the Scriptures which we read.

We give a few by way of example, placing this mark (-) to indicate the parenthesis of this present Dispensation, which comes between the previous Dispensation of Law, and the next Dispensation of Judgment⁹⁸ which is to follow this Present Dispensation of Grace.

Ps. 118:22, “The stone which the builders refused (-) is become the head-stone of the corner.”

Isa. 9:6, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: (-) and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Compare Luke 1:31, 32.)

Isa. 53:10, 11, “It pleased the LORD to bruise him: he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (-) he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.”

Zech. 9:9, 10, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (-) And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”

Luke 1:31, 32, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. (-) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”⁹⁹

All this shows us the far-reaching consequences of the Lord’s example in the Synagogue at Nazareth. Far-reaching in the confusion which arises from not heeding it; and far-reaching also in the happy results of applying the same principle that He applied to Isa. 61:1, 2, in all the other passages where the present Dispensation is passed over, and indicated only by a comma.

This applies only to Scriptures where the two other Dispensations are actually referred to. But there are many where only one is in question; and more care is then required to detect it, so as not to interpret of one Dispensation that which refers to another.

God’s dealings in each period correspond with its distinct character; and if we would understand those dealings we must be able, readily, to classify the truth appropriate to each.

⁹⁸ *I.e.*, between C and C, page 84.

⁹⁹ Others may be seen in Amos 9:10, 11. Dan. 9:26, 27. Hab. 2:13, 14. Zeph. 3:7, 8. Zech. 8:2, 3. Luke 21:26. See *Things to Come* for Dec. 1904. Vol. X.

This classification forms a subject quite distinct from the Dispensations themselves, and demands separate treatment, which we propose to give in our next chapter.

iv. RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD AS TO ITS DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH AND TEACHING.

This part of the great Requirement of the Word flows from, and, at the same time, depends upon a thorough understanding of the Times and Dispensations themselves.

When these are rightly divided then it will be easy for us to keep the truth pertaining to each quite distinct.

There are whole departments of Truth which belong exclusively to one or other of these Dispensations, and not to the rest.

If we take a truth which belongs to one Dispensation and interpret it of another it will lead not only to confusion in the mind, to discordance in the Word, and uncertainty as to the truth; but it will lead to disaster in the life. For, if the Word be not understood, there will be no enjoyment in the study of it; consequently, the reading of it will be neglected, and we shall cease to feed upon it; our spiritual strength will grow weak and we shall be unfit for God's service, beside being a misery to ourselves.

Not only, therefore, must we rightly divide the Word of truth as to its Times and Dispensations, but as to its Truth and Teaching also: we must learn to appropriate each truth to the particular Dispensation to which it belongs.

Unless we do this we shall not "grow in knowledge:" for we are to increase in knowledge as well as in "grace" (2 Pet. 3:18).

To do this we must empty ourselves of all Tradition. We must question all that we have thus received; and be prepared to *unlearn* what we have previously been taught by man if it does not recognize this great requirement of the Word of truth.

If we think we know, it will be impossible for us to learn. If a vessel be full it is impossible for its contents to be increased. We must make room for this blessed increase by continually replacing what we have learned from man with what we learn from the Lord. And even if what we have learned from man does *agree* with the Word, then we must be prepared to learn it over again, direct from the Word, so that the Truth may hold us, instead of our holding the Truth.

There are six distinct departments in which the truth of the Word has to be rightly divided in order to obtain its Teaching in connection with the Times and Dispensations.¹⁰⁰

In order to keep this Dispensational truth and teaching rightly divided—

1. *We must not take Truth belonging to ONE PART of a PAST Dispensation and read it into ANOTHER PART of the PAST.*

The whole of the four Gospels belongs to the Old Dispensation; to the special period of Time during which the Kingdom was proclaimed and afterward rejected.

Truth pertaining to the proclamation period is not truth for the rejection period.

¹⁰⁰ All this refers, of course, only to *Interpretation*, and not to *Application*. This will form a chapter by itself when we come to consider the "Words" (see Canon X., Part II., below). We may apply all that is written so long as we do so in harmony with what is addressed especially *TO us* in this Dispensation. All was and is "written for our learning:" all is FOR us. But not all is addressed or applies TO us. We must not apply what was true of one Dispensation to upset what is true of another Dispensation.

(a) For example, in Matt. 10:5, 6, we find the command, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

If the Word is not to be divided at all, rightly or wrongly, as some who oppose our teaching assert, then this command must be still binding on all the Lord's servants.

If it belongs to all persons, for all time, and for all times, then it is of universal interpretation. According to this, there ought to be no Missionary Societies for work among the Gentiles; but every Missionary Society should be only for the Jews.

But this is not quite the principle which pertains to and governs modern missionary operations.

Then there must be something wrong somewhere. Either this command remains in force and modern Missions set it at naught, and are carried on in defiance of it; or, there must be some explanation which shall exonerate such contumacy.

If it be said, in defense, that there are later commands, such as "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15); then this is to argue (1) that the Word of God either flatly contradicts itself as to the fundamental principle of the missionary work; or (2) that *some* division must be made between the two commands.

But this latter is all that we are contending for. Only, the division which we would make does not ignore either command, but gives each its own due and proper place, significance, and importance. It does not exalt one at the expense of the other, but assigns to each its own appropriate sphere.

The former command, "Go not," etc., was given in connection with the proclamation of the King and the kingdom: but, when both had been rejected, and the King was about to be crucified, then this command was no longer appropriate to the changed circumstances.

Another command could then be given, "Go ye," instead of "Go not."

Both were equally true. The one was true as to its special reference to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; the other is true as to its general reference to all. But both commands were given in the past Dispensation.

(b) Luke 9:3. In connection with the above command there were other precepts given. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, nor yet staves" (Marg. Gr. *a staff*). Matt. 10:9, 10.

But when the kingdom had been rejected, and the King was on the eve of being crucified, *these commands were formally abrogated* by the Lord Himself, as being no longer suitable to the changed circumstances. The Lord repeats them, and asks whether they did not find His promise true: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing."

"Then said he unto them, BUT NOW, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke 22:36).

Those two words "But now" announce the fact that even in that same Dispensation, with only a brief interval of time between them, those two commands are to be rightly divided.

The whole principle for which we contend is wrapped up in those two words "But now." According to this principle, that which belongs to one part of the past Dispensation, must not necessarily be interpreted of another part of that same Dispensation. How much more then must the truth and teaching of the different Dispensations themselves be carefully divided: when not only different circumstances prevail, but where the

whole sphere has changed: not only where the people dealt with are different, but where the principle on which they were dealt with by God is changed.

And yet, in spite of these two examples from Matt. 10 and Luke 9, the whole Bible is jumbled together, Law, Gospel, Grace, Judgment, Glory, Jew, Gentile, Church of God, Times and Dispensations, all confused in one vast tangle, till it is no wonder that thousands of readers, if they do not give it all up in dismay, neglect it to their own present loss of peace and joy and strength.

2. *We must not take Truth belonging to a PAST Dispensation and interpret it of the PRESENT.*

If we do we at once put ourselves under the Law, to which we died, in Christ, and from which Christ hath therefore made us free; the Law having no power over a man that has died.

(a) *Law and Grace.*—To those who lived under the Law it could rightly and truly be said: “It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us” (Deut. 6:25). But to those who live in this present Dispensation of grace, it is as truly declared, “By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (Rom. 3:20; see also Gal. 2:16; 3:11, &c.). But this is the very opposite of Deut. 6:25! What then are we to say, or to do? Which of these two statements is true? and which is false?

The answer is, that neither is false. But both are true if we rightly divide the Word of truth as to its Dispensational truth and teaching.

Deut. 6:25 was true, then, “concerning” Israel; and is in harmony with the covenant of works under which Israel had placed itself. But Rom. 3:20 and Gal. 2:16 are true now “concerning” all three, Jew, Gentile, and Church of God. The statement in these two passages concerning all “flesh” was made after Israel had broken that covenant (Heb. 10:29); and after Christ had introduced the unconditional “everlasting covenant” (Heb. 13:20) of grace, into which He entered for His people “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:3, 4).

These are two statements exactly opposite to each other. Is it then the fact that the one is true and the other false? Nay, both are true; absolutely true. And this will be seen at once if we appropriate each to, and interpret each of, the Dispensation to which it properly belongs. The former is not true now in this Present Dispensation. It was true of those under the Law. The latter is as true now of those who are under Grace.

But we fear that multitudes as they hear the Old Testament read in our churches fail so to divide them rightly, but understand the interpretation of them as belonging to themselves now. They thus put themselves under law, and deny their standing which God has given them in Christ; hence it is that they fail to enjoy that liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free (Gal. 5:1).

In the Old Dispensation God dealt with one nation only; but in the Present Dispensation He no longer deals with any one nation, but with individuals out of all nations. This is the key to the understanding of those many passages where the words “all” and “every” and “world” are used in the New Testament. “All” must mean one of two things: either “all” *without exception*, or “all” *without distinction*; and it is in this latter sense it is constantly used in contrast with the one nation of Israel.

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth¹⁰¹ will draw all men unto me” (John 12:32). If this means “all” *without exception*, then it is not true, for all men have not been drawn unto Him. But it is most blessedly true, if it means “all” *without distinction*, as it surely does.

¹⁰¹ *I.e.*, in crucifixion, as the next verse (33) distinctly states.

The expression He tasted death “for every man” (Heb. 2:9) must be understood in the same sense; *i.e.*, not limited as heretofore to Israel; but extended *without distinction* to all, whether Jews or Gentiles. With this agrees 1 John 2:1, 2.

In the Old Dispensation God’s light shone only in and on Israel; but now, having come into the world, it lighteneth “every man” *without distinction* of nation, race, or creed (John 1:9; compare Titus 2:11).

In the Old Dispensation God dealt according to man’s work: now He deals according to Christ’s work.

In the Old Dispensation, Israel was to work for life: now we work *from* life.

The Law gave *works* for man to do: Grace brings *words* for man to believe.

Two words distinguish the Two dispensations. “Do” distinguishes the former; “Done” the latter. Then, salvation depended on what man was to do; now it depends upon what Christ has done.

(b) *The Imprecatory Psalms.*—These have been a trouble to most Christians: who among us has not been disquieted by them? Critics speak of them as “very unfit for the lips of our Lord.”¹⁰² There must be very, very few who have not felt the difficulty; and though they have realized it they have not seen the way out of it: neither will they, nor can they do so, until they learn to rightly divide the Word of truth, and interpret these Psalms of the Dispensation to which they belong. They must be appropriated to the Old Dispensation of the Law. There they are in place; as they will be in place again in the coming Dispensation of Judgment.

“The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance” (Ps. 58:10, 11). So will the great voice of much people in heaven say “Hallelujah . . . for true and righteous are his judgments” (Rev. 19:1, 2).¹⁰³ This clearly shows that these and all such “Cursing” Scriptures (as they are called) are in perfect keeping with the Dispensation to which they belong.

In all probability Ps. 109 admits of another explanation by putting verses 6—19 within a parenthesis; in which case verse 20 may be rendered as explaining it:—

“This is the work of mine adversaries from the LORD, And of those that speak evil against my soul (*i.e.* me).”

Verses 6—19 will then be the “evil” which David’s enemies spake against him.¹⁰⁴ These will be the words that came from “the mouth of the wicked and deceitful:” and the proceeds of the “lying tongue” (v. 4). These will be the “words of hatred” (v. 3), and the “evil for good” with which David’s enemies rewarded his love (v. 5).

But Psalm 137:8, 9 does not admit of such an explanation. The spirit is appropriate to the Dispensations of Law and Judgment, but not to the present Dispensation of Grace:—

“Remember, O Jehovah, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem:
Who said, Rase it, Rase it even to the foundation thereof.
O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed
Happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.”

¹⁰² *How God Inspired the Bible*, Rev. J. Paterson Smyth.

¹⁰³ Thus the first “Hallelujah” (praise ye the LORD) in the Old Testament (Ps. 104:35) agrees with the first in the New Testament in connection with vengeance and judgment.

¹⁰⁴ See above, under Section I. of this Chapter III. of Part I., p. 59.

There is a time of judgment coming for which all such language will be appropriate (Isa. 26:9. Rev. 2:26, 27); but that language is not for this present Dispensation of grace. If we do so interpret it, then there is an end of ever hoping to find the “truth:” and all hope of ever understanding the Word of God is destroyed.

(c) *As to the Sabbath.*—Obedience to 2 Tim. 2:15 clears away heaps of confusion, and delivers from the bondage of law, in which so many, through disobedience to that great precept to “rightly divide the Word of truth,” are still bound: some of them “bound hand and foot.”

The Ceremonial Laws of the Sabbath were given to Israel, and not to the Gentile nation’s of the earth, Pagan or otherwise. While the interpretation therefore belongs to Israel, it would be wise for all nations to make an application of the great principle laid down in the Law, as to resting from servile labor on one day in seven. But the law of the Sabbath is neither abrogated, changed, nor transferred to any other day of the week. And if any believe that the Law is to be obeyed now, they have no liberty to alter that law, or to modify it in any way; but are bound to “keep holy the seventh day.” They have no choice in the matter, and dare not take the liberty of altering the law of God.

But, on the other hand, Christians in this present Dispensation are “not under law, but under grace.” We “died to the law,” in Christ (Rom. 7:4), and the law has no power over one who has died. “We are delivered from the law, having died to that wherein we were held” (v. 6). We are “under [obedience to the] commandments of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21).

To those in Galatia who desired “to be under the law” (Gal. 4:21) the Apostle wrote, “How turn ye again to the beggarly elements (*i.e.*, religious ordinances) whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain” (Gal. 4:9—11).

This Scripture is specially addressed to, and is to be interpreted of the Church of God, today; and all who would thus have us return to and put ourselves under law we have great need to be “afraid.”¹⁰⁵

As towards others and himself, the Christian can apply those laws as far as they are compatible with his own Church Epistles. There he is told that, “one man esteemeth one day above another: another [man] esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” (Rom. 14:5, 6).

It is a matter of being persuaded in one’s own mind, and not as being under law; still less as being under the judgment of our fellow believers in this matter. “Let no man therefore judge you in meats or in drink; or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath” (Col. 2:16). We do not “let them judge” us, but they do so all the same. We shall be judged, yea, and condemned by many for writing even as much as this: and though we quote the Word of God, we shall be met by arguments of expediency, which are all based on a total disregard to another command, equally binding, belonging as it does to this present Dispensation; and that is the command, as to “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

The Sabbath laws are either still binding on us, or they are not still binding. If they are, then those who keep “the seventh day” and not “the first,” are right. If they are not binding, then we are all “free from the law,” and we have our guidance in Rom. 14:5, 6. Col. 2:16 and Gal. 4:1—11.

But, if we read into the present Dispensation that which pertained only to the former, there can be nothing but confusion in our own minds, and conflict and arguments with our fellow-Christians.

And, beside this conflict with them, we shall be seeking to put not only the Church of God, but all the Gentiles also under the laws which were given by Moses to Israel alone.

¹⁰⁵ See *The Church Epistles*, pp. 109, 176, etc., by the same author.

It will be seen that thus “rightly dividing the Word of truth” as to Sabbath-keeping is the only effectual answer to the large body called “Seventh Day” Christians; who, not seeing the blessed truth that we are free from the law of Moses, and under the law of Christ, who is the Lord of the Sabbath, are not only observing the seventh-day Sabbath themselves, but are carrying on an active propaganda to induce all Christians to join their ranks.

(d) As to the Kingdom.—There are some Past Dispensational truths, like those which *concern the Kingdom*, which leap over the Present, and belong both to the Past and the Future.

They were truth in the Past Dispensation; and they will be truth in the Future: but, they are not truth in or for this Present Dispensation.

This Present Dispensation, so far as regards the truth pertaining to the other two, is not reckoned; and this present interval is passed over as though it did not exist.

The Past and the Coming Dispensations have to do with the Kingdom. This Present Dispensation has to do with the Church of God.

The former had to do with the Law, the next has to do with Judgment: but, the Present Dispensation has to do with Grace.

If therefore we read into the present that which has to do both with the past and the future; and, if we read into the Dispensation of Grace that which has to do with Law and Judgment we at once leave the high ground of Grace on which God has set us; we lose the blessing of that standing which is ours in Christ; and we interpret of ourselves, language, which is appropriate only to a Dispensation of Judgment or of Glory. This means, not only loss of blessing to ourselves, but it means the introduction of confusion into our minds, and contradiction into the Word of God.

This is specially true if we take that which was spoken of the KINGDOM and understand it of the CHURCH Of God.

Of course, if anyone holds that the Kingdom IS the Church, it would be consistent so to take it. But those who do so make no attempt to rightly divide the Word of truth: and they treat language as being useless for the purposes of Revelation.

If, when God says one thing He always means another, then the Bible becomes a book of Enigmas instead of Enlightenment; and the door is opened for all those differences of interpretation which are not only a puzzle to the children of God, but are a source of all those divisions among Christians which are a defilement of God’s building (1 Cor. 3:17); and of all those controversies which are a scandal and a stumbling block to those that are without.

It would be a sufficient answer to those who say that the Kingdom is the Church, to reply, “You say so.” Or, to those who say the Church is the Kingdom to answer, “So you say:” for no such assertion is made in the Word of truth. It is only an inference; and it is wrong, because it comes of wrongly dividing the Word of truth.

But, as we write, not for confutation, but for instruction, we may mention the following facts for the guidance of those who would, like the Eunuch of Ethiopia, understand what they read.

The Kingdom, as we have said, belongs to the past Dispensation. It was proclaimed by John the Baptist; and afterward its being then “at hand;” it was the first subject of the Lord’s own ministry (Matt. 4:17); but, having been rejected, it is now in abeyance until the time comes to set it up in Divine power and glory.

It is clear, therefore, that truth which is appropriate for that Kingdom, whether past or future, is not truth appropriate for the present Dispensation of the Church. Even the expressions used and the terminology employed are not the same. What is said of the Kingdom is not true when spoken of the Church.¹⁰⁶

The Kingdom is said to be “set up” (Dan. 2:44. Acts 15: 16). The Church is “built up” (Eph. 2:20—22. 1 Cor. 3:9. Col. 2:7).

We hear much about the “extension of the Kingdom” and the “advancement of the Kingdom;” but these are non-scriptural expressions when spoken of the Kingdom, and un-scriptural when used of the Church.

We read of those who are “heirs of the Kingdom” (Jas. 5:5), but not of the Church; of “Children of the Kingdom” (Matt. 8:12); but not of the Church (except in the Church of Rome).

We read of having “received the Kingdom” (Luke 19:12, 15); and of “entering” it (Matt. 18:3); of “seeing” it (John 3:3); and of “inheriting” it (Matt. 25:34). But never do we once find such expressions used in Scripture of the Church of God! In no sense can any one “inherit,” or “see,” or “receive” the Church.

Among all the Figures used for the Church the *Kingdom* is never so used. We find it compared to a “house” (1 Tim. 3:15); “a *Temple*” (1 Cor. 3:16, 17); “a *Body*” (1 Cor. 12:27, &c.), but never to the Kingdom.

The Kingdom, proclaimed in the past, and now in abeyance, is yet to come; and all Christians pray “Thy kingdom come.” But the Church is here, now; and is soon *going away*: for it is waiting to be “caught up to meet the Lord in the air, so to be ever with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:14—17). If the Church, therefore, is the Kingdom, the prayer ought to be “Thy kingdom go!”

Again, the Church is an *election*, hence its name *Ecclesia*, which means *a calling out*. But the Kingdom, when it is set up, will be universal and all-embracing (Ps. 103:19. Rev. 11:15).

Christ is now the Head over all things to His Body, the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15. Col. 1:18); but He is never called its King. How much error and confusion is created from the use of non-scriptural expressions it is impossible to tell.

We quite understand that, as the word (*basileia*), *kingdom*, means not the material country or the subjects, but the *sovereignty* or *administrative rule* of the King, so, the Church necessarily finds its sphere and place within that rule. But, in this case it is always “the kingdom (*i.e.* the sovereignty) of God” (Rom. 14:17. 1 Cor. 4:20. Col. 4:11); or “the kingdom (or sovereignty) of the Son of His love” (Col. 1:13). Amid all the realms of this all-embracing Sovereignty of God in heaven and on earth, among angels and men, the Church has its proper, distinctive, and unique place; just as in the sovereignty of a house, there is the place for the Head, the Wife, the Children, the Friends, the Visitors, the Guests, the Officials, and the Servants. This is not to say that any one of these IS the other. Each one has its own peculiar position within this universal sovereignty; and the Church of God its own unique position within it. It is part of the “Body” of which Christ is the “Head” part therefore of the Head, “one NEW MAN” (Eph. 2:15), “a PERFECT MAN,” even “the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ” (Eph. 4:13). If these scriptural expressions had been heeded we should never hear the Church spoken of as in our Hymns and Sermons as “she” and “her;” as though the Church were “one new woman,” or “a perfect woman.”

But, while this is so, as to the Church having its own place in the vast and universal sovereignty of God, it is never included in the more limited expression “the kingdom of heaven” as it appears in the Gospel of Matthew, and which belongs peculiarly to Israel. Nor is it included in the wider, but yet limited, Kingdom of Heaven to which the Lord’s prayer refers; for the sphere of this is on the earth.

“*The Kingdom (or Sovereignty) of HEAVEN*”

¹⁰⁶ See a pamphlet, *The Kingdom and the Church*, by the same author.

Has the Messiah for its King.
It is from heaven, and under the heavens upon earth.
It is limited in its scope.
It is Political in its sphere.
It is Jewish and Exclusive in its character.
It is National in its aspect.
And is the special subject of Old Testament prophecy.

“The Kingdom (or Sovereignty) of GOD”

Has God for its ruler.
It is in Heaven, over the Earth.
It is Unlimited in its Scope.
It is Moral in its sphere.
It is Inclusive in its character (including even the Church).
It is Universal in its aspect.
And in its wider aspect is the subject of New Testament revelation.

All this is true, and yet it is equally true that, if we call the Church the Kingdom, we are not “rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

Thus, even though the Church, as such, comes within and under the universal Divine Sovereignty, we may not put one part of that Sovereignty for another part without injuriously effecting the whole.

When the Lord said to Peter “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 16:19), He did not mean *the keys of the Church*. This, at one stroke, does away with the preposterous claim of the Church of Rome. Keys are used for opening and for admission. Peter used these keys when he again proclaimed the kingdom to Israel (Acts 2—7), and afterward to Gentiles (Acts 8—12).¹⁰⁷

(e) *The Various Gospels*.—From this confusion between the Kingdom and the Church comes the confusion between the various GOSPELS of which the Scripture speaks.

There is no dispute as to the meaning of the word. The English word Gospel may mean either *good news*, or *God’s News*. But the Greek word means only *good news*. This does not carry us far. It tells us only the fact that the news is good. There is a further question for us to ask; viz., *What is the news that is so good?*

News is of different kinds. In our Newspapers we find Political News, Financial News, Judicial News, Social News, Sporting News, and indeed news of all kinds.

We have therefore to answer our own question as to what this “News” from God is, and what it is that makes it “good.”

We read for example of—

The Gospel of the Kingdom,
The Gospel of God,
The Gospel of the grace of God,
The Gospel of the Glory, and

¹⁰⁷ The other part of the Commission (v. 19) was likewise confined solely to Peter. To no one else was this commission given, and Peter had neither the power nor authority to transfer that commission to others, still less to give to the others the power of transmitting either the one or the other. This is the explanation also of those other passages as to “binding” and “loosing.” “retaining” and “remitting.”

The Everlasting Gospel.

The question is, Do all these expressions mean the same thing? Is the “good news” the same in each case? If God has thus put these five Gospels asunder, are we at liberty to join them together? Has God thus distinguished them, and, shall we say that there is no distinction whatever?

It is very general not only for those who read, but for those who teach, to say that there is only one kind of Gospel, and those who say this do not hesitate to use harsh language of us, and of those who seek rightly to divide these Gospels and endeavor to apportion them and their peculiar news to the Time or Dispensation to which they respectively belong.

“The Gospel of the Kingdom”

Was the good news that, the Kingdom, which had been the subject of Old Testament promise and prophecy, was at length “at hand.” That was good news indeed for all those who waited “for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25); who “looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (v. 38); and who “waited for the Kingdom of God” (Mark 15:43). Many believed this good news concerning Christ the King, and “trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21).

But, after the Kingdom had been rejected, and the King crucified, it was again proclaimed to Israel, and the announcement made that the King was ready to return (Acts 2:38; 3:19—21), on the one condition of national repentance. But the making of this proclamation was still opposed by the People through their rulers (Acts 4:17, 18); and the preachers of this “Gospel of the Kingdom” were “threatened” (v. 21).

When Peter’s Ministry to the Circumcision ended in his imprisonment (Acts 12), and Paul was raised up and sent forth, it was with the *added good news* of Grace. This was what is again and again claimed by Paul as “my Gospel.” Then after all this: after the rejection and Crucifixion of the King, after the Martyrdom of Stephen, and after the Imprisonment of Peter, the Epistle to the Romans (which stands first of the subsequent Canonical writings) opens with the words, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be (or, by Divine Calling) an Apostle, separated unto

“God’s Gospel.”

This was good news of a different character. This was news of *grace* proclaimed, not to Israel only, or to any one nation, but to individual transgressors of the Jews, and sinners of the Gentiles alike; to all *without distinction*,¹⁰⁸ It was grace proclaimed to Jews who deserved wrath, and to Gentiles who deserved nothing. Hence it is called

The Gospel of the Grace of God.

This was further *good news*, as set forth in Romans and the other Church Epistles. It was the good news that those who are in Christ are reckoned by God (and hence are to be reckoned by us) as having died with Christ and having risen with Him; and that when this Gospel shall have accomplished its object and gathered out from Jews and Gentiles all the members of the one Body, these shall be gathered together unto Christ the Glorious Head in glory (2 Thess. 2:1).

This *good news* is called THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL, or better,

“The Gospel of the Glory”

of the blessed God which was (Paul says) committed to my trust” (1 Tim. 1:11). In 2 Cor. 4:4 it is called “the glorious Gospel of Christ,” *i.e.*, the good news of the “glory” which is to follow the “sufferings” of

¹⁰⁸ See above, p. 110.

Christ; and which is to be the outcome of those sufferings. This good news is preached now. It is part of the good news of the Grace of God; for grace and glory are inseparably bound together. There is no Gospel of the grace of God, without the Gospel of the glory of God. Grace is the flower, Glory will be the fruit. The Church is not always to be in sorrow and trial; and the good news concerning the glory is “the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

But when the preaching of this double Gospel of Grace and Glory shall have closed, we read of another Gospel which is to be proclaimed in the midst of the Dispensation of Judgment. It is called

“The Everlasting Gospel.”

It is not proclaimed until the very crisis of the apocalyptic judgments; after the Judgments of the Seven Seals, the Judgments of the Seven Trumpets, and the revelation of the Beast in his superhuman stage (Rev. 13). Then, before the final judgments of the seven Vials, seven angels make seven proclamations (Rev. 14:6—20). The first is the proclamation of “the everlasting Gospel;” of mercy in the midst of judgment. It is the command to mankind simply to “Fear God” as the Creator. Not a word as to the Redeemer, or as to grace or glory, but a simple command to “Fear God.” What else will be contained in that Gospel of the coming Day of Judgment we know not now.

It is called “everlasting” because the acknowledgment of God as the Creator was before all other news; and will follow after all news of the kingdom, grace and glory will have passed away. It announces God, only as the Creator; not as Lord, or as Jehovah (the Covenant God), but as “God” (the Creator). It is not “Repent,” or “do this” or “do that,” but only “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come; and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Compare Exod. 9:30. Ps. 33:8.)

Is it not strange that this should ever have been supposed to be the same as the Gospel of the Grace of God? Is it not strange that news of God’s present grace should ever be taken as being the same as the news of God’s mercy in the midst of judgment?

Nothing can account for such perversity but the fact that it comes only from human selfishness, and the determination to take everything, past, present, and future, as belonging to, or having to do with, the Church of God.

Rightly divide these different Gospels, according to the Dispensations to which they belong, and we have only harmony, consistency, and truth.

(f) *The Sermon on the Mount.*—Few portions of God’s Word have suffered more from want of compliance with the one great requirement of the Word of truth as given in 2 Tim. 2:15.

It occupies the greater part of the first of the four periods of the Lord’s ministry.¹⁰⁹

The first period was occupied with the Proclamation of the King and the Kingdom.

It begins in Matthew at ch. 4:17, and goes on down to the end of ch. 7, and thus occupies the whole of chs. 5, 6, and 7.

This shows us that what we call “the Sermon on the Mount” (which, after all, is only Man’s name for it) has to do with the Kingdom. It shows that the laws of that Kingdom which was the sole subject of that first period of Christ’s ministry were to be very different from the laws given by God through Moses’ on Mount Sinai; and very different also from the traditions which had made so many of them of none effect. This teaching follows, naturally, as being in harmony with the truth which pertains to the Kingdom, and not with

¹⁰⁹ For the other three Subjects of His Ministry, see *Christ’s Prophetic Teaching*, by the same author.

that which pertains to the Church of God. It is appropriate to a Dispensation of Law and not to a Dispensation of Grace; to a Past or Future Dispensation, but not to the Present Dispensation.

This is, of course, the case so far as *interpretation* is concerned. But, when it comes to *application*, then, if there be truths of eternal application we may, of course, apply them; and if there be truths in harmony with what is addressed specially to the Church of God, and agreeing with the truth addressed directly to it in the Church Epistles, then we may *apply* it, so far, but no further.

“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18). This is truth, of eternal application.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:21) is also truth of eternal application.

But the instruction as to “agreeing with our adversary” (ch. 5:25); instructions as to “fasting” (ch. 6:16—18), the “danger of the Council” (ch. 5:22); the “Judge,” the “Officer,” and the Altar (ch. 5:24, 25); the seeking the kingdom (ch. 6:33), the profession “I never knew you” (ch. 7:23), the doing, and works (ch. 7:21, 24); all these are like a foreign language when compared with the language addressed to us in our Church Epistles.

Moreover those who hold that this discourse is to be interpreted of the Church of God make no attempt to obey its precepts. Instead of loving their enemies (ch. 5:44) they do not even love their brethren, if they commit the unpardonable sin of daring to differ from them in opinion.

Instead of trying to agree with their adversary quickly (ch. 5:25) they do not try to agree with their fellow believers, even slowly.

Instead of not judging others (ch. 7:1) it is the one thing that they are most addicted to, and well-practiced in. If any sue them and would take away their coat (ch. 5:40), then, instead of letting him have their cloak as well, they let him have the law.

They read (ch. 5:42), “Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away,” but, all we say is, “*Try it; go and ‘ask,’*” and see how they carry out this precept which they maintain is written and *addressed to them.*” As for ourselves we feel under no such obligation, either on the one hand to give or to lend *whenever* we may be asked; or, on the other hand, to *wait till we are asked.*

And then, to what altar do they carry and lay their gift, or offering (ch. 5:23, 24)? unless they count Flowers, and Eggs, and Dolls, as “Sacrifices,” and their Communion Tables as Altars.

Who is to compel them to go one mile, and they go two miles?¹¹⁰ (Matt. 5:41).

Finally we strongly advise our readers, if they smite those who interpret this “Sermon” of the Church on one cheek (ch. 5:39), not to wait and see whether they turn the other, but to get out of the way as quickly as they can.

They will glibly pray “thy kingdom come” (ch. 6:10), but with the same breath, and the same persistent inconsistency shown throughout, they will pray for the “advancement” and the “extension” of the same kingdom which, according to this, has come and is already here.

¹¹⁰ This was perfectly intelligible in that Past Dispensation, though it can have no place in the Present. The verb (*aggareuo*) is a word brought into the Greek language from Persia, and refers to the practice of commandeering or forcing others into the royal service. The (*aggaroi*) are mentioned as royal couriers, in the *papyri*. The verb had come into general use, and was naturalized as early as the third century B.C., and was well understood by the people, though quite technical. It is still found in modern Greek in the sense of *compelling*. (See Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, p. 86.)

They will not think of measuring the forgiveness they ask God for, by the forgiveness which they extend to those who have sinned against them.

As to asking why they behold the mote in their brother's eye (ch. 7:3), we would ask why they behold so many which are not there at all.

All this confusion comes from interpreting what is said of the *Kingdom*, and was spoken to those who were proclaiming it, of a condition of things wholly different. The kingdom, whose laws the King was there laying down, was, after that, rejected. And the King having been crucified, the kingdom is therefore now in abeyance. The precepts pertaining to it are in abeyance also. His own words "BUT NOW" in Luke 22:36¹¹¹ are sufficient not only to warrant us in so treating "the Sermon on the Mount," but sufficient to *compel* us to do so.

If we do not heed the corrective instruction contained in the words "But now," and thus carry out the principle involved in them, then all must be confusion.

The world can plainly see the inconsistency produced by it; and, in consequence, turns it against the Church, and against Christians; and uses that very inconsistency, which is so manifest, as an argument against the truth of Christianity itself.

Those Christians who say that these chapters are addressed to them are charged by the world with direct disobedience to their precepts. And Christ also is charged with the inconsistency of giving commands which cannot possibly be carried out.

But once we rightly divide the Dispensations, and *the truth pertaining to them*, we see that "the Sermon on the Mount" belonged to a past brief Dispensation, while the kingdom was being proclaimed; and will be appropriate again to a succeeding Dispensation when the kingdom shall have come: but it neither belongs to, nor can be interpreted of, nor even applied to the totally different circumstances of this present Dispensation of Grace.

Those who are imbued with the precepts peculiar to the Church of God, in the Epistles addressed to it, could never for one moment make the grave mistake of putting themselves under these laws of the kingdom which are *infinitely more stringent and spiritual than the laws of Sinai*; nor could they thus mislead the world and give it its strongest argument against the very truth of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

(g) *The Lord's Prayer*,—This occurs in the "Sermon on the Mount," and it manifestly forms an integral part of it.

That it pertains wholly to the kingdom is clear. It is a prayer for that kingdom to come, in order that God's will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Its standard is Law, and not Grace.

Forgiveness is sought not on the ground of grace, but of works; and not on the ground of mercy, but of merit.

The future and approaching Tribulation is contemplated as imminent, if not present.

The Evil One, the Beast, is present in power. None are able to buy or sell except that which has his mark (Rev. 13:17). Daily bread must be miraculously "*given*," if those who use this prayer are to be kept alive.

No name of Christ is in it, nor is it offered in His name or merits, as He Himself declared it should be (John 16:23, 24).

¹¹¹ See pages 107, 103, above.

It is a prayer suitable to the time, while the kingdom was being proclaimed as “at hand.” And when the Church shall have been removed it will be seen how appropriate it will be when the kingdom shall be again proclaimed as “at hand;” and the “Gospel of the kingdom” shall be again preached in the coming days of “the Great Tribulation.”¹¹²

(h) As to Priesthood.—All the false doctrine connected with Priestly assumptions in the present day arises from this same misplacement of truth, which takes that which was true for the Past and Future Dispensations, and mistakenly regards it as being true for the Present Dispensation, which it is not.

Not only does priestcraft and all its attendant evils spring from this misplacement, but the mischief can be met and remedied only by replacing the truth in the Dispensation to which it belongs.

The difficulty is experienced; and to get over it, truth is taken from the coming Dispensation and put into the present in order to meet the error which comes from first taking truth from the Past and putting it into the Present Dispensation. These are the shifts which have to be resorted to in consequence of disobedience to 2 Tim. 2:15.

It is urged that in this present Dispensation “all are priests;” but this is just as incorrect as to say that some, or any, are priests.

On earth, God has never recognized a priesthood except that which He ordained Himself and confined to the nation of Israel (Exod. 19:6), and to the tribe of Levi (Exod. 29:9). To those who had put themselves under the Law it was said, “If ye shall obey my voice and keep my covenant then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exod. 19:5, 6).

That was a true promise and prophecy of and for Israel, in the past Dispensation. But Israel failed to fulfill the condition necessary for national priesthood as announced in Exod. 19:5. Israel did not keep the covenant. Hence the conditional promise, “Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests,” was not performed. The tribe of Levi was substituted for the nation, and the national performance of that promise remains still in abeyance until such time as Israel shall turn to the Lord. Hence, the prophecy was repeated at a later period in the prophecy of Isa. 61:1, which the Lord read, only in part, in the Synagogue at Nazareth, when He “closed the book,” and stopped at the point where the prophecy had been fulfilled (Luke 4:18—20). After “the day of vengeance” (which the Lord omitted, because it was still future) shall have passed, then it is declared of the nation as a whole: “Ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD; men shall call you the ministers of our God” (Isa. 61:6; 66:21).

John sees in proleptic vision, *i.e.*, by anticipation, the yet future fulfillment of this prophecy. In Rev. 1:6 he announces it when he gives glory to God for what He will then have done, even to “Him who hath made us (*i.e.*, John and his brethren according to the flesh) kings and priests unto God and his Father.”

In Rev. 5:9, 10, John hears the four *Zoa* (or Living Creatures), and the Twenty-four Elders sing a new song referring to that yet future day; “Thou hast redeemed [a People] to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made them unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they shall reign on the earth.”

This is the true reading and rendering¹¹³ of Rev. 5:9, 10; and with this the R.V. practically agrees.

¹¹² See a pamphlet on “The Lord’s Prayer,” by the same author.

¹¹³ See the author’s work: *Commentary on Revelation*, republished by Kregel Publication. p. 242.

Peter, who wrote specially to believers among the Dispersed (the *Diaspora*) of Israel, could speak of *them* as the spiritual house (of Israel) and call them “a holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

But in no case could this be said of believing sinners of the Gentiles either then, or now, or in the future.

Is it not strange that those who do this, do not see that they are compelled to take only one of the two classes mentioned? Only the “priests!” We never hear of their claiming to be “kings,” now, in this day of grace. Wrongly dividing the word of truth, or not dividing it at all, introduces “priests” into the Church of God, and those who do that are driven into a further and necessary inconsistency, and are, perforce, obliged to leave out the “kings” altogether!

Surely this is sufficient to show us the error of Sacerdotalists and the error also of their opponents. Both are wrong. The one is wrong in making a baseless claim, and the other is wrong for attempting to refute it by a baseless argument. Both the false claim and the false argument proceed alike from the same cause.

The fact is there is no priesthood recognized by God on the earth during this present Dispensation, while Israel as a nation is excluded.

It is said even of the Lord Jesus Himself, that now, “IF HE WERE ON EARTH He would not be a priest” (Heb. 8:4).

And the reason given is that, on earth, priesthood belongs to the tribe of Levi only; and “our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood” (Heb. 7:12—14).

Christ is a Priest, but HIS priesthood belongs to Heaven, and not to earth; and is “after the order of Melchizedek,” and “not after the order of Aaron.”

To see the truth as to priesthood, Dispensationally, puts an end to all controversy as to the claims of Sacerdotalists, as well as to all the weak replies of Protestants, which only serve to strengthen those claims instead of meeting them.

To see this Dispensational truth makes a priesthood in the Church of God an impossibility. For *Christ never was a priest on earth*; and He would not be a priest if He were on earth today.

Once we rightly divide the Word of truth as to Priesthood, away goes all Prelacy and Priestcraft, which have created “Christendom,” and turned it into a Babylon; a “hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2).

True, Peter can write to Believers among “the Dispersion” (1 Pet. 1:1; compare John 7:35) and *apply* Exod. 19:6, as the Lord applied Isa. 61:1, in the Synagogue at Nazareth, and show how those believing Israelites to whom he wrote fulfilled the past, and anticipated the future in a “spiritual” manner (1 Pet. 2:4—10). All this could be applied to them, as it could not be even *applied* to us; though, even here, there was one thing that could not be then applied to them. They were priests only in a “spiritual” sense; but they were not “kings” in any sense at all. So the reference to the past Dispensation was rightly divided so far as it could be *applied* to the new (though transitional) condition of things.

Here we have, then, another example of how, and how far, we may *apply* a scripture to that of which it cannot be *interpreted*.

(i) *As to Baptism*.—We have the same confusion in Truth and Teaching, and all the controversies as to doctrine and practice.

It is clear, from the Gospels, that it has to do with the kingdom. The very first time it is mentioned is in connection with the kingdom (Matt. 3:1—6).

It was preached by John who was known as “the Baptist;” and John was not a minister of the Gospel of the Grace of God, but a prophet under the old covenant appointed to “prepare the way of the Lord,” who came “to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15:8).

His ministry was unique; and his message was “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand:” and he baptized those who believed his preaching and confessed their sins. The reason why he baptized was in order that Christ should “be made manifest to Israel” (John 1:31).

Moreover he testified of the One who should come after him, and who should baptize also; not with material water, as John did, but with *pneuma hagion* or spiritual water, that is, with “power from on high.”¹¹⁴

This the Lord Himself confirmed in Acts 1:4, 5.

But, as we have already abundantly shown and seen, the kingdom was rejected, and the King crucified.

John, as we have said, baptized individuals who “believed on Him who should come after him” (see Acts 19:4).

But, in Matt. 28:19, 20, the Lord speaks of a future baptism, not of individuals, but of all “nations,” not in the name of Him as the coming One, for He had already come, and would be with them; but “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Strange to say, this command was never obeyed on any one of the several occasions recorded in the New Testament, when baptism was “administered.” Not once do we find any of the apostles, nor any of the first preachers of the Gospel making any exception to the use of this one particular formula. This practice was *invariable*.

In Acts 2:38 Peter commands those of the Dispersion who believed: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you *in the name of Jesus Christ*.”

In Acts 8:16 Peter and John “baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus*.”

In Acts 10:48 Peter “commanded them to be baptized *in the name of the Lord*” (R.V. Jesus Christ).

In Acts 19:5 (whether this refers to those who heard John or those who heard Paul¹¹⁵; or whether it refers to John’s act or Paul’s) it is certain that “they were baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus*.”

In Rom. 6:3 Paul speaks of “as many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*.”

And in 1 Cor. 1:13, 15, “baptized in the name of Paul,” is clearly contrasted with baptism *in the name of Christ*.

There is not one exception to this practice.

It is equally certain that Matt. 28:19, 20 definitely commands the DISCIPLING of “THE NATIONS” by baptizing them in the Triune name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The full command is as follows:

¹¹⁴ See *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*, republished by Kregel Publication, pp. 26-35.

¹¹⁵ See *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*, pp. 104-107.

“Go ye therefore and make all nations disciples, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold, I (even I) am with you all the days until the end of the age.”

This command speaks of “nations” (or Gentiles), and thus excludes the Jews, for it is distinctly declared of them that they should “not be reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9). Whereas, the Gospel of the Grace of God is preached today to Jew and Gentile alike.

The command speaks of “all nations,” and it says, “make all nations disciples” or “Disciple all nations” as such; whereas this present Dispensation is eclectic, and it is individual Jews and Gentiles who are taken *out of all nations*.

The word rendered “teach” in verse 19 is not the same as “teaching” in verse 20. The former means to “make disciples;” while the latter means to instruct the individuals who are thus made disciples. But neither of these terms is peculiar to the *present* Dispensation. Ministerial work today is, according to the Church Epistles, not to “disciple nations” or Gentiles, but to preach and proclaim the Gospel of the Grace of God to individuals, as lost sinners, that they may be taken out not only from among the Jews, but from AMONG the nations. It is to “preach the Word;” and we are to do this the more earnestly because, as the days get darker, men will be less ready to “endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:1—4).

The command in Matt. 28 manifestly applies to a very different condition of things from that which is common to our experience.

The only ground for this command is that “all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” For, while, in the Divine counsels, it can be said, “Thou hast put all things under his feet,” yet, it is immediately added (Heb. 2:8), “we see NOT YET all things put under him.” The references given in the margin of Matt. 28:18 fully bear this out. Not until the yet future opening scene in the coming Dispensation of Judgment will the gift of “all power” *on the earth* be formally made and received, and the heavenly song burst forth, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power,” etc. (Rev. 5:12, etc.).

But this is the only reason given for obedience to this command: “Go ye THEREFORE.”

Moreover, certain definite days seem to be marked off; and this, at the end of the age, or of that Dispensation of the kingdom, when the proclamation of “the gospel of the kingdom” will again be made¹¹⁶ and accompanied by its companion ordinance of baptism.

That baptism will not be into the name of the One who was to come (as in the Gospels); not into the name of One who had come and been rejected (as in the Acts of the Apostles); but into the Triune name of “the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This will indeed be a work which will require “all power” in order to secure the submission of Jews and Mahomedans, as nations, to receive this baptism as the sign and token that they have acknowledged and submitted themselves to Christ, the Messiah, as their Lord and King.

This national work is that referred to in Matt. 24:13, 14, “He that shall endure unto the END shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in the whole world for a witness, and then shall come the END;” *i.e.*, the end of “the days” referred to in Matt. 28:20.

This is the “end” here referred to in Matt. 28:19, 20.

The whole of this Dispensation is leaped over, as is done in Isa. 61:2, and many other passages, as we have shown above.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Matt. 24:14 (see pp. 113—119, above).

¹¹⁷ See pp. 100—101.

This command spoken of the Future, in a past Dispensation, entirely disregards this present interval and contemplates obedience to it as being carried out not in the Present, but in the Future Dispensation.

We have exactly the same phenomenon in Matt. 10. There the Lord commissions the Twelve for their immediate proclamation of the kingdom to Israel alone, as distinct from the Gentiles (Matt. 10:1—15). The Lord then passes on, and passes over this present Dispensation; and contemplates the yet future proclamation in which the heralds will be sent forth as “sheep among wolves.” This Gospel of the kingdom is to be “for a testimony” to the nations (here rendered Gentiles) as well as to Israel; and we have the same promise made to the preachers in Matt. 10:22 as in ch. 24:13. The words are exactly the same in both passages (in the Greek): “He that endureth to the END the same shall be saved.” The command is continued in the next verse (ch. 10:23): “But when they persecute you in this city flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.”¹¹⁸

If this coming be the same as the destruction of Jerusalem (as is generally supposed) then it is perfectly certain that the Twelve could not have gone on proclaiming the kingdom as being “at hand” for nearly forty years after it had been rejected, and the King crucified!

Moreover, in the ministry of the Disciples as recorded in the Gospels, we have not the slightest hint of their going among “wolves,” and of their being “persecuted,” and “fleeing” from city to city. On the contrary, their ministry seems to have been most peaceful and peaceable; and they had no such report of trial and trouble to give the Master when they returned from their mission. On the contrary it was marked as having had great success (Luke 10:17—19).¹¹⁹

That mission must indeed have been very brief, for we gather from the Gospel record that they were with the Lord the greater part of His ministry.

And where did His promise to be “with” them “all the days” of that proclaiming and baptizing, find its fulfillment, if He were immediately going away, and about to send the Holy Spirit to be with them during His absence. When the promise is so strongly personal and definite it seems very forced to interpret that presence as being spiritual or delegated to the Holy Spirit. The pronoun (*ego*), *I*, is very emphatic: “And, behold, I, even I, am with you all the days, until the completion of the age (*sunteleia*, or Dispensation).” (R.V. margin, *until the consummation of the age*.)

It seems clear, therefore, that the proclamation referred to in Matt. 28:19, 20, is yet future; and that it is closely connected with the then imminent personal appearance and promised presence of the Son of Man.

From all this it is abundantly manifest that, to take a command which belongs to a Past and Future Dispensation and to interpret it as being operative during the whole of this Present Dispensation can lead only to difficulty and contradiction.

Indeed, the bringing of John’s baptism, which belonged to the kingdom, into this present Church period has led to confusion and disruption. It has proved a bomb which has rent the visible Church into fragments.

It has led to controversies and divisions, and strife’s and contentions, which are today carried on with unabated vigor, and with the same bitterness as of old. It has led to the breaking up of the Church instead of its building up. It is the ordinance which has divided the Church instead of uniting it.

¹¹⁸ Greek, (*elthe*), *shall have come*.

¹¹⁹ It seems as though, after they had spoken of the Present, that the Lord, in proleptic vision, passes over and sees beyond this Present Dispensation; and, beholding Rev. 12:9, repeats the promises suited to that time, as given in Matt. 10:16—33; 28:19, 20. Mark 16:15—18.

Is it not passing strange that, if the command in Matt. 28:19, 20 really belongs to this Dispensation, the Apostles themselves, to whom the command was given, never once so interpreted it; and never once attempted to obey it?

The Lord had continued with them for forty days “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). One would have thought (judging from present-day interpretation) that He spoke only of the things pertaining to the Church, which according to the teaching of most Christians was set up, within ten days. But no! not a word was spoken about the Church. It was all about the kingdom. The Church of God was still kept a “great secret.” It was “hid in God” (Eph. 3:9). It was not yet “made known unto the sons of men” (Eph. 3:5). It had been “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

The only question the Apostles asked was about the kingdom, not about the Church. They did not ask *whether* the kingdom was to be restored to Israel or not. They asked only *as to the “time” when* it was to be restored; whether it would be *now*, “at this time,” or at some future time. They neither doubted nor questioned the *fact* of its restoration.

It is certainly very strange that Peter, who heard these words, should, *within a few days*, have stood up and said, “Repent and be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST” (Acts 2:38).

It is impossible for us to suppose that Peter, and those who afterward baptized, should be either forgetful of, or disobedient to, the Lord’s command, within *so few days* of its having been given.

Having had direct teaching from the Lord Himself on these very subjects, surely we should see, in the immediately subsequent acts of the Apostles, the nature of the instructions they had received.

If we thus rightly divide this portion of the Word of truth, we find that all is truth. There is no confusion. No violence is done to the Word of God. The command of Christ is left untouched. There it stands, through all these centuries, in all its truth and power, waiting for the moment when it will be obeyed (as it has never yet been obeyed), and the promise fulfilled to the very letter.

The action of the disciples is left unimpaired. Their obedience is not called in question. We are not called upon to blame them, or to excuse them; to condemn them, or to defend them. They followed John the Baptist in their proclamation of the kingdom, and they continued to use the baptism with which he had baptized.

As long as the Divine offer of the kingdom made by Peter in Acts 3:19—21 (R.V.) was open, baptism with material water was carried on, side by side, with the baptism with spiritual water (*pneuma hagion*), which was administered by the laying on of hands (compare Acts 19:6¹²⁰); the one *decreasing* and the other *increasing*, on the principle of John 3:30.

This coming change had been four times foretold (Matt. 3:11. Mark 1:8. Luke 3:16 and Acts 1:5), and we see it taking place; but the change is not complete until the offer of the kingdom made in Acts 3:19, 20 was finally and formally closed and withdrawn in Acts 28:25, 26. Until then baptism with water was continued, though it was *decreasing*. And it is mentioned only in those Pauline Epistles written during that period (1 Cor. and Rom. 6), but never again afterward. In the Epistles written after that solemn epoch it is never once referred to; but only the “one baptism” with *pneuma hagion*. In Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles there is no mention of any ordinances; except to emphasize the fact that they no longer exist, but are all done away in that completeness which is ours “in Christ.”

¹²⁰ Verses 4 and 5 were what Paul said, and verse 6 is what Paul did. The “they” in verse 5 were the people who heard John, not they who heard Paul. See *Word Studies on the Holy Spirit*, republished by Kregel Publications, pp. 104-107.

Ordinances that had to do with the flesh have no place in the Mystery or Secret which was revealed to Paul.¹²¹ There, all is Spiritual.

The Phenomena as to the two Baptisms may be thus presented:—



When the Mystery was revealed to Paul, and by him was “made known to the sons of men,” the Hebrew “doctrine of baptisms” was left behind with many other things, and the new doctrine of the “one baptism” with *pneuma hagion*, or with a spiritual (instead of a material) medium, was brought in.

“Thus, while the Word of truth” is cleared of all confusion the “traditions of men” are torn up by the roots.

The churches today profess to take the Acts of the Apostles as their guide to church doctrine and practice (instead of the Epistles that were specially addressed to them as churches); yet they ignore its teaching as to that very ordinance which they all agree in treating as fundamental, though at the same time they differ so widely as to its administration.

They then wrest a command of Christ, given with reference to the totally different and Future Dispensation, and strive to obey it in this present Dispensation in which it has no place.

They thus land themselves in an insurmountable difficulty; and erect barriers which effectually divide up the visible Church into hostile camps.

Failing to divide the Word of truth rightly, they get error instead of truth; and, believing they are obeying the Word of God, they are really only following the tradition of men.

For what is the state of the case historically?

From the Acts of the Apostles we know that they baptized only in the one name.

We know also that for some time this practice must have continued.

We hear nothing of baptism in the *Triune* name till the time of Justin Martyr¹²² (A.D. 114—165), and at the London Synod, called by Augustine in 605, any other form of words was pronounced to be invalid. This was confirmed by Pope Zacharius (741—752).

On the other hand, we have evidence of the baptism in the *one* name in the days of Cyprian, for he condemns those who held that it was sufficient to say “in the name of Jesus Christ.”¹²³ But it was declared to be valid by the Council of Frejus, A.D. 792, and also by Pope Nicholas I. as late as (858—867).¹²⁴

¹²¹ See *The Pauline Epistles*, by the same author, also *Things to Come*, Feb. 1907. *The Acts of the Apostles. Historically and Dispensationally Considered*; and Section No. 6, below, the concluding portion of this Division. Also a series of papers “On Baptist,” in *Things to Come*, Vol. XIII.

¹²² *Apologia*, 79.

¹²³ Ep. 72 (Migne). 73 (Oxford).

So that there was evidently confusion of practice as well as of doctrine, down to a very late period.

Various explanations of this diversity are given, but they are all based only on reasoning and probability.

We cannot believe that such a difference between the command in Matt. 28 and the practice of the Apostles in the Acts, can be accounted for on the ground that there is no difference between the use of the *three* names and the *one*. For in this case we may ask, What are *words* for? They are useless for the purpose of revelation, if in a simple and yet crucial case like this they do not mean what they say.

We could understand it better if the command had been to baptize in the *one* name, and the practice had been in the *three* names, for then the greater would have included the less. But, How can the less include the greater? How can the *one* include the *three*? and In what respect would this differ from John's baptism? John baptized into the *one* name. Did this include the three? If not, Why not? and Why should Peter's baptism include the three, if John's did not?

The fact is, there is no real explanation of any kind. The actual conflict is between tradition and revelation.

Our choice lies between these two. We may disobey 2 Tim. 2:15 and follow tradition with all its consequent confusion; or, we may rightly divide the Word of truth, and find clearness of vision and peace of mind.

No question of infant baptism, or of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, can arise where all is spiritual and Divine.

We must include the closing verses of Mark's Gospel in considering the effect of rightly dividing the Word of truth, as it touches the question of baptism.

Here, again, the difficulties are great indeed, if those verses which refer to the kingdom and its proclamation in the yet Future Dispensation, be taken and read into the Present.

Some of those who do this, logically insist on the point that we ought to see these miraculous signs and gifts in the Church today; but, as we do not see them, it is concluded that there must be something wrong in the Christian lives of believers; and hence it is urged that, an increase of holiness must be acquired by some means or other.

Some, who do not see these wonderful gifts and signs, conclude that the passage refers only to the past, and is now done with.

While others, seeing the difficulty created, treat the whole passage as spurious, and regard it as a corruption of the text which ought to be removed.

These are the difficulties which result from reading the commands that refer to the Past and Future Dispensations into the Present; whereas, if we rightly divide them, all difficulties are at once removed.

(k) *The prophecy of Amos*.—Acts 15:14—18, in which the prophecy of Amos 9:11, 12, is quoted, was written in a Past Dispensation, and is to receive its fulfillment in the Future. It must not, therefore, be read into the present Dispensation.

When James quoted it in the Council at Jerusalem, the Mystery had not yet been made known for the obedience of faith, for (as we have seen) it was never the subject of Old Testament prophecy.

¹²⁴ *Responsa at Bulgaros.*

The prophecy of Amos refers to what will take place “in that day” (ch. 9:11). The “day” spoken of is the day when (Jehovah says) “I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them” (v. 14). Then:

“In that day will I raise again the Tabernacle of David that is fallen,
And close up the breaches thereof;
And I will raise up his ruins,
And I will build it as in the days of old;
That they may possess the remnant of Edom
And of all the heathen, which are called by my name,
Saith the LORD, that doeth thus.”

This prophecy refers neither to the Church of God nor to the temple of Jerusalem; but to “the Tabernacle of David,” which stood on Mount Zion before the Temple was erected on Mount Moriah (2 Sam. 6:17).

It speaks of the heathen, *i.e.*, the Gentile nations, being called “in that day” by the Name of the LORD.

When Peter declared in the Council how God made choice of him, that the Gentiles by his mouth should hear the word of the Gospel (committed unto him) and believe; and was followed by Paul and Barnabas declaring what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them: then James said that the words of the prophets *agreed with this*, for God had declared by Amos that He would return and build again the Tabernacle of David, and bring the Gentiles into blessing with Israel.

God had just shown this by using Peter to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, first to Israel (Acts 6, 7) and afterward to the Gentiles (Acts 8—12).

The moment had come, therefore, for the call to Repentance; which was the one condition of this national blessing of Jews and Gentiles as such.

But we know that the proclamation was unheeded, and Peter’s call was not obeyed. All this was followed shortly afterward (Acts 28:25—28) by the solemn and formal proclamation of Isa. 6:9, and the fulfillment of the threat of judicial blindness which has, from that day, covered Israel’s heart (2 Cor. 3:15. Rom. 11:25).

Gentile blessing in association with Israel is now in abeyance: and Acts 15 does not refer to the Mystery, or to the Church of God, but to the Gentile nations as such.

The Mystery had not yet been made known, but “these things” had been “made known from the beginning.” The following is the correct rendering of what was the Primitive Greek text¹²⁵ of Acts 15:17 and 18, according to the R.V., Rotherham, J. N. Darby, and other translators:—

“That the residue of men may seek after the Lord,
And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known¹²⁶
from the beginning of the world.”

Thus it is quite clear that this Scripture, written in the Past, and referring to the Future, must not be read into the Present Dispensation of the Mystery, which was “hid in God from the beginning of the world.”

¹²⁵ According to Greek Texts of Griesbach. Scholtz. Tischendorf. Tregelles, Alford. Westcott and Hort, the Revisers’ Greek Text. See above, p. 52.

¹²⁶ Margin: “Or, *who doeth these things* which were *known*.”

(l) *“Son of Man.”*—The title of the Lord Jesus Christ as the “Son of Man” is a title that belongs to Him in the Past and Future Dispensations as “the Second Man,” “the last Adam,” having *dominion in the earth*; and not to the Present Dispensation.

Its first occurrence¹²⁷ in Ps. 8, and its first occurrence in the New Testament (Matt. 8:20), and its last (Rev. 14:14—18), all show this connection with the earth.

Out of the eighty-four occurrences of this title in the New Testament, eighty of them are in the four Gospels and *not one in the Church Epistles*. There is only one in the Acts (ch. 7:56), and after a quotation in Heb. 2:6, we do not meet with it again until we come to the two places in Revelation (ch. 1:13, and 14:14), and these are in connection with His coming to take up His great power and exercise His *dominion in the earth*.

This of itself is sufficient to show us the significance and teaching of this title; and that, quite apart from the principle we are now illustrating, we must not read past and future Dispensational truths into the present.

We have no more to do with the Lord Jesus as “the Son of Man,” than the Gentile woman of Canaan had to do with Him as the “Son of David.” When she made her plea and based it on that relationship, what could the Lord say but “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?” (Matt. 15:21—24).¹²⁸

The Church of God is brought into union with the risen and exalted Christ as “THE SON OF GOD,” and in no sense are we associated with Him in His title “Son of Man.”

This at once shuts the Church out of the Gospels, and out of the Tribulation of Matt. 24 (of which we have more to say below), and out of all the passages in which we have the title “the Son of Man.”

If we were imbued with the words employed in the Church Epistles, and had them ever in our minds, we should instinctively reject any teaching which would bring us into union with Christ as the “Son of Man,” or into Tribulation and Judgment scenes where that title is, and will be, so appropriate.

3. *The PRESENT not to be read into the PAST.*

As we may not read the Past into the Present, so we may not read the Present into the Past.

A few examples will suffice.

(a) *The Mystery, or Secret, concerning “the Church of God.”*—This was first “made known to the sons of men” directly, by special revelation from God to the Apostle Paul, and by the “Apostles and prophets” specially raised up for that purpose.

Before that, it had been “kept secret since the world began” (Rom. 16:25).

“In other ages it was not made known unto the sons of men” (Eph. 3:5). “From the beginning of the world it had been hid in God” (v. 9).

It had been “hid from ages and from generations” (Col. 1:26).

Surely these statements are perfectly plain, and admit of no dispute.

¹²⁷ See Canon V., below, Part II.

¹²⁸ See Canon V., below, Part II.

It has been suggested that this secret refers to the blessing of Gentiles, as such, with Israel; but the simple and conclusive answer to this is, that such blessing was never a secret, but was made known at the same moment as the blessing for Israel was made known.

In Gen. 12:3, it was included in, and was an integral part of, the very first promise ever made to Abraham: "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This was repeated at various times. In Gen. 18:18, Jehovah said of Abraham, "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." (See also Gen. 12:18; 26:4, etc. Deut. 32:43. Ps. 18:49; 67:2. Isa. 11:10; 49:6 Luke 2:32. Rom. 15:8, etc.)

This was blessing for Gentiles as such, in contrast, and yet in conjunction with Israel. But this is a very different thing from what had been "kept secret." The secret was not concerning Jews and Gentiles as such, but concerning a people taken out from both, and made "fellow-heirs" and members of "the same body" (Eph. 3:6), *i.e.*, "the one body," the spiritual body of Christ, which is the one great subject of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile (Rom. 10:12. 1 Cor. 12:13. Gal. 3:28. Col. 3:11).

It seems almost unnecessary to say more, for if these plain Scriptures are not convincing, nothing that we may add of our own is likely to make them so. Language, for the purposes of revelation, is useless if what is said to be "hidden" was made known; or what is called a "secret" had never been kept in silence.

If, however, we accept the statements as to the Mystery having been kept secret until revealed to and by Paul, then we shall look in vain to find it in the Old Testament, or in the Four Gospels, or anywhere before its revelation through the Apostle Paul.

If we think we find it, then we shall at once introduce confusion into the older Scriptures, because we shall arbitrarily, and of our own will, dislocate the Scriptures of truth, and read into the Old Testament what God says He carefully kept out of it.

The Church of God is specially instructed in the Epistles addressed to it.

In these Epistles the Holy Spirit fulfills the Lord's promise made in John 16:12—15. There, Christ said, "He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." Twice over the Lord repeats these words¹²⁹ (vv. 14 and 15). These things, which related to Christ, included all that God has made Christ to be unto us who are saved, and all that He has made us to be in Christ. Of this truth the Lord says, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth shall have come, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:12, 13).

If, then, we take the truth which was afterwards revealed, and which could not have been then borne or understood, and put it into the Gospels, from which the Lord designedly and purposely excluded it, we do despite to His purpose; we set at nought His wisdom; we attempt to do what He declares could not be done.

His hearers could not have understood His words had He revealed them then, for the great foundation facts of His death and resurrection on which they were based had not then taken place. But people today think they can understand the four Gospels if they read this subsequently revealed truth into them now.

It is just this which brings in all the confusion in our reading of the Gospels; and causes us to use one truth to destroy another truth, and prevents us from understanding either.

It is this that makes many exalt what they irreverently call "the teaching of Jesus" in the Gospels, and set it up in opposition to the teaching of Paul.

Whereas both spake by the Holy Ghost: both uttered the words of God as given to them to speak.

¹²⁹ In the Greek they are the same, though the A.V. unnecessarily renders them differently in the two verses.

The Lord Jesus said of Himself:—

“He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God” (John 3:34).

“My teaching is not mine but his that sent me” (John 7:16).

“I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me” (John 17:8).¹³⁰

But the Apostle Paul also spoke only the words given him to speak, and he declares that they were “the words ... which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. ii. 13).

Paul was commissioned to speak and write the truth which, in John 16:12, was designedly kept back. If, therefore, we take what Paul wrote, and put it in where the Lord left it out, what can be the result but confusion in our own minds, and a flouting of the expressed purpose and design of the Holy Spirit, in what He withheld and in what He revealed?

This is why, if the Church is put into the Great Tribulation of Matt. 24,¹³¹ it must be to the destruction of that “blessed hope,” which should ever be with us as our present comfort and strength.

This is why John 6 is interpreted of the Lord’s Supper, which was the subject of a subsequent revelation, and could therefore have no possible teaching concerning it.

This is why the Church of the Pauline Epistles has been read into the Old Testament prophecies and put in the place of the Bride. (See Ps. 45. Isa. 54:5—8; 62:4. Jer. 3:14. Hos. 2:16, 19, etc.)

This is why the Church of God is spoken of as “she,” while in the Epistles its members grow up “unto a perfect MAN;” and are part of Him who is the Bridegroom; and is Him are made “one new man,” and not a “new woman.”

(b) The title “sons of God” is closely associated with the Church of God; for, according to the Pauline usage it is the peculiar title of those who are new creations in Christ Jesus. This we see from all the Church Epistles, especially Rom. 8.

We must not therefore read this usage into the Old Testament, and interpret in the same sense the expression “sons of God” which we meet with there eight times: viz., Gen. 6:2, 4. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7. Ps. 29:1; 89:6. Dan. 3:25.

In all these passages the expression “sons of God” is used of *angels*.¹³²

The ground on which the two distinct usage’s are equally true of the two different classes of beings, respectively, is this: that “a son of God” denotes a being which exists as the direct creative act of God; produced by Him in contrast with being produced by man.

The angels are called “sons of God” because they are a separate creation distinct from all others. The first man, Adam, could be called a “son of God” in the same sense (Luke 3:38), because God created him. But Adam’s descendants were not the special creations of God; for Adam, “created...in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1), BEGAT a son “*in his own likeness*” (v. 3). So that, being the sons of the first Adam, we are

¹³⁰ See below, page 183.

¹³¹ See under No. 5, below. “The Future not to be read into the Present”

¹³² See below, p. 188, etc. also a pamphlet on *The Sons of God*, by the same author and publisher. Job 38:7 was clearly before the creation of man. And in Dan. 3:25 there is no article, and it does not denote Christ, but an angelic being.

“sons of men,” and we cannot be called sons of God by natural generation. When, however, we are His workmanship, created in “Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:10); “new creations” in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); then, in Him, we can be called “sons of God.” We are, then, His sons by the act of spiritual regeneration; for, He has created within us a New nature, and given us a “sonship spirit,” whereby we are able to say “Abba,” *i.e.*, my Father. (Rom. 8:15. Gal. 4:6.)

This Pauline usage of the expression is, therefore, quite distinct from the expression as we find it in the Old Testament. Had this been discerned, and the Present Dispensation not read into the Past, it would never have entered into any one’s head to have thought that the expression “the sons of God” in Gen. 6:2, 4, could have been used of *the sons of Seth*.¹³³

(c) The word “Church” may be considered here; for the changes in its meaning, though they might be classed under *usage* (See Canon III., Part II., below), depend rather on the changes of Dispensation than on usage, as such; and on Chronology rather than on Grammar.

In the Pauline Epistles the word acquires a meaning which it never had before. The meaning which is peculiar to this present Dispensation must not, therefore, be read into the Word when it is used in the Past Dispensation.

As to its Etymology *Ecclesia* means *Assembly*, or a Congregation of *called out ones*. But there are various classes of people who are *called out* from others.¹³⁴

Israel was an *Ecclesia*, or an assembly of *People called out* from other Peoples and Nations. See Gen. 28:3 (its first occurrence), where it is rendered *multitude*, and is used of Israel as a whole, as *called out* and distinct from all other nations.

It is used, in Gen. 49:6, of a smaller company of Israelites, or assembly of people *called out* from Israel, *viz.*, of the Tribal Council of Simeon and Levi.

Later on, in the same Past Dispensation, we find it used of another kind of assembly, *viz.*, of those who were *called out* of all Israel as worshippers assembling themselves together, as such, before the Tabernacle and the Temple. This is the meaning of the word in Ps. 22:22, 25, in the Gospels, Acts 7:38, etc. A further development of the usage of the word was caused in the closing or transition period of the Past Dispensation, which affected the meaning of the word as used in the Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles: at any rate, in the earlier portion of the Acts, which is a transitional book.¹³⁵ During that period (covered by the Gospels and Acts) the *called out ones* are the “Sheep-fold” of John 10. The assembly was composed of “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “The Porter” (John the Baptist) *opened* it and admitted the true Shepherd and the sheep whom He gathered; Baptism (the pool by the sheep-gate) being the mode of admission. Christ was the good Shepherd of these “lost sheep of the house of Israel” thus *called out*. Hence He was at once the “door” (v. 7), and the “shepherd” (v. 14).

Peter *called out* the “other sheep” which the Shepherd had (Acts 8—12), and brought them in to the “one flock” (v. 16). They were “not of this (Jewish) fold,” but Gentiles (as such), with Israelites in the place of their dispersion, who confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God.

These are the *Ecclesia* or “Church” of the Gospels and Acts.

¹³³ For, as a matter of fact, we see good and bad men and women marrying every day without any breed of monstrosities such as were the *Nephilim*, *Rephaim*, etc.

¹³⁴ The Greek word (*ecclesia*) is used 70 times in the Septuagint for (*cahal*), from which we have our English word, with its meaning, *to call*. See further, on pp. 248, 249, below.

¹³⁵ See *Things to Come*, Nov. 1906.

They had been led into this fold, but they were to be led out (John 10:9), and this commission was given to Paul. In Acts 19:9, he began this work when he “separated the disciples,” and the “hardening” of Isa. 6 was approaching its “completion.” When that Prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 28 the change of Dispensation was completed.

Henceforward the word *Ecclesia* acquires a more restricted meaning, and is used of “the Church of God” eleven times in Paul’s Epistles.

We must not, therefore, confuse the truth belonging and peculiar to these Dispensations, which is seen in the various usage’s of the word *Ecclesia*.

There are thus no less than five distinct usage’s of the word *Ecclesia*.

(1) It is first used of all Israel as *called out* from the Nations.

(2) It is used of those of Israel who feared the Lord and were *called out* as His worshippers (Acts 7:38).

(3) It is used of this company of called-out ones in the Gospels and earlier chapters of the Acts.

In Matt. 16:18 the reference was to a future called-out people. “On this rock I WILL BUILD.”

There could have been no reference here to the “*Ecclesia* in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38); nor to the *Ecclesia* of the Church of God in this Dispensation. Those who heard these words of the Lord’s promise could not connect them with the Secret or Mystery which was “hid in God,” and had not yet been made known to the sons of men. But they could connect them with Hos. 1:10; and 2:23. This is the promise which the Lord’s hearers would have known. Only with that promise in Hosea could they have associated this promise of the Lord in Matt. 16:18.

The revelation here made was an addition to the promise in Hosea. The Son of Man was about to be rejected. The prophecies of Him as “the stone which the builders refused” were about to be fulfilled. Nevertheless, the time was approaching when He would become God’s “sure foundation” according to Isa. 28:16; “Thus saith Adonai Jehovah, Behold, I lay¹³⁶ in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation,” etc. That may be either “I have laid” (R.V.), or “I will lay.” Both are true. Christ had been laid already then, in the counsels of God, and He would yet be laid in their fulfillment by God.

The Lord here repeats that promise. And the whole point was, Who was this Son of Man? Some said one thing and some another, and the Lord asks: “But YE, whom do ye say that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God. And Jesus, answering, said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon son of Jona, for flesh and blood revealed it not to thee, but my Father who is in the heavens. And I say also to thee, that thou art [called] *Petros* (a stone), and on this *Petra* (a rock) I will build my *Ecclesia*, and [the] gates of *Hades* shall not prevail against it, and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt. 16:15—19).

In the words which follow we learn that the builders were about to reject God’s foundation; for in the very next verse we read “FROM THAT TIME forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and SUFFER” (v. 21).

Thus, His sufferings are not mentioned until the announcement had been made, that, though the foundation stone was about to be rejected, it would yet be built upon. This rejected “Son of Man” is indeed the Christ, God’s “Anointed,” and He will become “the head of the corner.”

¹³⁶ Hebrew, (*yissad*) may be either the Piel preterite or the Kal future.

On Him, the Messiah, His Ecclesia or Assembly, spoken of in the Prophets, would yet be built. “I will build” are His words. “I will call” are Jehovah’s words in Hosea: “I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people: there shall they be called the children of the living God. Isaiah also crieth CONCERNING ISRAEL, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, A REMNANT SHALL BE SAVED”(Rom. 9:25—27).

This Remnant is the Ecclesia mentioned by the Lord in Matt. 16:18.

The gates of hell will strive against it, as Rom. 9:29 testifies, but the remnant shall be saved. This future Ecclesia of Israel is to be built UPON Christ, the Messiah, as the Foundation Stone.

The Church of God, as an Assembly, is also compared to a building; its members are built individually *on* a doctrinal foundation but the building itself is “a holy temple IN the Lord; IN whom ye also are builded together by [the] Spirit.”

The Church of God is now a spiritual building IN Christ: but the Ecclesia of Matt. 16:18 is the future, corporate, saved “remnant” of Israel.

The present Church of God is composed of Jews AND Gentiles, but the Ecclesia of Matt. 16:18 taken with Hos. 2:23. Isa. 10:22, 23. and Rom. 9:27, is a “remnant” OF “the children of Israel.”

(4) In Acts 19:32, 41 it is used of the guild or “company” of the Ephesian craftsman as distinct from the rest of the population of Ephesus (compare verse 25).

(5) In Acts 19:39 it is used of what we call a “Town’s meeting,” *i.e.*, a duly summoned gathering of the citizens in meeting assembled.

In Jas. 2:2 the word “assembly” is not the rendering of the Greek *Ecclesia*, but it is the word Synagogue. “If there come into your Synagogue” (so margin).

From all this it will be seen how necessary it is to confine the meaning of the word *Ecclesia*, or Church, to the Dispensation in which it is used; and to note whether it is used, in the Past Dispensation, of all Israel; or of Godly Israelites; or of the whole of God’s people; or of a portion of them in a certain District, City, or House.¹³⁷

The special usage of this word *Ecclesia*, in this Present Dispensation, by the Holy Spirit was not known until it was revealed to Paul as the Secret (or Mystery) which had been “hid in God” (Eph. 3:9); “hid from ages and from generations” (Col. 1:26); “kept secret since the world began” (Rom 16:25).

No, the “great mystery,” or Secret, is concerning the one spiritual unity of “Christ and His church,” and the end of it belongs to this present dispensation, and will close it up when the members of that Body will be

“Received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3:16).

4. *The FUTURE not to be read into the PRESENT.*

¹³⁷ The word is never used of a building; nor is the Pauline sense used in the Old Testament, nor in the Gospels, nor in the earlier transitional portion of the Acts. Our English word “church” is said to be derived from a combination and corruption of two Greek words, (*kyrios*), *Lord*, and (*oikos*). *house*. Hence *Kyriake*, the Lord’s house, preserved in Scotch *kirk*.

(a) The Great Tribulation, all believe to be still future; but yet, many Preachers and Teachers hold and teach that the Church of God, altogether or in part, will pass through it in whole or in part.

Some teach that *all* the Church will pass through *all* the Tribulation; others teach that *only a part* of the Church will so pass through it all; while there are yet others who teach that *all* the Church will pass through a *part* of the Tribulation. These last hold what is known as “the firstfruits view,” which identifies the Church of God with the 144,000 of Rev. 14, and places the Rapture of the Church in or after the middle of the Great Tribulation, and after the revelation of the Beast in his superhuman form, in ch. 13.

But here, again, we see the confusion and contradiction of reading what refers to Israel in the Future into the Present Dispensation; and interpreting it of the Church of God, to the destruction of its present hope of being alive and remaining at the Lord’s *coming forth* into the air to receive them, its members, to Himself, before the Day of the Lord bursts suddenly like a thief upon a world which cries “peace and safety.”

The Church of God is assured that that Day shall not overtake it as a thief. (1 Thess. 5:1—4.)

The firstfruits in Rev. 14 are the firstfruits of those who are redeemed “from the earth” (v. 3); redeemed “from among men.” They *stand* “before the throne”(vv. 1, 3); and they “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (v. 4). But all such language as this is foreign to the Church of God. We who are members of the spiritual Body of Christ are already “seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6); and we shall not “stand before the throne,” but be actually seated with Him when He shall have received us up into glory.

The other view, of part of the Church of God passing through the Tribulation is equally erroneous, and misleading; The Body is “one.” There is no amputation of the spiritual body of Christ. There can be no deformity such as would be caused by the absence of any of its members. If the Head “cannot say to the feet I have no need of you,” while here on earth, how much less can it be said in the day when “the number of the elect shall be accomplished” and the whole body presented perfect, complete, and “faultless” in glory. It is impossible for any one who is imbued with the language of the Pauline Epistles to imagine any connection between the Church of God and the Great Tribulation.

To say that the Church of God will be divided, and part of it go through the Tribulation, and part not; and that this division is based on the degree of holiness or watchfulness, or light, or doctrinal views, is to destroy the whole foundation of Grace, and put human merit in its place. Membership in the body of Christ is based on *life*, not on *light*. It depends neither on wages nor works; but, on the “gift of God,” not on the acquirement of knowledge; on the reception of God’s grace, not on the reception of man’s tradition.

Still less is there anything to warrant the belief that the Church of God must pass through the whole, or any part, of the Tribulation.

If we fail to rightly divide the Word of truth as to this we shall bring dishonor upon the free grace of God.

Indeed the Spirit of God seems to have taken special care to preserve us from such mistakes.

The Tribulation is everywhere either distinctly stated or specially indicated as being connected with Israel. The words are spoken “concerning Israel and concerning Judah” (Jer. 30:4). This fact, of itself, shows that it has no connection with the Church of God.

In Jer. 30:7 it is called “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” And why “Jacob?” Because that name carries us back to that night of Jacob’s trouble in Gen. 32:24—30, when, after many years of exile, he was about to return to his own land, and had reached its borders. There he heard of Esau’s preparations to come and meet him at the head of 400 armed men. When he heard this, “Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed” (v. 7), and he cries to God in his distress, and pleads the “mercies” of God, and deliverance from the hand of Esau lest he come and smite. It was the crisis of Jacob’s life; when, had “the mother with the children” been smitten, there would have been an end of the future nation of Israel, whose name was, for the first time, revealed on that eventful night.

Even so the coming Tribulation will be the time of “Jacob’s trouble,” the crisis of the coming nation. It will not arrive until Israel returns to the land. This is clear from Jer. 30:3, which proceeds to describe the “trembling” and “fear,” and adds “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (v. 7). The whole of this chapter should be carefully studied; and with it, Dan. 12:1: “At that time (*i.e.*, at the crisis of Antichrist’s power, see the end of ch. 11) shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy (Daniel’s) people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy (Daniel’s) people shall be delivered.”

It is positively certain that that time has not yet arrived; for, at the destruction of Jerusalem (which is supposed by some to be the Tribulation), instead of returning to their land the people were driven out of it; instead of being “gathered,” they were “scattered;” instead of being “saved” and “delivered,” they fled in their terror.

There are many Scriptures which speak of this time of trouble. Dan. 7:8; 8:9—12, 23—26; 11:30—39. Rev. 6—19. all refer to those days; but it is in Matt. 24 that the Lord Himself gives us its outline, and connects it with the Apocalyptic scenes.

In verses 4—6 its beginnings in “*that generation*” are described; but this introduction is closed with the words “THE END (*telos*) IS NOT YET.” This is emphatic, and is repeated in Mark 13:7, and Luke 21:9.¹³⁸ This is what is referred to in Matt. 24:34, and Luke 21:32, where the word is (*genetai*), *to begin to be, arise*.¹³⁹ That generation did actually see the beginning of those things which the Lord mentions in Matt. 24:4—6.

Then, in verse 7 (Mark 13:8. Luke 21:10, 11), the Lord describes *the opening scenes* of the Great Tribulation itself, which correspond exactly with the opening of the seals in Rev. 6.

The 1st Seal (vv. 1, 2) will be a repetition of what took place in that past generation, *viz.*, the coming of *many false Messiahs*.

The 2nd Seal: *Wars* (vv. 3, 4). “Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom”

“BUT THE END IS NOT YET” (Matt. 24:4—6).

Then:

The 3rd Seal: *Famines* (vv. 5, 6).

The 4th Seal: *Pestilence’s* (vv. 7, 8).

The 5th Seal: *Martyrdom’s* (vv. 9—11).

The 8th Seal: *Signs in Heaven and Earth* (vv. 12—17).

Then it is added in Matt. 24:7, 8, and Mark 13:8,

“THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ The English “by and by” meant (in 1611) exactly what the Greek means here, *immediately* (*eutheos*). (See below, Part II., Canon III., 2.)

¹³⁹ This is not the word used in Luke 21:24 for “*fulfilled*.” which is quite another word, *viz.*, (*pieeroo*), *to fulfill, or fill full*.

¹⁴⁰ Greek, (*odinoi*), *birth-pangs, or throes*. Compare Isa. 66:6—11 with Jer. 30:5 24.

But in Luke 21:12 it does not go on to describe these events, which belong to the Great Tribulation, but *it goes back* to what shall be

“BEFORE ALL THESE THINGS,”

and describes the events up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 in verses 12—24. Then the description (having passed over the details of the Tribulation itself given in Matt. 24:9—28 And Mark 13:9—23) joins with them in describing the end, and what shall be “immediately after the tribulation of those days,” culminating in the coming of the Son of Man, which is the common subject of Matt. 24:29—31. Mark 13:24—27. Luke 21:25—28.

The very title of Christ as “Son of Man” in this description of the Tribulation shows that the Church of God is not here. That title, as we have seen (page 140), has nothing to do with the Church or with this Dispensation of grace. It has to do with the earth, and with Christ’s dominion in the earth. It contemplates the Jews as in their own land, observing their own Sabbath laws (Matt. 24:20). It concerns those who are “in Judea” (v. 16). All the expressions used point to a people under the Mosaic law. This cannot therefore refer to the Church of God, which is “not under the law” (Rom. 6:14. 1 Cor. 9:21).

True, the Church of God has tribulation NOW, in the world, at least many of its members have, but not the Church, *as such*. But this is a very different thing from the Church, or any part of it, being IN “the tribulation, the great one.”

On the other hand, the Scriptures, other than the epistles addressed to the Church of God, constantly refer to that coming time of tribulation (Matt. 10:16—23.¹⁴¹ Rev. 1:9; 2:9, 10, 13; 3:10; 7:13—17).

Thus, the moment we recognize the great duty of “rightly dividing” the different principles of administration, apportioning each to its own distinct time and Dispensation, we see that the Church of God can have no place in the Great Tribulation; and that, being “not under the law,” it must be excluded from all those Scriptures which have the law for its governing principle, and Judaea for the scene of its administration.

(*b*) In the same way, we must not interpret the 144,000 of Rev. 7 or 14 of the Church of God. We see them involved in the horrors of the Great Tribulation, and in the Dispensation of Judgment; and specially sealed so that they should be preserved through it; whereas the promise to those who belong to the Church of God is very positive that that Day shall not overtake, or come upon it (1 Thess. 5:4).

But beside this, the very enumeration of them excludes all except those who belong to the *tribes of the children of Israel*. Not only are these tribes mentioned thus, collectively, in Rev. 7:4, but, in verses 5—8, each tribe is afterward mentioned separately by name.

The promise to Daniel was, that when that time of trouble should come, “thy people shall be delivered.” Here we see how that deliverance will be secured. This is the deliverance which is referred to in Joel 2:28—32.

As the Lord had 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal, in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, so He will have 144,000 of those who will refuse to bow the knee to the Beast, or receive his mark in the days of the Great Tribulation.

In Rev. 7 we have two of the three peoples with whom Scripture deals. In verses 1—8 we have the Jews; in verses 9—17 we have the Gentiles. It is clear therefore that we must not put in the Church of God where He has left it out. As for the Jews, we are told that “they shall not be reckoned among the nations” (or

¹⁴¹ See above, page 132.

Gentiles), Num. 23:9, and as to the Church of God, there is neither Jew nor Gentile (as such) in it (Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15. Col. 3:11).

If we, therefore, join together what God has thus kept distinct, we must get error instead of truth.

Besides, what do we gain by this disobedience to 2 Tim. 2:15? Where does our advantage come in, by thrusting the Church of God in everywhere, whether the Scripture speaks of Israel or the Gentiles, or the Cherubim, or the Twenty-four Elders, the Bride, Zion, and the New Jerusalem, and everything else? How much must be lost to us of what God would teach us about these various subjects of revelation.

Here, then, we have another example as to our not reading what is still future into this present Dispensation. We need not put the Church of God among those who are numbered of the twelve Tribes of Israel, nor into the innumerable Gentile multitude. A time is coming when the nations will “learn righteousness,” not by the grace of God, but by the judgments of God; not by the preaching of the Gospel, but by the proclamations of wrath. “O LORD . . . when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9). These are the learners who will make up this “great multitude which no man can number.” Many may be of that number who will be left behind when the members of the “One Body” shall have been received up in glory. Many who have been members of churches, but not members of the Church of God. Many who have been laboring at trying to make a unity of the Body, instead of “endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit.” They will then learn from the judgments of God what they failed to learn from the grace of God; and they will pass through and come out of the Great Tribulation and stand before the throne of God.

Those who believe they will pass through the Great Tribulation must not be surprised if God deals with them “according to their faith!”

(c) Sundry Prophecies relating to the Future Dispensation are interpreted of the Present, to the loss of coherency in the Word, and the gain of perplexity in the mind; to say nothing of the evils produced by perverting, and even “wresting” certain Scriptures from their own specific teaching.

“*The heathen for thine inheritance.*”—How often, for example, have we all heard Ps. 2:8 quoted on the platforms of missionary meetings:—

“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”

This promise to Christ, as Messiah, is quoted, as though it was to be fulfilled by the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God in this present Dispensation; whereas, the very next verse, if quoted with it, would make such an interpretation, or even application impossible; for it would show us exactly how that promise is going to be made good; and that it will be by judgment, not by grace.

“Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

When missionaries go forth equipped with a sceptre of iron, instead of the gospel of peace, we may regard such an application as being consistent.

This, really, comes under another head,¹⁴² which we propose to consider below, viz., the Importance of the Context; and the evils which are brought in by wresting any passage from its context. The context of Ps. 2:8, when read with verse 9, shows decisively what the true interpretation of verse 8 should be; and the scope of the whole Psalm would be seen to confirm it.

¹⁴² See under Canon IV. in Part II.

“*The mountain of the Lord’s house.*”—Isa. 2 is another example. We must all have heard verse 2 quoted again and again of the Church of God:—

“And it shall come to pass in the last days,
That the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow unto it,” etc.

This is supposed to teach the future extension of the Church of God, and its universal blessing to the nations; and this, in spite of the many passages in the Epistles which plainly tell us of the dark and terrible character of the last days of the Church on earth: evil men waxing worse and worse, scoffers walking after their own lusts, the departure of many from the faith, turning away their ears from the truth, and the turning them unto fables, and all this culminating in “the apostasy” and the revelation of Antichrist (1 Tim. 4. 2 Tim. 4. 2 Thess. 2. 2 Peter 3, etc.)

But beside all this, the immediate context of Isa. 2:2 should have made such an interpretation (or even, application) impossible; for the previous verse distinctly states that it was “the word that Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem,” and not concerning the Church of God.

No application may be made of any Scripture that is not in harmony with what is revealed elsewhere,¹⁴³ Such an *application* is forbidden by the subsequent teaching of the Epistles as to the last days of this Dispensation; while such an *interpretation* is forbidden by the context.

“*Thy light is come.*”—Isa. 50:1, 3, 11, 12 is another portion which is continually applied to the Church, and used to set forth the ultimate triumph of the Gospel, in order to the encouragement of missionary enterprise:

“Arise, shine for thy light is come,
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1).

Whose light? And, Risen upon whom? Not the Church of God, but upon Jacob’s seed, and his seed’s seed (Isa. 59:20) when “the Redeemer shall come to Zion.”

So far from the Church being in this Scripture, verse 3 distinguishes Jew and Gentile; and Gal. 3:27, 28 distinguishes the Church from both:

“And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

Here we see that the subject-matter is the Jew and the Gentile; while in the Church of God there is neither the one nor the other. The prophet is speaking of the Future Dispensation, after the Church shall have been “received up in Glory;” he is speaking of that moment in the Millennial Dispensation, when the Jew shall no longer be the tail, but the head of the nations; and when the Gentiles shall bring their wealth and their glory to Israel. This flowing of the nations for the aggrandizement of Israel is spoken of in other prophecies, and in such terms as to make even an application of them impossible; to say nothing of the interpretation. See Isa. 61:3—6, and Zech. 14:16—24, where it is distinctly stated that all this shall be when “the LORD shall be king over all the earth” (v. 9); when “Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited” (v. 11); and all this, not until Messiah’s feet shall have stood “upon the Mount of Olives;” even that mount “which is before Jerusalem on the East” (v. 4).

(d) “The Day of the Lord” is the Day when the Lord shall rule the world in Judgment and Righteousness.

¹⁴³ See Canon X., below Part II.

We shall see below, under the section which deals with the importance of first occurrences of words and expressions (Canon v.), that the one great outstanding fact that will characterize that day will be that man will be abased, and Jehovah exalted (Isa. 2:11, 17). Whatever may be the judgments, or the means employed, the result will be that the day of man's activities will come to an end, and Jehovah will begin to work: and truly, our hearts begin to say even now:

“It is time for Thee, LORD, to work:
For they have made void Thy law” (Ps. 119:126).

In this day, and in all previous Dispensations, judgment and rule and power in the earth have been committed unto man. It is called “Man's Day” in 1 Cor. 4:3, where it is translated “man's judgment” (Margin, “Greek, *day*”). Though the Greek word is “day” it is thus beautifully translated; for, this is the day when man is judging, nationally and individually. Nationally he is a failure; for, the end of nearly six thousand years finds good government to be the great want of the age, and the great problem of the nations. Individually, man is a worker of untold evils, and this in the Church as well as in the world, or even more so. For, the judgment of others instead of himself seems to be his one great object, while the wreckage of broken hearts and ruined lives testifies to the extent of the evils he has wrought.

Yes, this is “man's day.” But, “the Lord's Day” is coming,¹⁴⁴ and John sees it laid out in vision before him, when by the Spirit he was shown its course and its end (Rev. 1:10).¹⁴⁵

This is the day that concerns the world, and it will suddenly overtake it, at the moment when “peace, peace” shall be its cry, and “safety” its creed.

But we must not read that future Day into the present hope of the Church of God, to the destruction of that hope, and the loss of our peace, and the extinction of our joy. For the promise to us is given in no uncertain sound: “that day shall not overtake you as a thief.” The reason is, because we are “not in darkness” concerning it; we have the prophetic word which is a light in this darkness (2 Pet. 1:19); and, for that very reason we are called “the children of the light, and the children of the day” (1 Thess. 5:1—5).

By rightly dividing the Word of truth we distinguish between Man's day and the Lord's day; and also between the Lord's day and “the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:6; 2:16), when He who has begun the good work in us will perfect it; and we shall be with Christ; and rejoice to find that we “have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.”

5. One Part of THE FUTURE not necessarily to be read into another part of the Future.

There are Advents, and Resurrections, and Judgments which are all still future, and they must be rightly divided the one from the other, respectively, if we would learn, and know the truth respecting them.

(a) *The Advents.*—There is the “Parousia,” or Presence of Christ, which is the subject of the earlier Pauline Epistles, involving the Rapture of living saints and the dead in Christ (1 Thess. 4), and “our gathering together unto Him” (2 Thess. 2:1) before His Advent in judgment glory connected with “the Day of the Lord” (Isa.. 2:11, 17. 1 Thess. 5:2).

These two are to be carefully and rightly divided.

¹⁴⁴ *Four Prophetic Periods*, by the same author.

¹⁴⁵ See below, p. 198. Also a pamphlet on *The Lord's Day: Is it a Day of the Week, or the Day of the Lord?* by the same author.

The Parousia will be “our gathering unto” Christ, while the Advent will be the gathering of Israel to their Messiah and their Land (Gen. 49:10. Isa. 40:11; 43:5; 54:7. Jer. 29:14; 31:10; 32:37. Ezek. 20:34, 41; 34:12-14, &c.).

The Church of God has nothing to do with the Day of the Lord. That day will overtake the world as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2).

But the Church of God is distinctly told that “that day shall not overtake you as a thief” (v. 4).

The Church is assured that it will be at “rest... WHEN the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8). These will “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power WHEN HE SHALL HAVE COME¹⁴⁶ to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe” (vv. 9, 10). There are two marks of time “WHEN” in 2 Thess. 1:7 and 10; but they are not expressed in the same way in the Greek.¹⁴⁷ The first means “at;” the second means “when.”

Verse 7 relates to the Revelation of Christ to His enemies; verse 10 relates to the glorification of Christ with His saints.

The Saints will be *at rest* AT His revelation (verse 7).

And WHEN He is revealed, He will have already come and have been glorified with His saints (v. 10).

Scripture can hardly be clearer than this.

In order that there may be no mistake, the same fact is put in two ways: *first*, the “rest” which we shall have AT His Advent (His revelation in Judgment); and, *second*, the fact that He shall have already given us this rest, WHEN He is revealed.

It was this Advent which was the subject of Old Testament prophecy. We read nothing of the Rapture until it was revealed in 1 Thess. 4:13—5:11. This revelation was made on purpose that we might not be “ignorant;” as all are, and must be, concerning these things, unless they know what is here made known.

It was revealed for the special purpose, not only of informing the Church of God as to what it was ignorant of, but of comforting it. Twice over we have the exhortation, “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18); and, “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify (or build up) one another” (1 Thess. 5:11). Both exhortations are introduced (in English) with the word “wherefore”¹⁴⁸ showing the necessary connection between the cause and the effect; and linking them together.

If we read the Scriptures relating to the Rapture, and interpret them of the Advent, what is intended for our “comfort” will be used as an object of fear, and what is given as “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13) will be taken as our dread.

With many this is the case. And all the mischief is caused by not “rightly dividing” two truths both belonging to the same Dispensation.

¹⁴⁶ Greek, (*elthe*), 2nd aorist Tense subjunctive Mood, as in Luke 17:10. 1 Cor. 15:24, where it is so translated. Compare Matt. 21:40. Mark 8:38; 10:23. John 4:25; 16: 13. Acts 23:35. Rom. 11:27.

¹⁴⁷ In verse 7 it is (*en te apokalupsei*), AT THE APOCALYPSE, or *revelation* (as in the R.V.). In verse 10 it is (*hotan elthe*), WHEN HE SHALL HAVE COME to be glorified.

¹⁴⁸ The former is (*hoste*), *so that*, marking the exhortation as the logical result of the revelation. The latter is (*dio*), *on which account, wherefore*, marking the revelation as being the ground of the exhortation.

At the present moment of writing, both are, of course, future. Hence it is that so many mix them up together. They both concern the Lord's Coming, hence it is they are confused.

It is the same Christ who will gather His saints to Himself at their Rapture; and who will afterwards gather Israel to their Land.

His coming, from Gen. 3:15, onward, has always been the hope of Creation (Rom. 8:19—23), and the hope of Israel (Jer. 14:8), as it is now the hope of the Church of God (Titus 2:13). But, as with the Resurrections, each is "in its own order."

In due time He came, but He was rejected and crucified. Israel was "not gathered" at that coming (Isa. 49:5); therefore that gathering is now in abeyance, until the Lord's Advent, the Day of the Lord.

In that, which we speak of (for the sake of convenience) as the "*first* coming," we have an illustration of what we call the "*second* coming."

There were prophecies even of that first coming which had to be rightly divided in order to be understood, even when read by those who lived in the Past Dispensation; and which might have been understood had the words of those prophecies been carefully noted. As these prophecies serve to illustrate the order of events connected with the *second* coming it may be well to look at them more closely:

In Micah 5:2, and Zech. 9:9, we have two passages which both foretell and relate to that same first coming; and, fortunately, the English Version is as clear as the Hebrew in both cases.

In Micah 5:2 the word is (*yatza*), *to come out*.

In Zech. 9:9 it is (*bo*), *to come in*.

In Micah 5:2 the former is rendered "come forth," and in Zech. 9:9 the latter is rendered "come unto."

Both were then future. The one prophesied of Christ's "coming forth" at Bethlehem, and the other prophesied of Christ's "coming unto" Jerusalem.

Until the time came for their fulfillment, there was nothing in those prophecies to tell the readers what would be the interval between those two comings, or whether there would be any at all. There was nothing to tell them that they were separated, as we now know, by more than thirty years.

Some readers indeed might interpret them of one and the same event, and come to the conclusion that there was "a discrepancy;" or that the text was corrupt, or that there was something wrong with the translation.

These are the conclusions so readily come to by Higher and Lower Critics, who first create the difficulty by not rightly dividing the Word, and then endeavor to explain it by cutting it to pieces with their pens, as Jehoiakim did with his pen-knife.

Both these Scriptures speak of the same coming of the Lord; but they are separated by some thirty-three years. He "*came forth*" from Bethlehem at His Incarnation (Matt. 2:1). He "*came unto*" Jerusalem six days before His crucifixion (Matt. 21:1—10).

Had the Jews carefully read and received these words of God as they were known and understood by many at the time (Matt. 2:4—6) they would not have stumbled at His birth in humiliation.

All the events connected with those thirty-three years we speak of as having taken place at His first coming.

In like manner, all the events that will take place between Christ's "coming forth" into the air and His "coming unto" Jerusalem in the Day of the Lord go to make up what we speak of as His second coming.

But those events are all perfectly distinct, and are to be rightly divided off the one from the other, and are not to be confused or confounded.

All the events which will occur between the *coming forth* or the Descension of the Lord into the air, for our "gathering together unto Him" there, and His *coming unto* the earth, is power and great glory to execute judgment, must be rightly divided in order to be rightly understood.

We cannot, of course, speak positively as to the exact duration of that interval between the "coming forth" and the "coming unto."

Those who do not divide the Word at all make no interval, but jumble all the Scriptures up in confusion.

Others, who do make some attempt to divide it, make the mistake, we believe, of limiting that interval to "seven years," as being the "last week of Daniel."

True, there is such a period of "seven years" (Dan. 9:27): but there is no need thus to limit that interval. They may be the last seven of a larger number of years: for many events have to take place and many things have to be done during that interval.

Moreover, there is the (*sunteleia*), *the consummation of the ages*; and there is the (*telos*), *the crisis or end of the age*.¹⁴⁹

If the whole *sunteleia* should be forty years, and the *telos* should be the last seven years, then we should have both periods of the thirty-three years and the seven years.

(b) *The Resurrections*.—Several resurrections are spoken of in the New Testament.

These have all to be rightly divided if we would learn the truth of the Word.

Like the Coming of Christ, Resurrection was always the hope of God's people.¹⁵⁰

And this Resurrection was twofold, and its hope consisted of a first resurrection as distinct from a second.¹⁵¹ These were distinguished as that of the "just" and "unjust" (Acts 24:15), "life" and "condemnation" (John 5:29).

And they were distinguished also as to the times at which they shall take place.

Both are connected with the Advent: the one being immediately *before* the thousand years, and the other at the end of the thousand years (Rev. 20:4—6, 13).

These are referred to by our Lord: and the times and their order are very definitely stated in 1 Cor. 15:20—28.

¹⁴⁹ For the former see Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; and for the latter compare Matt. 24:6, 13, 14.

¹⁵⁰ Job 19:26. Ps. 16:10; 49:15. Isa. 26:19. Dan. 12:2. Hos. 13:14. It was announced at the Bush (Exod. 3:6), where Christ says God spake "touching the resurrection of the dead" (Matt. 22:31, 32), "for God is not the God of the dead but of the living." Therefore (the argument is), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must rise again. This was their hope (Heb. 11:8—16).

¹⁵¹ See Ps. 49:15. Dan. 12:2.

Christ the firstfruits already raised.

Then there will be those who will be raised in their own ranks, or order: “they that are Christ’s” at “the first resurrection” of Rev. 20:5, 6.

Then there will come “the end” or last rank, at the end of the thousand years (1 Cor. 15:23, 24); when, after the judgment of the great white throne, Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

But in 1 Thess. 4 we have a special revelation as to another resurrection at the time of the Rapture. We must not confuse it with the “first” and “second” Resurrections of Rev. 20. These are both connected with the Advent, the one, as we have seen, immediately *before* the thousand years, and the other immediately *after*. Both, *were the subject of Old Testament prophecy*; while the Resurrection of 1 Thess. 4:16 was a secret, then, for the first time, made known in a special revelation “by the word of the Lord.” This formula always denotes a special and specific prophetic announcement:¹⁵² Moreover, it is not called a “Resurrection.” The word is not a Noun, but a Verb. “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” This word “first” has nothing to do with the “first resurrection” of Rev. 20:5, 6; but only with the fact that it would be the former of the two there spoken of; their mention following closely one on the other. But in 1 Thess. 4, two events are spoken of, not two resurrections: *first* “the dead in Christ shall rise:” and *second*, the living who remain shall be caught away in clouds together, with them, unto the meeting of the Lord, into the air; “and so (*i.e.*, in this manner) we shall be ever with the Lord.”

Thus, the rising revealed in 1 Thess. 4, though it is still future, at the moment of writing, will be the great closing event of this present Dispensation, and will usher in the succeeding Dispensation of Judgment.

There are some who believe that, in Phil. 3:11—14, we have a later revelation¹⁵³ referring either to an earlier removal of the Saints; or to the hope of our “change” without dying; as the special hope of the “prize of our calling on high” (v. 14). This would then be either an expansion of, or addition to, what is revealed in 1 Thess. 4 concerning those who shall be alive and remain; or a fresh revelation of another and perhaps earlier “calling on high.”

Certainly we do not seem to have grasped or exhausted all that that wonderful chapter (Phil. 3) reveals. It seems to be connected specially with the glorious revelations made later in Ephesians and Colossians: and therefore with the Mystery of Christ and the Church in Eph. 5.

It may be asked whether 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15 completed all that God had then yet to reveal of the riches of His glory: and whether the “prize of our calling on high” may not refer to something special which God had held out for Paul’s encouragement when in prison in Rome.

The (*exanastasis*) of Phil. 3:11 certainly seems to be something beyond the *resurrection* revealed in the former and earlier Scriptures. It means, etymologically, *out-resurrection*, and followed as it is by the pronoun (*ek*), *out of*, points to something quite different and special.

The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It is used by Polybius¹⁵⁴ in the sense of *removal*, and by Strabo¹⁵⁵ in the sense of *migration*. In any case it was something Paul hoped for and longed to arrive at.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² See Gen. 15:1. 1 Sam. 9:27. 2 Sam. 7:4. 1 Kings 12:22. 1 Chron. 17:3. 2 Chron. 11:2; 12:7. Rev. 1:2, 9; 6:9; 19:13; 20:4.

¹⁵³ 1 Thessalonians having been written A.D. 52 and Philippians not till ten or more years afterwards.

¹⁵⁴ 1 Polybius, 2:21, 9.

¹⁵⁵ Strabo, 102.

It may point to our *removal* without dying, or to a more special, wondrous, and glorious change, corresponding more with 1 Tim. 3:16, “received up in glory,” referring only to those who shall be alive and remain.

Is not this, our *removal*, something for us to arrive at? Is it not a great and glorious change to hope for?

In any case, if a special word of this kind is used later, in Phil. 3:11, are we right in jumping to the conclusion that nothing different is meant, and there is no further truth for us to receive or to rightly divide?

We have certainly several resurrections revealed: and these resurrections being all future, and all in their own proper order, it is impossible for us to avoid confusion if we join them all together and make only one “general resurrection” instead of “rightly dividing” them according to the “order” which God has revealed.

(c) *The Judgments.*—The creeds of the churches know of but one judgment, which they speak of as the “general judgment,” as they know and speak only of one “general resurrection.” Yet, more than one is revealed in Scripture; and they are all still future. But, each will be “in its own order,” place, and time (Eccles. 3:1, 17):—

(1) 2 Cor. 5:10.—First, there is the appearance of the risen and changed saints before the *Bema* of Christ.

The *time* of this is “the Day of Christ” in the air, while it is the day of Antichrist on the earth.

The *place* is the *Bema* of Christ: that is the dais from which rewards and prizes are given; not the Bench from which sentences or judgments are pronounced.

The *reason* why “we” appear is to “receive” rewards for “deeds done,” service rendered, and works wrought: as well as the “crown of righteousness” which the righteous Judge shall give in that day. We “appear” there not to receive condemnation (Rom. 8:1); but to “have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5): we shall “not come into judgment” as to our standing or ought else (John 5:24); for the feeblest, and weakest, and poorest of the children of God will “appear” there as having been *already judged* in the person of their Substitute.

The *persons* who will stand there will be there in all the glory and perfection of their resurrection bodies. We are, even here, and now, “in Christ;” and we shall be none the less that when we are changed and made like Christ Himself. True, “we shall all stand before the Bema of Christ” (Rom. 14:9—13), but we shall stand there as saved: with and in our resurrection bodies made like Christ’s own glorious body (Phil. 3:20, 21).

(2) Matt. 25:31—46.—In this passage we have another judgment spoken of.

The “*time*” for this will be “when the Son of Man shall . . . sit upon the throne of His glory and before him shall be gathered all the Gentiles” (*ta ethne*.)

The persons will be the nations. The word (*ethne*) is rendered *nations* 64 times, and *Gentiles* 93 times, *heathen* 5 times, and *people*, twice. The Jews therefore will not be there, for they are “not reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:9); and the Church of God will not be there, because it bears no relation to Christ as “the Son of Man,”¹⁵⁷ and because it shall not come into judgment at all (John 5:24. Rom. 8:1).

¹⁵⁶ The word is (*katantao*), *to arrive at* (see all the occurrences: Acts 16:1; 18:19, 24; 20:15; 21:7; 25:13; 26:7; 27:12; 28:13. 1 Cor. 10:11; 14:36. Eph. 4:13; and Phil. 3:11). The word “attained” in verse 12 is (*lambano*), *to receive*.

¹⁵⁷ See above, page 140.

The *place* is “before the throne of his glory.” That this throne will be on earth is clear from Isa. 34:1, 2. Ezek. 39:21. Joel 3:1, 2, 11, 12.

The *ground* of the judgment is not even righteousness, much less holiness. It is not the ground either of grace, or of faith. And as to works, it is not even “good works” generally, and as such, but only one specific work, *viz.*, as to how they have *treated* the “brethren” of the Judge, *i.e.*, the Jews. This can only refer to those nations who are alive to stand before that Judge, and which have thus treated or maltreated His “brethren.” For there is not a word about resurrection, and we dare not put into the passage so important a matter when the Holy Spirit has so scrupulously left it out. But there are many who do this, and yet with a strange perversity would leave it out of Rev. 20:4—6, where God has put it in with all the emphasis of reiteration.

The *reward* is peculiar. It is entrance into “the Kingdom prepared FROM the foundation of the world.”

How the Church, which is “in Christ” BEFORE the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4),¹⁵⁸ can “enter the Kingdom,” is a problem, which those who make it must solve as best they can.

This kingdom is “under the whole heaven” (Ps. 115:16), upon the earth, and before the Millennium when He shall appear with His holy angels “to execute judgment” (Zech. 14:5. 2 Thess. 2:8. Jude 14).¹⁵⁹

But even this judgment is neither total, nor final, for after the thousand years, Satan “must be loosed for a little season,” in order to show that man remains the same in spite of all the evidences of the Glory of the Millennial reign.

The nations of the Gentiles immediately range themselves under Satan’s banner of revolt; and are at once destroyed without parley, by the special judgment of “fire from heaven” (Rev. 20:7—10).

(3) Rev. 20:11—15. This is the great and final judgment scene.

As to *time*, it is immediately after the thousand years. This marks it off from all others.

As to *place*, it is before “the great white throne.”

The *persons* who appear before it are to be raised from the dead for this special purpose. They lived before the thousand years, but they “lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (v. 4). Those who died during the thousand years must also be there, not one will be there who has not died. It is “the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29) or condemnation.

Those who introduce the *dead* among the living nations in Matt. 25 do not hesitate to introduce the living among the dead in Rev. 20.

We have thus seen that there are these several judgments: and that while all are still future, we have to rightly divide them as to their order, and nature, and character.

6. *The Truth and Teaching of the CANONICAL Order is to be distinguished from the CHRONOLOGICAL and Historical Order.*

¹⁵⁸ When Christ or the Church is mentioned it is “*before*” the foundation of the world (John 17:24. Eph. 1:4. 1 Pet. 1:20); but whenever the Kingdom is in question it is “*from*” the foundation of the world (Matt. 13:35; 25:34. Luke 11:50. Heb. 4:3; 9:26. Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

¹⁵⁹ See above, pages 116, 117.

By Canonical order we mean the order in which the teaching comes to us in the Canon of Scripture. That order is more or less Divine, at any rate so far as the Old Testament is concerned;¹⁶⁰ and so far as the order of the Pauline Epistles is concerned.¹⁶¹

By Chronological and Historical order we mean the order in which books were written and events happened.

These two may not always be the same in their teaching. One may be *Dispensational*, and the other may be *Experimental*.

All God's "works" are perfect, and so are all His "ways." All can see His works, but He has Himself to make known His own ways; as it is written (Ps. 103:7),

"He made known His WAYS unto Moses,
His ACTS unto the children of Israel."

(a) *The Tabernacle*.—When He ordered the making of the Tabernacle He began with the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25:10); then the Mercy Seat (v. 17); then the Table (v. 23); then the Candlestick (v. 31); then the Tabernacle (ch. 26); then the Altar of Burnt Offering, and the Gate (ch. 27:1, 9, 16). But that was the *historical* order, as originating only from God's side. He begins with and from Himself. But those for whom it was given, and who approached to receive its benefits and its blessings, experimentally, began at the other end, with the Gate; and then went on to the worship of God, ending with the communion of the Mercy Seat.

(b) *The Great Offerings*.—It was the same with the four Great Offerings (the Sin and Trespass Offerings being reckoned as one). God begins (Lev. 1) with the whole Burnt Offering, setting forth the value of Christ's offering in relation to Himself; descending by the Meal Offering (Lev. 2), the Peace Offering (Lev. 3), the Sin and the Trespass Offering (Lev. 4, 5), to the deepest needs of His people. But His people began at the other end, and approached with the sin offering first, as setting forth the experimental sense of their need (Ps. 32:1, 2).

(c) *The Four Gospels*.—So, also, as it required four Great Offerings to set forth all the various aspects of Christ's death, so it required four Gospel records to set forth His earthly life; and it would be as reasonable to attempt to make the four Offerings into one as to vainly attempt to "harmonize" the four Gospels into one; as though there were any want of "harmony" in them.

(d) *1 Samuel*.—It is well known that objections have been made against the text of the Book of Samuel because all the events are not in chronological order. But where is it said that they are? And why should they necessarily be so?

A human author arranges his matter as he pleases; and after bringing up his subject to a certain point, may go back and bring up some other matter to the same point.

Or he may introduce a later event and record it where it is desirable to bring out a certain contrast by way of emphasizing it, leaving it to the reader to discover his reason for doing so, and thereby fixing the lesson more surely on his mind.

A human author, we repeat, may do this; but the Holy Spirit of God may not do it, forsooth, without having objections raised against Inspiration!

¹⁶⁰ See *The Names and Order of the Books of the Old Testament*, by the same author.

¹⁶¹ See *The Church Epistles*, by the same author.

Notably is this the case with 1 Sam. 16:1 to 18:30.

Here the commentators do not hesitate to charge the Text with being corrupted, interpolated or transposed; and charges of contradictions and discrepancies are leveled against the genuineness and authority of Scripture.¹⁶²

Why not recognize the fact that we have four events the Chronological and Historical order of which is as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) | 1 Sam. 16:1—13. | The Call of David by God. |
| (2) | 17: 1—18:4. | The Call of David by Saul. |
| (3) | 16:14—23. | David enters Saul's house. |
| (4) | 18:5—30. | David leaving Saul's house. |

This being the historical order, why may not the Holy Spirit arrange them in such order that He may call attention to His secret movements which were shaping the whole history? And why may He not alternate DAVID and SAUL in order to emphasize the coming of the Spirit on David, and the departing of the Spirit from Saul? In order to show this we have the four events in their spiritual significance and teaching, according to the following:

Structure of Canonical Order: 1 Sam. 16.—18.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| A 16:1—13. | DAVID'S Call by God. The Spirit coming upon him. |
| B 16:14—23. | SAUL: The Spirit departing from him. |
| A 17:1—18:4. | DAVID'S Call by Saul. |
| B 18:5—30. | SAUL: The Spirit departing from him. |

Here, instead of the bare historical facts and exoteric events, we are taken to the esoteric reason for them all. That which explains them is the underlying counsel of God, who had rejected Saul, and taken His Spirit from him.

Thus we have the double lesson; and we retain the latter without losing the former.

If we compare the outward historical order with the inner and spiritual teaching we see at once why ch. 16:14—23, where the Spirit departs from Saul, is brought out of its chronological place, and placed in close juxtaposition with 16:1—13, where the Spirit comes upon David.

(e) "*The Words of Jeremiah.*"—Few books have suffered more from this treatment than the Prophet Jeremiah.

It is not disputed that the chapters as they are given to us in Scripture are not necessarily given in their Historical and Chronological order.

This is so obvious that there is no hint of it given in the text. Even the natural man can easily arrange the chapters according to their chronology.

But in this case again the *experimental* teaching depends entirely on the *canonical* order of the chapters. And the canonical order can be shown only by its structure:

¹⁶² Dr. Adam Clarke questions "the authenticity" of the verses which concern this subject, and quotes Pilkington and Kennicott, who suppose it "to be an interpolation of some rabbinical writer, added at a very early period to the Hebrew Text," and a proof of "the carelessness or infidelity of transcribers." But, surely, to put these passages down, thus, to knavery is to charge the writers also with the folly of children!

The Prophecy of Jeremiah as a whole.

A 1:1—3.	Introduction.
B 1:4—19.	Jeremiah's commission given.
C 2—20.	Prophecies addressed to the Jews (Josiah).
D 21—35.	History, etc. (Jehoiakim) (<i>Not in chronological order.</i>)
E 36.	Baruch. His mission to Jehoiakim.
D 37—45.	History, etc. (Zedekiah). (<i>In chronological order.</i>)
C 46—51. 64-.	Prophecies addressed to the Gentiles.
B 51: —64.	Jeremiah's commission ended.
A 52.	Appendix.

It will be seen from the above structure that it is the history connected with Jehoiakim which is not given in its chronological order.

The member D is specially set in contrast with the member *D*, and ZEDEKIAH'S history, being in chronological order, emphasizes and calls our attention to the fact, that it is JEHOIAKIM'S history which is *not in chronological order*.

And why should it be? Who was Jehoiakim? Was it not he who cut up the words of Jehovah with a penknife? Why should not his history be cut up with the pen? What does it matter how his history is treated? Note the contrast between him and king Josiah. Josiah, when the book of the law was found and the king heard the words of the law, rent his clothes (2 Chron. 34:14, 19, 21, 30) and submitted himself to it. He reigned with honor, and when he died he "was buried in one of the sepulchers of his fathers, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah" (2 Chron. 35:24).

On the other hand, Jehoiakim, who refused to hear the word of the LORD, and cut it in pieces, was "buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem;" and his dead body was "cast out in the day to the heat and in the night to the frost" (according to the prophecies in Jer. 22:18, 19; 36:30).

And, if any doubt remains as to the reason why this lesson of the prophecy of Jeremiah should not be lost, and its experimental teaching hidden and marred, let the structure of the Canonical portion connected with Jehoiakim be carefully studied; and its perfection be duly noted. It is as follows:

D (*Jer. 21.—35.*). *The Canonical History connected with Jehoiakim. (Not chronological.)*

D | F | 21. Defeat and Captivity proclaimed.

 G | 22—23:8. Promise of the BRANCH.

 H | 23:9—40. Whirlwind. False Prophets. Rejection.

 J | 24. Figs. Discrimination. (Captives and Remnant.)

 K | 25:1—11. Time: Seventy years.

 L | 25:12—38. Nations (The Cup).

 M | 26. Proclamation in the Court of Jehovah's House.

 L | 27. Nations. (The Bonds and Yoke.)

 K | 28. Time: Two years.

 J | 29. Figs. Discrimination. (Captives and Remnant.)

 H | 30, 31. Whirlwind. The Book. Restoration.

 G | 32, 33. Promise of the BRANCH.

 F | 34, 35. Defeat and Captivity proclaimed.

Is it not clear why this, the Canonical order, is so perfectly constructed? And is not the *Experimental* teaching exhibited by it shown to be of far greater importance than that of the mere Chronological and Literary order?

(f) *The Pauline Epistles*.—In our work on the Church Epistles we have set forth the experimental teaching of their canonical order: and have shown that they are presented to us in the order in which we are to study them.

In them we have the fulfillment of the Lord's own promise, given in John 16:12—15; "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He the Spirit of truth (*lit.*, shall have) come, He will guide you into all the truth. He shall not speak of (*or* from) Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

That is to say, that had the Lord spoken them then His disciples would not have been able to bear them.

Whatever may be the force of the word "bear," the contrast is between what they could not do "now," at that time, and what they would be able to do at some later time.

Time, therefore, does enter into the interpretation of words.

There could be no doctrine until the facts had taken place on which they were based.

There could be no Epistles until the Gospel history had been accomplished.

There could be no doctrine of Redemption or Atonement until His blood had been shed; and He, as a corn of wheat, had fallen into the ground and died (John 7:24).

"The things of Christ" were the doctrines concerning Him which were afterward "taken" and revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Epistles specially addressed to churches as such. If not, Where, and How, and When, has this Divine promise ever been fulfilled? Where has He guided us into "all the truth?" Where are we to look for this truth except in these Epistles which were written when He, the Spirit of truth had come?

Those who neglect the teaching of the Epistles reject these words of Christ. They "cannot bear them," even now. They put themselves back into a Dispensation which has passed away, and refuse to bear the words now that they have been spoken and written for our learning.

Many, thank God, are heeding what has since been revealed. Many are rejoicing in these "things of Christ" which the Spirit of truth has received, and has shown what God has made Christ to be unto us, and what He has made us to be "in Christ." Many are reading and studying the Epistles which the Spirit of truth has addressed to the churches by the Apostle Paul.

We have spoken of some of the Dispersion Epistles under the heading of rightly dividing of the subject matter (pp. 72-78), according to which Paul's Epistles must be divided off from those other Epistles which are not addressed directly to the Church of God.

We are specially concerned now, therefore, with

The Pauline Epistles.

Besides the group of Epistles addressed to the Dispersion (1 and 2 Peter, and James), there is another group of General Epistles (1, 2, and 3 John and Jude); and yet another group of Pauline Epistles.

These groups, whatever may be their order in the ancient Greek manuscripts, always consist of the same Epistles, and are thus preserved distinct and separate from the others.

In some MSS. the *Dispersion* group follows the Acts; and is followed by the *General* group, concluding with the *Pauline* group.

In the Pauline group the order of the Epistles varies to this extent; the Epistles addressed to churches (in which we include Romans and Ephesians, though they are not specifically so addressed) are always found together, and in the order in which we have them in our Bibles today. No Greek MS. has ever yet been seen in which this order varies. But in some MSS. the other Pauline Epistles do vary; the Pastoral Epistles sometimes preceding and sometimes following the Epistle to the Hebrews. We believe that the proper place of Hebrews is last, both canonically and chronologically, thus closing up Judaism effectually and cutting it off completely.

Many have observed the importance of the epoch marked by the Destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70, and the wonderful effect it must have had on Judaism and Christianity. This epoch is marked in the New Testament by the Epistle to the Hebrews, written in A.D. 68.

In our work on *The Church Epistles* we have dealt only with their Canonical order; but their Chronological order is not without its own direct teaching.

The Holy Spirit of God has specially preserved and given them to us in their Canonical order, because that is the order in which we have to learn their truths, which are *experimental*, and are therefore more important for our spiritual life.

That Canonical order is as follows:—

A1 | Romans. *Doctrinal*. Dogmatic Instruction (in which Paul was alone in writing).

B | CORINTHIANS. Reproof for *practical* failure as to Romans' teaching. (Paul Sosthenes, and Timothy).

C | GALATIANS. Correction for *doctrinal* failure as to Romans' teaching. (Paul and all the brethren).

A2 | EPHESIANS. *Doctrinal*. Dogmatic instruction. (Paul alone in writing).

B | PHILIPPIANS. Reproof for *practical* failure as to Ephesians' teaching. (Paul and Timothy).

C | COLOSSIANS. Correction for *doctrinal* failure as to Ephesians' teaching. (Paul and Timothy).

A3 | THESSALONIANS. Praise and thanksgiving for a model church, manifesting the fruits of Paul's teaching in Acts 17:1—3, in holiness of life and missionary zeal (Paul,

Silvanus, and Timothy).

These are the *experimental* lessons of the Canonical order.¹⁶³

But the Chronological order is equally a fact, and it has its own special teaching for us, which is *Dispensational*.

These Epistles are not given to us in this order, because the *Dispensational* teaching is not so important or so essential to our salvation.

The *experimental* teaching, which is essential; is ensured to us by the *Canonical* order in which we receive them; but the *Dispensational* teaching of their *Chronological* order has to be sought out, by rightly dividing them according to the *times* when they were respectively written.

Both orders are divine; and they have their distinct and separate teaching.

This element of *time*, in interpretation, reminds us that Paul never saw any of John's writings! None of the churches to whom he addressed his Epistles had ever yet seen John's Gospel. That Gospel, therefore, cannot be necessary to the understanding of the Epistles, or to the formation of churches.

¹⁶³ See *The Church Epistles*, by the same author.

Not until some twenty years after Paul's death was John inspired to write. How real must have been his inspiration to give us those verbal conversations of the Lord with Nicodemus, the woman of Samara and others at which John himself was not present, even though he was a disciple at the time.

All this shows us that we are not to read subsequent revelations into previous writings. The "not yet" of Heb. 2:8, and the "cannot now" of John 16:12, must be allowed to have their full weight in the interpretation of the Scriptures of truth; and, especially in the Epistles of Paul, if we are to "understand the Scriptures."

The churches whom he addressed could not fail to rightly divide the words of truth which they received. They could not mix up the four Gospels with the Prison Epistles. The Thessalonians could not confuse their teaching with what was written long after to the Ephesians, or to the Hebrews; and which they had never seen.

But we now have "All Scripture" and our responsibility is therefore greater.

If we do not rightly divide "all Scripture" according to the times, when, and as it was written, it will be impossible for us to be guided into "all truth."

Even where this dividing of the Word of truth according to its subject-matter is carried out, there has been failure to carry it out fully with reference to its dispensational or chronological teaching.

And as so very few thus fully observe this all-important precept, and fulfill this great requirement of the Divine Word, it is all the more necessary that we should make an attempt to do so, in some measure, here, and now.¹⁶⁴

The Chronological order is as follows, according to the generally received dates:—

1 Thess.	A.D. 52 from Corinth.
2 Thess.	A.D. 53 from Corinth.
1 Cor.	A.D. 57 from Ephesus (spring).
2 Cor.	A.D. 57 from Ephesus (autumn).
Gal.	A.D. 57 from Corinth (winter).
Romans	A.D. 58 from Corinth

Acts 28:25, 26 (A.D. 62).

Ephesians	A.D. 62 spring. From Prison in Rome.
Colossians	A.D. 62 spring. From Prison in Rome.
Philippians	A.D. 62 autumn. From Prison in Rome.
1 Timothy	A.D. 67 from Corinth.
Titus	A.D. 67 from Corinth.
2 Timothy	A.D. 68 from Prison in Rome.

It is obvious that we must not read into the Acts or Paul's earlier Epistles that which was revealed to him later, while in prison in Rome.

Up to Acts 28. Peter's offer of the kingdom (Acts 3:19—21, R.V.) was still open.

¹⁶⁴ We must refer our readers here to two separate pamphlets on this subject, viz., *The Pauline Epistles and The Good Deposit*; or in *Things to Come*. April and May, 1907, and subsequent numbers.

Stephen (A.D. 33) sees the Lord Jesus still standing (Acts 7:55), for He had not yet “sat down” at the right hand of God (Heb. 10:12, A.D. 68).

Isaiah 6 had been twice quoted by Christ as not yet fulfilled, Matt. 13:15 (Mark 4:12. Luke 8:10) and John 12:40.

Not until Acts 28:25, 26, was Paul commissioned to pronounce this threatened judicial blindness, for the third, and last time.

It is obvious that not until after Acts 28 could any declaration of the Mystery have been made. Until then nothing could be said which would be incompatible with the possible acceptance of Peter's offer.

However, we must refer the reader to our separate pamphlet on this subject; and to pages 165, 166, above, where we have spoken of the possibility of there being some further revelation in Phil. 3.

Enough has been said on this whole subject of rightly dividing the Dispensational truth and teaching to show the importance of obeying the precept in these various particulars.

End of part one.